

# The Greatest Of The Prophets

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A New Commentary on the Book of Daniel

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# The Greatest Of The Prophets

## PREFACE

No words of mine are needed to prove the vast importance of the two books of Daniel and the Revelation for the final generation of mankind, who will be living on earth just before the second advent. If, as I believe, we are that final generation, then these books were designed by God especially for us.

The present work was begun in the latter part of 1937, while I was still teaching at Walla Walla College. Of course, I was not beginning my study of these two books then, but at that time I first began to write out a verse-by-verse examination of them. After I had prepared a fairly complete manuscript of about six hundred pages, other subjects demanded my attention; so that it would not be correct to say that the present work has occupied my mind continuously since then. Yet there is no denying that it does represent an immense amount of labor, for large parts have been revised and rewritten many times.

Essentially all the chief scholarly works along these lines have been consulted in the completion of this work. No one can build up a work like this by his own unaided efforts; we of this day stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before. A few of them are quoted or referred to here and there in the following pages; but it would be useless and merely pedantic to make a formal list of them here.

A correct understanding of the marvelous visions of Daniel and the Revelation would most assuredly work a reform in the thinking and in the lives of the people of our day. That such a transformation may be accomplished for many is the earnest prayer of - THEAUTHOR.

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“Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.” Daniel 8:16.

“Daniel's fourth kingdom is the Roman power: first in its earlier stage as a consular and imperial power, and then in its later stage, when as the 'little horn' it depicts the papacy. Yet in both these points the critics hold entirely different views: i.e., they are wiser than Christ: Christ the Teacher of the Gospel pages, Christ the Revealer of the Revelation! Now that higher criticism which, consciously or unconsciously, claims to be higher than Christ, comes to us really from beneath. It is the dragon who gives it 'his power and his throne and great authority.'” -Charles Boutflower, In and Around the Book of Daniel, page 293. 1923.

“When the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience.” - Testimonies to Ministers, page 114.

“When we as a people understand what this book [the Revelation] means to us, there will be seen among us a great revival.” Ibid., p. 113.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. General Characteristics of the Book

The position of each of the books of the Holy Scriptures may not seem a matter of much importance; yet it is well to note that an argument has been urged against the authenticity of the book of Daniel because in the Jewish version it is not found with the major prophets, as in the English Bible, but in the fifth place from the end. In the Massoretic Hebrew Bible it is essentially in the same place, though because of a combination of some of the books in the Hebrew, Daniel appears as the third from the last of the Ketubim, or the Haglographa, the latter being itself the third or last large division, the preceding large divisions being termed the Law and the Prophets. The argument against Daniel because of its position in the Hagiographa and not among the major prophets will be considered later.

The book comes down to us partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, the first part and the last being in Hebrew, but the middle portion being Aramaic, from the middle of the fourth verse of chapter 2 to the end of chapter 7. This very peculiar language division has been the occasion of much discussion, as it does not in the least correspond to the literary contents of the book. For there is a clear literary division of the book into two parts, the first six chapters being composed of narratives or anecdotes, while the latter half of the book comprises three distinct visions. [1] Thus the visions are mostly in Hebrew (except chapter 7); while the narratives are mostly in Aramaic (except chapter 1 and the first part of chapter 2).

*1. Chapter 9 is merely a supplement to the vision of chapter 8; while chapters 10, 11, and 12 are in reality all one vision.*

Accordingly, scholars have had no end of difficulty in trying to account for these peculiarities of language and of literary classification. For there can be no doubt that this identical division into Hebrew and Aramaic, if not as old as the book itself, does date from the very earliest period of the book's history of which we have any record. Many good scholars think that the book was originally written thus, partly in the one language and partly in the other. Pusey declared that it could have been thus written in the two languages in the period at the downfall of Babylonia, but could not possibly have been written in these two languages at the times of the Maccabees. Some contend that the one part or the other must be a translation from the prime original; but whether this original was Hebrew or Aramaic scholars are not agreed. On this point more will be given later.

The student of any book of the Bible, including, of course, this one of Daniel, should always remember that the present division into chapters and verses is not a part of the original, and in reality is not very ancient. It is said to have been first made by Stephen Langdon, who became archbishop of Canterbury; he died in 1228. This division into chapters obscures the fact that the last three chapters of Daniel are only parts of one vision. Moreover, the English division into chapters is not always followed exactly in the modern Jewish version.

R. H. Charles, archdeacon of Westminster and author of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford University Press, 1929), has pointed out that the book is divided into ten natural sections, each dated in one way or another by the author, usually at the beginning of each section. Not all of these dates appear in our English versions. The third and the fourth, however, have dates assigned them in the Septuagint, while the fifth is dated by the events at the end, or the day of Belshazzar's death, in 539 BC. The others are dated in the English versions in terms of the reigns of certain kings, this being one of the many evidences that the book must have been written, not in Palestine, but somewhere in the East, either in Babylonia or in Persia. My personal opinion is that the book consists of personal private documents left by Daniel, but assembled somewhat later, probably by Ezra or Nehemiah. The latter, we know, collected a "library" of the holy books, and doubtless was divinely inspired in so doing. Undoubtedly this collection of documents left by Daniel was then among the other books which now constitute most of the Old Testament.

The difficulties regarding the authorship of the book which arise from the two languages in which it comes to us, are still further complicated by the fact that in the first six chapters Daniel is spoken of in the third person, while in the remaining six he is generally (though not always) represented as speaking in the first person.

When the pseudo-scholarly vogue of questioning the authorship of the books of the Bible became

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a favorite pastime a century and a half ago, the book of Daniel fared like the rest, and was confidently cut up and assigned to several authors. This dissection of Daniel has now gone entirely out of style; all modern scholars agree that the book is a unity, in spite of its two languages, and in spite of the further remarkable fact that it covers a period of almost seventy years. An exceedingly small number of authors have ever written anything worth while at both ends of any such period.

But was the book originally written in Hebrew, or in Aramaic? Or was it composed by the author at widely different times, part of it being written in the one language and part in the other? No other book in the Bible exhibits this duality of language. Ezra has two sections in Aramaic; but these are readily accounted for as being royal documents (proclamations, etc.) which, with some accompanying narrative matter written also in Aramaic, are incorporated into these Hebrew books in their original language. Not so with Daniel. No reason which is natural and obvious has ever been assigned for these two languages of Daniel, though the theory that the book comprises documents written by Daniel at widely different periods of his life seems to present the least difficulties. This is hardly the place to discuss this problem in detail, especially when no agreement has been reached among scholars as to why the pseudo Daniel writing in the days of the Maccabees (as the "critics" tell us), should have wanted to write it partly in one language and partly in another. Nor can they tell how it could possibly have been translated into one language or the other even partially, almost immediately after having been written, if, as these "critics" say, it was written, not by Daniel, but by some pious Jew about the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Obviously these facts about the book's two languages constitute strong arguments for its authenticity and for its antiquity.

The chief discussion in modern times about the origin of the book is concerned with the period of its composition. Conservative scholars, like Hengstenberg, Moses Stuart, Pusey, C. H. H. Wright, R. D. Wilson, and Boutflower, date it as tradition has always done—during the latter days of Babylon and the first part of the Persian Empire, that is, in the sixth century BC, as expressly dated in the book itself. But all the "critics," such as the German commentators, with Driver and Charles in England and Montgomery and Torrey in this country, are equally united in placing its composition in the times of the Maccabees, or around 165 BC. No intermediate date has ever been suggested by anyone, so far as I am aware. There is thus a period of some 400 years between these two groups of commentators, "an extent of time," says Montgomery, "so vast that it is impossible for either to understand the other, or for either to make impression upon the other's argumentative bulwarks." - Commentary, 1927 ed., P. 58.

## 2. An Outline of the "Critical" Position

I am frankly a conservative, and I do not expect my work to be read by any but conservatives. But in spite of the despair expressed by the author just quoted that either side would ever be able to make any impression upon the "argumentative bulwarks" of the other, the attempt will be made to face the facts and arguments relied upon by the "critics," with the hope that my readers can at least understand the theoretical position of both sides.

The approximate date of 165 BC, which the "critics" assign for the composition of the book, should be regarded as only an indication of other profound differences between their position and that of the conservatives. Let us first consider the manner and circumstances of the book's composition, according to the "critical" theory.

According to the "critics" the book was composed in Palestine during the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, "between BC 168 and 165." - Driver. Charles is very positive that it must have been composed "before the dedication of the new altar" in December, 165, and he says that "this is the view of Wellhausen, Bevan, Driver, and most scholars." - Commentary, page 212. It was written as a means of encouraging the Jews to stand out against their persecutors. Its anecdotes, we are told, have only a slender element of historical fact behind them, while the visions, instead of being genuine predictions of far-future history, are mostly history dressed up in the guise of prophecy, the whole book being a very remarkable and very clever literary device in the name of a supposedly historical personage living in the times of Babylon and Medo-Persia. In short, the book of Daniel is, they say, a pseudo-autograph, or a writing with a false name attached to it.

It was, says Archdeacon Charles, "composed in secret and by an unknown author.... and copied and circulated, in some cases no doubt, under the seal of secrecy during its first or even second decades." - Commentary, Introduction, page XX. The author just quoted admits that within twenty years it must have been translated into the form which we call the Septuagint, which involves the additional incredible fact

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that within this brief period it must also have been admitted into the Jewish canon of Sacred Scripture.

Without stopping now to dwell on the sheer impossibilities or incredibilities in all this, or the dishonorable (as we moderns consider it) character which this theory gives the book, we, may pass along to note some factual consequences which follow from this view of the manner and date of its composition.

Regarding the Narratives or Anecdotes. Formerly the “critics” rated them all as pure fiction, though with splendid moral lessons. However, archaeology has upset many a literary theory, and the “critics” now admit that many of these stories have a genuine historical basis, for example, the chapter dealing with the death of Belshazzar. These topics will be considered later in more detail. Here it need only be noted that the historical character of any of these narratives is admitted by the “critics” only with extreme reluctance. Every genuine historical element in these narratives, including the archaeologically established general atmosphere or environment of each, tends to discredit the “critical” view of the time and place of the book’s origin and to establish the older or conservative view. Regarding these narratives as a whole, we have the following candid admission from Montgomery, one of the most recent writers on the subject: “In general, it must be said that the atmosphere of the pagan world and its contrast with Judaism are capitally presented.” - Commentary, page 75. This author further acknowledges that the first part of the book was written in Babylonia, not in Palestine, and this part at least is “pre-Maccabean.” See pages 22, 90, 96.

Regarding the Visions. Of course, the most important parts of the book are not the narratives but the visions. We need not try to decide whether the date of the book assigned by the “critics” determines their view of its visions as not true prophecies, or whether it is the other way around, and that their disbelief in the visions determines its date. They have not informed us on this interesting problem of psychology. But it will be well here to state briefly their views about the visions and their method of interpreting them, reserving a fuller consideration until later.

It is a foregone conclusion that they will never admit any genuine long-time prediction in any of the visions. Hence the fourth kingdom of both the second and the seventh chapters (which all commentators admit are parallel to each other) cannot refer to Rome; for Rome was then too far in the future. Both these visions of the second and the seventh chapters must end with Antiochus Epiphanes. They arrive at this surprising conclusion in this fashion: They work backward with regard to these and the other visions. They first decide that the eleventh chapter is chiefly a detailed history (in the form of a pseudo prophecy) of the successors of Alexander down to and including Epiphanes himself. Then they apply the same method of interpretation to the eighth chapter, very confidently telling us that this also must apply to Epiphanes. From these settled(?) bases they take it for granted in a lofty way that the seventh and the second chapter must also be “cabined, cribbed, confined” within the same narrow limits set by the end of the Greek tyrant.

In passing it may be noted that this method of working backward from the eleventh to the second chapter is the exact reverse of the conservative method of studying these visions. All conservatives consider the dream vision of the second chapter to be the ABC of all long-time predictive prophecy. The seventh chapter clearly gives the same topics in a slightly more complicated fashion, with some enlargement of details in the case of the fourth kingdom. The vision of the eighth chapter concentrates on the blasphemous work of the little horn;” and we might easily fail to understand it, if we had not had the second and the seventh chapters to guide us. Then we reason in the same way with regard to the eleventh chapter, which though much more difficult in its last half, seems to cover the same ground as the others. In my opinion, all four visions cover the same ground; all run down to the catastrophic close of all human history; and all dwell with increasing particularization and emphasis on the work of the papal power, the great antichrist, and its career in opposing and perverting the true worship of God. Thus we use the second and seventh chapters as invaluable helps in understanding the visions which follow. However, it must be confessed that some conservative scholars, like C. H. H. Wright, have lost out in this matter; for they say that the eighth chapter, and especially the eleventh, apply to the work of Epiphanes, and thus they do not have strong grounds for refusing the interpretation of the “critics” regarding the seventh and the second.

Perhaps the term “meaning” or “interpretation” of these visions may need to be explained. In the minds of the conservatives “the meaning” of the vision or the prophecy is that objective historical event or series of events which the Holy Spirit desired to point out by the giving of the vision. This “meaning” we endeavor to find out the best we can, by comparing the vision with the history which we think is meant, also by comparing one line of prophecy with all the others, and especially by studying how Christ and the New Testament writers have interpreted those parts of the Old Testament which had been fulfilled already in their day. In this way we seek to learn the true methods of interpretation; for we are convinced that there must be an intelligible method of understanding all of them. And we become convinced that we are on the

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right track when we see how Christ in His Olivet discourse, Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, and John in the book of Revelation have repeatedly quoted from and applied various parts of Daniel's visions.

The word "meaning" has a different connotation in the minds of the "critics." Since with them there can be no such thing as a genuine long-time predictive prophecy in any of these visions of Daniel, all of them (in their view) ending with Epiphanes and being written only with the short-time purpose of encouraging the Maccabees in their heroic resistance against their enemies, the true "meaning" is that purely literary meaning which the cryptoauthor had in mind when he wrote it, giving what was then mostly past history under the form of pseudo prophecy.

In other words, the "critics" endeavor to interpret all these visions of Daniel in much the same way that a modern literary man seeks to interpret what Shakespeare had in mind in certain of his plays. Perhaps the plays of Bernard Shaw would make a more suitable comparison; for under the guise of history Shaw often seeks to "show up" or burlesque contemporary events; and the "critics" tell us that the pseudo-Daniel was chiefly hitting at very recent or contemporary events under the successors of Alexander. The "critics" are not interested in working out the specific details; and in any case they never seek for any recondite or truly predictive meaning which the Holy Spirit had in mind for the enlightenment of the generations living down in the latter days of the world's history; for they tell us there never was any such meaning put into these visions in the first place.

No wonder Montgomery says that the conservatives and the "critics" are so far apart that neither party can hope to make any impression upon the "argumentative bulwarks" of the other.

As for the idea of a personal Messiah, a divinely sent King of the Jews who is to deliver the nation from all its troubles and completely change the world, the modern Jews have almost universally discarded this view for the theory of a racial Messiah, or the view that the Jewish race is destined to become the leader or "savior" of the world. It seems that the "critics," who have imitated the Jewish theologians in so many other respects, have fallen in with this Christ-denying theory of a racial Messiah, at least to the extent of denying that any prophecies in the Old Testament are genuine predictions of the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth. It is in this spirit that these "critics" try to explain away, not only the familiar prophecies of Moses and the Psalms, of Isaiah and the minor prophets, but, as we shall presently see, they set themselves to explain away the definite predictions of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9, in which are found three specific dates foretelling events in connection with Christ's life on earth which can easily be shown to have met a remarkably accurate fulfillment.

This denial of a personal Messiah and the substitution instead of the theory of a racial mission for the Jews as leaders of the entire race of mankind, is usually accompanied by a denial of any personal resurrection and future individual Immortality, the substitute for this being the theory that the human race is to keep on and on forever, much as it is now doing, with no termination, or at least no assignable end to the ceaseless multiplication of births and deaths, of sin and suffering. The world, according to this view, which is merely one aspect of the current theory of organic evolution, is to keep on and on and on, as it is now doing, with perhaps better plumbing, better food to eat, better clothes to wear, and better homes in which to live-in short, with the world becoming a more comfortable place in which the man of the future may continue to reproduce other wretches like himself, and keep on sinning and suffering and dying, so far as science or even that kind of religion can see, to all eternity.

Calvinism pictured a never-ending hell, horrible, and contrary to the doctrine of an all-wise, all-loving Creator; but this theory of the present order of things being destined to last to all eternity, is in some respects even more horrible. The Calvinistic hell was limited to a definite number who had already lived on this earth; but this evolutionary hell on earth keeps up the endless multiplication of the victims of fate, ceaselessly brought into existence on this cursed earth, with no choice about their coming into existence, and with no hope of any termination of the endless births and deaths of generations still unborn.

From this endless evolutionary hell on earth a belief in the actual inspiration of these visions of Daniel would most assuredly deliver us. A genuine belief in, and understanding of, them would do more to revivify the decadent Protestantism of our day than would any other measure I can think of.

Two more items regarding the prophecies need brief mention in this connection, to illustrate the polar differences between the self-styled "critics" and the conservatives. Both items will be dealt with more fully in the proper places in the notes.

The famous prophecy of the seventy weeks (given in the ninth chapter) has long been regarded as referring to the times of the Messiah. Even Jesus Himself seems to have referred definitely to one of the dates set by this prophecy when, immediately after His baptism and His anointing with the Holy Spirit, He



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declared: “The time is fulfilled.” Mark 1:15. Since this prophecy of the seventy weeks is the solitary time prophecy in the entire Old Testament where any specific dates are given for the Messiah, Jesus must have been referring to this prediction in the ninth chapter of Daniel. If He did not know what this vision meant, who did?

If everything in the book is to end with the times of the Maccabees, then there can be no genuine Messianic predictions whatever in Daniel; yet how can anyone get this entire period of seventy hebdomads (weeks of years) back to a point for a beginning which will allow them to terminate with the times of Epiphanes? No one has ever invented any other method of interpreting these seventy hebdomads than as 70 times 7 years, or 490 years in all. Someone hit on the clever theory that these seventy weeks of years are only an expansion and multiplication of the seventy years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah. Jeremiah 25:1, 11. Had not Moses foretold that God would punish the Israelites seven times more for their sins? These seventy weeks of Daniel would make seven times the seventy years of captivity predicted by Jeremiah. To be sure, there is not the slightest scripture to sustain such a guess; but the arithmetic is correct, and the conclusion suits the theories of the “critics,” and that is sufficient. Hence they tell us that this prophecy of Daniel is merely an extension and amplification of the earlier one by Jeremiah. Thus both must begin at the same time, 586 BC. This then becomes the starting point from which the “critics” begin to measure off the 490 years of the seventy weeks. It makes no difference that on this basis there is no significant event to mark the termination of the period. Why should we expect any accurate fulfillment of what is, after all, only a pseudo prophecy?

Moreover, as Montgomery, a leading American “critic” tells us, the Jews of the times of the Maccabees sadly realized that “the felicity promised by the prophet [Jeremiah] at the consummation of the seventy years had notoriously failed of consummation.” Commentary, page 378. Hence the pseudo Daniel tried his best to keep the prophecy up to date, with its real termination still in the future. By multiplying Jeremiah’s period by 7, and thus extending it to 490 years, the termination would then (ca. 168 BC) be only slightly in the future. To be sure, this would extend the total some sixty-five or sixty-seven years too far, even after further drastic adjustments. This hardly matters, for it was due to a “miscalculation” on the part of the pseudo Daniel in the first place, and “we must not expect an exact historical chronology according to the approved data of modern historical investigation.”-Ibid., P. 391.

Lastly, we may note their attitude toward the prophecy of the seventh chapter about “one like unto a Son of man.” This has long been regarded as referring to the Messiah in His glorified form. Even Jesus Himself repeatedly took this title expressly to Himself, and He was evidently quoting from Daniel. Pusey tells us that Christ used this term “Son of man” thirty-two times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, twenty-six times in Luke, and ten times in John, obviously quoting from this passage in Daniel. Yet the “critics” hold to their major premise, that there must be nothing in Daniel later than the times of the Maccabees; hence they try to make this passage have some other meaning.

In this passage in the seventh chapter of Daniel, this Being like unto a Son of man is given an everlasting kingdom. In the eyes of a Christian this looks like the everlasting kingdom of Christ. But the “critics” ask us to look down to the twenty-second verse and the twenty-seventh verse of this same chapter, where the prediction is that the kingdom is to be given to “the people of the saints of the Most High;” and from these texts they argue that the “one like the Son of man” does not represent an individual Messiah, but is to be understood as meaning “the people of the saints” as a collective unity. In other words, this Being like unto a Son of man is a symbol, not of Jesus as the true Messiah, but of the saints as a body, which is the modern interpretation of the racial Messiah now usually adopted by the Jews. In many other instances the “critics” side with the modern Jews, as opposed to the common Christian interpretation of Old Testament passages.

We need not proceed further along this line. We can now better understand what Montgomery meant when he said that the critics” and the conservatives cannot expect to make any impression on the “argumentative bulwarks” of one another.

### 3. The Hebrew-Aramaic Text and the Versions

Since the original text of Daniel as it has come down to us is about equally divided between the Hebrew and the Aramaic, so far as quantity goes, most modern scholars consider that the book must originally have been composed in either the one language or the other. There is the other possibility that what we now call the book was originally only a number of personal documents of Daniel, written at



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widely different periods, but found among his effects and assembled into one body by some competent person, such as Ezra or Nehemiah. Since nobody questions Daniel's ability to write either Hebrew or Aramaic as he preferred, and since these documents cover a tremendous period of seventy years, it is clearly possible that their bilingual character may be exactly what they were like originally.

On the basis now commonly accepted by both "critical" and conservative scholars, no matter which language we suppose to have been the prime original, the other part of the book must be looked upon as a version or a translation. Then in addition we have the Septuagint, which is a Greek version. This must represent a translation of the entire book which must on any theory have been made incredibly soon after the times of the Maccabees, if not a considerable while before, since the universal Jewish tradition is that the Septuagint translation of the entire Old Testament, begun under Ptolemy Philadelphus, who reigned from 285 to 247BC, was completed by the middle of the second century BC, which is only one or two decades after the date set by the "critics" for the composition of this book of Daniel.

The early Christians seem to have been much attached to the use of the Septuagint as the form in which their sacred Scriptures had come down to them; yet before the end of the second century three other translations of Daniel had appeared, by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion respectively. Translations into the Old Latin and into the Syriac were also made quite early, though exactly when nobody knows.

The Septuagint of Daniel differs so strangely from the original Hebrew-Aramaic that the early church adopted the version of Theodotion instead, so far as Daniel, at least, is concerned, as testified by Jerome. Scholars recognize that there are also other translations (as quotations) from Daniel in the Greek New Testament, which, of course, is much earlier than the version of Theodotion; yet these translations do not agree with the Septuagint. Hence we are obliged to say that there must have been another early translation into the Greek, a pre-Theodotion version, which must have been in use before the time of the New Testament writers.

Some authors say that the Septuagint is a name which should apply only to the Pentateuch, since this was the only portion of the Old Testament which was then translated.

We learn from the book of Sirach that not only the Law (Pentateuch), but also "the Prophets and the rest of the books" were already current in translated form by 132 BC. The Jewish Letters of Aristaeus and Josephus, Antiquities, XII, 2, which contains the earliest story on the production of the Septuagint, tell us that not more than the law was translated in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

Now, the existence of so many different versions at these early times has an important bearing upon the problem of the date of the book of Daniel. It is a well-known principle that in ancient times no book was ever translated into another language until at least several generations after it was first written. This was inevitable when all copies were made by hand. If Daniel was written first in Aramaic, a considerable time must be allowed before it was turned into Hebrew; and the same would hold true the other way around, if the book was originally composed in Hebrew. One plausible theory for the duality of its language is that, having been composed in one of these languages (no matter which), it had at an early date been translated also into the other; but during some severe period of persecution (or in some other way) a large part of the only available copy of one language was lost or destroyed, and also parts of all the copies of the other; so, then, in order to make up a complete copy of the entire book, pieces from both languages had to be employed; and this twofold language form of the book has been passed along to our day, due to the extreme care with which all the ancient canonical Scriptures have been preserved and copied.

As already remarked, the differences between the various texts and versions of any ancient document are valuable clues to the date of origin of the original. On this basis the striking differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew-Aramaic are convincing evidence that a long time must have elapsed between the original composition of the book and its translation into Greek. Since there were at least two Greek versions of the book before the time of the New Testament, while either the Hebrew or the Aramaic must (according to most scholars) also be a translation from the other language, this would make at least three complete translations before New Testament times. All of these differ so radically and completely from each other from beginning to end that only many centuries of previous existence would seem to be adequate to explain the facts.

By accepting the traditional date of the book, somewhere in the sixth century BC, we can account naturally for these language facts; but to assign a date of around 165 BC is to fly in the face of all this language evidence.

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## 4. Ancient Documentary Evidence to the Book

As far back as we know two of these ancient versions of Daniel, the Septuagint, as well as the version of Theodotion, they always include certain other literary documents which are obviously apocryphal accretions or additions. In all modern Protestant versions these additions are always placed separately, as a part of the Apocrypha, though in the Vulgate and the subsequent Catholic versions they are included as integral parts of the book of Daniel. They include “Song of the Three Children,” “Susanna,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”

“Susanna” occurs in the Theodotion (Greek) version at the beginning of the book, while “Bel and the Dragon” (probably itself of composite origin) occurs at the close of the Theodotion version.

The Protestant churches have never regarded any of these documents as integral parts of the book of Daniel, nor as truly inspired; but the Catholic Church has always incorporated all of them with the Holy Scriptures. However we may regard the problem of their sanctity or their divine inspiration, their existence in these ancient forms is strong evidence of the great antiquity of the book of Daniel, around which they all gather and which must obviously be much older than any of them.

Besides the numerous references to and several quotations from Daniel in the various books of the New Testament, there are references also in several Jewish books dating from two or more centuries before the days of the apostles. The dates assigned to these pre-Christian Jewish books are of course merely the estimates of well-known scholars, based chiefly on internal testimony, and naturally enough we do not expect the assigned dates to err on the side of antiquity. But we may take provisionally these assigned dates at face value, as given by R. H. Charles, who is the leading authority in this field.

The First Book of Enoch contains many references to Daniel; but Charles says that much of this book is of “earlier date than Daniel,” that is, earlier than he wants to assign the date of the book of Daniel--- so he would rule out these parts as evidence. Other parts of Enoch he admits. Parts of this book he dates 104-195 BC, while other parts he dates “before 161 BC.” The latter part of The First Book of Enoch, which Charles dates before 64 BC, quotes extensively from the seventh chapter of Daniel, and attempts a partial explanation of the oppressors of God’s people, applying the symbolism to the events under Antiochus, for of course the Roman Empire had not then become universal.

The Third Book of the Sibyllines (145-140 BC.) contains some clear mention of the “ten horns” of Daniel’s seventh chapter, with another reference which looks like an allusion to Daniel.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (109-107 BC) contain numerous direct quotations from Daniel, and Charles even uses them (which are in the Greek) as a means of checking up on the original text in both the Hebrew and the Aramaic.

The Book of Jubilees, which Charles says “belongs to the same period as the Testaments,- uses throughout the scheme of year weeks as Daniel does in chapter 9:24. The Book of Jubilees borrowed this scheme from Daniel, in the opinion of Dr. Charles.

1 Maccabees, about 137-105 BC, has many important quotations from Daniel; and this book is constantly used by scholars not only for criticism of the original text of Daniel, but also for the historical facts involved, though on the latter subject it must be used with discrimination and caution.

The Zadokite Fragments contain several quotations from Daniel. “Some scholars assign these Fragments to the latter half of the second century BC: the present writer [Charles] to the latter half of the first century BC.”

2 Baruch (“before AD 70”) alludes to Daniel 12:10. It also identifies Daniel’s fourth empire with Rome.

The Psalms of Solomon (70-30 BC.) quote from Daniel 12 regarding the resurrection. The Book of Wisdom (50 BC to AD 10) quotes from Daniel 12.

The Assumption of Moses (AD 17-29) is one of the earliest to interpret the fourth empire of Daniel as applying to the Roman Empire. The reader should note that this is many years before any of the New Testament books had been written.

Josephus, who lived from about AD 37 to 96, writes freely about Daniel and calls him the greatest of the prophets. In interpreting some of his prophecies, he gives the then contemporary (or earlier) interpretation as applying Daniel’s fourth empire to that of the Greeks; but in the same connection he goes on to give a later interpretation as applying it to Rome.

4 Ezra (AD 80-120) contains an extraordinary statement about the fourth empire of Daniel. After relating a reputed vision and an interpretation given by an angel applying this fourth empire to the Greeks,

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the author then takes the angel to task for having given a wrong interpretation “to thy brother Daniel,” and declares that it should be applied to Rome. For further particulars see Charles, Commentary, pages 169, 171.

It will not be necessary to carry this line of study further, as the references to Daniel in the early Christian writings are far too numerous to mention.

One further testimony to the early date of the book of Daniel is found in the account given by Josephus of the visit of Alexander to Jerusalem, 332 BC, where Alexander was shown the prophecies of Daniel concerning himself. This anecdote has been discounted by the “critics” as incredible; yet it really has many internal evidences of its genuineness. This visit of Alexander to Jerusalem (if genuine) would be nearly two hundred years before the time of the Maccabees, that is, nearly two full centuries before the time when the “critics” tell us the book of Daniel was composed. No wonder they try to throw discredit on this incident.

The story as it comes to us through Josephus is that Alexander, during the siege of Tyre, demanded that the authorities at Jerusalem send him men and supplies. The high priest, who was the responsible ruler at Jerusalem, considered his oath of allegiance to Darius and refused to help Alexander. The latter postponed his revenge until after Tyre had been captured, then marched for Jerusalem. The high priest, warned by a dream, dressed himself in his beautiful white garments, and with a company of priests also dressed in white went to meet the enraged king. But the latter, on meeting the company on the brow of a ridge overlooking the city, prostrated himself before the priest, and afterward in explanation told how he had seen such a company in a dream which he had had before setting out from his home in Macedonia. When he had gone into the city and had offered sacrifices in the prescribed manner, the high priest showed him the book of Daniel, wherein a prediction had been recorded about the first king of Greece. See Daniel 8:21.

Now on the side of the genuineness of this story in all its essential particulars, we have the undoubted fact that Alexander did treat the Jewish nation with uncommon favor and leniency. Why did he do this? This narrative offers an explanation, and no other sufficient explanation has been given. Furthermore, Josephus was obviously giving the general opinion of the Jewish nation in his day about what had happened to Alexander regarding the book of Daniel. How could the Jews of Alexander’s time or soon afterward have hit upon the idea that the conquests of the Macedonian had been predicted beforehand in this book of Daniel, if the latter was not then in existence but was fabricated a century and a half later in the time of the Maccabees? Even if we discount some of the details of the story, such as, for instance, the premonitory dream of the king, still how are we to account for the general opinion of the Jewish nation, evidently extending back for two hundred years or so before the time of Josephus, that the career of this king had been predicted in the book of Daniel, if this book had been concocted only hastily and in secret some two hundred years after Alexander’s time? All these suppositions are unreasonable; and the simplest explanation of all is that the incidents narrated by Josephus actually took place. This would prove the early date of the book.

Lastly, when the aged priest Mattathias lay dying, in the year 166 BC, he exhorted his sons and other relatives to steadfastness in the cause of their religion, saying: “Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael, by believing, were saved out of the flame. Daniel, for his innocence [see Daniel 6:22] was delivered from the mouth of the lions.”

This is another narrative which bears within itself ample evidences of its genuineness. The historicity of this aged priest cannot be doubted; and why should his dying testimony to his sons be discounted? On the other hand, if this record be genuine, it would prove the existence of this book of Daniel for a considerable time before this incident, sufficient for the establishment of a sacred reputation around the book and its narratives. The simplest method of accounting for all the facts is to believe that Daniel’s book had long had a reputation among the pious Jews, this aged priest having quoted from it as he might quote from the book of the Law or from any of the other prophets.

From all this array of historical facts it is evident that we have abundant proof of the existence of the book of Daniel long before the times of the Maccabees. Thus its historicity is established as completely as anyone has any right to expect or to demand.

### 5. The Place of Daniel in the Old Testament Canon

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Such outstanding Jews as Philo and Josephus tell us that the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was fixed and closed centuries before their time, Josephus giving the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-425 BC) as the date of its final settlement. The recognized threefold division of these ancient documents into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (or Hagiographa) is sometimes thought by modern scholars to represent so many successive stages in which these writings became fixed or received as truly divine and authoritative. But this can be true only in a very general way, for there are ample evidences that this threefold division, while itself very ancient, probably going back to at least the times of Alexander or before, has nevertheless changed in its content more than once down through the centuries. Evidences for this will be given presently.

No human being can determine accurately when the Hebrew canon was closed, when certain books were admitted into the canon (if such a term as “admitted” is itself allowable), or even when the threefold classification was adopted. The following words of C. H. H. Wright are a sensible and reliable statement of the facts in the case:

“There is nothing worthy to be regarded as real ‘evidence’ concerning the settlement of the so-called canon of the Old Testament Scriptures. No one can prove when or by what authority the books of the Old Testament were arranged into three distinct divisions. It is vain to speak of three distinct canons, and to assign, with Bishop H. E. Ryle and others, a date for the closing up of each division. Those attempts rest upon unhistorical conjectures.” - Daniel and His Prophecies, page 50.

These truthful words were written expressly in view of the argument against Daniel often made by the “critics” based on the fact that in our modern Hebrew Bible the book of Daniel is placed near to the end of the third division, the Hagiographa, being followed by Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles. This position can be explained on the ground of its content and its history; it shows no lack of respect for Daniel on the part of the ancient Jewish authorities. See E. B. Pusey, Daniel the Prophet, 1864 ed., pp. 351, 352.

There is good evidence that the canon was almost completed before the return from the Captivity. Several important books were at that time yet to be written; but it is evident that this one of Daniel’s and the others were piously gathered (and possibly arranged in some suitable order) under Nehemiah, when he founded his “library,” as spoken of in 2 Maccabees.

During the turbulent centuries which followed, numerous books were written by pious and careful men, such as the Wisdom of Ben Sirach, Tobit, and 1 Maccabees, books written possibly even in the sacred Hebrew and with much wisdom and piety; but not one of them was admitted into the canon of the Scriptures, because the Jews had no authoritative prophet then living to decide on the all-important problem as to their genuine divine inspiration. This is the reason assigned by Josephus for the termination of the canon, or the series of the Sacred Scriptures because the line of prophets had itself ceased, and thus there was no one with sufficient knowledge or divine insight to decide on the inspiration of any new books.

We are even told in 1 Maccabees that the stones of the desecrated altar were carefully preserved and guarded, “until there should come a prophet to show what should be done with them.” In other words, the priests and scribes of that time did not dare to decide such a question as the proper disposal of these desecrated stones, without some special prophetic instruction, which they did not have but which they hoped would someday appear. In a similar spirit we find the people deciding temporarily on the family which should furnish the high priest, “until there should arise a faithful [with special emphasis on the word “faithful”] prophet” to settle the matter. See E. W. Hengstenberg, Dissertations on the Genuineness of Daniel,” page 206.

Hence it is wholly incredible that at this very period, in the days of the Maccabees, when all were so fearful of doing or accepting something wrong, a new book, written in secret and by an unknown author, should have been admitted without a single dispute into the sacred lists of the Scriptures, when even the highest authorities dared not decide such trivial matters as the disposal of certain stones, or the method of the priestly succession, without a special message of an inspired prophet.

In view of the facts stated above, and in view of the important additional fact that at this period the Pharisees and the Sadducees -rival sects-were quarreling over this question of the authoritative value of the Scriptures as they then had them, it is utterly preposterous for the “critics” to say that the book of Daniel could have been written in secret by an unknown author about 165 BC, and hastily admitted into the group of the Holy Scriptures by the highly critical Sanhedrin. Would either of these parties have permitted the other to add a new book by an unknown author at such a time of rivalry and dispute? Try to imagine either the Catholics or the Lutherans allowing the other to add another book to the Bible in the days of the Reformation, or at any time subsequently.

Moses Stuart and Charles Boutflower have pointed out that the order of the books of the Old

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Testament as given by Josephus is different from the order in the modern Jewish Bible; and that there is evidence that this change in the order of the books, which puts Daniel near the end of the canon, must have taken place around the fourth century AD. Not only did Josephus place Daniel among the prophets, but he rated him as the very greatest of the prophets. Melito, bishop of Sardis (ca. AD 180) lists Daniel among the prophets and between Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Origen (ca. AD 182-251) assigns the same place to Daniel. The Council of Laodicea (AD 363) put Daniel among the prophets and after Ezekiel, as in our English Bibles. An exactly similar place is assigned to Daniel by Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, and by Athanasius, and indeed by all the writers of antiquity who have left us catalogues of the Scriptures.

But when we come to Jerome (AD 340-420), a change has taken place. We find him remarking with surprise that “Daniel is not reckoned by the Hebrews among the prophets, but among those who wrote the Hagiographa.” Somewhere in the meantime a rearrangement of the Hebrew books had been made, though there is no evidence that this was designed to throw any reflection upon Daniel. Under the present Hebrew arrangement Daniel stands next to Esther, a book for which the Jews have the most profound veneration; while the book of the Psalms stands at the head of the Hagiographa, or the group of the Writings.

Of course, the value of Daniel is settled for the loyal Christian by the testimony of Christ and of the various New Testament writers. For there are few books of the Old Testament whose divine inspiration is so fully attested by the apostles and by Christ Himself as is the book of Daniel. One might almost say that all the many prophetic parts of the New Testament are largely built around the predictions of the book of Daniel. Indeed, if the modern “critics” will not hear Christ and His apostles in this matter, neither would they be persuaded though tons of old Babylonian bricks should rise from their dust heaps to testify that Daniel actually lived in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus.

Charles Boutflower declares: “Daniel’s fourth kingdom is the Roman power: first in its earlier stage as a consular and imperial power, and then in its later stage, when as the ‘little horn’ it depicts the papacy. Yet in both these points the critics hold entirely different views: i.e., they are wiser than Christ: Christ the Teacher of the Gospel pages, Christ the Revealer of the Revelation! Now that higher criticism which, consciously or unconsciously, claims to be higher than Christ, comes to us really from beneath. It is the dragon who gives it ‘his power and his throne and great authority.’”--In and Around the Book of Daniel, page 293. 1923.

Even the thoroughly modernistic “critic,” James A. Montgomery, frankly admits that Daniel is repeatedly and officially endorsed in the New Testament.

It is clear that Daniel and the New Testament stand or fall together. We may even without sacrilege paraphrase a famous passage from Jesus Himself: If we believe the New Testament, we must believe Daniel; for the New Testament repeatedly quotes from and endorses Daniel; but if we reject Daniel, how have we any right to profess to believe the New Testament?

### 6. The Meaning and Place of Prophecy in the Scheme of Divine Revelation

Modern people have been taught by the “critics” to look upon all the Scriptures as merely a record of man’s long search after God, instead of being, as they really are, a record of God’s search for man. A lower depth of degradation has been reached in the case of such predictive prophecy as that of Daniel (which the “critics” style not prophecy but “apocalyptic”); for Daniel’s visions have long been spoken of as a “pseudepigraph,” or a writing with a false title of authorship, and no genuine predictive prophecy at all, but a make-believe prediction which is only a dressing up of history and contemporary events.

All human attempts to read the distant future must always be as futile as the attempts of astronomers to describe the geography of the other side of the moon-something that they have never seen and never can see. There is this difference, however: We may not be able to refute such guesses of the astronomer, but the guesses of the false prophet are easily refuted with the actuality of the historical record. On the same basis, a genuine predictive prophecy carries its own credentials; for when the prediction has become history, then all those who do not exercise a strong will to disbelieve can see that God has spoken. See Deuteronomy 18:22.

Three major objectives may be recognized in the giving of such long-time prophecies as those of Daniel and the Revelation:

1. From their very beginning, and during all the long centuries of their course, these divine



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messages have cheered and strengthened the people of God, with their pictures of the sure triumph of God's cause, even though in the meantime His people may have to drink the bitter cup of hope deferred and cruel persecution.

2. When several of these long-time prophecies, running parallel with each other, have been fulfilled in minute accuracy for the larger part of their courses, with only a small portion of each yet remaining for the future, they constitute the most tremendous apologetic which the church can have, assuring anyone who will candidly examine the evidence that there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets for the guidance of His people.

3. These long, parallel lines of world history, written many centuries in advance of most of their fulfillments, with only brief portions of each still remaining unfulfilled in our day, show us where we are in the course of the world's total history. They constitute divine instruction for the church during her last days on earth, to guide her safely through the perplexing dangers which will immediately precede the close of human probation and the Second Coming of Christ.

Every long-time prophecy has always seemed almost unintelligible to the people living at its beginnings. Partly on this account the book of Daniel was a puzzle to the Jews of his own time, or until they saw what they thought was the fulfillment of much of his visions in the persecutions through which they had to go during the days of Epiphanes. Even Daniel himself was horrified at what his visions seemed to mean in the way of long-continued tribulation for his people and their long-deferred deliverance. What wonder then, that the Jewish leaders of the days of the Maccabees refused to understand Daniel's visions as referring to events in the long-distant future, and adopted an interpretation which fixed on the persecutions of Epiphanes as the experiences foretold in Daniel's visions? We in these days can see that the two make a poor fit, and it is a thousand times better to apply these visions to the persecutions during the Dark Ages under the apostate Church of Rome.

The "critics" in modern times have repeatedly called attention to the marked differences between Daniel and the other prophets of Israel and Judah. They say (what is only partly true) that these prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc., were occupied wholly with the affairs of their own times, with the apostasies which surrounded them, and with the results which would follow in the near future. In all divine revelation there has been a mysterious blending of the divine and the human, and only seldom has a prophet been given a vision of the future which was entirely outside his intellectual and cultural environment.

Daniel had had a very extraordinary training, not as a national prophet, but for his place as an international prophet. By a series of providences entirely beyond his own choosing he was thrown at an early age into the center of world affairs. When he so successfully interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, this dramatic meeting of the youthful Jew with the almost equally youthful king determined the life career of Daniel. He was to serve first as an international statesman under the personal training of one of the wisest and most truly great monarchs of all time, and thereafter as the one to whom Providence entrusted three wonderful visions of the world's future. These visions had to do, not with the mere immediate future of Judah and Israel in the narrow district called Palestine, but with international events down to the close of human history--events that would have important contacts with and influences upon the work and people of God.

Yes, Daniel was a unique prophet. There was no other like him in all ancient times. He had a most extraordinary early training which could not fail to free his mind from some of the insular prejudices of his people and prepare him to become the human agent for prophecies of world significance for peoples of all subsequent times. Coming as he did near the close of the long and illustrious line of Hebrew prophets, his book has the further distinction not only of rounding out or almost completing the Old Testament canon and of bridging over the long interval of some four hundred years until New Testament times, but of reaching onward for two thousand years more, until the end of all earthly history.

It is the position taken in the following pages that all four of the great lines of prophecy given in the book of Daniel run parallel with one another from the days of the seer down to the end of human history. The dream vision of the second chapter obviously runs down through Rome and its subsequent divisions, until the Stone quarried out without hands smites the image with violence and becomes a great mountain and fills the entire earth. Similarly the seventh chapter extends down past Rome and her persecutions to the time when the judgment is set, and until the time comes that the saints possess the kingdom. But the eighth chapter (which has by many been supposed to stop with the career of Antiochus Epiphanes) clearly is parallel to the seventh; for the same judgment scene is introduced at the end of the 2300 "evenings and mornings" under the name of the cleansing (or justification) of the [heavenly] sanctuary; while the same anti-Christian power, which in this vision distinguishes itself by its interfering

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with the heavenly sanctuary, comes to the same violent, supernatural end, for “he shall be broken without hand.” Daniel 8:25. Also the eleventh chapter, with its minute mention of the literal kings who followed Alexander for a few centuries, soon brings in the Roman power also, and its willful king (verses 36-45) must mean the same enemy of God’s people; and it has the same tragic supernatural end, for “he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (verse 45), an event which is immediately followed by the standing up (or reigning) of Michael, “the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people.” Daniel 12:1, A.R.V.

A great and encouraging simplicity is thus introduced into the study of prophecy. It is seen that the earlier and simpler lines have been given as the keys to the others, which are more complicated and more difficult to understand. That is, these four parallel lines constitute a graded course in the study of prophecy, the easy ones coming first, and leading on to the more difficult but also the more important. From the many statements of the angel to Daniel that his visions were not to be fully or correctly understood until near the close of time, we can see that the former misunderstandings were to have been expected. Now, with the new simplicity thus introduced into the study of these visions, we may be assured that the parts which are still obscure will soon yield to the common-sense key of using the simple to help understand the more difficult, with the confidence that by treating all these four visions as parallel and equivalent, whatever we find in one vision which seems to be inconsistent with one of the others, should become a warning to us to revise our interpretation, so as to discover the harmony which assuredly underlies them all.

### 7. The Three Schools of Prophetic Interpretation

There are three leading systems of prophetic interpretation. Each of these systems has a long history reaching back to the beginning of the Christian Era or beyond, each has today many eminent advocates, and of course each group thinks its own system to be the only correct one. Only a brief description of these systems will be attempted here, though some specific examples of each will be given in the notes following the discussion of the seventh and the ninth chapters. See pages 153-157, 257-261. These three systems may be listed as follows:

i. The critical system, also called the preterist system, also the system of Porphyry. The latter was a Neoplatonist who lived shortly before the time of Constantine, his dates being usually given as from AD 233 to 304. The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that he “is well known as a violent opponent of Christianity and defender of paganism.” - Eleventh ed., Volume 22, Page 104. The modern “critics” have no reluctance in classing themselves with Porphyry in his theories about the prophecies of Daniel, for they repeatedly and openly declare that Porphyry was right in saying that Daniel’s visions were only history dressed in the guise of prophecy. Jewish scholars also take the same view; indeed it may be said that the “critics” have merely been following the lead of anti-Christian Jewish commentators, first in the German universities, and later elsewhere. Most of the European “critics” who wrote on the prophecies either were Jews or had a Jewish intellectual background. The pedigree of the school of Porphyry is Sadducean.

2. The Protestant system, also called the historical system. This is the view that the visions of Daniel were genuine revelations of future history; that the fourth empire of Daniel 2 and 7 must be Rome in both its pagan and its papal aspects; and that the New Testament endorsement of Daniel, such as the repeated references to or quotations from Daniel by Christ, Paul, and John in the Revelation, ought to be given due consideration in any interpretation which we seek to place upon Daniel’s visions.

The present commentary adopts the Protestant or historical interpretation; though it seeks to correct many errors which have previously been made, for it would seem almost self-evident that in this our day we ought to be able to understand Daniel far better than anyone could hope to have done in the time of the Reformers, or even in the days of Hengstenberg, Moses Stuart, or E. B. Pusey, nearly a century ago.

3. The futurist system, also called the gap or postponement system, likewise the Catholic system. It receives the latter name because it was first (in modern times) taught by the Jesuit scholar Ribera, about AD 1585, and later was eagerly adopted by Dr. Pusey, J. H. Newman, and others of the Tractarian or High Church party in England. Someone has remarked that this futurist system of making the career of antichrist a future event, tends to remove the brand which the Holy Ghost has placed upon the papacy in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation.

C. H. H. Wright explains that the modern vogue of the theory is, in England, due to the Plymouth Brethren, while in America it is more directly due to the Scofield Bible and the many Bible Institutes and “Fundamentalist” publications, but historically derived from the same sources as the English.



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This system denies that the papacy is the power spoken of in Daniel's visions as warring against God and His people, or that it is the identical power mentioned by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, in Revelation 13, and other similar prophecies. All these symbols which the Protestant system would apply to the papal power, the futurists apply to a personal antichrist, or one wicked individual who is yet to come. Some of them go so far as to say that there are no prophecies in either the Old Testament or the New which deal with events in the Christian dispensation. All the great lines of prophecy which run down to the cross, including the famous seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27, they break off at the death of Christ and postpone all the remainders of these lines over to the end of the present dispensation, or after their alleged "first part" of the Second Coming of Christ. This makes all the major part of the book of Revelation apply, not to what has happened or is now happening around us, but to the future, after the Second Coming, all of these many prophecies being crowded into the brief period during which the antichrist is to flourish. Thus there are absolutely no prophetic way marks along the history of the church during the Christian dispensation, and thus we have no chronological means of judging whether we are nearing the Second Coming or not.

In attempting to evaluate the merits of such widely conflicting views, it may be well to get back to first principles, and to look at some of the fundamental assumptions at the foundation of these three systems; for such basic assumptions may enlighten us as to what we may expect from these systems of interpretation themselves.

a. It is not difficult to recognize in the "critical" system an assumption that God does not speak to the men of one generation for those who are to live many centuries later. The "critics" profess to believe that God did give messages through the prophets for their contemporaries; thus there might be "Inspired" instructions for the Jews who were going through the persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes, but no message for the future generations two thousand years later.

This is deism. For unless we say that the human race is to continue on interminably into the future in its present welter of sin and suffering, we must face the implied fact that a catastrophic end of the age of some sort is impending; and of this catastrophic change or terminus of the present order of human events the prophecies seem to be full and unambiguous. Hence it is unreasonable for anyone to say that God did speak to the contemporary peoples of the times of the Maccabees, but that He has no prophetic message for us today. Moreover, if a new message were given us now regarding the times immediately ahead, it would not be believed, unless accredited with amazing signs and wonders. Whereas a prophetic message which has come down to us from remote antiquity is already authenticated by the best possible credentials, if its earlier portions are attested by many historic fulfillments all along the line; so that we can thus acquire confidence in the small part still remaining unfulfilled. Thus the prophecies applying to our times are authenticated in the best possible way.

b. The Protestant or the historical system assumes that Daniel's visions were given by God, not so much for the people of Daniel's times, but chiefly for the people living at the time of the end. 1 Peter 1:10-12; Daniel 8:17, 26; 12:9. But it also assumes that the symbolism of the visions was designed for us to understand, when studied in the light of the best grammatico-literary analysis, bearing in mind that these visions are to be understood according to their obvious intent, as a particular type of poetical figures, transcendent and world-embracing generally, but with keys to the symbolism already provided somewhere in the Bible by God Himself. Mystical and allegorical interpretations are quite out of place. Nor will it ever do for us to complain that the prophecies do not fit the historical events to which we have applied them; when we discover their true meaning and apply them correctly, we shall have no occasion to apologize for any supposed lack of appropriateness or completeness. The fit must hold not for a few points only but for all the points involved.

Some scholars have spoken of an apotelesmatic accomplishment of the prophecy, by which is meant that a partial or preliminary fulfillment may take place in one age, then long afterward a much more complete fulfillment. For instance, Christ's prophecy in the "little apocalypse" of Matthew 24 seems to apply primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, while its full and final accomplishment will be seen in the destruction of the nations of the world at the Second Coming. Many prophecies in the Old Testament seem to have been partly accomplished in events which took place near to the times of the prophets, but will be completely fulfilled on a vaster scale and with more minute accuracy in the events associated with the end of the age.

This is because the prophecies deal with the general principles of God's management of world events, so that whenever similar conditions prevail, we might speak of the prophecy as applying. Thus we might speak of a sort of double fulfillment according to the laws of analogy; for whenever a similar set of conditions occur, the prophecy would seem to apply. The work of the little horn of Daniel 8 might be said

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to have been partly and imperfectly fulfilled in the interference of Antiochus Epiphanes with the sanctuary service of the Jews. Antiochus Epiphanes has even been spoken of with some plausibility as a type of the real antichrist. Yet in many important particulars the work of Epiphanes does not accurately fit the prophecy, though a much more complete and accurate fulfillment has taken place in the way in which the papacy has oppressed God's people and has blasphemously perverted the daily mediation of Christ's priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary. See the notes on Daniel 8:1-14 and elsewhere.

However we may think we see the work of Epiphanes in these and other predictions of Daniel, it is a sufficient answer to say that in the New Testament the apostle Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:14), the book of Revelation, and even Christ Himself take up these same prophecies of Daniel and treat them as not having in New Testament times seen their accomplishment, but as applying to events still unfulfilled in their own days. Thus if we wish to speak of a double application of the prophecy, we must bear in mind that it is the final meaning which is the true meaning after all, when the prophecy is fulfilled on the largest scale and with the most complete and detailed accuracy.

I need scarcely remind the reader that we need divine enlightenment to understand the meaning of the visions of Daniel, even as we need the same enlightenment to understand any of the truths of the Bible. Yet any application which we make of the prophecy to subsequent history must always be of the nature of a theory, a hypothesis. The thousands of misapplications of these same prophecies, which now appear to us so childish, must ever remind us of Oliver Cromwell's pathetic entreaty to his fellow Puritans: "My brethren, by the bowels of Christ I beseech you, bethink you that you may be mistaken." Still, if our main assumption is true, that all these long-time prophecies were planned and timed for the last days in particular, it follows that at this late date we ought to be able to make a far better application of the prophecy to the history than could anyone back near the days of the prophet himself, or, let us say, than could the Jews in the times of the Maccabean persecution. They were much too near those events to get a true historical perspective. They were content with an application which we now see to have been only partial and incomplete, if indeed the prediction was ever meant in any sense to apply to those events. It is in this way that we in these days can keep the prophecy up to date, to use Montgomery's rather sarcastic expression. See his Commentary, page 62. Else what is the use of all the experiences of history in helping us to understand God's ways of dealing with the race of mankind?

If the various prophecies of the Bible are all from the same divine Author, in spite of the human element which pervades all written revelation, we ought to expect that the more important symbols used will be capable of uniform and consistent interpretation in harmony with one another. We may even say that symbols have been used so as to give an opportunity for those with a will to disbelieve to disregard them; in other words, so that none of the wicked may understand, though the ones who are wise will understand. Daniel 12:10. The sad mess of things which selfish fanatics have sometimes made in trying to bring about by military force what they thought the prophecies meant, is illustrated by the work of the Zealots, who are blamed by Josephus for the worst horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem; but the Chiliasts and Fifth monarchy men of various times and occasions were not far behind them. A sanctified common sense is eminently needed in interpreting prophecy. For we may compare its interpretation to a certain kind of decoding of cipher messages; with the application of true principles, and by comparing one line of prophecy with another, we easily discover that the many lines of world events can then be translated uniformly according to a common standard.

It is not so easy to analyze the underlying assumptions of the futurist system. Of course a complete study of it is beyond the scope of the present work. As remarked above, it is held by Roman Catholics, also by the Anglicans of England and elsewhere, who boast of being Catholics but differ from the Romanists in denying the headship of Peter. By assigning all these prophecies to the future they can avoid the conclusion that the Roman system is the great antichrist of Daniel and the Revelation, as well as the man of sin spoken of by Paul. It is not so easy to see why so many evangelical Protestants hold to the futurist system. In the early days of the church many of the Fathers pointed out that a devastating antichrist was still to come, and they even prayed that the Roman Empire might be prolonged, for they were assured that when imperial Rome should cease, the succeeding antichrist would be even worse, since Paul had spoken of a power which was then restraining or holding back the appearing of the still worse antichrist. 2 Thessalonians 2:6, 7. This way of looking for a future antichrist might almost be regarded as a habit which the church got into, a habit which has persisted down to our day, in spite of the striking fulfillment which history now shows of this antichrist as having already appeared.

But perhaps the real reason true for the futurist view in our day is to be found in the fact that a logical and consistent application of the historical system seems to lead inevitably to the conclusion that a

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reform about the Sabbath and the commandments of God must be due to go to the world before the Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 14:6-12); and that a judgment work must be regarded as going on in heaven previous to the second advent (Daniel 8:14; 7:9-11, 22). Both of these doctrines, with others involved in the historic system, are rejected by futurists on other grounds; and the doctrine of a future antichrist has been worked out in great detail in what seems to its advocates to be self consistent and conclusive.

Because of the wide vogue of modernism and the profound apathy toward all predictive prophecy thus resulting, the futurists and the Adventists (with their historical application) seem to be about the only people still maintaining any genuine interest in the visions of Daniel and the Revelation. The historical system interprets the symbols of these two books as meaning kingdoms (instead of individual kings) and great systems of false religion like Romanism and apostate Protestantism, instead of the literal men or supermen spoken of by the futurists. The latter boast of their "literal" application of the prophecies. With them Babylon must mean the literal city on the banks of the Euphrates; Jerusalem and Israel must always mean exactly what they meant two or three thousand years ago; the "man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) cannot mean a false system of religion with the devil behind it, but must mean a literal man or superman, who is yet to appear and do the things spoken of by Paul.

If Daniel were to speak of the true people of God some two thousand years in advance, how could he possibly do so except in terms which he and the people of his time could understand? It was inevitable that divine revelation should use such terms as "thy people" or "the holy people" or even the terms "Judah" and "Israel," when referring to those who two thousand years later would be worshiping the same Jehovah. In Daniel's day there was no other language to use, if he were to refer to them at all. Even such terms as the "sanctuary" and "the continual burnt offering" (Daniel 8:11-13), when used concerning a time this side of the cross, should in strict common sense be interpreted to mean the only "sanctuary" and the only "continual mediation" (in heaven) which the New Testament recognizes in this age of the world. All similar terms borrowed from the Mosaic ritual, when used in any long-time prophecy, should obviously be understood to mean whatever true system of worshiping Jehovah is at this time being carried on, while such names as "Israel" and "thy people" are also to be applied to whatever true followers of Jehovah are in existence at the time specified. These are only matters of common sense and of true grammatico-literary method. See Romans 2:28, 29; Galatians 3:29, etc.

If the sacrifice of Christ really accomplished anything permanent in the way of changing the religious outlook of the human race, if He really did "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Daniel 9:27; the futurists apply this act to the future antichrist) for all future time, then it is a flat denial of Christ's completed work to suppose that the visions which He gave through His prophets recognize a future revival of those ancient forms of animal sacrifice in a localized temple in a literal Jerusalem. This would be sheer non-Christianity, as is also the idea that the literal children of Israel are ever again to be regarded as the special people of God.

I hasten to say that splendid men, men whom I admire, hold these latter views. My quarrel is not with them, but with the wrong doctrines which they hold, doctrines which I consider contrary to some of the most fundamental teachings of the Bible. If my language on some of these points sounds strong and positive, I hope that it will be understood as simply expressing a definite personal conviction only, not as indicating any antipathy toward the men who hold these futurist views.

Since the cross, no literal descent from Abraham. has ever been recognized as giving anyone any special standing in the sight of God; and this change is complete and an eternal one. In the light of such texts as Galatians 3:29. (and there are plenty more of the same sort), it is evident that faith in Christ is the only true basis for classifying men recognized by heaven. A Hebrew without faith was never a true child of God, though boasting unblemished descent from Abraham and David; while a Gentile today who believes is a true child of God, even though his lineage runs back through Egypt or Assyria. And since the cross these fundamental truths have been made absolute and permanent.

The literal descendants of Abraham were for a limited time specially led and favored by God, chiefly for the purpose of preserving the Scriptures with their Messianic promises for future generations. But when Jehovah declared through Ezekiel that He would "overturn, overturn, overturn" that kingdom, and that thereafter it "shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him" (Ezekiel 21:27), He was stating as clearly as any language could tell it, that the day was coming when the literal descendants of Israel would no longer be the special people of God. The same truth is taught in Matthew 21:33-43, in Luke 19:12-27, and in many other scriptures.

This text in Ezekiel also plainly declares that the literal kingdom of Israel will be no more until the setting up of the Messianic kingdom of Christ, which will be on the new earth, as stated by innumerable

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texts. This text is a permanent injunction from the supreme court of heaven against any attempt to revive the literal kingdom of Israel. Since the rending of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:51), a symbolic divine act which synchronized with the moment of Christ's death on the cross, there are no promises to Israel which do not include every true believer, be he Chinese or Hottentot; nor is there a single promise that a full-blooded Jew can claim, unless he is a believer in Christ. These are eternal and fundamental truths. No interpretation of any Old Testament prophecy which runs counter to these eternal principles can possibly be true.

Hence it is only a confusion of most vital truth for the futurists to interpret the many prophecies to Israel which apparently still remain unfulfilled, as applying to a time when the literal descendants of Abraham will be restored to the literal geography of Palestine. If we are to believe in the finished work of Christ, it should be everlastingly settled that literal Israel has had her day as a nation; hence whatever prophecies seem to speak of Israel this side of the cross, are to be applied to all the genuine people of God who are existing at the time when they apply. It is doing violence to the whole plan of the gospel, to the entire work of redemption, to say that a literal restoration of the Jews to Palestine is demanded by these predictions which speak of Christ's glorious kingdom; for these will be fulfilled when Christ reigns over immortalized saints in the earth made new. These many promises will be amply and gloriously fulfilled in Christ's Messianic kingdom on the new earth, but not otherwise.

What if the Zionists have now declared an independent Jewish state in Palestine? This has been tried before. John of Gischala, the leader of the Zealots (who were the Zionists in the days of Vespasian and Titus), tried it; with the result that the temple was burned and Jerusalem destroyed. A generation later they tried again under Bar Cocheba, with even more disastrous results. What can even determined and stubborn fanaticism accomplish against the divine decree, it "shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him"? When the King returns from His absence, how is He going to treat those who have persisted in setting up a pseudo kingdom in His name? Even if Satan himself appears personally and claims to be the long-awaited Messiah, what can possibly be the outcome except to make the destruction even more spectacular and final?

"The folly of interpreters," wrote Sir Isaac Newton, "has been, to foretell times and things by this prophecy [the Revelation], as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that after they were fulfilled they might be interpreted by the event, and His own Providence, not the interpreters, be then manifested thereby to the world. For the event [outcome] of things predicted many ages before, will then be a convincing argument that the world is governed by Providence."-Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John, pages 251, 252. London, 1733. .

It seems to me that these eminently wise words ought to be taken to heart by those modern writers who are so very positive about the detailed doings of what they term the future antichrist. When in the history of the world have any men been able to figure out in advance the details of any prophecy, as these men assure us they have done?

The believers in the historical interpretation do not make this mistake. They say that all of these prophecies except their final portions have already been fulfilled and can be easily verified by history. Thus these prophecies, when put alongside the long series of historical fulfillments, constitute not only a most tremendous apologetic for the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, but constitute just so many way marks to the Holy City which the pilgrim church has already passed by; and because of these she is encouraged in the knowledge that only a small remainder of her journey is still ahead before she is to see her King and Savior. And all this seems exactly what Christ and all His prophets must have intended by these predictions in the first place.

In radical contrast with all this, the futurists deny that any of these serial prophecies apply to the Christian dispensation. All these lines of predictions, they tell us, break off abruptly at the cross, and all their remainders are postponed until after the second advent. Accordingly during the long Christian Era there are no way marks whatever by which the pilgrim church may know something of her whereabouts during her long painful journey, nothing by which she may have any warnings of what is still ahead before the second advent. During all these nineteen centuries, and during the still remaining future, she must always struggle forward in grim, fearsome darkness, with no prophetic guide whatever to tell her "what of the night." This is unreasonable and un-Scriptural.

The Jews certainly made a sad mess of interpreting the Messianic prophecies. They were right in



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the time when they expected Him to come; but they had fixed their hearts on the glorious promises of a King in majestic splendor. Accordingly they despised and rejected Him when He appeared as meek and lowly of heart, riding upon an ass into their city amid the rejoicing of the multitudes whom He had taught and healed. Similarly, all the early church fathers looked for the coming of the antichrist at about the right time; yet they did not recognize him when he did appear, for they were looking for the antichrist to be a savage, superhuman, individual tyrant, who would make havoc of the church, and who would also set up a hideous and blasphemous worship of idols and compel all to conform. In other words, as the learned Joseph Mede long ago pointed out, these church fathers made the same kind of mistake which the Jews had made before them; for they looked for the same style of an antichrist as the Jews had expected to see in their Messiah. But both were wrong; and because of their blunders, what horrible results followed!

Is not the same sort of mistake now being made by futurists, who are positive about what their future antichrist is going to do after Christ comes to take away all the righteous, and leaves the wicked to have another, a second, chance?

### 8. Some Historical Problems

There are many historical problems raised by the “critics” in connection with the book of Daniel, such as the third year of Jehoiakim; the introduction of such terms as Chaldeans and satraps; especially the mention of Darius the Mede, and Belshazzar. It will be proper to consider these briefly in this section; others of minor importance will be referred to at the proper places in the commentary proper. Much fuller treatment of some of these historical problems will be found in R. D. Wilson’s *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (1917), and Charles Boutflower’s *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (1923); and to them the reader who wishes to go more fully into these subjects is referred. Raymond P. Dougherty’s *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (Yale University Press, 1929) is considered to have solved almost all the doubts about the historicity of the fifth chapter of Daniel regarding Belshazzar.

In the minds of those who believe in the divine authorship of the visions of the book, the problems raised by these historical references are of minor importance. They can readily remember the time (if they happen to be old enough) when the “critics” denied the historicity of such a people as the “Hittites” because, forsooth, the Greek classical writers never mentioned them. Sargon, king of Assyria, was regarded as a myth for the same reason. Even Josephus was discredited by the “critics” for mentioning Belshazzar; for didn’t all the Greek historians give Nabonidus as the last king of Babylon? Today the battle line has shifted from the Greek historians to the tablets and inscriptions; but the same strategy is still employed, and Daniel is regarded as guilty until he is proved innocent by the testimony of the contemporary documents.

Since the language divisions of the book into the Hebrew and Aramaic seem to have no possible correlation between the historical chapters and the visions, and since all the earlier parts of the book seem to be an essential preliminary for the understanding of the remainder, the unity of the book is conceded by all modern scholars. Yet the believer in the divine origin of the visions might even be willing to discard essentially all the historical chapters, if they could be shown to be unhistorical, without in the least disturbing his confidence in the remainder. Any careful student of the ancient documents of the Old Testament realizes how many unreliable items, such as numbers or the spelling of proper names, may have slipped by mistake into these documents since they were originally written. Accordingly, in the following discussion of these various historical problems an attempt will be made to give what facts we know about them; though it should be understood here beforehand that in some of the cases we may not be able to settle the difficulties in any satisfactory manner. Yet it is not at all essential that every such point should be thus settled. We still have confidence in Josephus and Herodotus and Ctesias, in Appianus and Arrian and Tacitus, although we are not always able to reconcile some of their statements with other contemporary authorities.

The Third Year of Jehoiakim. The statements made about Nebuchadnezzar’s coming against Jerusalem and carrying off certain Jewish captives in the third year of Jehoiakim, as stated in the first verses of the first chapter of Daniel, are considered unhistorical by the “critics.” But all agree that Nebuchadnezzar did come against Jerusalem in the days of Jehoiakim, while Berosus (as quoted by Josephus) tells us that an expedition against Jerusalem was carried on by the young son of Nabopolassar, and that the latter died while this son (Nebuchadnezzar) was away on this expedition. Hence the latter may have been regarded as king *de lure* before he reached Jerusalem; and the events here spoken of may have

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taken place exactly as described, and at the very time mentioned, although at present we do not have the contemporary documents to verify all these particulars.

The Chaldeans. Daniel's use of this name for a class of "wise men" in the early days of Nebuchadnezzar has been rated by the "critics" as an anachronism, but such a charge reveals a lack of carefulness and exactness on the part of the "critics." The term Chaldean was first a tribal or national name for the people who more than once conquered Babylon, the people to whom Nebuchadnezzar himself belonged. Probably at no time were they a numerous people. There is evidence that they had become the leading priestly caste of Babylon, the guardians of the cult and temple of Bel-Marduk, the most important cult in the entire Babylonian world at that time. Later, it is true, this class of priests fell into disrepute as little better than charlatans and fakirs; and this is the sense in which we find the name Chaldean used by the Latin poets in the early days of Rome. This is no proof of its being an anachronism for Daniel to use the name as he does in the early part of his book.

So strong does the case now stand for the historicity of the name as Daniel uses it that Boufflower now turns the tables on the "critics" in the following confident fashion:

It is one feature of the controversy which has so long raged round the book of Daniel that points once looked upon as fatal to the early date of that book are seen on further investigation to be proofs of its authenticity. This is the case with the 'Chaldeans' who figure so prominently in the narrative portion. The defenders of the orthodox view would now be as sorry to lose the presence of those jealous, contentious individuals as to have the one much debated, much-doubted-of Belshazzar removed from the scene." In and Around the Book of Daniel, page 35.

The Use of the Word "Satraps." The Aramaic word 'achashdarpan, "prince" or "satrap," has for a long time been considered to be of Persian origin. This view has been given up since it appears in cuneiform sources as early as in the time of Sargon II as Satarpanu. A Hurnan origin has now been suggested. Hence, the Persians took this title of their highest officials over from the west, and the title's use in the time of Nebuchadnezzar is by no means out of place. In Persian times this title was used to designate the official who stood at the head over the largest divisions of the empire, called satrapies.

Sir Isaac Newton was of the opinion that the historical chapters of Daniel were written (of course from documents) by Ezra after the death of the prophet. Modern "critics" reject such a suggestion, contending for the absolute unity of the book's composition; but one almost suspects that their zeal for this unity of authorship is in large measure actuated by the desire to bring the date of the book down to the latest possible period which they think is indicated by some of the words employed. But, as has been remarked, if the book were really written during the late Greek period, it ought to be as full of Greek words and Greek idioms as it actually is full of Akkadian and Old Persian. Franz Delitzsch, an eminent Semitic scholar, tells us that the Hebrew of Daniel is much like that of the book of Chronicles, which he says was written "shortly before the beginning of the Greek period." All modern scholars admit that the Aramaic of Daniel is similar to that of Ezra's, and both greatly resemble the recently discovered papyri from Elephantine in Upper Egypt, which were written by some Jewish colonists in this locality in the time of Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem. These papyri can be definitely dated in the fifth century BC, so that we now have actual language documents contemporary with some of the latest writings of the Old Testament. These writings, including the book of Daniel, are now in much better standing among scholars than they used to be under the disparaging statements of the German "critics" of a half century or more ago.

Darius the Mede. The person here spoken of is the great historical puzzle of the book of Daniel. We can only guess as to who it is that is thus spoken of, but no guess hitherto made can be regarded as wholly satisfactory.

The Medes themselves are still shrouded in historical obscurity; for in spite of all the archaeological discoveries throwing light on the other peoples of the ancient East, we still have essentially nothing from the Medes themselves. We know that they lived in what is now the northwest part of Persia, that their capital was at Ecbatana (modern Hamadan), and that under Cyaxares, their greatest king, they helped to destroy Nineveh in 612 BC (formerly given as 606 BC). Nabopolassar was associated in this attack on Nineveh, and later Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, married Amuhean, the daughter of Cyaxares.

The Medes seem to have been as closely connected with the Persians as the Scots with the English. Cyrus the Great, the conqueror of Babylon, seems to have been related by birth or by marriage with the royal line of Media, but his ancestors were called "kings of Anshan," which is a district of Elam or Susiana, though its exact location is still in dispute. At first a vassal king under Media, he revolted and marched to meet the king of the Medes; but the troops of the latter revolted from their allegiance and joined

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Cyrus, who then took and plundered the Median capital, Ecbatana, probably in the year 550 BC. Later he conquered Croesus, the fabulously rich king of Lydia, with his capital at Sardis, and before he captured Babylon in 539 Cyrus had already become ruler of almost all the region now included in Asia Minor.

In the early part of the present century some remarkable papyri in Aramaic were discovered on the island of Elephantine, below the second cataract of the Nile. Some bearing double dates—the Egyptian and Jewish ones—range from 471 to 402 BC. Papyri bearing only one date come from earlier periods. They are written in essentially the same form of Aramaic as that of the book of Daniel, thus helping to confirm the early date of the latter. They show that the Jewish colony in this part of Egypt at this time had a temple of their own and kept the Passover and other Jewish rites and customs.

The archaeological material of the tablets and inscriptions that have been discovered, are scanty and unsatisfactory. The general picture which we get from them is that the young Cyrus, by his brilliant military victories, gained full command of the entire Babylonian empire and appointed governors and petty subordinate “kings” as he saw fit. But always in the background there was apparently the elderly king of the Medes, to whom Cyrus gave formal respect, perhaps homage. All the known facts indicate that this nominally supreme king of the Medes was a close relative, perhaps an uncle, and that Cyrus, soon after the capture of Babylon, became supreme ruler of the entire empire in a peaceful way, probably as the heir of the former king.

The Greek histories of these Medo-Persian affairs, while not contemporary, are sufficiently close to the events to be accurate in general. Yet their statements, too, are fragmentary, and do not always agree with each other or with Josephus, who wrote several centuries later. The Jewish historian tells us that Darius the Mede conquered Babylon with the help of Cyrus his kinsman. Darius, he says, was the son of Astyages, though this may mean only a descendant. But he adds that Darius had another name among the Greeks. Herodotus, on the other hand, indicates that Astyages had no son, only a daughter. Xenophon, probably the best informed of the Greek historians, tells us that Astyages had a son, Cyaxares II; hence some scholars now believe that this Cyaxares II is in reality the Darius the Mede mentioned in Daniel. This makes Cyrus the nephew of Cyaxares II and also his son-in-law, and ultimately his heir and successor.

Boutflower lists six different rulers who have been mentioned for identification as Darius the Mede. He argues for Cambyses, the youthful son of Cyrus, who held office as “king of Babylon” for nearly a year following its capture. He meets the statement in Daniel 5:31 about Darius being sixty-two years old by amending it to read twelve. But even aside from this grave difficulty I do not find Boutflower’s argument at all convincing. I think we can dismiss Cambyses from the picture entirely. But many eminent authorities have argued strongly for Gubaru or Gobryas, an elderly general of high rank, who was personally present with Cyrus in the night attack on the last stronghold of Babylon. See pages 120, 122.

On the whole it must be owned that we cannot at this date do much to clear up the problem of Darius the Mede. This name still remains the chief historical puzzle of the book of Daniel; but the historical identification of the name, though it might be interesting, would have little value.

Belshazzar. The long-drawn-out battle among scholars over the record of Belshazzar as the last king of Babylon, may be considered as now over—except the shouting, though it is hard to say when the latter will subside. Up to the time of the discovery of the tablets which mentioned his name as that of the son of Nabonidus, the “critics” always denied his existence, pouring ridicule on the book of Daniel for naming him as the last king of Babylon. In 1924 appeared a Babylonian document from Nabonidus (Nabuna’ld) in which he says: “He let everything go, he entrusted the kingship to him [Belshazzar], while he himself set out on a far journey.” The “far journey” on which Nabonidus set out was for a beautiful oasis in Arabia now called Teima. There, incredible as it may seem, the aged king actually spent several years in retirement and inactivity, leaving the entire government of Babylon to Belshazzar, who seems to have been about twenty years of age when he was first appointed king. For further details see the notes on chapter 5.

Nabonidus seems to have been of a pious, or perhaps rather antiquarian, taste; for he rebuilt many old temples, though not those of the popular Bel-Marduk caste, as did Nebuchadnezzar. A record has been found of the death of the mother of Nabonidus, an old priestess of Sin, rival of Bel-Marduk. This old priestess, the grandmother of Belshazzar, died in 550 BC, at the great age of 104 years. Both Nabonidus and Belshazzar incurred the strong enmity of the influential Bel-Marduk priests, and this enmity seems to have been one of the important factors in the comparatively easy transfer of the kingdom of Babylon over to the Medo-Persian rule.

In the light of what we now know (though on a few small items we wish we knew more), the mention of Belshazzar has now become an asset for the book of Daniel, instead of a liability. It may not be inappropriate to quote here the summary of the situation given by Raymond P. Dougherty, in his notable



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work on this subject:

“The foregoing summary of information concerning Belshazzar, when judged in the light of data obtained from the texts discussed in this monograph, indicates that 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 literature in accuracy [*italics as in the text*], so far as outstanding events are concerned. The Scriptural account may be interpreted as excelling, because it employs the name Belshazzar, because it attributes royal power to Belshazzar, and because it recognizes that a dual ruler ship existed in the kingdom. Babylonian cuneiform documents of the sixth century BC furnish clear-cut evidence of the correctness of these three basic historical nuclei contained in the Biblical narrative dealing with the fall of Babylon.’--Nabonidus and Belshazzar, pages 199, 200. Yale University Press, 1929.

## 9. The Importance of Daniel for Our Days

In a preceding paragraph (page 37) we studied the general purpose of prophecy, and we saw that the long lines of world history in advance were not given to gratify the curiosity of the earlier generations regarding what was then future. Peter tells us that it was revealed to the ancient prophets that their visions were not for themselves, but for their brethren who should live later. 1 Peter 1:12. To sin-loving men a precise knowledge of the future might prove anything but a blessing, though it is also true that believers should be able to derive instruction from the statement about events in the future, as they derive instruction from God’s record of events long past. When all the major parts of several lines of prophecy have already become history, the people who thus see the transformation of prophecy into world history cannot fail to recognize that a divine Mind foresees and superintends all the affairs of the world.

The great Sir Isaac Newton, though a devoted student of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, was modest about his ability to understand all these visions, more than two hundred years ago. He declared that it is an essential principle of some of these prophecies that they “should not be understood before the last age of the world; and therefore it makes for the credit of the prophecy, that it is not yet understood.” - Observations, pages 250, 251.

But more than two hundred years have since passed. By the same principle we ought now to be much better prepared to understand these visions given to Daniel, which he has repeatedly declared would be closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Since we are now more than a century along in this period designated in prophecy as “the time of the end,” we have every reason to believe that God’s people will be able to understand Daniel’s visions, though it still remains true that “none of the wicked shall understand.” Daniel 12:4.

Regarding this phrase, “the time of the end,” which recurs frequently in the book of Daniel, we are told by the eminent English scholar, R. H. Charles, that it is always used eschatologically in the book of Daniel, that is, it always refers to events preceding the setting up of the kingdom of God. Today there are many thousands who believe we have already arrived at this “time of the end,” a time when essentially all of the great lines of prophecy have already been completed, in short, the specified time preceding the great climax of all human history. This is what makes so many thousands call themselves Adventists. They do not boast of being able to understand all the prophecies; but they do believe that the visions of Daniel and the Apocalypse are becoming increasingly clear, and they have unbounded confidence in these visions as having been given by God for our enlightenment in this time of the end. They are convinced that by a prayerful study of these visions we shall be better prepared to stand in the perilous times ahead of us.

Students of apologetics have always spoken of miracles and prophecy as the two great methods of accrediting or proving a prophet or his message. Aside from the internal evidence, or the evidence from the contents of the message itself, they are the only means of proving that the message the prophet gives is from God.

Miracles and prophecy are different in their evidential values. A physical miracle, no matter how stupendous, can be actually witnessed only by a small number of people; and the farther we are removed from such a physical miracle, either in distance or in time, the less value does it have for us, or the less does it appeal to us with convincing cogency. Only a comparatively few hundreds or thousands ever saw the miracles of Christ, while for the people of our day the historical record of their occurrence is often of little evidential value at all. Moreover, evil men may even perform amazing wonders to prove a lie; and we are repeatedly warned that evil powers in the last days will show great signs and wonders to deceive, if it were

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possible, the very elect. Matthew 24:24; 2 Timothy 3:13; Revelation 13:13, 14.

Predictive prophecy is different. Its value as evidence attesting the divine origin of a prophet's message is seen only when its predictions have passed into history. Instead of decreasing with the lapse of time, its evidential value increases with every century which elapses between its pronouncement and its fulfillment in history. Instead of only a limited few who can witness a physical miracle, multiplied millions in all the countries of the globe can now in our days witness the most convincing of all the providential acts of God, the historical accomplishment of important events foretold centuries or millenniums in advance. Only the God who created the world and who still controls the destinies of men and nations can give any accurate prediction about the future. Hence when we see various long lines of prophecies like those of Daniel which have been minutely and accurately accomplished by the history of the past two thousand years, only one who has the most obdurate will to disbelieve can deny that the great Jehovah has spoken.

As for the specific periods of time given in this book, all have already been fulfilled. Aside from the series of dated events in chapter 9 which relate to the times of the first advent of Christ, but four periods are mentioned in Daniel; and all of them are now fully in the past. The 1260 years of Daniel 7:25, and mentioned again so many times in the Apocalypse, ended in 1798; and the 1290 days (years) of Daniel 12:11 are thought to have ended at the same time. The 2300 days (years) of Daniel 8:14, the longest prophetic period in the Bible, ended in 1844; and the 1235 days (years) of Daniel 12:12 seem to have ended with this same date, 1844. Indeed, it is the settled belief of Adventists that this is the latest date given in any prophecy of the Bible, and thus that no definitely measured period runs on to the actual second advent. William Miller and other pioneers fixed on 1844 for the date of the return of Christ; but while their dates were correct, we now know that they were mistaken in regard to what was then to take place; and we are all now agreed that no definite prophetic period runs on to the actual end of the age and the second advent. All prophetic periods have now run out, and for more than a century the world has been living in the little period of undefined length preceding the actual return of the Master.

The last one or two verses seem to be about all that is left of chapter ii still unfulfilled, The heavenly court session described in chapter 7, and mentioned in chapter 8:14 under the term of the cleansing of the sanctuary, is still in progress. But aside from these, the only events still unfulfilled are those which are plainly connected with the change from the temporal to the eternal state. Thus there would seem to be very little of the four major lines of prophecy of this book still remaining to be accomplished, though those portions which still remain are of transcendent importance to mankind.

On the other hand, the visions of the book of Revelation have picked up these prophecies of Daniel and have enlarged their final portions, giving a profusion of detailed instructions for the guidance of the people of God in the last deadly conflict with the dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet, that awful trinity of hell, in the closing hours of human probation, just preceding the Second Coming of Christ. But an experience in understanding the visions of Daniel is of profound importance in trying to interpret those of the Revelation. Only by a wise comparison of all the divine messages given for this time of the end, will we by God's grace be enabled to "fly the Babylonian woe."

All these things indicate the wonderful value of Daniel for our day. The candid, teachable mind, which refuses to be browbeaten by the imposing claims of the "critics," and which refrains from listening to that theophobia which is so natural to our fallen human nature, cannot fail to be impressed with the profuse evidence which we now have of the divine inspiration of the book of Daniel.

"None of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand." Daniel 12:10.

## 1. THE MAKING OF A PROPHET

We know nothing of the childhood of this great statesman prophet. But the revealing incidents of this chapter which occurred in his late youth illustrate the saying that it is the set of the sail, and not the gate, which determines the careers of men, and consequently the destinies of nations. God has His own methods of training the men whom He plans to use in the affairs of His kingdom.

This first chapter tells how four captive Hebrew youths, with Daniel as their leader, avoided contamination from their heathen environment at the royal court of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar had definite ideas about the education of his future ministers; but these four young men believed that the instruction given through Moses was much better, and of the end of their novitiate the results justified the Mosaic system of physical, mental, and moral training. Even of this early age Daniel is getting on

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experience in understanding firsthand, or directly from the Source of all wisdom. For the shaping of a truly successful life, nothing can be more valuable.

***1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.***

The date here assigned has been the occasion of much discussion. But anyone who has seriously attempted to adjust apparently discrepant accounts from independent ancient documents, especially if these accounts are originally from different countries, like Judea and Babylonia, with their radically different methods of reckoning time, should not regard the difficulties connected with this date as serious matters. The actual year according to our system of reckoning would seem to be 605 BC. Dr. Edwin R. Thiele, an eminent authority on chronology, favors this date. Because of their disobedience, God had forewarned the Jewish king and his people that they would have to go into captivity; but this warning was disregarded, and when the king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, the Jews were as unprepared as if they had never been warned. See also the Introduction, page 40.

Nebuchadnezzar. This name is spelled differently in various ancient documents. The older form, and probably the more correct spelling, was “Nebuchadrezzar,” as it appears in Ezekiel and usually in Jeremiah. In Chronicles, Ezra, and Esther, we find it as in this text. The same variation appears in the Greek documents, and the differences are not always to be accounted for by the consideration of the dates of the documents. This variation in spelling was used foolishly by Farrar as one of his points of attack upon the historicity of the book of Daniel. The cavils of the “critics,” that is, their objections to the historical accuracy of Bible statements, usually seem small when we know all the facts as revealed by history and archaeology.

King of Babylon. This invasion of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar took place before he was actually crowned king of Babylonia; thus he is here called king in anticipation of what he became only a few weeks later. His father, Nabopolassar, had felt himself too old and infirm to carry on the war in the west country, so he sent his young son, Nebuchadnezzar, who was not yet of age, to conduct the campaign. After having victoriously traversed Syria and Palestine, also conquering Jerusalem, he turned against Egypt. Hearing of his father’s death back in Babylon, he entrusted the main part of the army to some of his subordinate officers, giving them also the captives which he had taken from Judea and other nearby countries. Accompanied by only a few attendants, he cut directly across the desert by a short route to Babylon, leaving the army to follow more slowly around by the usual route to the far north, near the upper waters of the Euphrates. This longer route was the one most frequently used in ancient times.

***2. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; and he carried them into the land of Shinar to the house of his god: and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.***

This would be the first time that Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Some authors think that Jehoiakim was captured and bound for the purpose of being carried off to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6) but finally made his peace with Nebuchadnezzar and was allowed to continue on as ruler in Jerusalem, being of course tributary to Babylonia. It is evident that this text does not even imply that Jehoiakim was at this time carried to Babylon; so that it is wholly gratuitous to create a seeming discrepancy where there is none.

Shinar. This is a common Hebrew name for Babylonia, though the origin of the name is uncertain. Some think that it is a dialectic variation of the ancient name Shumer, which is used by the old tablets for South Babylonia.

The house of his god. The particular deity here alluded to would doubtless be Marduk, or Bel-Marduk (called Merodach in Jeremiah 50:2), who was regarded as the official or patron god of Babylon.

***3. And the king spoke unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring in certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal and of the nobles;***

***4. Youths in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skillful in all wisdom, and endued with knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king’s palace; and that he should teach them the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.***

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Throughout history it has been the usual destiny of aristocratic captives to become pages at the court of their masters. Here the chief eunuch, or what we might term “the majordomo,” was ordered to bring into the court certain highborn young men from the number of Jewish captives, and to train them as pages for such promotion afterward as their talents might justify. See Isaiah 39:7. Jewish tradition of a later date taught that Daniel and his companions were actually of royal blood; but it seems probable that had such been the case it would have been expressly stated here; all that is really stated is that they belonged to good families, though perhaps related by descent to the royal family.

No blemish. That is, with no physical imperfection. Obviously they were not obliged to undergo any physical mutilation themselves.

Well favored. Driver says that this is an archaic English term for “good-looking.” The literal Hebrew is “good in looks.”

Montgomery says that the three phrases here given to express the mental abilities or qualifications “are simply accumulative and do not permit analysis into distinct mental functions.” The term here rendered “science” seems to be a term standing for all knowledge, not merely what we now mean by “science.” We now know from archaeological discoveries that the ancient Babylonians had acquired a really astonishing fund of mathematical and astronomical knowledge. Not only could they calculate eclipses of both the sun and the moon, but they had equated the two lines of these eclipses together in such a way as to arrive at the saros, or period of a little more than eighteen years during which all the lunar and solar eclipses repeat themselves in regular order. The wise men of Babylon, who had acquired such a knowledge of astronomy, must also have been proficient in many other lines of what we now term natural science.

The tongue of the Chaldeans. The men to whom the term “Chaldeans” is applied were the group of priests associated with the temple of Bel-Marduk, the patron deity of Babylon. Their “tongue” was doubtless Aramaic, although they used also the Babylonian language written in the ancient cuneiform script. This last-mentioned language was archaic even in that day, but has been recovered in modern times by means of many thousands of tablets which have been found in the ruins of Babylon and other cities. This ancient language written in cuneiform was the “tongue” of a thousand years before, in which all the ancient learning was written. Thus Daniel and his companions would be confronted with the task of learning at least two new languages. The ordinary language of the king’s court, Aramaic, although somewhat related to the Hebrew, was probably as different as German is from English. This was the lingua franca of the ancient East, the language of commerce used between the different nations. They would also be required to become proficient in the prevailing court etiquette, which would be distinctly different in many respects from the usages of that “good society” in which they had been brought up in Judea.

While the education of these young men was entrusted to the court official here termed the master of the eunuchs, this does not necessarily imply that any physical mutilation was performed upon them. On the contrary, such would involve a distinct “blemish,” which would be against what was required of them in the way of qualifications. At one time even the Persian heir apparent, corresponding to the English Prince of Wales, was brought up by the eunuchs of the court.

***5. And the king appointed for them a daily portion of the king’s dainties, and of the wine which he drank, and that they should be nourished three years; that at the end thereof they should stand before the king.***

Montgomery’s note on this verse translates this idea into modern usage: “As cadet members of the court the youths were taken on the budget of the royal menage and given a stated assignment of food and drink from the royal commissariat.” The Persians were notorious *bons vivants*, the court of their kings far exceeding any of its predecessors in lavish entertainment. It may be that we only know more about the feasting and luxury of the Persians. At any rate, we may be certain that even at the court of Nebuchadnezzar these young men were to receive plenty to eat and drink. The Babylonians were known as hard drinkers.

The three years here mentioned seems to have been the normal period of training under the Persian system of education, probably also that of the Assyrians and Babylonians. It is a part of our modern arrogance to think that the ancients did not have any formal or systematically graded education. We now know, however, that a thousand years before this time there were regular textbooks in mathematics and language in both Egypt and Babylonia. These textbooks have in some cases been preserved to our days; so we can well believe that there were graded systems of advancement which had to be pursued in regular

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sequence.

Much speculation has been indulged in concerning the probable age of Daniel and his companions. According to the Greek reports of the education pursued among the Persians, the advanced training began in the fourteenth year, and not later than the sixteenth or the seventeenth years. Three years of further training would bring them to nearly the reputed age of maturity of those times. King Nebuchadnezzar himself had only recently reached the age of legal maturity at the time of his accession to the throne. So he would be Daniel's senior by only some three or four years, in all probability.

**6. Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel ' Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.**

**7. And the prince of the eunuchs gave names unto them: unto Daniel he gave the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.**

It seems to have been a custom for one's name to be changed on entering court. Joseph and Esther are Biblical examples; but there are plenty of others besides the ones here given. Especially would this be true in the case of foreign youths, whose Jewish names would sound outlandish to the Babylonians. The fact that the names given to Daniel and his companions were reminders of Babylonian idol worship does not seem to have been objectionable to the Hebrews. Perhaps it would be better to say that they had no choice in the matter; they could not help what names the other people called them.

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

Mention has already been made of the luxurious ways of the Persian court in the matter of food and drink. We have many more details about such matters at the Persian court than we have about the Babylonian, hence the references to the Persian customs in such matters. The Jewish law was founded on the principles of simplicity and discrimination in diet. Hence, while there would doubtless be some foods among those appointed by the king which the Mosaic law did not forbid, there would be many which a careful Jew would not touch. Moreover, all the king's foods might have incurred the contamination of being offered before the heathen idols, which would spoil the best of foods for a Jew. All things considered, Daniel thought it incumbent on him to avoid the danger of defilement by discarding the whole menu and arranging for a more simple and (for him) a much better bill of fare.

There are plenty of examples in Jewish history of persons who held similar scruples about eating. Judas Maccabaeus and his companions chose to live in the mountains on what they could find there of roots and herbs, rather than run the danger of pollution from unlawful foods. Josephus tells us of the pious Jews for whose sake he went to Rome. They voluntarily lived on figs and nuts.

**9. Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs.**

**10. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? So would you endanger my head with the king.**

Probably no capital penalty is referred to in the expression "endanger my head," but, rather, the idea that the king would hold him responsible for the young men under his care.

**11. Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:**

**12. Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.**

**13. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenances of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou sees, deal with thy servants.**

Daniel gathered from the reply of the prince of the eunuchs that though the latter had no particular objection to the suggested change of diet, he was not willing to give it his formal authorization. So Daniel takes the matter up with the subordinate officer who is directly in charge of him and his companions. The



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officer here named as a steward is called a “warden” by Montgomery, who remarks that “Daniel lays a wager of faith with the warden” about the physical results which would follow from the change of diet. The Greek versions imply that the warden was favorable to the change because he would enrich himself by supplying them with a cheaper bill of fare than that provided by the king.

***14. So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days.***

***15. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king’s dainties.***

***16. So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.***

The term here rendered pulse would include vegetable food in general, especially grains. Parched grains are a common food in the Orient. Driver says that the word in Isaiah 61:11 translated ‘the things that are sown’ is almost the same as this word rendered “pulse.”

***17. Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.***

While his companions were attaining proficiency in matters which were counted as part of the accepted wisdom of the day, Daniel was even at this early age following along the line which was to be the major work of his life. Humanly speaking, the profoundly important revelations which came to him later would never have been his had he not acquired a proficiency in understanding visions and dreams.

***18. And at the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.***

***19. 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.***

***20. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm.***

The king probably had more than one motive in providing for a group of brilliant young men around his court. He was intellectual himself, and he liked to associate with clever people; but he must also have been somewhat like Frederick the Great of Prussia, who wanted to boast that around his court were the greatest and cleverest men of the entire world. So when these four young men came out so well in their final examination, they were assured of a welcome and a good position around the capital of what was then the world’s greatest empire.

***21. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus.***

The word here rendered continued might be given as “remained on,” the implied meaning being that he lived to see the joyful release of the Hebrew captives, which took place in this first year of Cyrus. The word unto is equivalent to “until;” and its use here seems peculiar, unless we compare with it other texts where the same word “until” occurs in a way that does not mark the final termination of the thing or the event spoken of. See Psalm 112:8 and Matthew 5:11.

In the present instance we learn from chapter 10:1 that Daniel lived at least until the third year of Cyrus, which would be more than seventy years after he had been carried away into captivity. He would thus be about eighty-seven years of age.

This verse will not seem peculiar if we look upon this first chapter as a unit or as a self-contained piece of literature written at first, perhaps, without any thought of its being included with other documents in a book like this which we call the book of Daniel. It may even at first have been “written” or engraved on a tablet, after the well-known Babylonian custom, and only later have been assembled with other documents into what now constitutes this book. This verse would be entirely appropriate as the close of a single document; whereas it seems somewhat odd in the place where it now stands. Yet its presence here in its original form is another proof of the extreme carefulness with which all these ancient documents have been copied and recopied without any alteration or editing.

The term “continued” may mean that Daniel “remained where he was” and did not return to Palestine when the Persian monarch gave permission for the Jews to return home. Boutflower (page 245)

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thinks that this expression furnishes us with a hint of the date for the beginning of the writing of the book, even as Daniel 10:1 and 12:13 seem to indicate that it was finished under the third year of Cyrus and only shortly before the death of the prophet.

In any case we have in this chapter revealing incidents in the early life of one of the greatest men of all time. They illustrate the way in which God trains special men whom He plans to use in His work. As a statesman, Daniel had a profound influence on two world empires and exercised this influence during a prolonged career. He was the only prophet during Old Testament times through whom God saw fit to outline in advance the rise and fall of the world's empires down to the end of earth's history and the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God. This was indeed a high honor which God bestowed upon this Hebrew captive, but the honor and trust were not misused. Daniel is one of the few men of the Bible about whom nothing seriously evil has been recorded; and at the close of his remarkably long life he received the divine assurance that he could confidently expect a bright and happy resurrection-blessed promise for a long life well spent amid trying and perplexing circumstances.

## 2. THE GREAT IMAGE

The prophecy given in this chapter may be regarded as the ABC of prophetic symbols. It furnishes the key to all the rest, not only to the others given in this book, but to those of the book of Revelation. In point of time also, it is the first which gives an outline of the world's history from that time down to the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God.

From a literary point of view also it is remarkable. Dr. S. R. Driver expresses it: "The representation of the magnificent but hollow splendor of earthly empire in the form of a huge, gleaming, terrible colossus, of many colors and different metals, brilliant of its summit, but gradually deteriorating, both in material and in appearance, toward its base, and, when struck by the foiling rock, instantly collapsing into atoms, is fine and striking." — "Commentary," page 17.

***1. And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams; and his spirit was troubled, and his sleep went from him.***

Since Daniel was carried to Babylon in the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar, and then was given three years of training in the royal school, the apparent discrepancy has given no end of trouble to the commentators. Some modern scholars have adopted the view that there is here a double method of reckoning the reign of the king: that in the account given in the first chapter he was then reigning as co-regent with his father Nabopolassar, while on this reckoning he is sole monarch. Driver, however, defends the text as it stands, on the basis of the well-known postdating practice, under which custom the accession year was not counted, but the royal reign was reckoned from the first full year thereafter. This with the universal Hebrew usage of counting fractions of periods, whether of months or of years, as full units, would easily explain every apparent discrepancy in this case.

Dreamed dreams. Among all the ancient Oriental nations dreams were considered matters of profound importance. Numerous classical examples of this are recorded.

His sleep went from him. The more literal rendering would be, "His sleep was come to pass," that is, it was finished or done with. He found he couldn't sleep any more at that time.

***2. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the enchanters, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king.***

The picture which is here presented is that of an Oriental despot who found that he couldn't sleep. In the middle of the night, perhaps, he issued a peremptory summons to round up all the men around the court who professed to have any dealings with supernatural events, to come in and "tell the king his dreams." It was no matter to the king that he was depriving a dozen or ten dozen men of their sleep; he must have his whim gratified on the instant, no matter what trouble or inconvenience it might cause any number of others. Why did the king tolerate these men around him, except to help him out of such circumstances?

All the other classes of men enumerated here are well known in the ancient literatures. Fully one



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fourth of Ashurbanipal's library as discovered has to do with omens or magic of one sort or another. But the name Kasdim (Chaldeans) has caused much discussion, and until the past few years it was used as a point of attack by the "critics." These have said that the word was always used in a national or ethnic sense, never as the name of a class, until long after Daniel's time, hence this term helped to prove the "late" date of the book. Boutflower, a stout defender of the book of Daniel, devotes a whole chapter to this subject and proves that the name Chaldeans was that of a highly privileged class of priests of the god Bel, even as far back as the days of Nebuchadnezzar. He turns the battle around and handsomely shows that the presence of this term "Chaldeans" in the book of Daniel is now an asset, instead of a liability. "The defenders of the orthodox view would now be as sorry to lose the presence of those jealous, contentious individuals as to have the once much-debated, much-doubted-of Belshazzar removed from the scene."--In and Around the Book of Daniel, page 35.

***3. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream.***

According to the words here used and hereafter, it is not entirely clear whether the king had really forgotten the dream entirely, or whether he was merely withholding the dream itself in order to test the reputed skill of these supposedly wise men.

In this connection it should be remembered that King Nebuchadnezzar was at this time a young man, in his early twenties, and thus not much older than Daniel. He was, moreover, a man of keen intellect and was well able to judge the claims of the men around him as to their genuineness or their fraudulent nature. He seems to have been one of the ablest and cleverest monarchs who ever occupied a throne.

***4. Then spoke the Chaldeans to the king in the Syrian language, O king, live forever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.***

These high-caste priests of Bel, the Chaldeans were acting as spokesmen for the entire company, which doubtless comprised several dozen persons. Many of these priests were probably elderly, dignified men, almost as accustomed to deference as was the king himself.

Beginning with the words O king, the Aramaic language is used in the book down to the last verse of chapter 7. As for the guesses assigned by scholars for this peculiar division into two languages, see the Introduction, pages 23-3.

It seems evident that the Aramaic was the ordinary court language around Babylon at this time. Many scholars think that the words in the Syrian language (literally, "in Aramaic") are a gloss, and they try to trace to Jerome's mistake the idea that the wise men spoke to the king in this language. From this attempt arose another mistake, that the Biblical Aramaic was called Chaldee. From the numerous Aramaic documents which have been discovered during the last few decades, it has become abundantly clear that Aramaic was on its way to become a world language in Daniel's time.

***5. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if you make not known unto me the dream and the interpretation thereof, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.***

Instead of the clause The thing is gone from me, which is not in the original Septuagint, according to Charles, most modern commentators substitute, "The word from me is sure," that is, What I say will surely be carried out. The modern Jewish translation prepared in 1917 by the Jewish Publication Society of America, has: "The thing is certain with me: if etc." This of course carries the idea that the king had not really forgotten the dream, but was withholding it and making the occasion a means of testing the supernatural claims of his wise men. His opinion of these men was probably not high. All these men claimed to have magical or supernatural means of knowing things, the different classes among them, magicians, astrologers, and so forth, merely adopting different means of attaining this magical knowledge. Now the young king had caught them in a situation where he could actually test out their loud claims. He may have been getting a good deal of malicious fun secretly from their predicament.

You shall be cut in pieces. That is, dismembered limb from limb; similar to the custom of the Middle Ages of drawing and quartering. All the Oriental despots, particularly the Assyrians and the Persians, were notorious for their savage cruelty in carrying out their executions. Witness the records in the

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Behistun inscription.

***6. But if you show the dream and the interpretation thereof, you shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honor: therefore show me the dream and the interpretation thereof.***

The king was no less able to reward than to punish.

***7. They answered the second time and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation.***

This answer may sound more respectful than the former one, but it is essentially a repetition of their former reply.

***8. The king answered and said, I know of a certainty that you would gain time, because you see the thing is gone from me.***

The matter was hastening to a climax. The king was not slow to understand their implied acknowledgment that they could not do anything in the way of revealing a genuine secret, but he was not at all disposed to let them off easy in this case. Probably he never had much respect for them or their business.

The expression The thing is gone from me, is like the previous one, Inasmuch as you see the thing is certain with me, that, if etc.” The temper of absolute monarchs has never been known to improve under opposition or resistance.

***9. But if you make not known unto me the dream, there is but one law for you; for you 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 you can show me the interpretation thereof.***

Have prepared lying and corrupt words. He probably means by this that they had agreed together as to what they should tell the king about the meaning of his dream, if he would only tell them what the dream was about.

Till the time be changed, that is, until something should arise to give them a chance to get out of their predicament.

***10. The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter, forasmuch as no king, lord, or ruler, bath asked such a thing of any magician, or enchanter, or Chaldean.***

***11. And it is a rare thing that the king requires, and there is no other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.***

This language can hardly be regarded as anything but a flat statement that the king was unreasonable in making such a request. Undoubtedly the leading ones among these priests of Bel-Marduk were learned, rich, and enormously influential; they had not been accustomed to being put in a corner and made to look like impostors. But in the last part of their answer they tacitly acknowledged that they did not have any supernatural power to reveal secrets; there was no one who could do such a thing except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. In other words, these gods did not really have anything to do in the way of revealing such secrets to the Chaldeans and their companions. Their claims to such superhuman knowledge were only a pretense.

Probably the real idea behind what they said would be that only the “high gods,” or the great or supreme gods, could reveal such a thing, whereas they themselves (the Chaldeans) did not have any dealings with these “high gods,” but only with the subordinate or lower gods. This distinction in rank among the heathen deities is found all through the heathen religions, and became the foundation of what is commonly called “devil worship.” These “devils” or “demons” were recognized as subordinate in rank to other beings whom the priests regarded as beyond their reach.

***12. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.***

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***13. So the decree went forth, and the wise men were to be slain; and they sought Daniel and his companions to be slain.***

Herodotus tells us that about a century later Darius I of Persia actually carried out such a wholesale massacre of the Magi, which resulted in their almost complete extermination. This decree by Nebuchadnezzar was not to be any quiet or secret assassination, but a public execution; so the proper officials were sent out to get the condemned men together for their doom. As Daniel and his companions were by this time regarded as included among the professional wise men, they also were hunted up by the officials, though they evidently had not been among those who had been summoned before the king. Probably only a few of the leaders had actually been present at the interview with the king, whereas now the decree was to include all who belonged to these professional classes of wise men, perhaps hundreds in number. The executions were planned to embrace many more than those representative ones who had met the king.

***14. Then Daniel returned answer with counsel and prudence to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon;***

***15. He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Wherefore is the decree so urgent from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.***

The word here given as prudence is literally "taste," and means discretion or tact. Arioch is an ancient Akkadian name.

Captain of the king's guard. This expression occurs several times in connection with the history of Israel in the Old Testament, once also as the title of an officer of the pharaoh of Egypt. The word here translated "guard" originally meant butchers, or slaughterers of animals, not executioners; yet in some way not clearly traced these men became the official bodyguard of the king.

So urgent. Driver says that this word "urgent" is not strong enough to express the original. The Jewish translation reads: "So peremptory."

***16. And Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would appoint him a time, and he would show the king the interpretation.***

We are not informed how Daniel managed to conform to the royal etiquette in making this request for more time and a stay of the execution. Montgomery suggests that he may have had Arioch intercede for him, or that the latter may have granted a respite informally on his own authority.

This agreement to solve the king's request shows Daniel's faith in his God in a marked degree. He believed God would intervene in this matter.

***17. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.***

***18. That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his companions should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.***

Several providential circumstances are clearly combined toward the happy outcome of this whole affair. In the first place, the king's dream must have made a profound impression on his mind; and he either forgot it entirely, or was induced to withhold it from the priests and other wise men in such a way as to lead to a complete exposure of the false claims of these men. Again, it was all for the best that Daniel was not at first consulted by the king regarding the dream, for if he had been requested by the king to tell the dream and had made it known with its interpretation there would have been no opportunity to expose the false heathen systems. In this case, as in so many others down through history, the heathen priests and their associates had the first chance.

They had a free hand, with no one to hinder them. With their lives at stake we may be assured that they did their best. Then when they utterly failed and openly confessed that they could do nothing, it was time for God to honor His trusting servants with the means of explaining the dream to the king. Through this entire set of circumstances He gave to the world for more than two thousand years the first, and in some respects the clearest, outline of the world's history ever shown in advance through anybody.

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**19. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.**

Some think that the term vision of the night covers dreams as well as visions; others contend that visions are always distinct from dreams, the latter being a lower form of divine communication. If, as appears probable, the king in his impatience had summoned the wise men to him during the night in which he had had his dream, when his sleep went from him, then the search for Daniel and the others would take place the next day, and the prayer of Daniel and its answer would take place during the next night.

As soon as the matter was revealed to Daniel, he doubtless summoned his companions (unless they were already with him engaging in prayer) and blessed the God of heaven. That is, he gave formal thanks to God for answering his prayer, even though he had not tried out the matter with the king to see if he had the real dream which the king called for. He was certain that what had been revealed to him was from God, and he was also assured that God would not be giving him false information. In this act of asking for a direct communication from God and then having his prayer directly answered, Daniel was acquiring a valuable experience which was to prepare him for becoming the “greatest of all the prophets,” as Josephus terms him. The other visions given to him later could not have been communicated to him (in all human probability) if he had not acquired an experience in such matters here so early in his life, for he was at this time a young man.

Daniel’s praise for the answer to his prayer is in strict metrical form in the Hebrew, consisting of four stanzas of tristichs and tetrastichs which alternate with each other. The Jewish translation prints this portion in metrical form. Several other examples of lyrics or hymns occur in the book further on, quite extensively in chapter 4, in the last part of chapter 6, and twice in chapter 7, with brief spontaneous lyrical outbursts here and there besides that hardly admit of distinct classification.

As the A.R.V., which we have been following, does not preserve the poetical form in this passage, we give it below from the Jewish translation, which is verbally almost identical with the A.R.V.

**20. Daniel spoke and said: Blessed be the name of God From everlasting even unto everlasting;  
For wisdom and might are His;**

**21. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings, and sets up kings; He gives  
wisdom unto the wise, And knowledge to them that know understanding;**

**22. He reveals the deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light  
dwells with Him.**

**23. I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O Thou God of my fathers, Who has given me wisdom and  
might, And has now made known unto me what we desired of Thee; For Thou has made known unto us  
the king’s matter.**

This hymn of praise is a natural and unaffected outburst, and is rightly regarded as a fine example of liturgical form. In the second stanza there is a direct challenge to the fatalism of the Babylonian astral religion. As Montgomery points out, this fatalism continued its baneful influence in the Greek and Roman worlds for a long time.

In the last stanza Daniel unites his companions with himself in his thanks-what we desired of Thee.

**24. Then Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had appointed 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 show unto the king the interpretation.**

We may well imagine that Daniel’s visit to Arioch was a hurried but joyful act on his part; and although his own life had been at stake, his first plea is not for himself, but for the wise men of Babylon as an entire class. The secret had been revealed to Daniel, and because of this the lives of all the group should be spared. The priests and their fellows could not in the slightest degree claim any part in this revelation of the secret of the dream; they and all their vain pretensions were as much to be reprobated as before; but Daniel asks for their lives on the strength of what he was now able to do for the king.

How often do sinners receive a prolonging of their tranquillity because of the presence among them of a few who are faithful to God. In one of Paul’s numerous shipwrecks of which we have record, he was assured that the lives of all who were sailing with him would be saved because of his faithfulness. Acts

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27:22-24. If only ten righteous had been found in Sodom, that city of iniquity would not have been destroyed. So in the case here under consideration. Because of the intercession of Daniel and his three companions, the lives of all the wise men of the kingdom \*were saved from the just anger of Nebuchadnezzar.

***25. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the children of the captivity of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.***

The circumstances here narrated would seem to prove that Daniel himself did not have any earlier audience with the king, as might be inferred from the words of verse 16.

In haste. Montgomery says that the words might more exactly be “in excitement.” The king had already had some acquaintance with the Hebrew captives, yet he could not be expected to remember this young fellow Daniel. Hence the courtly etiquette must be observed by a formal introduction, for as Montgomery slyly remarks, “royal minds are easily forgetful of ‘college professors.’” Arioch also doubtless was glad to have it appear that he had been anxiously hunting for someone to solve the king’s perplexity, and had at last found the right man.

***26. 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?***

The king was still skeptical about the claim of this young man to be able to reveal the secret. If he couldn’t tell the details of the dream itself, how could the king have any confidence in a professed interpretation?

***27. Daniel answered before the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded can neither wise men, enchanters, magicians, nor soothsayers, show unto the king;***

***28. But there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and He hath made 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:***

***29. As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter; and He that reveals secrets hath made known to thee what shall come to pass.***

Before the king. This seems to have been the more common form of expression, though the less formal “to the king” also occurs in this book.

Daniel had here a splendid opportunity to make known the true God to this heathen king, and he did not fail to improve it.

Under somewhat similar circumstances, Joseph had directed the mind of Pharaoh to the Hebrew Jehovah as the revealer of secrets. Genesis 41:16. Daniel now disclaims any credit for himself and gives all the credit to the God in heaven that reveals secrets. Daniel could be confident and fearless before this greatest monarch of the ancient world, because he had already bowed in love and adoration before the King of kings, who had in turn entrusted to His servant an astonishing message for this Nebuchadnezzar.

In the latter days. Literally, “in the end closing part of the days.” On this Driver has the note: “An expression which occurs fourteen times in the Old Testament, and which always denotes the closing period of the future so far as it falls within the range of view of the writer using it. The sense expressed by it is thus relative, not absolute, varying with the context.... Here, as the sequel shows, it is similarly the period of the establishment of the divine kingdom which is principally denoted by it.”

Thy thoughts came into thy mind. Here Daniel tells the king what he had been thinking about previous to having the dream. Nebuchadnezzar had been pondering the future of his kingdom and what might occur after him. We should remember that this occurred near the beginning of his reign and that afterward he had a reign of some forty years full of glory and prosperity for his kingdom. Because of his commendable desire to know the future of his kingdom and of the world, the great Jehovah took notice of it and gave him this extraordinary picture of the course of the world’s successive empires down to the establishment of the kingdom that shall have no end. Instead of giving the king the full meaning of it all, He ordained that the interpretation should come through one of His chosen people in order that the additional light of His true religion might also be made known to this young ruler, and through him to all the world.



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***30. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but to the intent that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that thou may know the thoughts of thy heart.***

As Joseph had done before him, Daniel here disclaims any personal wisdom in making known the dream and its meaning. The dream, which follows in the succeeding five verses, is in many respects the most remarkable dream ever given to any human being. Aside from the handsome tribute paid by Driver in the sentence already quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Hebrew scholars and commentators, as Montgomery remarks, “have in general hardly done justice to the grandly conceived and artistic symbolism of the image.... Yet its simplicity, its magnificence of proportion, its originality, deserve their right valuation.” - Commentary, page 185.

***31. Thou, O king, saw, and, behold, a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible.***

This dream image is rightly spoken of as a colossus, of which the ancient world gives us several examples. Herodotus tells us of a golden statue of Bel twelve cubits high, which still existed in his day; and the fame of the great stone colossi in Egypt had doubtless been spread over the ancient world. The word colossus comes to us as the specific name of the bronze Apollo erected 280 BC on the shore of the harbor of Rhodes, and in the myth which has since grown from it, reputed it to have stood astride the entrance to the harbor. It is said to have been more than 100 feet high, and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Whose brightness was excellent. The word “excellent” in old English always carried the distinctive meaning (which it has since lost) of pre-eminent or surpassing.

***32. As for this image, its head was of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of brass,***

***33. Its legs of iron, its feet part of iron, and part of clay.***

The progressive deterioration of the materials, composing this colossus is one of its most noticeable and most surprising features. A large image or statue of any sort would naturally be an object of attention to any intelligent pagan, and this one was most extraordinary in its brilliancy and in its size. As the upper parts were bright and beautiful, the king may not at first have noticed how it deteriorated both in appearance and in quality as one looked it over from the top to the bottom. Yet when considered from the standpoint of stability, the shoddy, fragile feet rendered the entire colossus about as unstable and as surely doomed because of its construction as one could possibly conceive. The five parts into which it was divided grew progressively less beautiful, less valuable, and less stable, from the top to the bottom. Even if no stone had appeared to destroy it, anyone could easily see the utter impossibility of this statue’s enduring permanently. It is evolution reversed which we find in this gradation from gold down to a mixture of iron and miry clay.

Two only of these materials call for comment. The term here rendered brass is more properly rendered “bronze” or “copper,” the ancients not discriminating carefully between these different materials. The word given as clay is often used to signify “earthenware,” as is shown by the marginal reading under verse 41.

The ancients were profuse in their use of bronze in making statues and images, and decorations of all kinds. There are also instances of tile work (probably what is meant by the earthenware or clay of the image) entering into the composition of an image or other art as a sort of decoration, similar to the examples which have been discovered of metals inlaid with enamels or porcelain. This may be ornamental in certain instances; but such combination of earthenware and metal would be nothing but a shoddy, flimsy pretense when used in place of iron in the foundation of a colossus like this.

***34. Thou saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces.***

***35. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors. And the wind carried them away, so that no***

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*place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

The sublimity and literary beauty of this passage have not been appreciated sufficiently. Karl A. Auberlen remarks:

“Where among all the poets and historians of antiquity and of modern times, is there a passage which, for simplicity and majesty, can be compared with these words?”

The climax of this symbolic colossus was brought about by a stone which was cut out without hands and smote the image on its feet. This stone was quarried without any human agency, implying that it was a work done directly by God. Any event we see take place without any visible agency which we can ascribe to natural law we are disposed to class as a miracle; hence the action of this stone has about it all the characteristics of the miraculous. This end of all these earthly kingdoms as here given is parallel to the end of the power called the “little horn” of chapter 8:25; and also similar to the end of the power described in chapter ii, which comes “to his end, and none shall help him” (chapter 11:45).

Threshing floors in the Orient were usually on elevated or exposed spots, where the wind would be felt most strongly, in order to carry away the chaff during the process of winnowing. When a metallic statue should be knocked down by some external moving object it would not naturally be so completely pulverized as is here described; this also may be regarded by the beholder as something decidedly out of the ordinary.

A great mountain. One of the astonishing facts revealed by archaeology is that the Chaldeans, the leading priests of the god Bel-Marduk, are also represented as priests of “The Great Mountain.” Thus we may identify the cult of The Great Mountain with that of Bel-Marduk. This cult of Shadu Rabu, or The Great Mountain, was one of the most powerful cults of Babylonia; so at the mention of this term by Daniel, the king’s mind would inevitably receive the impression that this miraculous Stone was to become a visible manifestation of the God of heaven who was giving this vision and revealing these things to the king through His chosen messenger, Daniel. On this point see Boutflower,

***36. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.***

***37. Thou, O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory;***

***38. And where so ever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens hath He given into thy hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.***

In and Around the Book of Daniel, pages 35-45, where the original authorities are cited.

This young king, still in his early twenties, was accustomed to flattery and homage; but here was an announcement which must have secured his profound attention. He had been born to the royal power, his father, Nabopolassar, being the founder of the dynasty. In union with Cyaxares the Mede, Nabopolassar had revolted against Assyria, had captured Nineveh in 612 BC, and in this way had made Babylon an independent kingdom with himself as its head. In 605 BC he died and was succeeded by his son, Nebuchadnezzar, who became one of the most illustrious sovereigns of the ancient world, enjoying a long and prosperous reign of some forty-three years.

Thou art the head of gold. This does not mean that the king himself was here designated, but his kingdom. The terms king and kingdom are used interchangeably in this connection, both in this chapter and in the following ones, particularly the eleventh.

The details of the history of Babylon may be obtained from any reliable history of these times. See Source Book for Bible Students, pages 45-59.

***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.***

The “critics” perversely desire to assign a pseudo kingdom of Media as the second of the series, the one here mentioned as “another kingdom inferior to thee.” They know well that there was no such Median kingdom between the Babylonian and the Persian. Dr. R. H. Charles, in the latest and most authoritative work by this school of “critics,” acknowledges that this Median empire is “a mythical one.”-



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Commentary, page 177. Yet with one voice they declare that Daniel teaches there was such an intercalary empire of the Medes between Babylon and MedoPersia. They refer to such texts as Daniel 5:31 to prove that this is what Daniel believed and therefore what is here “meant” by the empire immediately following Babylon. All this, of course, depends upon the theory that this book of Daniel is not really an inspired revelation from God, but a literary work by a clever, pious Jew of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. This man, they say, wished to encourage his people by a romantic picture of the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God, but was often mistaken about the facts of history. This theory of an intercalary Median empire was one of those historical “mistakes.” The object of these “critics” is to avoid the conclusion that the fourth empire of Daniel is Rome, but they can attain this only by charging Daniel with blundering in inserting this mythical Median empire after the Babylonian.

With such a pseudo interpretation of the symbols of this dream image we have nothing to do here. It remains for us to point out that Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon in the year 539, and thus Medo-Persia became the empire outlined in this prophecy as the one to follow Babylon.

There has been much speculation concerning this expression inferior to thee. Even a superficial glance at ancient history reveals that Medo-Persia was not inferior to Babylon in either power or extent of territory. It doubtless was inferior in the matter of unity and compactness of organization, and some have thought that it may have been inferior in riches and grandeur, though this is doubtful. However, we must remember that this problem of relative inferiority does not concern these two empires alone; it’s a universal comparison all down the entire image from the top to the bottom: Every one below is represented as inferior in value and in beauty to the one preceding. So whatever problem there is must not be considered solved until we have covered the entire ground.

And another third kingdom of brass or bronze. Obviously this must refer to the empire of Alexander, which succeeded that of Medo-Persia when Alexander won the battle of Arbela in 331 BC. The Greeks were noted far and wide for their brass armor, which was a new thing under the sun, and which gave them a great superiority over their enemies. Later even this efficient style of weapons, defensive and offensive, was displaced by the still more efficient iron or steel. This displacement was a gradual one and, as Lucretius points out, was contemporary with the rise of the Roman power. Boutflower has an enlightening chapter on this subject, dealing with the metals represented by the various parts of the image. Op. Cit., Pages 24-34.

***40. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things; and as iron that crushes all these, shall it break in pieces and crush.***

In all the visions of the world empires recorded in the book of Daniel, the fourth of each series gets about as much space and description as all the others put together. So in this instance. The others are passed over hurriedly, with a mere mention; but the fourth is characterized in detail, and the divisions into which it split up are also set forth with considerable minutiae. Further consideration also is devoted to the everlasting kingdom of God which is to succeed them all.

The description here given of the fourth kingdom must mean Rome and no other. It fits Rome and no other. Also in all the other three visions, those of the seventh, eighth, and eleventh chapters, the fourth kingdom or power as described means Rome, their descriptions fit Rome, and they fit no other power before or since. This comparative application of these four lines of prophecy is the strongest proof that this application must be the correct one.

Gibbon has never been accused of evangelical prejudices; yet he could not fall to see how wonderfully appropriate is the prophetic description when applied to Rome. It is almost superfluous to quote his words, as they are so much a classic as to be known by all who have read extensively along these lines; but we insert them here, as no other words so fittingly characterize this prophecy:

“The arms of the 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.” - The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chapter 38; General Observations at end of the chapter, paragraph.

***41. And whereas thou saw the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou saw the iron mixed with miry clay.***

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***42. 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.***

***43. And whereas thou saw the 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 does not mingle with clay.***

Since this prophecy must extend down the centuries from imperial Rome even to the Second Coming of Christ (as do also all the other visions of Daniel), we have here the extension of the iron legs into feet and toes, which are expressly spoken of as “a divided kingdom.” The two legs are not designed to represent the Eastern and the Western parts into which imperial Rome was divided. Nor is there any express mention of there being ten toes, as there are ten horns expressly mentioned in the symbolism of the seventh chapter, and also in the parallel visions of the Apocalypse. All that we are definitely told is that there would be a division of the kingdom—not, it should be noted, a conquest of this empire by some external power. It is tacitly asserted that this Roman Empire would not be conquered by any other or later power, as had been the case with all the preceding world empires, but that in its divided state it would be prolonged and would extend down to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of God.

Far too much stress also has been placed upon the alleged division of Rome into ten parts or ten minor kingdoms. The number ten does come into the prophecy in the seventh chapter; and in that place we shall deal with the matter. Here there is no express mention of the number of parts into which it is divided; though the mention of “toes” would seem to imply the number ten.

In chapter 7 the fourth beast is said to have ten horns, and they are explained as meaning ten kings (or kingdoms) which were to arise from the breaking up of the Roman Empire. The ten horns are also mentioned in the Revelation in several places (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:1 11, 16); so the expression “the ten kingdoms of Western Europe into which Rome was divided,” is correct enough. But no definite mention of ten toes is made here.

Moreover, as will be seen later (in the note on chapter 7:8), it is quite probable that the number ten is used as an indefinite but comparatively large number, rather than as an exact number. The fact that this number ten is ever afterward maintained, when chapter 7:8 definitely tells us that three of them were plucked up to make place for another little horn (an eleventh), this number ten being always maintained throughout the subsequent prophecies in the book of Revelation, is a strong argument in favor of the suggestion that the number ten is used only as a round number.

While the specific number ten is not mentioned here in connection with the toes, another related fact is mentioned, and it is given with almost tedious repetitiousness, namely, that there are to be elements of weakness running through the entire lower part of the image—“partly strong, and partly broken” [margin, brittle].

Some scholars have thought that the meaning is that some of the toes would be of iron and some would be of the clay or tiling or terra cotta. Montgomery contends that the underlying meaning of the whole description is that “each leg, each foot, every toe, are severally composed of non coherent stuffs, all equally subject to fracture and crumbling.” - Commentary, page 189. This seems a most fitting characterization of the modern nations of Europe, the resultants of the old Roman Empire.

It seems truly extraordinary that Hippolytus, one of the earliest Christian writers on prophecy (about AD 236), in dealing with this verse foretold that the ten kingdoms into which Rome would be divided would pass from monarchies to democracies. Simcox wrote nearly three quarters of a century ago: “Few things were humanly speaking less likely in his days, few more so in ours.” - Revelation, page 107. Cambridge University Press, 1902.

They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men. This undoubtedly refers to the perennial attempts all down through the centuries to cement friendships among the various incongruous parts by marriage alliances between the various royal families. To such an extent has this been carried that at a certain point in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Queen Victoria was quaintly termed “the grandmother of all Europe.”

***44. And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.***

In the original the “it” is emphatic, in contrast with the other kingdoms. This verse carries us on into the future to the miraculous setting up of the eternal kingdom of Christ. In the verses immediately

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preceding we are brought down past the division of the Roman Empire into its various parts, a division which had not even commenced in the days of Christ and the apostles; accordingly the setting up of this kingdom could not have been done in their days. It could not have been done until after the division of the Roman Empire, which was carried on between AD 351 and 476. This text says, “in the days of those kings” clearly referring to the divisions represented by the feet and toes of the image.

It is completely false to interpret this setting up of the everlasting kingdom as having taken place at the first part of the Christian Era, or in the days of Christ and His apostles, for the following reasons:

1. This everlasting kingdom is not to exist contemporaneously with earthly governments, nor even to overlap with some of them, but to succeed them, and to do so catastrophically, by utter violence, resulting in their total destruction.

2. This everlasting kingdom, the fifth of the series, is symbolized by the stone which struck the image. But what part did it strike? Not the legs, which were the parts existing in Christ’s day; but the feet and toes. Verse 34. Let us remember that the successive parts from the head downward represent accurately a chronological succession; and from this point of view we may say that the feet were not in existence until about four centuries after the death of Christ and the establishment of the visible church. Hence this stone cannot possibly represent the Christian church. In the days of Christ and His apostles, to use the apt words of Uriah Smith, the image was developed only down as far as the thighs or the knees; hence the smiting if done by the church, would have had to be done on the legs, not on the feet, where the prophecy locates the smiting. The feet of the colossus had not been formed when the Christian church was founded.

3. The stone which smites the image is spoken of as having been quarried out of the mountain without hands. Verse 45. This surely represents, not the church acting in a quiet and orderly way in spreading the good news of salvation, but an obviously miraculous work, a sudden and catastrophic work of annihilation and complete displacement. Such a work will be accomplished when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God. Then will be the time when this everlasting kingdom will be set up, and not until then.

Down in the feet of iron and of clay,  
Weak and divided, soon to pass away;  
What will the next great, glorious drama be?  
Christ and His coming, and eternity.

In Revelation 17:12 we are told of ten kings or kingdoms which, at the time spoken of, had received “no kingdom as yet,” but would at some time then future receive “authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour.” The time here spoken of is obviously well along in the Christian dispensation. Finally, these ten kingdoms are to be destroyed, along with the beast of Revelation 17, at the Second Coming of Christ. It should be self-evident that these ten kingdoms of Revelation 17 cannot possibly be identical with the original ten kingdoms into which Rome was divided, as represented by the ten horns of Daniel’s fourth beast (Daniel 7:24), and as represented in this second chapter by the toes (presumably ten, though no specific number is mentioned), into which the iron kingdom was divided. In Daniel’s vision of the four beasts we are told that three of the original ten horns were “plucked up by the roots,” never to exist again. This term, “plucked up by the roots,” obviously means that they were absolutely destroyed as nations, never to become nations again. They were to have no national successors.

Obviously the seven remaining could not become ten many centuries later, or immediately before the Second Coming of Christ, which is the period spoken of in this chapter in the Revelation. It is mere nonsense and trifling with sacred truths to speak, as some have done, of a readjustment of the modern map of Europe in such a way as to bring again into existence these three defunct kingdoms, which were extirpated, or plucked up by the roots.

Many attempts have been made to solve the puzzle. There is no difficulty at all, if we once realize that the number ten is often used in the Old Testament for an indefinitely large number, and is doubtless so used in these instances. Thus we are not under any necessity of supposing that the ten kingdoms of Revelation 17, down just before the Second Coming of Christ, have to be identical either in their boundaries or in their total number with the ones into which the empire of Rome was originally divided.

The ten kingdoms into which Rome was divided dominated Western civilization. Again, just before the Second Coming of Christ, the ten kingdoms which combine with the beast and the false prophet to make war against the Lamb and whom the Lamb overcomes (Revelation 17:12-14), also represent the nations of the entire world (Revelation 16:14); for the last, life-and-death struggle between right and wrong

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takes place on a global or world-wide scale.

***45. Forasmuch as thou saw that a 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.***

In this concluding statement of Daniel we find a summary of all the major elements of the vision in a brief restatement of the grand outcome. This is followed by a solemn declaration of the truth of the entire vision, and the fixed inevitability of it all. The words he has spoken are God's vision and also God's own interpretation, not Daniel's; hence they are all reliable and true, not like the "lying and corrupt words" which the king had accused the priests of using. Verse 9.

***46. Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshiped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him.***

The king was profoundly impressed with what had been presented before him. The revelation of the secret thoughts of his mind, with the opening up of the future history of the world, all came home to him as actually from a supernatural power; and, in accord with this natural feeling of wonder and reverence, he was ready to do homage to the human instrument through whom such divine knowledge had been made known.

It is useless for us to ask how a strict monotheist like Daniel could permit himself to be treated in the fashion here spoken of, for we are not told anything of how Daniel reacted toward this homage. He may have been as strong in his protest and in his monotheistic explanation as Paul and Barnabas were to the people of Lycaonia. Acts 14:13-18. Jerome cites a somewhat parallel incident from Josephus. When Alexander the Great was approaching Jerusalem, the Jewish high priest came out to meet him dressed in his beautiful white priestly robes, with the golden breastplate on which was engraved the name of Jehovah. Alexander bowed in profound homage before the high priest, and when one of his officers, Parmenio, twitted him because of the act, Alexander retorted, as stated by Josephus: "I do not adore him [the high priest], but the God who hath honored him with his priesthood."

***47. The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou has been able to reveal this secret.***

It is a mark of true greatness on the part of Nebuchadnezzar that he did not in the slightest resent the statement of the vision that his own kingdom would be replaced by another. Young as he was he was sufficiently a realist in human affairs to realize that no kingly line can hope to be permanent in this changing world. He was doubtless sufficiently familiar with the more esoteric teachings of the Babylonian religion to know that in its primal aspects all its reasonable ideas tended to head up in one supreme God. Even if we may not suppose him to be thus initiated into all the philosophic aspects of the inner mysteries of his country's religion, by which he would instinctively identify Daniel's God with the great Chief of all the "high" gods, we can fall back on what Montgomery states: "A polytheist can always take on new gods, the monotheist never."

***48. Then the king made Daniel great, and gave him many great gifts, and made him to rule over the whole province of Babylon, and to be chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon.***

We sometimes speak of the unchanging East, but there is no part of the world where such sudden and surprising changes in human affairs have occurred all down the line of history. Here we have Daniel promoted to the place of administrator of the chief province of the empire, in which was the capital itself.

Chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon. The literal of this is "chief of the sages," or prefects. As Pusey thinks, each college or group of the wise men had its own head, while Daniel had general authority over all. A Biblical precedent for this is found in the case of Joseph, who married a daughter of the chief priest of Heliopolis, and who held a high office under the Pharaoh; also in the case of Moses, who "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Acts 7:22. It may be questioned whether there was any more nonsense taught back there than in our modern universities, which are today considered so essential for a young man's advancement. At any rate, no one can attain to mental clearness who does

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not have the ability to reject the chaff and retain only the wheat in any system of education.

***49. And Daniel requested of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel was in the gate of the king.***

Daniel would feel more satisfied to have subordinates whom he could trust and who would do efficient work; hence the appointment of his three companions. In the gate of the king. This term has been misunderstood by some of the “critics,” who do not seem to have been familiar with the wide use of this phrase in the ancient East. Doubtless at first this word “gate” was a literal one; but soon it came to mean only the royal offices or the chancellery, and its locality may have been far removed from the actual entrance of the city. The Turkish royal offices used to be known as the Sublime Porte, and “porte” originally meant “gate.” This is a survival of the same idea. Daniel, if not exactly premier, was at least among the leading men of the nation; he was in the cabinet, as we would express it.

Thus we come to the close of the second chapter, which, like the first, is a document complete in itself. Considered as literature, it is sublime; as history, it is brief, though complete and accurate, and written hundreds of years in advance; as prophecy, it assures us of the future reality of the glorious kingdom of God, sealing to us this assurance by its preliminary outline of the successive stages of earth’s kingdoms which were to precede it. Since we now see that these successive stages have been fulfilled as predicted, we know for a certainty that God has spoken. In due season He will surely set up His kingdom, one that shall never be destroyed or given to other people.

O glorious kingdom of God! Long hoped for by the weary pilgrims of earth’s dark night, but now soon to be established in the times determined by the wisdom of the King of eternity! Hasten on, glad day, when all the faithful of the past, as well as those living among the last generation of mankind, will receive their inheritance together. Hebrews 11:39, 40.

Note on the Four World Empires of Daniel 2. All scholars admit that the symbols of this second chapter must be understood as parallel to those of chapter 7, where the same powers are represented as four beasts. The differences in interpreting these symbols have to do chiefly with the way of understanding the fourth empire, represented by the legs of iron in this second chapter and by the nondescript fourth beast of chapter 7, which had great iron teeth and nails of brass, which devoured the whole earth, and out of which came another blasphemous and persecuting power, speaking great words against the Most High, wearing out the saints of the Most High, and thinking to be able to change the times and the law of the Most High. The “critics” apply this fourth symbol to the petty Greek kingdom under Antiochus Epiphanes; the conservatives apply it to Rome, first in its stage of world empire, afterward in its stage of religion-political world domination.

At this point we will not stop to argue for or against either interpretation, but will touch briefly on the history of the interpretation of this second chapter, postponing until the end of the seventh chapter a fuller statement.

It is probable that the Jews of the Maccabean age and the decades following were chiefly interested in the symbols of this prophecy as it pictured the Messianic kingdom. Naturally, they were not prepared to give a correct evaluation of the symbolism of events still future. When we come down a little later, say a century or two after Christ, we find many of the early Christian writers who well recognized the empire of Rome as the one that fitted the specifications of the prophecy.

For instance, the following is from Hippolytus, a voluminous writer who was martyred about AD 235:

“Rejoice, blessed Daniel! thou has not been in error: all these things have come to pass. After this again thou has told me of the beast, dreadful and terrible. ‘It had iron teeth and claws of brass: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.’ Already the iron rules; already it subdues and breaks all in pieces; already it brings all the unwilling into subjection; already we see these things ourselves. Now we glorify God, being instructed by thee.”

Plenty of evidence can also be given to show that, long before this date, Josephus and the Jews of his time quite generally applied this fourth empire to Rome. Further details on this point will be submitted at the end of the discussion of the seventh chapter.

As for the meaning of the stone which smote the image on its feet, then became a great mountain and filled the whole earth, we have already given argument to show that this cannot refer to the spread of the Christian church. The smiting did not take place when the legs were representing the victorious and undivided Roman Empire (as if this smiting had been done in the days of Christ); but the stone smote the



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image upon its feet that were of iron and clay or in its divided condition. It says further: In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.” It is absolutely clear, therefore, that this kingdom of God was not due in the days of Christ and the apostles, for Rome was not divided until some four hundred years after their time. Some Catholics would like to apply this prediction to their church, which came into power soon after that date, but they shrink from applying the parallel vision of the seventh chapter in the same way.

Looking at this whole matter in a broad and common-sense way, we must confess that this kingdom of God has not yet been set up; it can be set up only by a catastrophic end of all the present world powers; and this can take place only at the Second Coming of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

### 3. THE FAITHFUL THREE

No date for this chapter is given in the Massoretic text, but the Septuogint and two other ancient versions, those of Theodotion and the Peshitto, insert here at the beginning, “in the eighteenth year,” which would be 587 BC. This is one year before Jerusalem was destroyed by this some Nebuchadnezzar. This date would seem to be very significant.

The king erects a gigantic golden statue on the plain of Durn, near Bobylon. He assembles all the officials within reach, asking them to bow down to this image, under penalty of death in a furnace. The three companions of Daniel refuse to obey the king’s command and are thrown into the furnace. They are miraculously delivered, whereupon Nebuchadnezzar proclaims the power of the God of the Hebrews.

***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 kings of Assyria, his predecessors, had been in the habit of erecting statues or other monuments to commemorate their conquests. Since Nebuchadnezzar had recently completed the conquest of the western countries, some have thought that this golden image was occasioned by these recent victories; but other considerations were doubtless also involved. Hippolyttis and other early commentators suggested that the king was probably trying to outdo the great metallic image which he had seen in his dream some sixteen years previously. That statue had a head of gold which Daniel had interpreted as meaning Nebuchadnezzar; but from the head downward there was a rapid deterioration, and finally the entire image was overthrown and destroyed by a supernatural stone which then spread out and occupied the whole earth. The young monarch resented this idea of deterioration and destruction, and was determined to erect a statue wholly of gold, to indicate that his kingdom was to stand forever.

The author of Prophets and Kings has outlined for us the psychology of the king, his boundless ambition and selfish pride. He forgot the many supernatural circumstances connected with his dream and its interpretation by Daniel, and defiantly determined to erect a symbol of “Babylon as an eternal, indestructible, all-powerful kingdom, which should break in pieces all other kingdoms, and stand forever.”-Page 504.

The sequel shows that this colossal egotism received a providential rebuke with so plain a meaning that he was once more taught an important lesson concerning the great facts of life.

Of gold. Doubtless not of solid gold, but of some other material overlaid with gold plates or gold leaf. The proportions here given, about ninety feet high by ten feet wide, indicate that there must have been a base or pedestal of a considerable size beneath the image proper, as the proportions of a human statue are quite different, or about 5 or 6 to 1.

In the plain of Dura. This locality has not been identified with certainty, for there are at least three places of this name in the vicinity of the capital. A small river called the Dura flows into the Euphrates some six or seven miles below Babylon; and near this river, about twelve miles southeast of the site of old Babylon, are a number of mounds carrying the name Dura. One of these mounds has a large rectangular brick structure, forty-five feet square at the base and some twenty feet high, which some have identified with the site of this ancient statue.

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**2. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.**

**3. Then the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, 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.**

We have here, and in several other places in this chapter, a sonorous and almost pompous repetition of names which would seem out of taste in any Greek or Roman literary document, but which was not at all out of harmony with Assyrian or Semitic ideas of taste.

Not all of these titles have been identified for certain; nor is it necessary. They represent all the classes of officials, or the grandees of the empire, named in the order of precedence from the highest to the lowest. Of the seven specific titles, two are Persian in origin, four Semitic, and one is of unknown origin. Some have thought from this that, since this part of the book of Daniel is in the Aramaic, this form may be a translation from the original language in which it was written. Since this translation would have been made in the days of the Persian rule, the names given were as then commonly used. This, however, is only a speculation to try to account for this use of Persian titles.

For the use of the word "satraps" see further remarks in the Introduction, page 41; also note on Daniel 6.

**4. Then the herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,  
5. That at what time you hear the sound of the comet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music' you fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up;**

**6. And who falls not down and worships shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

**7. Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.**

We may well imagine that there would be a great fanfare when all these diverse instruments composing the orchestra were started up. This description is realistic enough to be the narrative of a witness of the occasion. Of the six instruments here enumerated, three names are of Semitic origin, one is doubtful, while two are of Greek origin. From the names of these two Greek instruments of music has been built up a theory of a late date for the origin of the entire book, when Greek civilization was spread out over the entire East following the conquests of Alexander. This is a precarious basis on which to erect such a theory, when it is squarely against all the traditions about the origin of the book. The book of Daniel had already been received into the canon when the first references to it were made by other writers, and this could not have been true of a book composed in the times of the Maccabees. We know that the Greeks were famous for their music; they made musical instruments. Then, as now, the name of the thing would travel with the article itself even to distant lands. If the book had really been composed during the late Greek period, it would have been half full of Greek words and idioms, which, of course, is not the case.

**8. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and brought accusation against the Jews.**

**9. They answered and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king, O king, live forever.**

**10. Thou, O king, has made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image;**

**11. And who falls not down and worships, shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.**

**12. There are certain Jews whom thou has appointed 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 has set up.**

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The Chaldeans here mentioned are the same caste of priests of Bel-Marduk which have been mentioned in the previous chapter. Doubtless they had long nursed a grudge against these whom they regarded as upstart Hebrews, who had been promoted but who were still obstinately refusing to do honor to the Babylonian religion.

Speculation has been rife as to why Daniel was not present on this important occasion. Possibly he was sick and unable to attend. Possibly he was away in some distant part of the empire on official business. One might as well speculate on why these three Hebrews were there, when they must have known full well what the assembly was for and what they might expect by attending and not joining in the celebration. Probably they wished to show that in obeying the king's orders they would go as far as they could conscientiously. The king had commanded them to be present; they would obey his order and let the rest of the king's plans work themselves out.

Brought accusation against the Jews. The original means literally "ate the pieces of the Jews." The verb means to slander, to accuse falsely or maliciously. The Greek noun equivalent gives us the term *ho diabolos*, which is a common title for the devil, who is the slanderer in chief. An equivalent word occurs in the Tell el'Amarna tablets, which date from about the time of the Exodus; so the word and the idea are ancient.

**13. Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.**

**14. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said unto them, Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you serve not my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?**

**15. Now if you be ready that at what time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the image which I have made, well: but if you worship not, you 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?**

The king was disposed to give them another chance. But he ends with the arrogant question, "What kind of a god can deliver you out of my hand?"

**16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter.**

**17. 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 thy hand, O king.**

**18. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up.**

The reply of these three men is not nearly so abrupt and definite as it has sometimes been represented. We have no need to answer thee is equivalent to saying: "We have no defense or apology to make." They had already disobeyed once, and they needed no second trial. They appealed their case to their God; yet they modestly admitted that God might not see fit to interfere in their behalf. However, they could only do in the future as they had already done.

The word *if* which introduces the seventeenth verse has occasioned much discussion. The meaning of the clause is given by Montgomery: "If our God whom we serve is able [consistently with His purposes] to deliver us from the fiery burning furnace and from thy hand, O king, He will save (us); but if not, etc." In this tone of language they are simply using the voice of all genuine faith; they assert the power of God to deliver, but acknowledge on the other hand that they cannot be certain of how God's divine purposes may work out in this particular instance.

**19. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated.**

**20. And he commanded certain mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.**

**21. Then these men were bound in their breeches, their tunics, and their mantles, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

**22. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the**

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*flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*

**23. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.**

The furnace which has been repeatedly mentioned is thought to have been somewhat like a kiln, with an opening at the side for inserting fuel. Such a furnace on a large scale might be sufficient to admit several human bodies. There are historical accounts of furnaces in Persia for the execution of criminals.

The garments of the men as here named have given much trouble to the translators, so that we cannot be certain of the kinds of clothing spoken of; but this is not important. They were men of eminent position, and had doubtless attended this celebration in the full court dress. They were taken as they were, with all their garments, and hurled bodily into the furnace.

As for King Nebuchadnezzar's part in this affair, we should remember that he was a despot, with absolute power of life and death over even the highest of his subjects. He had now ruled long enough to become accustomed to the exercise of this absolute power, and he could not stand to have his will thwarted in such a matter. All power tends to corrupt its possessor; as Lord Acton has remarked, "absolute power corrupts absolutely." If at a later period of his life he really experienced a change of heart in such matters, it probably was the result of such an experience as this, together with the incident narrated in the next chapter.

**24. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste: he spoke and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.**

**25. He answered and said Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.**

Was astonished. Driver says that the meaning here is "was alarmed" or "was afraid."

A son of the gods. The King James Version makes it stronger and more specific: "And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." If someone should ask how that heathen king could be expected to know what the Son of God was like, the answer is readily given. For a decade and a half he had been constantly in touch not only with Daniel but also with these other Jewish high counselors, who were not only highly intelligent concerning the best teachings of their own religion, but who were by no means backward about giving these truths to others. One of the prime ideas of the Jewish religion was that the divine Son of God was to come someday and rule the earth as its King. Theoretically Nebuchadnezzar was probably about as familiar with this idea as Daniel and the three worthies were. Now, suddenly and in a miraculous manner, he was confronted with a Being who irresistibly reminded him of what he had been taught. So in his utter amazement he blurted out exactly what was being so impressed on his mind. See E. G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pages 508-510.

Between verses 23 and 24 the Septuagint and Theodotion insert a long passage which constitutes the part of the Apocrypha called Song of the Three Children. The Vulgate of Jerome also gives it, though with notes to the effect that it was not found in the original Hebrew text, but was translated from the version of Theodotion.

**26. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace: he spoke and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came forth out of the midst of the fire.**

The term here used, most high, occurs frequently in all writings of the period, both Jewish and pagan, the term being used by Gentile peoples as the technical name of the Hebrew God. Nebuchadnezzar here recognizes the Hebrew deity as supreme above all others, but riot necessarily as the only God. Any candid and intelligent pagan, under such circumstances, might probably have done the same.

**27. And the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, that the fire had no power upon their bodies, nor was the hair of their head singed, neither were their breeches changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them.**

It was as obvious and undeniable a miracle as one can imagine.

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*28. Nebuchadnezzar spoke 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 have yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.*

*29. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything 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 is able to deliver after this sort.*

The king does not own this "Most High" as his god; He is only their God. Yet the king formally recognizes this Jewish deity as the head of a religion which he now proclaims as a religion political, a recognized religion, with legal rights which must be respected by all the empire. It is useless for us to attempt to analyze this decree according to our modern ideas of religious freedom. We might say that the king was now too far on the other side, and ought merely to have allowed every one of his subjects to worship as he chose; but these ideas of complete religious liberty are strictly modern. No ancient king or philosopher had the slightest idea of what we now term separation of the civil power from the religious. To find such a sentiment in a document of Daniel's period would be as much of an anachronism as to find there something about airplanes or the radio.

*30. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.*

Instead of promoted, the literal Aramaic is simply "prospered." Doubtless it means that the king did not hold against them what they had done, but gave them advancement as was opportunely suitable.

The noble example of these three Hebrew worthies, in obeying the Creator of the heaven and the earth instead of an imperial despot, though confronted with a cruel death by fire, has been an inspiration to uncounted numbers all down the centuries. In the days ahead, when all the powers of earth are to combine to enforce the worship of the beast and his image and the reception of his mark, as foretold in Revelation 13 and 14, the people of God will need to keep in mind such examples of faithfulness and glorious deliverance. When that time of trouble such as never was comes upon the world, goading the arrogant powers of earth to unite in crushing out the few who are resolved to be faithful to their Creator, then as of old the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will arise to vindicate the faith of those who trust in Him.

That day of days is hastening on apace.

## 4. THE KING'S MADNESS

In the form in which we have this chapter in our English Bibles, it is a single document, issued by King Nebuchadnezzar in thankfulness for a strange experience through which he had posted. Of all the ancient forms in which the book of Daniel appears, the Septuagint clone gives us a date for this incident—the eighteenth year of the king's reign, which would be 587 BC. As this date may not be correct, the events here narrated may have occurred later. As he reigned a total of forty-three years, this would give him still some twenty-five years of reign after the beginning of the experience here related.

This is essentially all the secular corroboration which we have of the remarkable incident here recorded. Our English Bible have followed the Massoretic text quite fully. Large portions of this chapter are arranged in metrical style in the modern Jewish translation.

*1. Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you.*

*2. It hath seemed good unto me to show the signs and wonders that the most high God hath wrought toward me.*

*3. 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.*

The claim of ruling over all the earth, as here made by implication, does not mean what such an expression would mean today. Yet these ancient empires did cover the larger part of the civilization of that



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time.

The title most high God is what a pagan would employ to designate the God of the Hebrews when speaking respectfully of this Deity. In Babylon, as in many other enlightened pagan communities, there was a decided tendency toward henotheism, or the belief that each nation or people was under the special protection of its own specific deity. Thus Marduk could be the god of the Babylonians, while Jehovah was the recognized God of the Hebrews. Nebuchadnezzar had obviously arrived at the stage where he was willing to acknowledge the Hebrew God as in many respects superior to all others. It is possible that at some time in his life he did arrive at the idea of real monotheism, but the language of this chapter is quite consistent with the theory that he was as the result of this experience only a well-instructed henotheist, with a profound respect and reverence for the most high God of the Jews, even though his troops had succeeded so recently in completely destroying the temple at Jerusalem. This is about all that the language implies.

***4. I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace.***

***5. I saw a dream which made me afraid; and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.***

As intimated above, if this incident occurred in his eighteenth year, it would be in 587 BC. The other word here used, flourishing, is in the original appropriately applied to a tree, and means “spreading” or “luxuriant,” a term which is significant in view of the nature of his dream.

***6. 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.***

***7. Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers; and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.***

The Septuagint omits these and other parts which mention the calling in of the various classes of wise men, and brings Daniel at once into the business. This would seem more probable; for was not Daniel already well known as a specialist in such matters? The full series of incidents as here stated may seem more dramatic, for it gives an opportunity again to display Daniel’s superiority to all the other wise men; but it seems almost like a repetition of the events of the second chapter.

***8. But at the 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 I told the dream before him, saying,***

***9. O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubles thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.***

According to the name of my god. The god of Babylon and thus the patron deity of the king himself was of course Marduk, or Bel-Marduk. Driver and other modern philologists state that the name “Belteshazzar” is not derived from Bel, the name of this god, but from the word balatsu, meaning “his life;” though Driver acknowledges that the name may be an elliptical or shortened form of Bel-balatsu-usur. Even without this explanation, Belteshazzar would in its initial syllable be an example of an assonance, which might be all that is implied by the king’s words.

The spirit of the holy gods. This is the language of polytheism, though later on in this chapter the king uses language which is quite in harmony with genuine monotheism. The word “holy” as here used does not carry any moral or ethical connotation, as paganism has always made a separation between its religion and its ethics or morals; hence the word “divine” would probably be more suitable. The heathen idea of “holiness” is a mere matter of ceremonial correctness; it has nothing to do with morality or what we now mean by holiness. Only in Christianity do we find “holiness” connected with character.

10. 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.

11. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth.

12. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the birds of the heavens dwelt in the branches thereof, and all flesh was

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fed from it.

The appropriateness of this dream is better realized when we learn that during the larger part of his active life Nebuchadnezzar made repeated expeditions into the forests of Lebanon, from which he derived the large beams with which to carry on his perpetual building operations. The longest and one of the most important inscriptions of this king is found in duplicate form in the Lebanon Mountains, one on the rocks of Wadi Brissa, a valley west of the upper Orontes, while the other is at the mouth of the Dog River, north of Beirut. But the king personally cut down some of the great cedars with his own hands, and we have repeated evidences of his profound admiration for these majestic monarchs of the forest. In his book, Boutflower has an entire chapter entitled "The Royal Woodcutter," which is devoted to the archaeological discoveries connected with this subject.

***13. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and a holy one came down from heaven.***

***14. He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches.***

***15. Nevertheless leave the stump of its 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:***

***16. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.***

The word watcher does not mean a guardian, but a wakeful one, or one who is watching on guard. To leave the stump of its roots in the earth, would seem to signify that the life of the tree was to be preserved. The phrase with a band of iron and brass is not clear; but it also may be interpreted as a part of the plan for the guarding and protecting of the stump. The rest of the symbolism is readily understood. Seven times is probably seven years, that is, seven literal years. R. D. Wilson has pointed out that the word here used is not the ordinary word for "year," but a word which merely means a fixed or appointed time, long or short. If we had archaeological or other historical facts necessitating a shorter period for the term of the king's affliction, making it, let us suppose, seven months, there would be no textual difficulty in so interpreting this statement.

The word heart here used means of course the mind or the intelligence; the seat of the intelligence was regarded by the Hebrews and other ancient peoples as located in the heart, not in the head or the brain.

The disease of the king here alluded to is known among medical people as lycanthropy, and its description in Daniel is presented in a natural and simple manner. This disease has long been known to students of psychiatry, and from the horrible records of other cases we conclude that this of Nebuchadnezzar was a mild one. Driver and Montgomery admit that Nebuchadnezzar may have had such an attack of insanity, after the manner of other royal persons, such as Otto of Bavaria and George III of England.

An interesting side light on this matter has been preserved by Eusebius from an ancient writer named Megasthenes, of about 300 BC, who tells us that after Nebuchadnezzar became great and powerful, he ascended to the roof of his palace and became possessed by some god, under the inspiration of which he uttered a warning about the calamities which were to befall the city of Babylon. This story evidently comes to us through the Babylonian priests who were bitterly opposed to Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, as is evident from other parts of the story which are not relevant to the present matter, but which the curious reader may find by consulting Boutflower, Pusey, and other apologists.

***17. The sentence 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 rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the lowest of men.***

The divine decree is here stated with a solemn cadence and finality, with the announcement that the Hebrew God most high is the arbiter of national as well as of individual destinies, and that He can exalt to a high position even the most lowly born of men, or can hurl them down from kingly power whenever He sees fit.

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**18. This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen; and thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation, for as much 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.**

The Septuagint has the singular in this final statement, “the Spirit of the holy God;” but we know that this version is often an interpretation or commentary rather than a mere translation. We shall see evidence of this further on in the book, where this version does not hesitate to insert words or even whole phrases to make the prophecies seem to agree with the history which the translators imagined was being referred to in the prophecy.

19. Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was stricken dumb for a while, and his thoughts troubled him. The king answered 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 your adversaries.

Was stricken dumb; that is, he was dumfounded or appalled, as the meaning of the dream came upon him. The time here indicated during which Daniel hesitated to tell the king the calamity which impended him, is given in the A.V. as “one hour;” but the rendering here is more accurate: for a while, meaning an indefinite period.

**20. The tree that thou saw, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;**

**21. Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was food for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the birds of the heavens had their habitation:**

**22. It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reaches unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.**

**23. And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew down the tree, and destroy it; nevertheless leave the stump of the 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;**

**24. This is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king:**

**25. That thou shall be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shall be made to eat grass as oxen, and shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee; till thou know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will.**

**26. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shall have known that the heavens do rule.**

Some of the documents left by Nebuchadnezzar give us an intimation of his ideal for his country. He wanted Babylon to be a great center for the good and the prosperity of all the world. In the famous Wadi Brissa inscription in the mountains of Lebanon, made many years (probably) before this dream came to him, we have the following as the king’s high conception of the position of Babylon: “Under her everlasting shadow I gathered all men in peace. A reign of abundance, years of plenty I caused to be in my land.”-Boutflower, In and Around the Book of Daniel, pages 79, 80.

Thou shall be driven from men. In ancient times, and even today in the East and other non-Christian countries, insane people are not cared for in institutions or even by their relatives, as in Occidental lands. If a king might be regarded as the incarnation of some god, much more so would he be thus regarded if he went insane. He would be feared even more than ever, shunned by all, and treated more like a wild animal than like a human being. This would also fit well into the style of the lycanthropy, if the king in his madness thought that he was some vegetable-eating animal, like a sheep or an ox.

Thou shall be made to eat grass as oxen. Persons afflicted with lycanthropy often try to imitate the particular animal which they imagine they have become. They often try to eat the things which such an animal eats; though this would not mean that they actually subsist upon such food. This malady often allows its victims to be lucid and normal at times, the malady only coming on now and then; though no one can tell when it may manifest itself.

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Thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee. If the king had been universally hated by those around him, he might have been killed by them in one of his fits of insanity. As it was, it would seem that a regency or guardianship for the kingdom was appointed; and the affairs of the empire went on much as usual. Possibly Daniel himself took charge of the situation, and by assuring the princes of the definite or limited period of the king's madness, reserved the kingdom for him on his recovery. It would be quite unreasonable for us to expect to find any official record of these events, for royal personages do not leave any permanent record in such cases. People never place on their monuments a record of their vices or their calamities. As R. D. Wilson remarks, one might search in vain for a tombstone recording that the person commemorated had been for some seven years in an insane asylum.

***27. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.***

This impending calamity was not an iron fate which nothing could avert; it was only a provision by a wise Providence for the good of both Nebuchadnezzar and his people. Its actuality was entirely contingent upon the conduct of the king himself.

***28. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.***

***29. At the end of twelve months he was walking in the royal palace of Babylon.***

***30. The king spoke and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?***

***31. 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:***

***32. And thou shall be driven from men; and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shall be made to eat grass as oxen; and seven times shall pass over thee. Until thou know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will.***

***33. 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 hair was grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.***

The change here from the first person to the third has occasioned some remarks by supercilious critics. We must not judge these ancient documents by our modern standards of literary style. We must acknowledge that the narrative goes along much more smoothly here in the third person than it would in the first.

The celebrated India House Inscription in London gives a fine account of the great buildings constructed by this king in Babylon. He was proud of his building works, not only in Babylon but throughout the empire.

Walking in the royal palace-probably on the roof of the Hanging Gardens. The condition of his bait and fingernails is a picture of the neglect which befell him. He was neglectful of his own person, and no one else cared for him or attended to his personal needs. See Montgomery, pages 243, 244; Charles, page 98.

***34. 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 honored Him that lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom from generation to generation;***

***35. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He does 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 does Thou?***

It is appropriate that the return of reason is here spoken of as taking place when the king, in a mute, half-unconscious way, began to acknowledge God as the real ruler of the world and offered a prayer for healing and restoration.

***36. At the same time mine understanding returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I***

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*was established in my kingdom, and excellent greatness was added unto me.*

*37. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all His works are truth, and His ways justice; and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.*

There is no good reason to doubt the historicity of the events here narrated or to question that this mighty monarch, one of the greatest of all those ancient times, became a follower of the God of Israel, recognizing that he held his kingdom only as a sub ruler under the God of heaven.

## 5. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Today, after an immense amount of controversy, the name Belshazzar is an asset for the historicity of the book of Daniel, instead of a liability. Up until about 1854, no one knew anything about him except what is mentioned in Daniel. Josephus had identified him as the lost king of Babylon and the son of Nebuchadnezzar. Because of this obscurity, and because the Greek historians made no mention of him, the "critics" either denied his existence entirely or thought that the name Belshazzar was only another name for one of the successors of Nebuchadnezzar.

First come some tablets wherein Nabuna'id ("Nabonidus" of the Greeks) speaks of him as his "first-born son," or as the "son of the king." The "critics" fought a retreating game, until in 1924 Sidney Smith published a new account of some of the doings of Nabuna'id, which reads as follows:

"He entrusted the 'camp' to his [Nabuna'id's] oldest [son], the first-born, the troops everywhere in the country he ordered under his [command]. He let [everything] go, entrusted the kingship to him [Belshazzar] and, himself, he started out for a long journey." – "Ancient Near Eastern Texts" (1950), page 313.

Nabuna'id, when about to go off to Teima in Arabic, had his son made king. Nabuna'id was gone for some fourteen years, during which Belshazzar was virtually the sole reigning monarch. Nabuna'id was a man well along in years when he took the throne (apparently as a usurper), and being of a reflective or peaceful disposition, he spent the greater part of his reign in this beautiful oasis of Teima (now called Taima) in the interior of Arabia. When the Persians under Cyrus invaded the country, they took the father prisoner after the fall of Babylon while Belshazzar was slain during its capture. Inscriptions have been found which indicate that there was a joint rulership of Nabuna'id and Belshazzar.

This chapter has no formal date; but as it occurred in the closing days of the city and the loss of Belshazzar, the date would be 539 BC.

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

*2. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his lords, his wives and his concubines, might drink therefrom.*

*3. 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 lords, his wives and his concubines, drank from them.*

*4. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.*

A great room, some 52 meters (173 feet) long by 17 meters (57 feet) wide has been discovered in what is supposed to have been the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which is considered to be the room here used as the banquet hall. In the middle of one of the long sides is a niche which is probably the place where the king's throne stood. Belshazzar's act of bringing in the sacred vessels of the Jewish temple would be considered a sacrilege even in the eyes of a pagan. The sacred things of even a conquered religion were still considered holy, and were not put to an ordinary use or kept in some secular place, but in a temple. Belshazzar belonged to a disorderly, godless crowd, as it seems from many evidences; and when inflamed with wine such a person might do almost any wild thing. Probably the whole festival or banquet may be supposed to have been largely devoted to celebrating former victories, and thus the conquest of Jerusalem. From the fact that the Persians had conquered most of the territory around Babylon, including part of the city itself, and Belshazzar was at this moment being besieged in the citadel of the city, it may be



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supposed that the banquet was planned primarily for the military purpose of inspiring his men in view of their situation. If this supposition be correct, it was all the more a gross blunder on the king's part to commit this sacrilege during his banquet.

We also know that it was during a popular Babylonian festival, on the night of the sixteenth of Tishri, that Ugbaru made an assault on Babylon, according to the Nabonidus Chronicle. See the note on verses 30 and 31.

***5. In the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.***

In trying to visualize the scene, we should remember that in ancient times even royal palaces were poorly lighted at night. No possible multiplication of lamps or candles could furnish anything but a dismal twilight; but over against the most lighted part, probably on the large blank wall directly opposite the king's table (which we should think of as on a raised dais), these bloodless fingers were noticed writing or making the motions of writing.

The writing itself may have stood out in highly illuminated outlines, like some of our modern electric signs. Such living letters could not fail to strike consternation to all beholders.

***6. Then the king's countenance was changed in him, and his thoughts troubled him; and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.***

***7. The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall he clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall he the third ruler in the kingdom.***

We have here a vivid picture of what fear will do to a shameless profligate, even when this person ordinarily puts on a bold front and seems to fear neither God nor man. Purple was at all times regarded as a royal color. The third ruler in the kingdom. This expression has long been a favorite one with apologists; as it was so easy to think of Nabuna'id as the first, Belshazzar as the second, and the one who made the interpretation as the third. Others have thought of the queen mother (see verse 10) as the second (Belshazzar being the first) and the interpreter as the third.

It seems too bad to spoil such a beautiful theory; but Montgomery now comes forward with the idea that the original word here was an old Babylonian title, like triumvir or the old Anglo Saxon "thirdling." This explanation seems much more reasonable than the other. On this basis the title was a customary official title, the original numerical denotation having long since been lost.

***8. Then came in all the king's wise men; but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation.***

***9. Then was King Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were perplexed.***

We should try to picture a steady procession of these wise men coming in during these fateful hours, but all going out again without having solved the riddle.

***10. Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: the queen spoke and said, O king, live forever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed.***

***11. 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, were found in him; and the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made him master of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and soothsayers.***

***12. Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of dark sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.***

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The woman here spoken of as the queen was evidently what we now might term “the queen dowager,” probably the celebrated widow of Nebuchadnezzar, Nitocris, who once had been a prominent figure in the ruler ship of the empire. The queen mother in the Persian court (for we know much more about the Persian court life than about the court of Babylonia) held a dominant position. She was evidently not at the banquet; yet she felt free to come into the banquet hall without any formal invitation.

The spirit of the holy gods. The queen here talks the language of polytheism, though she is speaking about an Israelite. Such polytheistic language was, of course, the only style of language about such matters which Belshazzar and his half-drunken court could understand.

Thy father. In what sense is Nebuchadnezzar here called the “father” of Belshazzar? The Hebrew expression “son of David” was a common designation of any of the descendants of this great king. Similarly, it would seem, the term here used is applied to one who was certainly not Nebuchadnezzar’s own son, possibly not even a descendant at all. On this latter point we lack the necessary information.

Dougherty in his book Nabonidus and Belshazzar says that it is extremely probable that Nabonidus had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and that thus Belshazzar was really the grandson of the great king. Even if he were not any blood relative, the fashionable legal fictions of the day would class him as a descendant.

Master of the magicians. This title is first found in chapter 4:9. See the note there for an explanation.

Dissolving of doubts. The literal of this is the “untying of knots,” meaning of course the loosing or undoing of magic knots or spells. In magic, knots are often tied by the magician and are considered as binding the victim against whom they are directed. These knots can only be untied by a stronger or more skillful counter magic. Some of the qualifications here assigned to Daniel by the queen are terms of common sense, but most of them are borrowed directly from the magical arts and pseudo wisdom of the heathen priesthood and their dark lore.

***13. Then was Daniel brought in before the king. The king spoke and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, who art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Judah?***

***14. I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in thee.***

***15. And now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof; but they could not show the interpretation of the thing.***

***16. But I have heard of thee, that thou cans give interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou can read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shall be clothed with purple, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.***

We should try to visualize the dramatic scene. The venerable prophet who stands before the king and his large crowd of banqueting guests has been in an alien land for some seventy years, and is more than eighty years old. During much of his life he has lived around the court, and has held some of the highest offices in the empire under the former sovereigns, including the great Nebuchadnezzar, whose confidence he enjoyed. Much more than all this, he has talked with God and has had direct personal revelations from God regarding the entire future history of the world. All of these many uncommon experiences have made him absolutely fearless, and under the present circumstances he is prepared to deliver to this young profligate king a message direct from the God of Israel, whose sacred vessels the king had so shamelessly desecrated.

On the other hand, we should think of the king as a sleek, well groomed young man, not much more than thirty years of age (Boutflower says about thirty-six), sitting on the raised platform in full view of all the guests. He is probably not in solitary grandeur, but is surrounded by several of his concubines, who, like the king and all the others in the hall, are terror-stricken at the blazing letters on the wall.

The speech which Daniel here gives before the agitated monarch is one of the most effective and forceful bits of oratory in any language.

***17. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; nevertheless I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.***

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In a stately balance of sentence, polite but decisive, he scorns the king's promise of reward, but promises to read this fearsome writing emblazoned on the opposite wall. He then proceeds to deliver a most effective indictment of the king's frivolity and sacrilege. It is a balanced charge in two parts: (i) a statement of what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar; (2) an indictment of Belshazzar in the light of what his great predecessor had experienced but which Belshazzar had not heeded.

**18. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty:**

**19. And because of the greatness that He gave him, all the peoples, 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 raised up, and whom he would he put down.**

**20. But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:**

**21. 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; he was fed with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven. Until he knew that the most high God rules in the kingdom of men, and that He sets up over it whomsoever He will.**

Nebuchadnezzar had been one of the most powerful monarchs which the world had had up to that time. After his sad experience he had learned the great lesson of life, "to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly" with God. Micah 6:4.

Two verses which follow, giving the charge directed against Belshazzar, Montgomery says: "There is no finer example of the preacher's diction in the Bible than this stern and inexorable condemnation."

**22. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, has not humbled thy heart, though thou knew all this,**

**23. But has 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 from 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, has thou not glorified.**

Samuel had reproved Saul (1 Samuel 15:10-35), and Nathan had denounced David (2 Samuel 12:1-15); but in such instances there was some respite and a chance for the turning aside of the threatened doom. Here no more opportunity is offered to the shallow-minded, defiant Belshazzar, for he had known all this.

All thy ways. The last word in this phrase is similar to the word used in Jeremiah 10:23: "I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his steps." Thus Daniel's word here, "all thy ways," might be rendered "all thy destinies." Belshazzar had not learned the most important lesson of all life, and now there was no more opportunity left; his probation was done.

**24. Then was the part of the hand sent from before Him, and this writing was inscribed.**

As we have already intimated (see note on verse 5), this writing should be thought of as being upon the plaster of the wall, either directly behind the king's place, or across the room on the side opposite the king, the candlestick (or lamp stand) being of course near the king's position. If across the hall, on the large white side opposite the royal station, we might think of the writing as large enough for all the guests to read, the letters themselves being doubtless highly illuminated, and looking like some of our modern advertising signs.

The word inscribed is strongly reminiscent of the Babylonian custom of inscribing or stamping on a hard material, or on a soft substance which was afterward made hard by drying or baking. The original word is not the ordinary one for "written," but one which means "printed" or "stamped."

**25. And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**

**26. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and**

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*brought it to an end.*

**27. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.**

**28. PERES; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.**

It will be readily noticed that the three words which are interpreted are stated differently in the first statement of the writing. In the first statement of the writing, the first word is repeated, while the last word appears in the plural form, "upharsin" being the plural form of "peres," with the conjunction "u." Because the interpretation takes account of only the three words, and because this shortened form is the only form recognized by the Septuagint, Theodotion, the Vulgate, Josephus, or Jerome, modern scholars believe that this simple form of three words must be the original and best form of the text.

Why could not the wise men even read these words, let alone give them an interpretation? Various conjectures have been offered. Some Jewish writers have suggested that the archaic Hebrew script was used; others that the letters were written vertically instead of horizontally; still others that they were in the entangled form of an anagram. Or it may have been written in some entirely strange script, unknown to anyone present and only miraculously revealed to Daniel. The reading may have meant only the intelligent pronunciation of the consonants forming the inscription, which only a trained person could do, even after he knew the letters.

The three words, Mene, Tekel, Peres, are treated in the interpretation as passive participles, "Numbered, Weighed, Divided." Some years ago a suggestion was made by a Continental scholar that the original form of these words represented certain pieces of money, the whole thus representing a series of money value. This theory is supported by Boutflower with impressive arguments, but is rejected by other Semitic scholars. It is agreed by all that the last word, "Peres," would be pronounced almost exactly like "paras," which is the Aramaic word for Persians. Thus in the last we have a genuine play on words, possibly also in the case of the others; for puns of this sort, or words with double meanings, are common in both the Old Testament and the New.

The question has been asked: Why did Belshazzar accept so meekly the announcement of the end of his kingdom, seeing that the Persians were besieging him, and thus that any such statement by those around him might readily be treated as "unpatriotic" or an open treachery? The answer is easily found. "A terror of God was upon" them all (Genesis 35:3); for when a genuine prophet of God takes charge of a situation, as Daniel did on this occasion, there is no power that can harm him or that can withstand his message.

**29. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with purple, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.**

Regarding this final statement, see the note on verse 7.

**30. In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.**

**31. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.**

The famous Nabonidus Chronicle in the British Museum which was published by Dr. T. G. Pinches in 1882, gives many items concerning the last days of the Babylonian Empire. This tablet may have been written by the priests of Babylon, after its capture by Cyrus, and thus it may represent a bias in favor of the conquerors. It represents Naburia'Id as unpopular on account of his neglect of the powerful priestly caste of Bel-Marduk; but it tells in chronological order the events leading up to the capture of the city.- According to it, however, the Persians entered Babylon on the sixteenth of Tishri, while Cyrus himself did not come to the city until the third of Marcheshram. Gubaru, the governor appointed by Cyrus, appointed subgovernors throughout the city.

Gubaru has by some commentators been considered to be another name for the man mentioned in the text of Daniel, Darius the Mede, but this identification can hardly be correct. On this latter point see the Introduction, pages 42-44.

The well-known account of how Cyrus diverted the Euphrates for a few hours, thus making it possible for a band of his soldiers to march into the city through the shallowed waters of the old river bed, is not mentioned here in this account of the end of Babylon by Daniel, nor is it mentioned in any of the inscriptions hitherto discovered. Yet there is no good reason to doubt its historicity. The picturesque details

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come to us through Herodotus and Xenophon only; but they agree exactly with the predictions of the fall of Babylon given in Isaiah 44:27; Jeremiah 50:38; 51:30-32, 36. Why should the “critics” continue to sneer at Herodotus as being the “father of lies” instead of being the “father of history,” when so many archaeological discoveries have already been made to vindicate his testimony, even as they have vindicated in so many instances the historical records of the Old Testament?

The feast of Belshazzar, with its tragic close, has long been a favorite subject with poets, painters, and moralists; and with ample reason. Not only does it mark the end of one world empire and the beginning of another, but from the Biblical viewpoint it signalizes three important events: the poetic justice of the end which overtook the impious desecrater of the sacred vessels of the temple; the fall of Babylon, the oppressor of God’s chosen people; and the rise of another world empire which was to set free the captives and allow them to return to their own land, even with royal assistance, financial and military. Under this rising Medo-Persian rule was fulfilled the prophecies of nearly a century before, that at the end of seventy years (Jeremiah 25:1-12) these events would take place.

In the larger view, also, this tragic end of the empire which had been Nebuchadnezzar’s offers occasion for reflection to the thoughtful student, as to why one nation disappears and another takes its place. This is much too large a subject to be attempted here in a footnote to this chapter. It is sufficient to say that these changes do not take place by chance, or by the mere prowess of those who think themselves superior to others. As was declared to Nebuchadnezzar, the great lesson of it all is that “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will.” Daniel 4:17. As Paul on a certain occasion explained to the men of Athens, the appointed times and bounds of the various peoples have been determined by the Creator Himself, to enable men to have a better chance to “seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.” Acts 17:27.

In the great hereafter, when all the plottings and injustices of human life have come to an end, when God’s people have the leisure and the wisdom to study history from the vantage point of eternity and with free access to the unbiased records of the heavenly archives, we can then hope to interpret aright many things which at present are hard to understand. Perhaps even at that time we shall not wholly lack a mournful interest in that eventful night when Crownless and scepterless Belshazzar lay, A robe of purple round a form of clay.

### 6. IN THE LIONS’ DEN

Because of envy, the satraps and other officers conspire to get Daniel into trouble; they have the king pass a law about worship which they know Daniel will disregard. Daniel continues his habits of worship as before; but when he is accused and the king realizes what it all means, Darius tries in every way to avoid carrying out the penalty against Daniel. The Persian laws must be carried out, so Daniel is put into the den of lions. Bright and early the next morning the king is out of the den to find whether God has really saved Daniel. When he learns that Daniel is unharmed, he is overjoyed, and in due order he visits a similar penalty upon the men who had planned Daniel’s ruin.

In the introduction (see pages 42-44) we considered the problem of Darius the Mede, who is stated to have been sixty-two years of age at the time of the capture of Babylon, when he “was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans.” Daniel 9:4.

Hugo Winckler, the German “critical” scholar, followed by Boufflower, an evangelical, suggested that Darius is equivalent to Cambyses, the young son of Cyrus; and on the basis of this boyish ruler they think they can better explain the strange conduct of the high officials in coming “turn ultuously” (as the Jewish translation gives the words in Daniel 6:6) to the king with their request about the new law.

T. G. Pinches, C. H. H. Wright, Robert Dick Wilson, and others contend that the old officer Gubru is identical with Darius the Mede. On the basis of this identification we would have to make other suppositions.

Still others contend for Cyaxares II, named as the son of Astyages by Xenophon, and possibly an uncle of Cyrus, the latter having become the heir of the aged king.

We really do not know positively what historical personage is to be identified as Darius the Mede. A new king might feel especially flattered in being asked to make a formal enactment covering the well-recognized principle that the king ruled by divine right and was in reality a sort of god Incarnate; hence it would not seem so absurd to have this fact openly recognized, by decreeing that for a month no religious



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petition of any kind should be addressed to anyone but the king. If the strangeness of this law be removed by showing its reasonableness in the light of the religion-political ideas of the times, the other events in the chapter become intelligible.

**1. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, who should be throughout the whole kingdom;**

**2. And over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one; that these satraps might give account unto them, and that the king should have no damage.**

Satraps. This word is from the Akkadian *Satarpanu* (see page 91). In the so-called Nabonidus Chronicle it is said that Gubaru, governor of Babylon under Cyrus, appointed governors in Babylon; and the term satrap is often used for almost any rank of subordinate official. The number here given of 120 has been thought to be unreasonable, as Herodotus tells us that at a later period the Persian king created twenty satraps for his whole empire. From the historical setting we would suppose that the district over which this Darius ruled (as a subordinate "king" under Cyrus) would include not only Chaldea, Akkad, and Susa, but also Gutium, or part of Persia proper, over which Ugbaru had been governor before the conquest of Babylon. See also the Introduction' page 41.

That the king should have no damage. This picture of high superintendents who keep a careful watch over the lower officials, especially in matters of finance, accurately portrays the organization of the Persians, whose civil service was carefully planned and carried out.

**3. Then this Daniel was distinguished above the presidents and the satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.**

We should keep in mind that at this time Daniel was an old man, more than eighty years of age. He had almost from earliest manhood been accustomed to high responsibilities; first, in all the glory of the long reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and afterward (probably) under the king's immediate successors, until the wild, riotous misrule of Belshazzar. The excellent spirit which was recognized in Daniel was, of course, his faithfulness to duty and his unselfishness and lack of greed, a rare combination of qualities among the officials of his time.

**4. Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find occasion against Daniel as touching the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault, forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.**

**5. 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.**

Thus we have the other two presidents and the other officers forming an intrigue or conspiracy to get rid of Daniel. A consideration of all the facts in the situation convinced them that they could not make any accusation against him on the basis of neglect of duty, nor even on blunders he had made; for he did not blunder. He is an excellent example of an illustrious civil servant in high position who goes through from one administration to another, even passing through a revolution or a foreign conquest, without any disturbance, simply because he was efficient and faithful.

**6. Then these presidents and satraps assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, five forever.**

**7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the deputies and the satraps, the counselors and the governors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a strong interdict, 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.**

The term *assembled together* has occasioned much discussion among scholars. The Jewish translation gives it as "came tumultuously;" but as the same original occurs in the eleventh and fifteenth verses, where this wording seems out of place (even though the Jewish translation is consistent and gives it the same there also), this rendering is denied by most modern commentators. Montgomery would render the term: "came in concert," or in "collusion," as a conspiracy. Their statement to the king that all the

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presidents had agreed with the other officers in this request, is obviously a lie; for Daniel was one of the three presidents, and only the other two were represented before the king in the special council session.

The royal statute which these conspirators asked for was evidently one concerning religion. With Alexander and his successors, as afterward under the Roman emperors, the sovereign was openly proclaimed as a manifestation of Deity. We do not have any historical proof that such an idea prevailed under the Persians, yet there would seem to be nothing incongruous in the idea that these officers should persuade the new king to make this decree. Furthermore, Darius was a Mede, and we know little about these people. It forbade everyone to make a religious petition of anybody, or to pray to any being, save the king himself, for some thirty days; thus a formal statement was made of the divine character of the monarchy.

The den of lions. Lions were common wild animals throughout the East from remote antiquity. In addition to hunting the wild ones, the Assyrian kings kept some of these animals in captivity to be loosed at times and hunted for sport. From the Assyrians this custom passed to the Persians. The word “den” properly means a pit or dungeon; and, we are to suppose, an underground room, or perhaps an open pit, somewhat like the place at Bern, Switzerland, where the bear pit has been famous for many years.

***8. Now, O king, establish the interdict, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which alters not.***

***9. Wherefore King Darius signed the writing and the interdict.***

The repetition of terms interdict and writing and similar terms in the preceding verse, are to be understood as legal phraseology, which is notoriously addicted to a repetition of words and phrases.

***10. And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his chamber toward Jerusalem); and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.***

Though he evidently knew what was going on, Daniel seemingly took no measures to stop the plot. Quietly and without ostentation he went on about his accustomed work and religious devotions, as if nothing had happened. The term here rendered chamber means properly a roof chamber, which was (and is still prevalent in the East) an apartment above the flat roof, usually at one corner, and having large latticed windows for a free circulation of air. Such a roof chamber is spoken of in many places in the Bible, such as Acts 9:37, 39; 20:8. The windows of this roof chamber were open toward Jerusalem, and in his kneeling Daniel faced in this direction as, according to Solomon’s prayer (1 Kings 8:35), all good Israelites were supposed to do. The conspirators knew of Daniel’s habits and thus had no difficulty in seeing him or at least hearing him—in direct violation of the king’s interdict. Mohammed at first had his followers pray toward Jerusalem, afterward changing the direction to Mecca.

Three times a day. There were three established seasons of prayer among the Israelites: at the morning burnt offering; at the ninth hour in the afternoon, when the evening meal offering was made; and at sunset. Of these three seasons for prayer, the “evening oblation” (chapter 9:21), which occurred in mid afternoon, ultimately became the chief daily season for sacrifice and prayer.

As he did aforetime. Hitherto Daniel had, so far as we know, been uniformly prosperous; but his many years of peace and success had not tended to break down his established routine of private devotion. The great crisis of his life came in his old age, but he was prepared for it. The king’s new law did not command him to commit any positive sin; it only asked him to refrain from doing an act which he considered a duty. No matter what a crowd of courtiers had induced the king to do, Daniel went on calmly with his religious duties as he did aforetime. And he did not try to rationalize away his convictions regarding duty.

***11. Then these men assembled together [came in conspiracy], and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God.***

***12. Then they came near, and spoke before the king concerning the king’s interdict: Has thou not signed an interdict, that every man that shall make petition unto any god or man within thirty days, save unto 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 alters not.***

***13. Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, who is of the children of the***

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*captivity of Judah, regarded not thee, O king, nor the interdict that thou has signed, but makes his petition three times a day.*

So far the plot was working out as planned. Coming to the king on this occasion, they first diplomatically had the king acknowledge that the decree or “interdict” had been made and signed. Then they brought their accusation.

***14. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to rescue him.***

***15. Then these men assembled together unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians, that no interdict nor statute which the king established may be changed.***

We should picture the contest between the king and his officers as going on continuously the whole day long, as Charles points out. Near the going down of the sun they all gathered together (some of them having been continuously present with the king) and rudely demanded that the law be carried out. The language of the fifteenth verse is considered harsh and rude for subjects to use in speaking before a king.

***16. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou serves continually, He will deliver thee.***

***17. 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 nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.***

There is something profoundly impressive in this Persian regard for law. Even this despot was helpless before the majesty of the law. The idea may likely have been originally founded on the theory that the king was infallible and could therefore never be wrong.

Daniel’s being cast ... into the den of lions would seem to show that the den was open from above. It may have been a deep, open pit, with perpendicular walls of Masonry, so that Daniel could be lowered down into it from above, but so deep that neither the animals nor the victim could get out. At some point below would necessarily be a door for entrance or egress; and it would be at this door that an extra stone was placed and sealed securely, preventing any deception or deliverance.

***18. Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting; neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep fled from him.***

No modern scholar seems to be certain of the meaning of the original expression here given as instruments of music. Probably we might render it “diversions,” without attempting to specify the kind. The king spent a miserable night, and without doubt did some praying on his own account. Few despots, however arbitrary and irresponsible, are comfortable under the thought of having taken the life of a good and innocent man.

***19. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.***

***20. And when he came near unto the den to Daniel, he cried with a lamentable voice; the king spoke and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serves continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?***

***21. Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever.***

***22. My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before Him innocence was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.***

***23. Then was the king exceeding glad, 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 had trusted in his God.***

The description of the king going to the mouth of the den is appropriate as being the impulsive act of a conscience-smitten ruler who had been trapped into doing an act of despotism much against his better judgment. This would seem to fit Cyaxares II as being Darius the Mede, rather than the boyish Cambyses, who later committed suicide. Daniel, too, though in this dramatic predicament, had not forgotten his

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accustomed courtly etiquette, and addressed the king with all the style of the palace or the council chamber.

**24. And the king commanded, and they brought those men that 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, before they came to the bottom of the den.**

Some commentators have thought that this retributive justice on the conspirators involved only the two “presidents” (verse 2) and their families, since they were the ones most guilty. But wholesale executions of even greater numbers were not unknown among the Persians and the Assyrians. That their children and their wives should be involved in their ruin is only in accord with the rude ideas of justice which prevailed in ancient times.

The decree of the king which follows is cast into metrical form by the Jewish translation, which is followed for this portion, except for the verse numeration.

**25. Then King Darius wrote unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied unto you.**

**26. I make a decree, that in all the dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God, And steadfast forever, And His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall be even unto the end;**

**27. He delivered and rescued, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and in earth; Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”**

This decree of Darius is a good summary of the character of the Jehovah of Israel. We may not be far astray if we suppose that the Hebrew statesman was consulted in its composition. At any rate, it is another splendid proclamation of the essential facts of theism, and, like Nebuchadnezzar’s somewhat similar edict, was perhaps all of the true gospel of Jehovah which the pagan peoples of that day would ever receive.

**28. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.**

This somewhat peculiar language is paraphrased by Driver as follows:

“After this signal deliverance Daniel’s gain sayers were silenced; and prosperity attended him through the rest of the reign of Darius, as well as in that of his successor Cyrus.”

Who was this Darius? In the general Introduction (pages 42-44) this subject of Darius the Mede was considered, and the conclusion reached is that we do not know for certain. Out of a half-dozen historical persons who have been suggested, we seem to be limited in choice to about two, Cyaxares II and Gubaru (Gobryas). Good arguments have been presented for each; though the evidence is fragmentary.

Whoever he was, he seems to have been a close relative of Cyrus, to whom the brilliant young general deferred as to one of higher rank. Cyrus probably knew that this Darius, king of Media, could not live long, so he was willing to wait until he could inherit the supreme command in a regular and legitimate manner.

These conditions fit the case of Cyaxares II, who seems to have been an uncle of Cyrus and also his father-in-law, Cyrus having married the king’s daughter, who was also his cousin. Since the Medes and Persians were sticklers for law and legitimacy, we can easily suppose that Cyrus, as the son-in-law and heir apparent (Cyaxares having no son), might have been content to bide his time and wait until his uncle died. Josephus tells us that the old king did die within about two years, and was succeeded in the regular way by Cyrus.

On the other hand, some eminent scholars, as Robert Dick Wilson, C. H. H. Wright, and T. G. Pinches, have argued for Gubaru, who also was well along in years at the capture of Babylon. He was a trusted companion of Cyrus and could have been appointed by the latter as viceroy, or governor, of the conquered Babylon.

Xenophon and Josephus agree in saying that Astyages had a son, Xenophon calling him Cyaxares II, and Josephus calling him Darius, but saying also that he had another name among the Greeks. On the whole, if Cyrus was his son-in-law and the recognized heir apparent, it would seem eminently reasonable to think of Cyrus’s being content for the time being to defer to the aged king in the matter of the supreme sovereignty, even though he had personally conquered not only Babylon but several other surrounding

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countries. But perhaps it is best to say that we do not have enough data to make a positive decision in this matter of Darius the Mede.

But it is not of any prime importance to be able to settle this problem. Our uncertainty on this point should not have the slightest influence to lead us to doubt the historicity of the events of this chapter which seem so strange to us. In the very nature of the case we have no right to expect archaeological evidence to confirm every detail.

## 7. THE FOUR GREAT BEASTS

If the dream image of the second chapter may be regarded as the A BC of prophecy, the series of symbolic beasts given in chapter 7 takes us into the heart of the subject. The series of metals of the great image represents the kingdoms of this world until they all disappear with violence before the eternal kingdom of Christ. In this series of wild beasts we have a glimpse of the way the kingdoms of earth appear to the God of heaven and to any enlightened Christian. The only way in which God Himself pictures the kingdoms of this world, either in this book of Daniel or in the Apocalypse, is as wild, ravenous beasts. The solitary seeming exception is the two-horned beast of Revelation 13:11-17, which was lamb like at first, but finally spoke as a dragon, and is branded in other passages of the Revelation as the false prophet.

In this chapter 7, along with the description of the four successive world empires, which exactly parallel the four chief parts of the image, we have also a vivid description of a judgment scene enacted in heaven.

It should be noticed in passing that all scholars acknowledge the exact parallel between the seventh chapter and the second. Hence whatever interpretation we make of the symbols of the one must also apply to those of the other. Thus each line of prophecy indeed, all lines of prophecy-will help us in understanding the others. See the Introduction, pages 6, 7.

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

Not many years ago the presence of the name of Belshazzar king of Babylon was considered by most scholars as a serious liability to the reputation of the book of Daniel. Today this name is regarded as a valuable asset; it helps materially to establish the historicity of the book. Since the publication of R. P. Dougherty's Nabonidus and Belshazzar in 1929, no reputable scholar has had the temerity to deny the historicity of Belshazzar as the last acting king of Babylon, son of the nominal king Nabonidus, who had for many years been in retirement at Teima, in Arabia. Even A. H. Sayce, before he died, published a handsome retraction of the many hard things he had written against the historicity of Daniel. The new light on Belshazzar had turned him around to the older faith. Further details on this subject will be found elsewhere, pages 44, 45.

As the series of visions introduced by this chapter forms a set by itself, that is, not a mere continuation of the historical incidents given in the first part of the book, the author goes back a few years, to the first year of Belshazzar. The series of visions are themselves given in their own chronological order, independently of the sequence of the historical chapters.

***2. Daniel spoke and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of heaven brake forth upon the great sea.***

Scholars are not agreed as to the reasons for the change from the third person to the first in this verse. The peculiar form in which such language has come down to us is doubtless connected in some way with the formation of the book of Daniel out of what were at first only fragmentary or separate documents. But whether the assembling of these documents was done by Daniel or by someone else is now beyond our determination. Like the anomalous original form of the book in two languages, both these peculiarities are visible evidence of the extreme scrupulosity with which the text has been handed down from the most remote antiquity. The many versions of the book, as well as the Massoretic text itself, testify that these peculiarities existed, even as now, at least two centuries before the Christian Era. And the existence of various versions at that early date, each differing from the others as at present, proves the existence of the



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original long before then. For two or three different translations of a book are not made (or at any rate were not made in ancient times) directly after its first composition.

I saw. Literally “I was seeing,” or “was beholding,” meaning a more or less prolonged series of observations. Winds in any prophecy seem always to indicate war or strife among the nations. The great sea. This would naturally mean the Mediterranean; but it is probably better to regard the term as merely a general one. The term sea is mentioned here not with its geographical but with its symbolic meaning of peoples and nations. Revelation 17:15.

### ***3. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.***

Almost all prophetic symbols seem to be used consistently from one part of the Scriptures to another; and when a symbol is defined in one place, we may have confidence in applying the same definition to the occurrence of the symbol elsewhere. For example, in Revelation 17:15 “waters” is defined as meaning peoples and nations. The four beasts here spoken of are expressly defined in the seventeenth verse following: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, that shall arise out of the earth.” The term “kings” in this case, as in many others, means “kingdoms,” of which the individual kings are regarded as the emblems or the official representatives.

### ***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 two feet as a man; and a man’s heart was given to it.***

The winged lion, or the figure of a lion with wings, is one of the most common on the ancient monuments of Assyria and Babylonia. Lions, as we have seen from the previous chapter, were found commonly throughout the surrounding countries, and were often hunted for sport. But the lion was regarded as the king of beasts, an expression which has survived to our day. Driver tells us that the word neshar, here translated “eagle,” is properly a vulture; not the ordinary carrion vulture, but the great vulture, or the griffon vulture, a magnificent bird which is still common throughout Palestine and the surrounding lands. “Everywhere,” says Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible, “it is a feature in the sky, as it circles higher and higher, till lost to all but the keenest sight, and then rapidly swoops down again.”

This symbol of a winged lion must correspond to the head of gold of the great image, and thus must represent the same power, namely, Babylonia.

Its wings were plucked, that is, they were torn off. A man’s heart was given to it. From the time of Hippolyttis down to Pusey and more modern commentators, the changes which are described as taking place with this symbol have been understood as representing the humanizing of the kingdom which took place under Nebuchadnezzar. As the empire is regarded as personified in its ruler, so the king’s loss of reason and of the kingly power might be portrayed by the plucking of the wings; but afterward, when his reason was restored, he showed a great change of heart. The barbarous or animal characteristics had disappeared, and as we may say, the kingdom became humanized in the person of the king its representative. The succeeding empires showed little of this humanizing element.

### ***5. And, behold, another beast, a second like to a bear; and it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.***

The progressive deterioration which was so marked a feature of the colossus of chapter 2 is again shown here. Next to the lion, the bear is the most formidable beast of prey known throughout the Orient. While it subsists principally upon fruits, roots, and other vegetable products when these are plentiful, yet when pressed by hunger it will attack and devour any of the smaller animals, and even man.

It was raised up on one side. This second symbol, the bear, must correspond to the silver arms and breast of the image; hence it must represent the empire which followed Babylonia, namely, Medo-Persia. This was a duality, being composed of two dominant races, the Medes and the Persians, symbolized by this fact of being higher on one side than on the other. The same fact is represented by the two horns on the ram of chapter 8, one higher than the other, the higher coming up last, meaning the Persian race, which finally became the dominant one.

The Persians were cruel and rapacious, and one becomes ashamed of our common human nature when one reads the blatant boasts of the kings of Persia, as displayed on their monuments, of how they

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treated the countries which they conquered. This is doubtless alluded to in the command to devour much flesh.

The bear, while a powerful animal, is awkward and clumsy in its movements; and these characteristics might appropriately represent the vast, unwieldy mobs of undisciplined humanity which the Persians called armies. These mobs were no match for the agile, brazen-armed troops of Alexander, who were splendidly trained as individuals and also as military combinations. The period of world empire enjoyed by the Medo-Persians was from the capture of Babylon in 539 BC to their defeat by the Greeks near Arbela in 331, or a period of 208 years.

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

The leopard is itself a swiftly moving animal; but its natural agility and swiftness were not enough in this case, it must have wings to symbolize the amazing swiftness of Alexander's career, and not the normal number but "four wings of a bird." Nothing in ancient times at all equals the speed with which this young Macedonian overran the nations. An ancient writer expressed it: "He acquired as much of the earth as he saw, and died while he was devising means to capture the rest."

The beast had also four heads. This leopard must represent not merely the Macedonian Empire during the brief career of Alexander himself, but also the same empire in its divided form among the Diadochi, as the immediate successors of Alexander are called. By the year 301, and as the result of the battle of Ipsus in Phrygia, the quarreling generals had reduced themselves to four, the number specified in the prophecy. This number is also mentioned in the next chapter in the four horns which appeared on the head of the he-goat after its great horn was broken. See the note on chapter 8:8.

As the result of this quadripartite division, Cassander got Macedonia, Greece, and the colonies to the west, including Magna Graecia; Lysimachus took Thrace and Bithynia; Seleucus held Syria, Babylonia, and the other eastern countries as far as the Indus; while Ptolemy secured Egypt and Palestine. This fourfold division was not a permanent arrangement, but was ultimately reduced to two, Syria and Egypt, the rulers of which became kings of the north and of the south, so much spoken of in the eleventh chapter.

***7. After this I saw in the night visions, and, behold, a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.***

Each beast was different from the preceding ones, but this one was so diverse as to be in a class by itself. It resembled nothing in real nature, and adjectives had to be multiplied to describe it. Its great iron teeth remind us rightly of the iron legs of the colossus, for this beast must correspond to the iron kingdom of Rome, thus represented in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This nondescript beast must not only correspond to the legs of iron, it must also represent the divided state of imperial Rome, as symbolized by the feet and toes of the image, the toes (naturally ten in number) corresponding to the "ten horns" of this beast. Further consideration of this power will be deferred until the discussion of the next verse.

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

The word here rendered considered might better be translated "was considering," or "was contemplating." All through this vision there is a prolonging of the action; the prophet studies one of the symbols until the next one appears.

Another horn, a little one. The meaning doubtless is that this power was little in its beginnings, though later it is described as "more stout than its fellows" (verse 20), while even in this verse we are told that it became strong enough so that before it, or by its means, three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. It is evident that, if the ten horns represent the divided state of the empire which once was Rome, this little horn must represent a power which would arise among these ten, and before which three of these kingdoms would fall or be completely destroyed.

Answering precisely to these specifications, we find the papal power arising in the West, among the divisions into which the empire was broken by the barbarian invaders. And we find that exactly three of

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these barbarian powers, the Heruli in AD 493, the Vandals in 534, and the Ostrogoths in 538, were “plucked up by the roots” to make way for the rising ecclesiastical power of the bishops of Rome, because these three powers were Arians, or heretics, in the estimation of the papacy, and their existence was blocking the path to world dominion which the proud pontiffs were determined to obtain. The decree of Justinian, AD 533, had authorized the bishop of Rome to be the “head of all bishops, and the true and effective corrector of heretics.” But not until AD 538, when the last of the heretic Arian powers in Italy had been removed by the armies of Justinian, could this imperial edict go into effect. Therefore the period of 1260 years of papal rule over the nations of the world is usually reckoned from the later date.

In the note on chapter 2:41 mention was made of the idea that the, number ten as used here for the ten horns may be an indefinitely large number, though perhaps not intended to mean exactly ten. In spite of the fact here stated that three of the ten were plucked up to make way for the eleventh, or the little horn, the number ten is still mentioned over and over again in subsequent prophecies of the Revelation. Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:1 11, 16. In Revelation 17 the remarkable statement is made that the ten horns “have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour.” Revelation 17:12. This is hardly the place to enter into an exposition of this latter text; but it seems evident that a similar set of “ten” kingdoms, though certainly not identical with the original set, are being referred to here, with no allowance at all made for the fact that three were destroyed completely before the rising power of the papacy.

It is undeniable that a list of ten kingdoms can be made out in Western Europe, which arose from the ruins of imperial Rome. While we must believe that the three kings which were “plucked up” are to be taken literally and exactly, it seems better to say that the number ten is used as a round number, to indicate a large number of divisions. This is the safer and the more reasonable view.

Eyes like the eyes of a man. These humanlike eyes fitly represent a faculty for keen observation and insight, and hence the possession of intellectual cunning and shrewdness. If any long lived power on earth has made its way by its wits, sheer cunning, and intellectual foresight, that power is the papacy. Occasionally it has used force; but its usual manner of winning out has been by its clever diplomacy, by playing off one power against another. Seldom during nearly a millennium and a half has any other power been a match for it in these respects.

It is interesting in this connection, and surely not a mere coincidence, that the Greek word for bishop is episcopos, and means literally a watcher or overseer. Thus the bishop of Rome, who poses as bishop of bishops, would be the one who watches over all others. Hence there is much significance in this prophecy, given so many hundreds of years before, which speaks of him as having eyes like the eyes of a man.

And a mouth speaking great things. In the book of Revelation this phrase is quoted, but the words “and blasphemies” are added: thus indicating the specific kind of “great things” which this power would speak. It should hardly be necessary to point to the claim of infallibility put forward by the papacy in 1870. Another blasphemous claim purportedly enables the Roman Catholic priest, whenever he pronounces certain Latin words, to “command” Jesus Christ to come down from heaven and again to become incarnate in the bread and wine before him.

In the original the next two verses are in the stately, measured style of the ancient poetry. Hence I give them here as in the Jewish translation:

***9. I beheld till thrones were placed, And One that was Ancient of Days did sit: His raiment was as white snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, And the wheels thereof burning fire.***

***10. 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.***

Many people have become hopelessly confused about this sublime passage describing the judgment, and about many other passages also, because they make the common mistake of supposing that no kind of judgment is to take place in heaven before the Second Coming of Christ. Yet here we have an unmistakable description of the great assize, what we may term court week in heaven, which is going on while events are still taking place among the nations of earth. The first words of the next verse are: “I beheld at that time because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke.” Verse ii. Obviously it is not an act or a period of executive judgment which is here depicted, but an investigative or examining

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judgment session. The books were opened.

As we shall see later, there is an important subject in the next chapter which is there termed the cleansing of the sanctuary or the justification of the sanctuary (see the notes on chapter 8:14), which is exactly parallel to the judgment scene here described. In other words, the cleansing of the sanctuary of the next chapter is the equivalent of the session of the judgment of this chapter. Both correspond to the great Day of Atonement of the Mosaic dispensation, the latter being only a type or a figure of this final day of atonement, the Yom Kippur of the universe. The Jewish Day of Atonement was essentially the close of the sacred year for the Hebrews; it was a solemn day of accounts, of settling the records of the previous twelve months. Similarly we have in this heavenly court a sublime description of the Yom Kippur for all mankind. The judgment was set, and the books were opened.

This transcendently sublime event takes place in heaven, not on this earth. The ten thousand times ten thousand who are here spoken of as standing before the Ancient of Days are not in any sense human sinners arraigned before the judgment seat, but are the innumerable angels or ministering spirits who are constantly attendant on the Creator to carry out His will. Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 5:11.

Every instructed Christian knows that God the Father is a personal Being. He sent His Son to become a man to show us what the Father is like, so far as we are able to comprehend. In the beginning also man was created in the "image" of his Maker.

The judgment has set, the books have been opened;  
How shall we stand in that great day  
When every thought, and word, and action,  
God, the righteous Judge, shall weigh?

The work is begun with those who are sleeping,  
Soon will the living here be tried,  
Out of the books of God's remembrance  
His decision to abide.

Oh, how shall we stand that moment of searching,  
When all our sins those books reveal?  
When from that court, each case decided,  
Shall be granted no appeal?

***11. I beheld at that time because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire.***

As already remarked, this word beheld really signifies a progressive action. The prophet was looking attentively, or watching continuously, and the events followed in succession. We have in the first clause an absolute proof that these human events are represented as taking place on earth while the judgment scene was taking place in heaven. It was while the judgment was set that the prophet was attracted by the voice of the great words which the horn spoke. The text says at that time, that is, while he was beholding, this speaking with great words took place. Doubtless the proclamation of papal infallibility in 1870 was one of these great words. When we remember that, according to the prophecy of the 2300 days (years) of chapter 8:14, the beginning of the judgment in heaven took place in 1844 and has since been going forward, we can appreciate how it was precisely at that time that these great words were spoken.

Later on, or the next thing in order, so far as this power is represented, the beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire. Thus the end of this power comes, not with its conversion, but with its utter destruction, as shown also by 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

***12. And as for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.***

Here we have additional evidence, if such were needed, that the Bible does not sanction the theory that there is to be a long period (a thousand years) of gospel proclamation after the second coming of Christ. The blasphemous power of the verses just preceding is not spoken of as being converted, but as continuing its work until it is given to be burned with fire. Its life was not to be prolonged, as had been the

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case with the other beasts, after their dominion was taken away. Sir Isaac Newton rightly infers from this verse that, when the final end comes, all the other beasts are still alive, though the dominion of the first three has been taken away. This text tells us that in this respect the little-horn power is different; it does not have a prolonging of life granted it, when its dominion is taken away; but dominion and life both end together. It was different in the case of the others. As for the rest of the beasts, they had lived on until the end of all together, though their dominion had been taken away long before.

This next verse also, as well as the one following, should be set off in metrical form; as in the Jewish translation:

***13. I saw in the night visions, And, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven One like unto a Son of man, And He came even to the Ancient of Days, And He was brought near before Him.***

Following the many Jewish commentators on this passage, the modern “critics” refuse to see in this passage any reference to Jesus as the Messiah who is to receive the kingdom of the world from God the Father. They tell us that the one like unto a Son of man is not the Messiah, but simply an idealized symbolic representative of the entire people of God. And they quote as proving this the twenty-seventh verse succeeding, where the everlasting kingdom is said to be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. Surely both ideas could be true simultaneously; for when Christ receives the kingdom, He forthwith invites His people: “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34.

But there are other serious misunderstandings of this verse. The being here spoken of as like unto a Son of man, must be a representative of Christ. His coming to the Ancient of Days cannot be His Second Coming to this earth, unless we say that God the Father (“the Ancient of Days”) has His throne here on this earth. No; it is all a transaction which takes place in heaven, before Christ comes back to this earth the second time. In Luke 19:12-15 Christ is represented as a nobleman who goes into a far country (heaven) “to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.... And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, etc.” This parable is exactly in harmony with the events brought to view here in Daniel; for Christ receives His kingdom from the Ancient of Days while still in heaven; and then proceeds to come to this earth to take possession of the long-lost or alienated dominion. All the affairs of this earth are first settled at the headquarters of the universe.

***14. And there was given Him dominion, And glory, and a kingdom, That all the peoples, 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.***

All through the New Testament, though most specifically in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is spoken of as our great High Priest, now carrying on a genuine priestly work for us in the heavenly sanctuary. But someday this work as a priest in behalf of sinners will come to an end; then will also end the probation of every soul. Then, by a real transaction with His Father in heaven, as represented here in these symbolic scenes, He becomes a King, and thereafter speedily returns to this earth to claim His inheritance.

***15. As for me, Daniel, my spirit was grieved in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.***

***16. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.***

The word here rendered grieved means rather “pained” or “distressed.” Daniel was anxious about the future of God’s people; this was why the vision troubled him.

***17. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings that shall arise out of the earth.***

***18. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever.***

Evidently the heavenly being who was making the meaning of these things known to Daniel realized that the most important single event in them all was this final one, when the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom. Thus he passes over all the intervening centuries; they are of minor



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importance. The great climax of all the ages of history is this tremendous truth that at some time, no matter how much deferred in the wisdom and providence of God, the time will come when the saints “shall receive the kingdom.”

**19. Then I desired to know the truth concerning the fourth beast, which was diverse from all of them, exceeding terrible, whose teeth were of iron, and its nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet;**

**20. And concerning the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three fell, even that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke great things, whose look was more stout than its fellows.**

Very little additional information is given here which is not given in the preceding verses. That the fourth beast’s nails were of brass or bronze is one additional item, and interesting, though not important. It is even more interesting to learn here that the eleventh horn, though little to begin with, grew until here it is described as having a look that was more stout than its fellows, which would imply that it not only displaced three of them, but finally became greater than any of them.

**21. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;**

**22. 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.**

Several highly important additional facts are here stated by Daniel, facts which he had not given in the previous account, but which he must have learned in some way before the formal explanation by the angelic interpreter.

1. This eleventh horn, at first little but finally more stout than the others, had made war with the saints. In other words, it had been a persecuting power, carrying on its campaign of persecution against the people of God.

2. This eleventh horn, which we have already identified as the papacy, prevailed against the people of God until certain events occur. These events seem to be three in number: first, a certain coming of the Ancient of Days, which is probably synonymous with the beginning of the judgment scene of verses 9-12. Second, until judgment was given to the saints of the Most High. This might be looked upon as the outcome of the judgment already mentioned; for it could hardly be at its beginning. Elsewhere we learn that this first judgment is only a preliminary one. That after its completion, that is, after probation ends and the Second Coming of Christ occurs, then the saints themselves enter upon a period during which they in turn become assistants at the work of judging the remainder of mankind, the wicked, who are still in their graves and are not to live again until the thousand years are finished. Revelation 20:5. In 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3 Paul is evidently referring to this very passage in Daniel, when he says that the saints shall judge the world, and even judge angels. Third, this little-horn power is to prevail against the saints until the time comes that the saints possessed the kingdom. In other words, this entire text seems to mean that this little-horn power is to make war against the saints and to prevail against them right down to the close of all human probation, which is immediately preceding the Second Coming. No other meaning seems possible, if we take these words at their face value.

**23. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.**

**24. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings.**

These verses are essentially a repetition of what has been given before, with no important additional information. The next verse is a most important one, packed with facts, most of which have not been previously stated, but which give many points identifying this power with the papacy beyond the possibility of a doubt.

**25. And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time.**

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Entire volumes have been written concerning the events here outlined in such brief order. We can deal only with the larger aspects of the events mentioned, referring the interested reader to such volumes as the Source Book for Bible Students and other volumes which treat these subjects in greater detail. Various commentaries, such as those by E. B. Elliott, Uriah Smith, and others, have dealt with this verse at length.

He shall speak words against the Most High. The titles assumed by the popes, the claims which they have made for some fifteen hundred years about being able to open and shut heaven, about being able to forgive sins, or about being able to grant indulgences for sin, ought to make any normally minded person realize that these claims are indeed speaking words against the Most High. To all their other claims they have added that of being literally infallible. The parallel prophecy in chapter 11:36 says of this same power that he “shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods.” Of what other power in all history has this been so literally true as of the papacy?

Antiochus Epiphanes was a mere bungler, a greenhorn in blasphemy, when compared with the adeptness, the mature proficiency, of this power. And Epiphanes had a brief career of only a few years; whereas Rome has been doing these things for more than a thousand years, and on a world-wide scale.

An authoritative Roman Catholic dictionary says: “The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God.” Also: “The Pope is as it were God on earth sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief king of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been entrusted by the Omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom.” - P. F. L. Ferraris, Ecclesiastical Dictionary, art. “The Pope.” In an encyclical letter in 1894, Pope Leo XIII also declared: “We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.” Plenty of other similar words against the Most High might be quoted. Epiphanes did not do anything like this, nor on such a scale.

Shall wear out the saints of the Most High. Surely no other power in all history has so persistently and completely worn out the saints of the Most High. The Septuagint version translates the verb by *katatripsei*, which means to wear away or rub away, as of clothes or other substance. The millions of martyrs from many countries and for many centuries all rise to testify that this work of wearing out has been most persistent and cruelly effectual.

He shall think to change the times and the law. By a comparison with the clauses preceding, we are justified in saying that “the times and the law” here mentioned must also be those of the Most High. It would be childish to say of any power whatever that it should think (or attempt) to change the times and the law of any man or set of men; for such changes have been accomplished times without number. Something far different is here brought to view. It is given as a climax in the work of this bold, blasphemous power that it would “think” to change the times and the law of God, though of course any such thinking or attempting could never make any actual change in these, so far as eternal realities are concerned.

But has the papacy attempted even this? Of course it has. In its catechisms and other authoritative doctrinal textbooks, it has left out the second commandment of the Decalogue, in order to permit its practice of adoring images. Then it has divided the tenth commandment in order to make up the proper number ten. Even worse, if possible, it has taken out the Sabbath of Jehovah, the only official memorial of the Creator which He ever gave to the race of mankind, and has substituted the Sunday or the first day of the week. It has repeatedly boasted that this change is a mark or a sign of its authority to ordain holy days for the people of God, even directly contrary to what God has commanded. Any authoritative doctrinal work of the Roman Catholic Church will confirm these statements. There is not the slightest secrecy about any of the acts of religious vandalism mentioned above; they are known to all the world.

Students of history know that the Council of Trent was the great and authoritative attempt of the Roman Catholic Church to meet the rising power of Protestantism. The Reformers had appealed to the Bible and the Bible only as the supreme guide in faith and practice. How did the Council of Trent answer this claim? It officially answered it by claiming the presence of continual inspiration as residing in the Roman Catholic Church, making its tradition the outgrowth of this continual churchly inspiration, and appealing to the long-established change of the Sabbath into the Sunday as the standing proof of this inspired authority of the church. They said that this change had never been done or commanded by Christ, but had been done solely on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Ever since this Council of Trent (AD 1545-1563) this change of the Sabbath to Sunday has been pointed to by Catholics as the mark or sign of the church’s ability to change even the fourth commandment of the Decalogue.

James A. Montgomery, one of the leading American scholars in this field, translates this passage: “He shall think to change seasons and law;” and he adds that the “seasons” here referred to “are the calendar feasts of the church.” - Commentary, page 311. This would make these words equivalent to the

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rhetorical figure of hendiadys, or one through two, and would mean the seasons of the law, or the law about the seasons, or the calendar seasons of the church. Montgomery then goes on to point out that Antiochus (whom he thinks is the one here referred to) attempted to revise the Jewish calendar, and tried to make the Jews profane the Sabbath. All of this goes far to show that Antiochus may well be regarded as a preliminary type of the later and greater antichrist; for this is exactly what Rome has been doing for centuries and on a global scale. See also the Smith-Goodspeed translation.

What more evidence is needed on this point?

And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. The word they must include both the saints and the times and the law. All commentators are agreed that this is symbolic or prophetic time, and that it equals three and a half prophetic years, or this many times 360 years, which amounts to 1260 literal years. This period is mentioned repeatedly in these chapters of Daniel and in the book of the Revelation. See Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5.

They are to be reckoned from AD 538, when the decree of Justinian went into effect making the bishop of Rome the head of all the churches. Counting 1260 years from this date, we reach the year 1798. In this year Berthier, with a French army sent by Napoleon, entered Rome, proclaimed a republic in place of the papacy, and took the pope prisoner, carrying him off to France, where he died later in exile.

***26. But the judgment shall be set, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.***

The judgment here mentioned must refer to the same judgment which has been already mentioned, and which we have decided must be a judgment now going on in heaven. We have reason to believe that this began in 1844 and will last until the end of human probation. The word they is somewhat ambiguous; it can hardly refer to those who take part in the judgment in heaven, except indirectly; it probably should be understood impersonally, as referring to people or nations generally. Within modern times there has been a strong movement toward separating the Roman Catholic Church from the governments of all those various states where she has had her own way for so many centuries, as for instance in the Philippine Islands, in Spain, in Mexico, and in most of the South American states. In all these countries it is conspicuously true that revolting peoples have taken away the dominion of the church on a large scale. On the other hand, in such countries as America and England, there are strong movements the other way. The same is true in Germany and throughout most countries which are nominally Protestant. This latter tendency points forward to the time when this great power is to say in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning." Revelation 18:7. Such is the time when the "death stroke" is to be fully "healed" (Revelation 13:12) and when all are again to wonder "after the beast" (verse 3). This triumph is to be extremely brief and takes place only at the close of human history, and it may thus be properly omitted in the text here under consideration.

Unto the end. This may signify the end of the dominion, that is, until this dominion or power is all taken away; or it may mean the final end of the power itself. In the latter case this phrase would be equivalent to the fate of this same power as described in Daniel 11:45: "He shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

On the other hand it may mean until the end of human history or the end of human probation. In this last case it would mean that the final attempt at recovering her lost world dominion will take place only in the last remnants of time, and will be followed closely or immediately by the end of all human history and by the Second Coming of Christ. This is probably its true meaning.

***27. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms 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.***

Here we have a reassuring glimpse of the final outcome of all the turmoil and persecution through which the people of God have had to pass in the present order of things. God's plans for His people are not to be thwarted; they will yet be carried through in all their wisdom and completeness. It is the part of faith and patience to await that glorious outcome in the assurance that, in only a little while, "He that comes shall come, and shall not tarry." Hebrews 10:37.

***28. Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts much troubled me, and my***

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*countenance was changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.*

The phrase, the end of the matter is literally “the end of the word,” which Charles says is a technical expression signifying the end of the vision, as we write “Finis” at the end of a book. Daniel was much troubled or “alarmed” at what he had seen; but he kept the matter to himself for a time, and only afterward wrote it out as we have it in this chapter.

Note on the History of the Interpretation of the Four Empires of Daniel 2 and 7. The “critics” point to the fact that the Sibylline Oracles, which were written in Greek “not later than 140 BC,” (R. H. Charles), interpret the fourth empire as applying to the Seleucidae or the Greek rulers of Syria, who were then oppressing the Jews. How could we expect the Jews of that early day to have a correct view of this series of world empires?

The author of 1 Enoch (“written before 64 BC,” says R. H. Charles) similarly applies Daniel 7 to the Greek rulers of his day.

Josephus also is quoted as applying the prophecy of Daniel 8 to the persecuting work of Antiochus Epiphanes, though in the same connection Josephus says that Daniel also wrote about Rome as the destroyer of Judea, though he did not want to say anything further on that point.

In 4 Ezra (AD 80-120) we have the curious statement of the author that this fourth empire ought to be Rome; though this was not the interpretation which the angel had given to Daniel in the first place; in other words, this angel had been mistaken in his interpretation, and this author of 4 Ezra wished to correct this mistake.

Porphyry (AD 233-304, Charles) also taught that the fourth empire was that of the Syrian Greek kings. The same can be said of Ephraem Syrus (AD 300-350).

On the other hand, the identification of the fourth empire with Rome was taught by the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas (ca. AD 100-120, Driver), and by Hippolytus (ca. AD 220, Driver), as we have already noted (see pages 87, 88), and by most of the church fathers. Driver adds that this interpretation “is met with likewise among Jewish authorities” of that time.

Driver quotes Hippolytus as follows: “The legs of iron are the Romans, being as strong as iron; then come the toes, partly of iron, partly of clay, in order to represent the democracies which are to arise afterwards. . . . The little horn growing up among the others is antichrist.” Surely this is wonderfully clear insight for a person who was living around AD 220.

All the “critics” admit that the New Testament in numerous places interprets the fourth empire of Daniel as being Rome. What they call the “little apocalypse” (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) appeals definitely to Daniel’s prophecy and applies it to a certain work of Rome which was still future in Christ’s day. Paul also in more than one place, and the book of the Revelation in numerous instances, quote Daniel in such a way as to show that they considered much of Daniel’s prophecies as still future in their day, applying these visions unmistakably to Rome, pagan and papal.

Driver, one of the great leaders of the “critical” school, admits, “So far as the mere symbolism of the vision [of Daniel 7] goes, there is no objection to this interpretation,” that is, the application to Rome. He goes on to say that the Roman Empire has ended, yet the kingdom of the Messiah has not been set up!

The “critics” make much of the alleged fact that the ten horns are hard to identify with any ten specific kingdoms which arose out of the Roman Empire. While it may be admitted that commentators are not agreed as to which kingdoms are meant by these ten divisions, others, as loyal to the Bible (like C. H. H. Wright), urge that the number ten is often used in the Bible for an indefinite number, in contrast with the number seven, which usually means completeness and definiteness. No one can deny that Rome was broken up into numerous divisions, which persisted as sometimes more and sometimes less than the number ten. No one can deny that another and different sort of power did arise among these divisions, and that three of the first powers disappeared before it. This eleventh horn corresponded in a wonderfully accurate way to the career of the papacy. These are outstanding facts which cannot be denied.

Since these divisions of the Roman Empire are always spoken of as ten in number, in spite of the fact that three were destroyed before the eleventh or “little horn,” it seems certain that the number ten must be indefinite. Otherwise there would be some mention of “seven” as remaining after the three were plucked up. On the contrary, throughout the entire book of Revelation, even in those passages which must apply only at the last of time, or immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ, it is always this same number ten, and not seven. See Revelation 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 12, 16.

It is needless to follow down through the succeeding centuries and show the full history of this interpretation of the fourth empire as applying to Rome. All the Protestant Reformers who have left us

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anything on the subject gave this interpretation to the prophecy. With the passing of the centuries this application has become increasingly clear and indisputable. This and the other prophecies have become almost like so many divine thumbprints and fingerprints made in advance; for they fit the Roman power and nothing else. However, it is only as we compare all the various parts of the prophetic picture, as given in the parallel visions of Daniel, as well as in the prophecies of Paul and those in the Revelation, that the force of the argument becomes overwhelming. Seemingly nothing but a determined will to disbelieve can deny the divine meaning of these prophecies. The great antichrist of prophecy has already appeared, and it is unreasonable for the futurists to deny all this cumulative evidence, and look for these many predictions to be fulfilled by some sort of superman who is yet to appear.

Nor can we pause here to point out how a misinterpretation of the Messianic kingdom has on many occasions down through the centuries resulted in a fanatical view of the church's relation to the kingdoms of this world. The Zealots were by no means the last to attempt to bring in the kingdom of God through political or even military means. Augustine's "City of God" was conceived in this fanatical spirit; and his attitude toward heretics prepared the way for the horrible persecutions practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. A similar attitude toward heretics may be expected in every case where the kingdom of the Messiah is looked upon as being ushered in by human effort and without any miraculous intervention of God. Augustine's doctrine that the church is here and now the kingdom of God involves the idea that the church has a divine commission to subdue by one means or another all earthly opposition. The pages of history are full of the horrible ways in which this idea has been carried out.

In our day the same conception of the kingdom is still widely taught, even among non-Roman peoples. It is the prime idea behind the widespread teaching of the "social gospel" and the ecumenical movement for uniting all the churches of the entire world into one organization. If the latter idea ever gets to the place where it has command of sufficient national or international power, we may look for its advocates to use any means within sight to carry out their program, by making the world over into what they think the kingdom of God ought to be.

The modern world-wide movement for the union of all professedly Christian bodies, or what is called the "ecumenical movement," reaches its ultimate goal in a World Council of Churches with subordinate councils in various parts of the world. Such a union of the churches, when given full power, will influence governments to enact religious or semi religious laws desired by the churches.

Then may heaven have pity upon the poor conscientious individualists who will refuse to fall in line with this artificial and unchristian program. The persecutions inevitably following such a fanatical course on the part of the great majority of "Christendom" are brought to view in the book of the Revelation, chapters 13, 14, and elsewhere. Such a false and fanatical view about the Messianic kingdom has been the source of most of the religious persecutions in the past and is surely destined to be a similar cause of trouble in the impending future.

For a comprehensive treatment of this whole subject of the history of prophetic interpretation the interested reader should consult the four-volume work by LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Review and Herald, Takoma Park, Washington D.C.

## 8. THE CAREER OF THE LITTLE HORN

Beginning with the first of this chapter, the Hebrew language is resumed, and it continues to the end of the book. There is no satisfactory explanation for this use of the two languages, but a discussion of the conjectures regarding the problem is given in the Introduction, pages 1-4.

The chief symbols used in this chapter are a ram, a he-goat, and a little horn which grows out of a preceding horn and becomes exceeding great. Various terms are used in speaking of the sanctuary or the temple. A notable time symbol of 2300 evenings and mornings seems to constitute the central idea of the chapter. The entire vision may be regarded as having been given largely for the purpose of developing this period of prophetic time.

While many commentators apply the symbols connected with this little horn to events which took place in the times of the Maccobees, the position here taken is that this vision begins with the time of the prophet and runs down to the end of the Christian age, or the bringing in of the kingdom of God. Thus it runs parallel to the visions of both chapter 2 and chapter 7. This makes the symbol of the little horn and its work apply to the long career of Rome in both its imperial and its papal aspects.



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***1. 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.***

A good argument in favor of the historicity of the book of Daniel is the frankness with which the various visions and sections of the book are specifically dated. As we have already seen (Introduction, page 2), there are ten sections to the book, and each section is definitely dated. This section is assigned to the third year of Belshazzar, in 550 or 547, since Belshazzar had become king in the winter of 553/552 or in the winter of 550/549 BC.

Daniel was now an old man. He had been in captivity from 605 to this year, or a total of about fifty-five years; and as he was probably around sixteen or eighteen years of age when brought to Babylon, he would now be well over seventy. He knew that the seventy years of the captivity prophesied by Jeremiah would soon expire, and he had a strong hope that he might live to see the promised restoration of his nation to the land of their fathers.

The previous vision here spoken of, that which appeared unto me at the first, is doubtless that of the four great beasts, as given in the preceding chapter.

***2. And I saw in the vision; now it was so, that when I saw, I was in Shushan the palace [margin, "castle"], which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision, and I was by the river Ulai.***

The "critics" have tried to cut down what they consider unnecessary repetition of words here, for there is obvious tautology. The meaning is not affected either way, though, so why should anyone want to change it? The fact of this visible tautology is splendid evidence for the extreme carefulness with which the original text has been transmitted to us.

The statement here given seems to mean that the prophet was not transported bodily to Shushan, but merely saw it in vision. The palace, or rather castle, of Shushan had formerly been the capital of Elam, and is more familiar to us in modern times under the name of Susa. According to the Greek historian Xenophon, it was used as a winter residence by the Persian kings, who spent the rest of the year at Babylon and Effiatana. As it was the people of this country who were so soon to capture Babylon and thus to become the second in the series of world empires, it seems fitting for this vision to take place in this local capital which presently was to become of much greater importance. The river Ulai here mentioned has been identified with a large artificial canal which flowed past the town of Susa and is still in existence. The spot where Daniel was allegedly buried is not far away.

***3. 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.***

***4. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; and no beasts could stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and magnified himself.***

As this symbol of the two-horned ram is definitely explained by the angel in the twentieth verse to represent the kingdom of Medo-Persia, there can be no question about the interpretation. It remains therefore for us merely to consider the appropriateness of the various aspects of the symbol.

Which had two horns. Two related peoples, the Medes and the Persians, were united into one nation. The early history of both these peoples is lost in the legends and myths of antiquity. Both were of the Indo-European stock, thus being radically different from the Semitic peoples. The homeland of the Medes was in the mountainous parts of what is now called the west of Persia and the east of Armenia. In ancient times all these regions had a very much greater rainfall than at present, with the result that they were the scat of populous, thriving communities, with a good climate. Historians know very little about the early days of the Medes. In 612 BC (formerly given as 606), Cyaxares, king of the Medes, helped to destroy Nineveh and the other cities of Assyria. The Babylonians were confederated with the Medes in this destruction of Assyria, and the young king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, married the daughter of Cyaxares. A more or less peaceful relationship existed between these restless peoples until the rise of Cyrus the Persian.

Cyrus revolted against Astyages, the son of Cyaxares, and by his victory in 550 the Medes became

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absorbed into the rising Persian Empire. However, the Persians treated the Medes more as partners than as a subject race. Many prominent Medes were employed as officials and generals; the ceremonial of the Median court was adopted by the Persians; and the new sovereigns spent their summers in Efflatana, the old capital of Media, their winters being spent at Susa, which had a milder climate.

But one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. This is a clear and accurate statement of the relationship between these two peoples. The Persians became the dominant members of the union; but the Medes were never treated as inferiors or a subjugated people, but rather as confederates. The empire is always known as the Medo-Persian Empire.

The way in which the Persian monarchs extended their empire westward and northward and southward has already been spoken of in the notes on the seventh chapter. See the comment on chapter 7:5. The large eastern conquests of the Persians were not of much importance to the Jewish people, and probably on this account they are here omitted. In the days of its greatness, this empire of the Medo-Persians covered a far greater geographical extent than did the preceding empire of Babylonia. But it was a loosely united affair, the policy of the Persian sovereigns being to give a large amount of autonomy to the various countries or districts, where governors or satraps ruled and conducted little courts almost like independent kings. The common title of the Persian monarchs was “king of kings,” or “king of the countries.” Doubtless it was because of this looseness of its imperial arrangement that the Persian Empire was called “inferior” to the Babylonian. Chapter 2:39. As the Persian Empire sprawled out from India to Ethiopia, it certainly was not inferior to its predecessors in either extent or in population. It is also true that no other nations or peoples could withstand its power during the time allotted to it by divine providence.

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

***6. And he came to the ram that had the two horns, which I saw standing before the river, and ran upon him in the fury of his power.***

The angel also explained the he-goat as meaning Greece, and the notable horn between his eyes as representing “the first king” of Greece, who was Alexander the Great. Hence we need not do any more than again to call attention to the appropriateness of these symbols. While almost universally called the king of Greece, because he was of Greek descent and because he made himself king of all the various Greek states before he set out for the conquest of Asia, Alexander was primarily king of Macedon, and many writers have adopted the fashion of calling the empire he founded the Macedonian Empire. But his ambition was to go to war against Persia not as a Macedonian, but as the successor of Achilles and the head of all Greece, that thus he might avenge the former invasions of Greece by the Persian kings Darius and Xerxes.

It is significant that many of the Greeks used to speak of themselves as the goats’ people, using the goat as a national or tribal symbol. On the coins of Lysimachus, one of the generals and successors of Alexander, the latter is represented as deified, with a horn on his head and a diadem.

No words are needed to point out how the picture of great swiftness given in this prophetic description of the he-goat, over the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground, exactly fits the astonishing speed and completeness of Alexander’s conquests. As Appianus, the Roman historian, remarks: “He [Alexander] was never defeated, and he finished almost every war in one or two battles.... He acquired as much of the earth as he saw, and died while he was devising means to capture the rest.”

With the battle of Arbela, Alexander became master of the entire world as he knew it. He had towering dreams of transforming the world by means of Greek civilization; but when he had scarcely begun to translate these dreams into something like reality, he died, in 323 BC.

***7. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with anger 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.***

Arrian (AD 100?-170?), the Greek historian, who has left the most complete and trustworthy record of Alexander that we have, declares:

“I am persuaded, there was no nation, city, nor people then in being whither his [Alexander’s] name did not reach; for which reason, whatever origin he might boast of, or claim to himself, there seems to me to have been some divine hand presiding over both his birth and actions, insomuch that no mortal upon

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earth either excelled or equaled him.”

***8. And the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and instead of it there came up four notable horns toward the four winds of heaven.***

Since all these events here described regarding Alexander and his successors occurred a full two hundred years after the time of Daniel the prophet, we have a clear case of predictive prophecy which was fulfilled in an accurate and detailed way. All this, of course, is considered on the basis that this book of Daniel was actually written by the real Daniel who lived in the last days of the Babylonian Empire and the first days of the Persian. No wonder, then, that all skeptical “critics” have sought to show that Daniel’s book was not really written at the time spoken of. They try to make us believe that it was written long afterward, in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes; and thus its statements would not be real prophecies, but history in pseudo-prophetic style.

Porphyry (AD 233-304), who, the Encyclopedia Britannica says, “is well known as a violent opponent of Christianity and defender of paganism,” was the first to take this position; for he said that the statements in Daniel are so minutely accurate that they must be history, not prophecy. From that day to this, unbelievers have followed the same line of reasoning. The school of Porphyry is still with us; and in spite of the overwhelming evidences now available for the historicity and authenticity of the book of Daniel, they continue to repeat this old charge of vaticinium post eventum, or that it is only a pretended prophecy written long after the events took place.

When he was strong. One might expect that it would be when he had been weakened by old age, or when he had been worn out by overwhelming enemies; but the prophecy correctly describes the tragic end of Alexander, who died a few months before reaching the age of thirty-three.

Instead of it ... four notable horns. Students of the history of these times know that within a comparatively few years, following the battle of Ipsus in 301 BC, the empire of Alexander was divided into exactly four parts. For the details of this division, see the note on chapter 7:6. Wright says that this “quadruple character of the empire remained more or less visible until the subjugation of the Greek Empire by the Romans.”-Daniel and His Prophecies, page 177.

As the division was first made, Ptolemy got Egypt and thus became the king of the south, as spoken of in chapter ii; Seleucus had Syria and Babylon to the north of Palestine, becoming the king of the north, in Jewish parlance. Lysimachus got Asia Minor, and Cassander had Macedonia and the adjacent lands. With the Mediterranean to the west and the desert to the east, there are no kings of either the west or the east, as spoken of by the Jews and Bible prophets.

***9. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the cast, and toward the glorious land.***

From this point onward the various schools of commentators are divided in their interpretations. Up to here, all are agreed. It is hard to imagine what strange interpretations might not have been given to the symbols of the ram and the he-goat, or to the great horn on the head of the latter, or to the four which replaced it, if the angel had not so definitely given us the meaning.

It would seem reasonable that the key to the prophecy from here on is to be found by checking this line of prophecy with those of chapters 2 and 7. If the second chapter is clear in its prophetic outline of the world’s history from the time of the prophecy down to the consummation of all things and the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God, it would seem reasonable to expect that the succeeding lines of prophecy would be likely to cover much the same ground. We apply this hypothesis to the study of the seventh chapter, and it seems to work admirably. The series of the four great beasts, with the other symbols following, seems also to cover certain aspects of human history from the days of Babylon to the end of the age and the beginning of the ever lasting kingdom of God. On this basis, we should expect that this eighth chapter which we are now studying would cover the same line of events, though presenting them from a somewhat different point of view.

In other words, it is reasonable to assume that all the four great lines of prediction which we find in this book of Daniel-the image of chapter 2, the four beasts of chapter 7, the symbols of the eighth and ninth (which go together), and the last prophecy in the book, which unfortunately has been divided among three chapters-cover much the same ground.

The “critics” do this, for they try to equate all these lines together; only instead of using the easy

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prophecies to explain the more difficult, they seem resolved to turn the problem around the other way, and wish to interpret the second chapter and the seventh in terms of what they think is the meaning of the eighth and eleventh. They are convinced that these last two lines stop with the times of the Maccabees; so they endeavor to crowd the first line, or the symbols of the great image, and also the symbols of the seventh chapter, into this same short compass.

The more reasonable method would seem to be to reverse this entirely. Since the second and the seventh chapters both seem to be clear and easily understood, and obviously cover all the ground from the day of the prophet down to the end of the gospel age, the presumption is that the eighth chapter and the eleventh do the same. Since we do not find any plain reference to the work of Antiochus Epiphanes in either the second chapter or the seventh, we may be safe in assuming that we are not to find such a reference in the others. And the meaning may be that this persecution of the Jews by the king of the north was hardly of sufficient importance to be brought within the field of the prophet's vision, in scanning the historic pathway of the people of God from that day down to the end of the world.

If then we are right in saying that these four great lines of prophecy all run parallel with one another, we shall expect to find in the prophecy which we are here studying some plain reference to Rome as the fourth kingdom, perhaps even clearer symbols of the apostate form of religion which was erected upon the Roman imperial foundation. We shall acquire confidence that we are on the right track, by seeing how readily the prophecy of this chapter is interpreted on this basis.

And out of one of them came forth a little horn. Here is a horn represented as coming out of one of the four horns, or out of one of the four divisions of Alexander's empire. That is, it is a distinct power, separate entirely from these four, though in its origin it might properly be spoken of as arising from one of them. It became in reality a fifth horn, or an entirely independent kingdom and separate from any of the four; and from this point onward it is the only nation or power referred to in this prophecy. The other three horns are hereafter completely ignored. This plainly implies that this fifth horn not only succeeds the Diadochi or the successors of Alexander, but that it absorbs them all.

All this fits Rome perfectly; but it certainly does not fit Epiphanes. He was only one of a series of some twenty-six kings who ruled the Syrian fourth of Alexander's empire, these twenty-six kings collectively, or the kingdom which they ruled, being one of the four horns. Thus Epiphanes was, for the time of his career, the personification of this horn; he was this horn. How could he be said to come out of himself? It is an utter confusion of the clear symbolism to speak of him as also representing a separate and distinct horn apart from the four. He was not even the greatest of his line or his dynasty; his father, Antiochus III, received the title of "the Great." He himself assumed the title of Epiphanes, meaning "God Manifest," or, as some would tone it down to, "The Illustrious." His contemporaries and his successors often called him "Epimanes," or "The Madman."

Other points of identification which rule out Epiphanes and oblige us to apply this symbol to Rome in its total career, both imperial and papal, will be considered as we proceed.

Some writers who are opposed to the identification of Rome as the little horn go to great lengths in perverting plain, authentic history in order to evade the idea that Rome can reasonably be described symbolically as arising from one of the divisions of Alexander's empire. The language here used, about this new power coming out of one of the preceding kingdoms, plainly means something much more than merely historical succession. If the latter idea is what is meant, then every succeeding prophetic symbol would have been represented as coming out of the preceding. Plainly something more is meant; and this something more fits the empire of Rome precisely.

Since this Greek Empire is always spoken of as of universal extent, and Alexander is traditionally said to have wept because there were no more worlds to conquer, the rising state of Rome would necessarily have to come out of some part of this kingdom of Alexander. As a matter of historic fact, Cassander's dominions extended to the west and included all the many Greek colonies which were scattered around the borders of the Mediterranean basin, including those of Italy.

Some centuries before this, or from about 800 BC, Greek colonists were flourishing in various parts of Italy, especially in the south, where such strong colonies existed that by the sixth century BC this district in the south of Italy became known as Magna Graecia. So strong also were the cultural aspects of these colonies that two of the leading systems of philosophy, the Pythagorean and the Eleatic, had their chief seats in Magna Graecia. The rising empire of the Latins sent an embassy to Alexander when he was at Babylon. In less than two centuries more, this set of Greek colonies in the west had become so strong that it could conquer the mother country, much as it would be if the United States were to conquer and absorb England and all her empire. Thus it is perfectly natural and accurately appropriate for the prophecy

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to represent the rising Roman Empire as emerging from one of the horns, the Macedonian or Grecian horn, of Alexander's empire.

Ethnologically the Romans and the Greeks were of the same stock. Vergil tells us that Rome was originally founded by colonies of Greeks, who reached the Tiber by way of the conquest of Troy. This is the record which the Romans always gave of themselves. The Latin language is also incontrovertible evidence of the historical fact that Rome grew out of Greece.

In still another sense did Rome and its empire grow out of the Macedonian or Grecian horn of the goat. In the battle of Pydna, 168 BC, Rome conquered Macedonia, and this event is regarded as the beginning of its world empire. The Greek Achaean League collapsed in 146, closely followed by the destruction of Corinth, the subjection of its people, and the full recognition of Greece as a Roman dependency. And it was at about this time, or in 161 BC, that the Roman League with the Jews brought the rising empire of the west into direct relationship with the Hebrew people.

Thus when the growing empire of Rome first came officially into the notice of this prophecy, this embryonic world empire could very appropriately be represented in symbol as just emerging from the western division of Alexander's empire. It had at that time recently conquered and subdued entirely this entire western division. From this conquest it soon proceeded in due course to take over all the rest of that world about which the son of Philip wept because it was the last he could see left to conquer.

In any way in which we are to understand the language of the prophecy, the fact is clear that this fifth horn succeeds and far surpasses the four. All this fits Rome exactly, and does not fit Antiochus Epiphanes, nor does it fit the Syrian kingdom of which he was one of the rulers.

Which waxed exceeding great. Notice the climax leading up to this term. The ram, or Medo-Persia, "became great" (verse 4, A.V.); the he-goat, or Alexander's empire, "waxed very great" (verse 8, A.V.); while this little horn "waxed exceeding great." What a contradiction of all the history it is to apply this last expression to Epiphanes, or even to the Syrian kingdom which he represented, when we compare his puny kingdom with those preceding him. He was constantly paying tribute to the Romans for his very existence; he was killed while trying to raise more tribute money; how then could he be spoken of as waxing "exceeding great," as compared to the Greek Empire or the Medo-Persian?

This expression is entirely appropriate when applied to Rome, first in its imperial form and then in its papal. The little horn of this chapter clearly means Rome as a unit, first as an empire and then as an ecclesiastical power greater than any civil empire. In this chapter no distinction is made between the empire of Rome and the succeeding combination of civil and church power, which for so many centuries has ruled the world from the same city. This little horn represents Rome in her entire career.

Contrastedly, the little horn of chapter 7 represents only or chiefly the papal phase of Rome. Many scholars have pointed out the slightly different language used in the original for these two powers. The Aramaic of chapter 7 is literally, "another horn, a little one;" while the Hebrew of this chapter admits of two translations: either "a horn less than littleness," that is, a very little horn. Or "a horn from littleness," that is, arising from a very small beginning, which would admirably describe the gradual and slow enlargement of the Latin city-state into the world empire of the Caesars, to be followed by the globe-encircling empire of the modern Roman pontiffs. Thus if the little horn of chapter 7 means only the papal form of Rome, while the little horn of this chapter covers both phases of the rule of the Imperial City, we can readily account for the slight differences in the language of the original.

As we shall see later, there are cogent reasons for regarding both the ninth and the eleventh chapters as being, not independent lines of prophecy, but as expansions or explanations of certain parts of this eighth chapter. One argument for this view is that both the ninth and the eleventh chapters seem like explanations; for they are in plain, straightforward language, not in symbols, like all the primary prophecies.

If this principle be accepted, we might very naturally look for something in chapter ii to correspond to the passage here under consideration, about the little horn growing out of a preceding horn, and finally becoming exceeding great. Such a parallel we seem to find in Daniel 11:23, where the same Roman power is spoken of as becoming strong "with a small people." This will be considered in due course.

***10. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them.***

Very similar language is used in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation, where the great red dragon



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is represented as casting a third of the stars of heaven down to the earth. Revelation 12:4. John may have been even quoting from this very passage here in Daniel. It is probably safe to interpret the host of heaven to mean here the rulers or dignitaries of the Jewish nation; though it might also be possible to look upon the entire language as a highly colored figure to bring out the lofty and arrogant claims and behavior of Rome in the days of its greatness. Imperial Rome was a totalitarian state, in which the emperor was the embodiment of the state and was deified when dead. He soon became deified while alive and was worshiped with divine honors. Many Christians during the times of the apostles and later yielded up their lives with joy, rather than burn incense to the emperor's divinity.

However, since this symbol of the little horn seems to be used to represent more especially the subsequent or papal aspect of Rome, this proud and arrogant behavior of the little horn after it had waxed exceeding great (verse 9) might well also portray the notorious claims and arrogant conduct of the politically ambitious bishops of Rome, in their relations with both the civil powers and the persecuted people of God. Proud arrogance in the face of Heaven is one of its chief characteristics.

***11. Yea, it magnified itself, even to the Prince of the host; and it took away from Him the continual burnt offering, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.***

Few terms in prophecy are more easily or more positively identified than this of the Prince of the host. Later in the chapter, in the interpretation of this vision as given by the angel, a similar phrase is used, The Prince of princes (verse 25); while in the eleventh chapter what must be an exact equivalent term is: "The Prince of the covenant" (chapter 11:22). All these terms are the same in meaning; and they all must without the slightest doubt refer to Jesus, the Son of God, who was crucified under the authority of the Romans. It seems little short of blasphemy to apply these terms to the Jewish high priest, Onias III, who, according to some accounts, was killed by a jealous Syrian official of Epiphanes, but who, according to other accounts, was not killed at all but escaped into Egypt. See page 243.

In many prophecies there is often what seems to be a disregard of historical continuity in the explanation of the symbols. There is a continuity of ideas, though this continuity may often seem to ignore the more exact historical continuity. This will appear in some of the passages next to be considered.

And it took away from Him the continual burnt offering. The reader should note carefully that the expression "burnt offering," here used and repeated several times in the following verses, is printed in italics in the English Bible, thereby showing that it is a supplied word and is not in the original Hebrew. The Hebrew word here translated "continual" is tamid, a well-known technical abbreviation in the Talmud and other Jewish writings, but found in this abbreviated form as a noun only in four more instances in this book of Daniel, so far as the Old Testament is concerned. It occurs frequently in the Talmud and other Jewish literature in this same form, that is, as a substantive or noun. Its meaning covered much more than the daily burnt offering; it included also everything that went with the daily service, such as the offering of incense and the lighting of the lamps. This abbreviation, tamid, meant all these acts collectively.

Hence C. H. H. Wright suggests the term "the perpetual service" instead of the one in the text, "the continual burnt offering." Others have proposed instead "the daily mediation," since the central idea of all the sanctuary and temple services is a mediation, or a work done by someone acting as a mediator between the sinner and his God.

It will help us greatly to keep in mind this fundamental idea of a continual mediation, when considering what is meant by the rest of this chapter. This continual mediation is as appropriate a term now, under the Christian dispensation, with our great High Priest ministering on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary, as it ever was for the Hebrews under the Mosaic system.

In the larger and truer aspects of the case, identically the same system of mediation has always prevailed. God has never had any other than the one system of salvation, from the days of Abel down to the close of all human probation. There always has been one and only one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:3. This prophecy declares that this continual mediation would be taken away "from Him," that is, from Christ; or, in other words, that His work as mediator would be interfered with or nullified.

All the sacrifices and attendant ceremonies as used throughout Old Testament times were only so many kindergarten object lessons, designed by God to direct the minds of the worshipers to the true mediatorial work of "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." Hebrews 8:2. Accordingly, if we find that the prophecy of this chapter extends past the time when the Jewish temple services were finally abolished, first by the superseding death of Christ and then physically by the violence of the Romans AD

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70, we cannot have any hesitation to apply the phrase here used, “the continual burnt offering,” or “the continual mediation,” to the mediatorial work of Christ in the primary sense, though applicable also to all the legitimate services here on earth designed by God to assist in carrying the minds of the worshipers to Christ’s mediatorial work in heaven.

On the other hand, all human devisings, no matter what their nature, which act as substitutes or as burlesques of God’s plan, are in reality taking away from Christ that “continual mediation” which He and He alone can carry on. “Every plant which My heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up.” Matthew 15:13.

There are countless ways in which individuals or nations can take away from Christ the benefits of His “continual mediation” on behalf of poor sinners. Every man who “takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face,” as the prophet Ezekiel expresses it (Ezekiel 14:4), is thereby making this “continual mediation” impossible, so far as he is concerned. Every pagan government which has sought to interfere with the worship of Jehovah, as all pagan rulers have done sooner or later, has been helping to take away this “continual mediation.” When imperial Rome instituted the apotheosis of its emperors, which was much like the deification of the mikado by the former Japanese government, it was meddling with this “continual mediation” in a high handed and most reprehensible way. An even more high handed and blasphemous interference with this “continual mediation” of Christ is seen in the teaching of the Roman Church concerning the mass, as will be explained later.

The belief that the pope is the effective mediator between the sinner and God, that none can approach God except through the pope or the pope’s representatives-this is one of the key doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. And surely this doctrine effectively takes away from Him (Christ) that continual mediation which is His due. There is only one Mediator between God and man, “Himself man, Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5.

Thus there are innumerable ways in which this prediction might be shown to have been fulfilled. But the prophecy is probably directed specifically against the deification of the Roman emperors, which continued as long as the empire existed, and the blasphemous perversion of the service of the Communion, which has prevailed ever since the fall of imperial Rome. This form of perversion and blasphemy strikes at the central idea of the work of Christ as the mediator between the sinner and his God.

Even the blame for the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes may without any casuistry be assigned to imperial Rome. Epiphanes was in fact a subordinate or puppet king of the rising Roman republic. All are familiar with the dramatic incident in 168 BC, in which the Roman envoy, C. Popillius Laenas, drew a circle in the sand around Epiphanes, demanding from the latter a promise to retire from Egypt before stepping outside the circle. But it is well known that Epiphanes was continually paying tribute to Rome; and no civil power can be regarded as truly independent while it thus pays tribute to another. The spoliation of the temple at Jerusalem and other temples was largely prompted by the urgent necessity on the part of Epiphanes to raise this tribute money; and his death was induced by one of these tribute-raising raids on a temple in Persia. Thus it would be technically correct to assign his entire career of outrage against the Jews as having been done under the authority or at the connivance of Rome.

Uriah Smith, who is by far the clearest and best of the commentators on the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, shows clearly that Epiphanes cannot be the power referred to by this symbol of the little horn. He proves conclusively that it must mean Rome. But he is not convincing when he seeks to prove that the symbolic language here used indicates the change from the pagan to the papal form of Roman rule.\* He seems to have been entirely unaware of the fact that the Hebrew term “tamid,” here translated “continual burnt offering,” but better given as “continual mediation,” is really a technical ecclesiastical abbreviation for the total system of daily mediatorial service, as carried on under the Mosaic system. It meant this and nothing else in the time of Daniel. In the Christian dispensation the term may appropriately be used also to designate the more spiritual worship by which the devout Christian consciously invokes the ascended Jesus as his one and only Mediator before the broken law of heaven.

It may be news to some of my readers that at least some of the leaders in the Millerite movement had the correct view of the meaning of the term “Daily.” In the *Midnight Cry*, October 4, 1843, this term is understood as meaning Christ’s daily or continual mediation in heaven on behalf of sinners, which was “taken away” by the work of the little horn. He revised chart of 1842, by Charles Fitch and Apollon Hale, omits the identification of paganism as the “daily,” thus by implication endorsing the correct view. This revised chart was the one which was endorsed (with some qualifications) by Ellen G. White. Crosier’s celebrated article in the *Day Star*, 1846, also commended by her, took the position that the sanctuary trodden down by the little horn is in heaven, not on the earth, the inevitable inference from this being that

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the “daily” must also refer to events in heaven. James White reprinted this Crosier article several times and expressly endorsed this interpretation of Daniel 8 as applying to the papacy. It was thus that “nearly all were united on the correct view of the ‘daily,’ as spoken of in Early Writings, pages 74, 75. Finally, Ellen White herself, in *The Great Controversy*, 1911 edition, page 65, specifically applies Daniel 8:12 to the work of the papacy. For further facts and evidence along this line see the paper of L. E. Froom, “Historical Setting and Background of the Term ‘Daily,’” September 1, 1948. I do not know of a single Adventist college in America which now teaches the view that the term “Daily” means paganism.

And the place of His sanctuary was cast down. This term, “the place of His sanctuary,” never had any other meaning in the time of Daniel than the city of Jerusalem and the temple which it contained. Now, in the Christian dispensation, with the temple at Jerusalem in hopeless ruins, this term properly directs our minds to the true sanctuary in heaven, which, as Paul says, “the Lord pitched, not man.” Hebrews 82.

Of course, it was the power of imperial Rome which in AD 70 took away once for all that Jewish “continual burnt offering,” and cast down “the place of His sanctuary.” This would be its obvious and only meaning for any intelligent Christian living during the first three or four centuries of the Christian Era. If the prophecy dealt only with events connected with the Jewish nation, this would be all that we would have any right to read from this prediction.

Bible believers agree that this prophecy extends on into the Christian Era, reaching down to the end of this age. Hence, though the language used was such as was familiar to Daniel and the Jewish people, we have a right to inquire what these terms must mean when used about events this side of the cross and this side of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

In the larger aspects of the subject, we have to refer these phrases about taking away from Him (Christ) the continual mediation and casting down the place of His sanctuary, to the blasphemous and sacrilegious work of the papacy in substituting the so-called “sacrifice of the mass” for the true sanctuary service in heaven, where Christ’s merits are daily being ministered in behalf of His people. It should be noted that the most essential idea of all worship is involved in the Catholic mass, only, however, to be burlesqued and blasphemed. Accordingly, if anything in all the career of apostasy were to be pointed out by a warning in a specific prophecy, surely this would be the one.

Note the following from a representative source attesting the Catholic doctrine concerning the mass:

“When the priest pronounces the tremendous words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from His throne, and places Him upon our altar to be offered up again as the victim for the sins of man. It is a greater power than that of monarchs and potentates. It is greater than that of saints and angels, greater than that of seraphim and cherubim. Indeed it is greater even than the power of the Virgin Mary. For, while the Blessed Virgin was the human agency by which Christ became incarnate a single time, the priest brings Christ down from heaven, and renders Him incarnate on our altar as the eternal Victim for the sins of man—not once but a thousand times! The priest speaks, and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God, bows His head in humble obedience to the priest’s command.”—Our Sunday Visitor, June 14, 1936.

Plenty of other evidence might be presented to show that the Catholic Church holds that the mass is a literal and physical repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary; that the “elements” ought to be worshiped as if Jesus were bodily present. Surely we have in this outstanding and indisputable set of facts the clear and unambiguous fulfillment of this prophecy: It took away from Him the continual mediation.”

As for casting down the place of His sanctuary, everybody knows that Rome did this very thing. It utterly destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple, and the latter has never been rebuilt. Epiphanes did not destroy the temple; he defiled it, he deliberately desecrated it; but he did not injure its structure in the least. Hence he never did what this prophecy predicted.

In passing, it ought to be noted and proclaimed from the housetops that the futurist school of prophecy, in pushing this and all the many related and parallel predictions into the future, when (they say) these things will be performed by the coming antichrist, are thereby seeking to remove the brand which the Holy Ghost in prophecy has placed upon popery. Let the true follower of Christ take heed and act accordingly.

As I have already pointed out, the position here taken is that this symbol of the little horn represents Rome in its long total career, first as the pagan or imperial despotism, warring against the Jewish people and then the early Christians. And finally, extending down to our own day and into the perilous future, warring against the Christian church. The two despotisms have ruled from the same center, and the transition from the one to the other is more in name than in fact; for the latter form is a mere continuance of

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the other. "The dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." Revelation 13:2.

Both powers, imperial Rome for several centuries and then papal Rome for well over a thousand years, represented human organizations for controlling and guiding millions of human beings in such ways as to separate them from the true worship of God. Both the imperial and the papal forms of Rome were efficient and effective in this nefarious work of coming between poor, lost sinners and their only means of eternal salvation. In the terms of the prophecy, both officially magnified themselves against the Prince of the host, both sought to take away from Him the continual mediation of His true worship, and both degraded or tried to destroy "the place of His sanctuary." This was done by imperial Rome literally when it destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem, and by papal Rome when it organized an elaborate system to make Christ's mediatorial work in the true or heavenly sanctuary of no effect.

Thus both imperial and papal Rome have literally and clearly fulfilled this part of the prophecy. No other power has ever done such a thing and on such a scale.

***12. And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground, and it did its pleasure and prospered.***

If we are agreed on the preceding interpretation, there will be little need of further comment on this verse. Driver and other "critics" translate the first part of the verse: "And a warfare was undertaken against the continual burnt offering with transgression." This is not substantially different in thought from the reading given above; but it is probably based on a "doctoring" of the Hebrew so as to make it seem more in harmony with their settled theory about this prophecy's applying to Epiphanes. Charles manipulates the Hebrew around until he gets the following: "And the transgression was offered in place of the daily burnt offering." I suppose he had one eye on the tradition that Epiphanes had offered swine's flesh on the altar at Jerusalem. And all this in the name of "scientific" criticism. What will theophobia not do in the name of "scholarship"?

The wise words of Kamphausen, a German scholar, are worthy of quotation in this connection:

"The more the difficulties in understanding an important passage of the book of Daniel accumulate, the less we are permitted to make an attempt at overcoming them by mere alteration of the text. In such cases the text has been transmitted with especial care."--Quoted by Montgomery, Commentary, page 377.

The prediction that this ungodly power would cast down truth to the ground, and would do its pleasure and prosper, needs no comment here. But we do feel like quoting the words of Uriah Smith on this passage:

"Rome meets all the specifications of the prophecy. No other power does meet them. Hence Rome, and no other, is the power in question. The inspired descriptions given in the word of God of the character of this system are fully met, and the prophecies concerning it have been most strikingly and accurately fulfilled in history."-The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, page 162.

***13. Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said unto that certain one who spoke, How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, and the transgression that makes desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?***

The careers of the nations can easily be pictured under the symbols hitherto given. Even the attitude of these earthly powers toward the people of God can also be portrayed under objective symbols. But when more abstract relationships need to be stated in prophetic language, or when profound spiritual truths are to be brought out in the garb of prophecy, resort seems to be necessary to something of the question-and-answer type, as here illustrated. One angel asks a question and another answers it, but for the benefit of Daniel. That also means, for the benefit or enlightenment of the people of God who live at the time or times spoken of. And since the period of time mentioned in the answer to this question is the longest period mentioned in this book, it seems evident that it must probably extend on past the turmoil and changes of the centuries, to near the close of human probation. That would be the natural thing to expect. When we study the answer to this question, as given in the next verse, we shall see that we were not mistaken in this expectation.

How long shall be the vision? Some have made the mistake of limiting this question and its answer to the career of the little horn; that is, they assume that this question and answer specify the length of time during which the power symbolized by the little horn would carry on its nefarious work. But this

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assumption is unwarranted.

In its simplified form the question really is: “How long shall the sanctuary and host be trodden underfoot?”

True, a superficial examination might seem to limit the question to the work of the little horn; for this power is the only one specifically mentioned in this vision as treading down the sanctuary and the host. But a more careful consideration of the subject will show how unreasonable it is thus to limit the question and answer to this one world power. By considering the background of this vision, or Daniel’s position and the situation of the Jewish nation at the time this vision was given, we shall gain a truer perspective.

We need to remember that at the time this was written Babylon was still the ruler of the world. Daniel himself and all his people were still in captivity; the temple or sanctuary at Jerusalem was in ruins, and had been in this condition for more than half a century. The prophet and his fellow believers were confident that the seventy years of predicted captivity were about ended; but the expected deliverance had not yet taken place, and the sanctuary and the host (or God’s people) were still being trodden down by the arrogant rulers of the nations.

Since this vision indicated that Babylon was to be followed by Medo-Persia, and this by Greece, then by four powers ruling contemporaneously, and finally by the power represented by the little horn, the question is manifestly equivalent to asking: How long shall these cruel world powers be allowed to tread underfoot both the temple (or sanctuary) and the host (the people of God)? It cannot be denied that this would be the meaning which Daniel would naturally attach to this question and its answer. Since Daniel knew that the sanctuary and the host were still being trodden underfoot by the great empire of Babylon, and he was now told that Babylon was not to be the last, but that still other empires would follow, the little horn being worse than all preceding, he was not such a fool as to think that the 2300 days specified in the question and answer had to do only with the little horn, the last of the series. No, indeed. Common sense would tell him that the time specified dealt with the series as a whole: How long would this condition of affairs be permitted to last? From Daniel’s point of view, it would be unthinkable that he would ask: How long is this little horn going to last? unless it would be for the purpose of asking about the termination of the whole thing, or, as the original Hebrew of the question reads: “Until when?”

Thus it was to be expected that Daniel’s unspoken question became formulated by the angel, asking in effect: How long will the sanctuary and the host be under the heel of the enemies of God and His people? Babylon was to have an end; but its end was to be succeeded by another world empire. This in turn was to be terminated in a similar way. But up to this stage of the prophecy not a word had been uttered about any end for the work of the little horn. The last statement immediately preceding the question and its answer was: “It did its pleasure and prospered.” What is more natural than to ask in horrified amazement: “How long is this sort of thing going to last?”

It is true that at the end of this chapter, in the last of the explanations given by the angel, the statement is made that this little-horn power “shall be broken without hand,” meaning that it will come to a supernatural end. But at the time of the question and its answer, not the slightest hint had been given that there would be any termination of this anti-religious power and its horrible work. Hence it was natural that the preceding series of powers should be passed over, and that attention should be centered on this little horn, as if it alone represented the enemies of God and His people, and the question should be asked: How long is this climactic horror going to continue?

Various other reasons help to show that this question and its answer cannot be limited to the career of the little horn. For one thing, the length of time during which the papal power would prevail is given in some half-dozen places in Daniel and the Revelation as 1260 years. Of course, this papal phase would be only the second half of the total career of the little horn, for, as we have explained, the little horn represents both the imperial and the papal form of Roman rule. On this basis the 1260 years and the 2300 years should end together, or at AD 1798. This would make the 2300 years start in 502 BC, a date which has absolutely no significance whatever as a starting point for such a period. Nobody can make reasonable sense out of this 2300-years period by starting it in 502 BC and ending it AD 1798. Obviously this is not its meaning.

As we all know, the “critics” interpret the little horn as meaning the Syrian kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes, the most anti-Semitic of its two dozen rulers. Accordingly, they seek to show that these 2300 days refer to the period during which Epiphanes coerced and persecuted the Jews and desecrated the temple. As I have shown elsewhere in these studies, no period can be pointed out during the reign of this Syrian king which makes even a moderately good fit to the 2300 days of this prediction, when interpreted as critics wish it done.

If this prophetic question and its answer do not fit the career of Epiphanes, and indeed seem much



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longer than the duration of both pagan and papal Rome, we have to apply it to the trampling underfoot of God's sanctuary and His people by all the symbols here given, or during the careers of Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, the work of the little horn being only the last of the long series of powers which were engaged in the nefarious work of treading underfoot both the sanctuary and the people of God. This was the great burden on Daniel's mind; and the angel framed his question and its answer as an echo of Daniel's unspoken anxiety. When will all this come to an end?

It will now be our task to study what the various parts of this question really mean, and thus to attempt to understand the divine significance of the question and its answer.

Two factors seem to be involved in the question. First, "the continual burnt offering." We have considered this expression above, and have found that it seems clearly to refer to the blasphemous substitution of an ecclesiastical invention to take the place of the "continual mediation" of the Savior of mankind, who continually mediates on behalf of sinful beings before the holy throne of a just and yet merciful God. This wicked substitution came into the professed Christian church at an early date, though it might be difficult to point out the exact time of its invasion of the church. Irrespective of when it began, the question now is, How long is this state of affairs to continue?

The transgression that makes desolate. This part of the question is not so clear, for this expression is somewhat obscure. Of course, it is always sin of some kind that separates between human beings and their God. Wright remarks: "Transgression in the midst of Israel was that 'which makes desolate.' Sin separates between God and His people. Isaiah 59:2." - Daniel and His Prophecies, page 181. But is it some specific sinful condition that is here referred to? Sin of a horrible nature and of most far reaching consequences is brought to view in this taking away of "the continual mediation" from man's merciful High Priest in heaven. As already explained above, we may understand it as meaning any dominant world power, like imperial Rome or papal Rome, which would arrogate to itself divine honors and demand to be worshiped by its people. Certainly when a blasphemous impostor comes as a "vicar" or a "vicegerent" and claims to have all the power of Christ, and thus comes between the sinner and his only means of salvation, it might suitably be spoken of as "the transgression that makes desolate," or the "desolating transgression." On this basis we might suppose that this phrase is only a sort of synonym or descriptive title of the world power which has been already named as the one that interferes with the "continual mediation."

This phrase, "the transgression that makes desolate" (or "the transgression that causes appallment," Jewish translation), or the "appalling sin," has a long and involved history among theologians and commentators; but the textual study of the term is aside from our present purpose, and is not necessary for an understanding of its meaning. When stripped of complications and technicalities, a common-sense view of the matter tells us that it must be a term covering both the pagan and the papal systems of arrogant, false religion in conflict with the religion of God, because it is used here as applying to the entire length of time from the rise of this little horn down to the establishment of Christ's eternal kingdom.

This expression, "the transgression that makes desolate," occurs several times and under slightly varying forms in the book of Daniel, and seems always to refer to Rome in some form. Jesus quoted it in His Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:15), and applied it to a power which at that time was still in the future; and this is another and first-class evidence that the kingdom or power referred to cannot mean Antiochus Epiphanes. The parallel record in Luke of this same discourse makes the expression refer to the Roman armies (Luke 21.20), which is additional evidence, if more were needed, to prove that these symbolic terms in Daniel must refer to Rome and Rome only. Since Christ spoke of this "abomination of desolation" as still future in His day, and since his language identifies it with imperial Rome, how can Antiochus Epiphanes come into the picture at all?

Recently the "critics" have been gleefully announcing what they regard as a great discovery, namely, that this term, "abomination of desolation," or "the horror that appalls," is in reality a substitute for or a pun upon a name which the Jews did not want to use, somewhat after the style of the near profanity of modern times. This forbidden name was "Baal Samen," meaning "Baal of Heaven," or "Lord of Heaven," and the "critics" draw the curious conclusion from all this that Daniel, by the term "abomination of desolation," must have been slyly referring to the altar or image of Zeus, the supreme god of the Greeks. We may admit the facts about the original similarity of the Hebrew term to the other one without, however, being obliged to admit their final conclusion.

It will be remembered that. God gave very explicit prohibitions against using the names of heathen deities: "Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." Exodus 23:13. In harmony with this prohibition, the psalmist declared that he would never take the names of heathen deities upon his lips. Psalm 16:4. Accordingly, we are not surprised to learn that the Hebrews very

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early in their history had substitute words which they used instead of these forbidden names of heathen deities, just as they also invented substitute terms for the ineffable name of their own Jehovah. Thus the term “shame” was frequently used in this manner by Old Testament prophets. Hosea 9:10; Jeremiah 3:24, etc. This custom of using substitute terms for names which were considered unfit to speak, might very easily have given rise to the terms here used in Daniel (with slight variations), and translated in the A.V.: “The abomination of desolation.”

Since the substitute term here used sounded like “Baal of Heaven,” it is obvious that it was no novelty or a term recently invented in the time of the Maccabees. For the connection of the Hebrews with the heathen Baal of Phoenicia dates away back almost to the Exodus itself; it had become an old and well established acquaintance centuries before the Captivity. Hence it is ridiculous to try to make it a newly coined phrase of the time of persecution under Epiphanes.

To give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot. Doubtless Daniel and every other Jew of his time would understand “the sanctuary” to mean the temple which had stood on Mount Moriah but was at this time in ruins. “The host,” as here used, obviously means the people of God—the Jewish nation during its time, and since that time the Christian church. If you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed.” Galatians 3:29. Since, as we have already intimated and shall see more clearly in the sequel, this entire prophecy extends for many centuries past the final desolation of the earthly sanctuary and the rejection of the Jewish people, we are led to the conclusion that this question, “How long shall be the vision?” must refer chiefly, or in its later phases, to something which might be termed the treading “underfoot” of the “host,” or the people of God, during the Christian dispensation. The similar work of treading underfoot the sanctuary must also refer to some perversion or desecration of the priestly work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary during the same period.

It is evident that here we have problems of no small difficulty. And the difficulties are increased when we learn that the answer to the question of “How long?” gives us only a numerical answer couched in terms connected with the Jewish sanctuary service, and seems to ignore entirely that part of the question dealing with “the host,” or the people of God.

We must not forget that the question of “How long?” was twofold in its make-up, and should have a twofold answer. The first part of the question dealt with the sanctuary and the “continual mediation,” while the second part was about the “host.” In other words, since there are two distinct parts to the question, it seems only natural to expect two distinct answers.

Let us state the case this way. If the numerical answer (to be presently given) fits both the sanctuary and the host, all right and good. We might then regard the question as a combined one, requiring only one and the same answer for both. But if, as we shall see in the sequel, only the “sanctuary” is mentioned in the answer here given, we shall then have a right to conclude that the answer is divinely meant to be twofold, and that the part of the answer concerning “the host” is in reality postponed until some later date.

Yet the answer here given deals only with one part of the question; it says that the matter of the treading underfoot of the sanctuary will be adjusted at the end of a specified period. It says absolutely nothing about “the host,” or when the people of God will be delivered or have justice done them.

We have a right to conclude, therefore, that the answer to the second part of the question, or when the host will be delivered, is postponed until some later period, when an answer to it may also be expected. As a matter of fact, the answer to this part of the question seems to be held over until almost the close of the entire book of Daniel. In chapter 12:1 the angel tells the prophet: “At that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.” The time here specified is the standing up or reigning of Michael, “the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people.” And this standing up or reigning means the time when He (Christ) takes the kingdom of the universe, an event which occurs in heaven immediately before His return the second time to this earth. A further statement on this subject will be found in the note on chapter 12:7: “When they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people.”

This postponement of a part of the answer to the question is very important for a correct understanding of the subject here under consideration. The part of the answer here given by the angel is as follows:

***14. And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed [margin, “justified”].***

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The time here involved is specific and definite, and its meaning will be considered presently. But what strikes us as strange is that it seems to have no assigned date for its beginning. If we arbitrarily try to solve the puzzle by beginning this period with the year 550 or 547 BC, or the year when this vision was given to the prophet, the end of the period will fall in AD 1751 or 1754, with absolutely nothing of significance to mark its termination. Obviously this cannot be the starting point.

The postponement of this part of the answer would seem all the more natural if, as some have suggested, the eleventh chapter is not another and independent vision, but should be regarded as like the ninth chapter, that is, only further explanations of the symbols introduced in this eighth chapter. On this supposition we can the more readily understand why the eleventh chapter consists almost entirely of literal statements and apparent explanations of previous symbols.

However, we discover that in the next chapter the prophecy of the seventy weeks, or hebdomads, has a date assigned for its beginning, and also that this shorter period of seventy weeks is to be “cut off” from something else. This would seem to mean that it is made a part of the longer period of 2300 “evenings and mornings.” The two periods thus begin together, the shorter period of the ninth chapter being but a subdivision of the longer period given in the eighth. The statement is made in the next chapter that the period of seventy weeks or “hebdomads” is “cut off” or “decreed” upon the people of Israel and the Holy City, and the conclusion is inevitable that these seventy weeks are “cut off” from the larger total of 2300 days. Then because a definite date is given (chapter 9:25) for the beginning of the shorter period of seventy weeks or 490 literal years, it is clear that we thereby have a date for the beginning of the 2300 days or 2300 literal years. This date will be shown presently to be 457 BC, and is one of the best established dates in ancient history. From this date as a beginning, the 2300 years must reach onward to AD 1844. A fuller discussion of the meaning of this profoundly important time period will be given presently.

First it will be necessary to consider what is meant by the expression, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. Preliminary, however, to any understanding of this expression must be the question, What is the “sanctuary” here spoken of? Or what would Daniel and every other Jew of that time understand by this term, “the sanctuary”?

To the last question there can be only one possible answer. Two, and only two, sanctuaries are spoken of in the Bible—the one at Jerusalem, and the one in heaven. The sanctuary in heaven is clearly revealed only in the New Testament and was scarcely known to the people of Daniel’s day. Therefore any intelligent Jew of that day would necessarily think of the sanctuary as meaning the beautiful temple in Jerusalem, which at this time had been lying desolate for many years.

Since a ruined, desolate sanctuary could not fulfill the prophecy, this divine pronouncement about a future cleansing of the sanctuary would for Daniel be an implied promise of the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. Accordingly, this prophecy might mean either of two things: First, it might mean simply the removal of the desecration and defilement from the site of the former temple, with the rebuilding of another temple and its dedication with appropriate rites for a renewal of the worship of Jehovah. Or, second, a well-trained Jew might look past this rebuilding of the temple to that most dramatic of all the religious ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual, the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, which would also seem to be meant by the expression here used. The literal Hebrew is not “cleansed,” but rather “justified,” or “vindicated,” meaning that at the time specified the sanctuary or temple, in Daniel’s day lying in ruins, would again function as before, its services naturally culminating in Yom Kippur, the climactic ceremony of the year. Indeed, this passage might well be translated: “Then shall the sanctuary have atonement made for it.”

As the Hebrew sanctuary consisted of three distinct parts---the court, the holy place, and the most holy--so Christ’s priestly work consists of three successive phases. The first, which began on Calvary, must precede His ministry in the holy place, and this in turn must precede His ministry in the most holy. He could not be a priest at all until He was anointed, and He became the Anointed (or the Messiah, or the Christ) at His baptism. Then, the Epistle to the Hebrews says, He must “also have somewhat to offer” (chapter 8:3), before He could begin His heavenly work as priest. He had His own sacrificial blood to offer when He ascended and signalized His initiatory work as high priest in heaven by what took place at Pentecost. Lastly, His final work in the great Yom Kippur of the universe synchronized with what was here foretold by the angel to Daniel, “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,” or literally justified, or have atonement made for it.

The impressive ritual of Yom Kippur, or Day of Atonement, is described in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Although it was not exactly the last day of the sacred year, it did clearly represent the end of all human probation; for the remainder of the year was devoted to rejoicing and clearly represented the

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completed redemption of the earth when made new. Although the elaborate ceremonies of Yom Kippur are no longer performed by modern Jews, the day is still regarded by them as typifying the great final day of judgment, when the sins of everybody are completely disposed of, and all can enter on a new life with nothing held against them from the previous year.

A modern Jewish poet well describes how his people still look upon Yom Kippur as a type of the judgment day:

The great white fast, the day that solemnly Its clarion call sent over land and sea. . . . What mandate gave the day to you and me? It is the judgment day of all the year.

Under the daily round of services as instituted by God through Moses, all confessed sins were regarded as having been transferred, sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, to the sanctuary itself by the blood of the daily and occasional offerings. Then, on the Day of Atonement, the final ceremony was so arranged as to represent, largely in pantomime, the gathering up of all the confessed sins of the past year and the placing of them and all others also upon the head of the waiting scapegoat. It was then made to carry off these sins into the wilderness or oblivion.

In the great cosmic reality typified by all these services, or the great antitype, the daily services obviously represented the profound truth that all sins, confessed and unconfessed, are accurately recorded in the archives of the heavenly temple. Many texts in both the Old Testament and the New speak of these records kept by the angels. They are spoken of as being kept there as an official witness against all transgressors until they are finally disposed of in some way, either by being forgiven and blotted out (in the case of confessed and repented-of sins), or as still retained there until the Yom Kippur of the entire universe, when all sins will be finally heaped upon him, and he must bear them away into everlasting destruction.

Thus the cavil about sins not being actually transferred to heaven is forever disposed of. The official records of all sins are there, without a shadow of doubt. The important thing about the cleansing of the sanctuary is the way in which these records are finally disposed of, either by being forgiven and blotted out, or by being placed for final disposal upon the great primal instigator of all sin, Lucifer or Satan.

Under the Mosaic dispensation this two-way method for the disposal of all sins was recognized. All who by confession and the proper sacrifices had made provision beforehand were assured that their sins were forgiven and would be remembered no more. Those who neglected to have the records of their sins attended to were to be "cut off" from among the people, a matter which God repeatedly declared He would attend to Himself. Under the Christian dispensation the essential realities are in no way changed or modified. All genuine Christians must arrange to have their sins go beforehand to judgment. Finally all the records of even unconfessed and unforgiven sins will be removed from the heavenly archives, being placed upon the head of the great primal rebel, the antitypical scapegoat, who carries them all into the wilderness or abyss described in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, after which Satan and all his followers are ultimately destroyed, and the last traces of even the records of sin will be forever disposed of in the purifying fires of Gehenna. Revelation 20:7-15.

As there are many special books and pamphlets dealing at length with this subject of the sanctuary and what its cleansing means in the Christian dispensation, we need not here enter into further details.

This purification service of Yom Kippur is unquestionably what all intelligent Jews of Daniel's time would understand by the announcement which appears so strange to us of this day: Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. Probably they would consider that the mere purification of the temple site and the rededication of a new temple would hardly be sufficient; they would look forward to the grand final service of the year, by which all sins and defilement would be removed forever, and all could enter upon a new year with no entailment of sorrow or sin carried over into the new life. This final ceremony for the nation as a whole would have seemed to them essential for the completion of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

The temple was finally rebuilt, and the Jews tried to restore their national life to what it was before the captivity. By this time the canon of their Sacred Scriptures had been completed, the book of Daniel having long been included in it. It is unquestionable that the Jewish people did not clearly understand the meaning of the prophecies given with such explicit detail in Daniel's book. God never designed that these or any other prophecies should be fully understood in advance of their fulfillment.

Presently Antiochus Epiphanes began to attempt his Hellenizing of the Jewish nation by force. The city was seized and partly burned, and a hostile wall and towers were erected and occupied by heathen soldiers. Then came the great outrage and profanation. On the fifteenth of Chisleu (December 18, 168 BC), the temple was deliberately desecrated by the erection of an idol altar upon or beside the altar of Jehovah; and ten days later, or on the twenty-fifth of this month, heathen sacrifices, including swine, began to be



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offered upon this new altar. Exactly three years later, on the twenty-fifth of Chisleu, 165 BC, the temple was restored and Jewish services of the proper kind were again offered in the temple. Thus the period of the profanation of the altar was exactly three Seleucid calendar years, while the more general desecration of the temple was three years and ten days, according to the Seleucid calendar.

Little wonder that the pious Jews of that day thought that these persecutions through which they had passed were the ones foretold by Daniel the prophet. They tried to harmonize the time of their persecution with the various prophetic dates, such as the time, times, and half a time (or three and one-half years) of Daniel 7:25; but the two made a very poor fit. Probably some ingenious person among them hit upon the same theory that has been adopted by the modern "critics," that the 2300 "evenings and mornings" of the text we are here studying might be made to mean just half that number of evening sacrifices and an equal number of morning sacrifices, or only 1150 actual days in all.

Then by reckoning the year at 360, or 364, or 365 days, the three years and ten days of the actual desecration of the temple would give 1100, 1102, or 1105 respectively. For uncritical minds, or for those with but a low standard for the accuracy of a divine prediction, this approximate harmony might seem to be near enough.

The following from an eminent modern scholar gives a summary of the situation:

"All efforts, however, to harmonize the period, whether expounded as 2300 days or as 1150 days, with any precise historical epoch mentioned in the books of the Maccabees or in Josephus have proved futile.... Professor Driver is justified in stating, 'It seems impossible to find two events separated by 2300 days = 6 years and 4 months which would correspond with the description.'---Charles H. H. Wright, *Daniel and His Prophecies*, pages 186, 187. Williams & Norgate, London, 1906.

We are unable at this late date to determine just how the Jews of the times of Epiphanes tried to adjust the details. We know that they appealed to the prophecies of Daniel as having been fulfilled in their own recent persecutions; but it was only in a vague general way that any correspondence could be recognized, and they probably did not bother themselves with any minute details. It is sufficient that the modern unbelieving "critics" have spent page after page in the child's play of trying to make some reasonable agreement between the predictions and actual history.

R. H. Charles, in his *Commentary*, makes this palpable discrepancy between the predictions and the historical dates his grounds for a conjecture about the exact time of the writing of the book in the times of the Maccabees. His argument is this: All the first half of this chapter agrees with the history of MedoPersia and Alexander's empire so accurately that this much must have been written only after all these events had become history. Because this statement about the 2300 days does not agree with the history, this chapter (or indeed the whole book of Daniel) was probably written before the Greeks set up their desecrating altar in the temple of God at Jerusalem; for otherwise no such prediction as this of 2300 days would have been made.

In other words, Dr. Charles's argument is that this prediction was a genuine one about things still future, but of course turned out to be wrong. He adds: "This is the view of Wellhausen, Bevan, Driver, and most scholars."---*Commentary*, page 212. In other words, this part is about the only genuine prediction in the book of Daniel; but it went wrong. The rest of the book is accurate and true, because it was written after the events. So much for modern "critical" scholarship.

It will be more profitable for US"W leave this barren modern "scholarship" to its own ways, and turn our attention to an understanding of the meaning of the passage here under study in the light of all the twenty-five intervening centuries. The passage of time furnishes the best method of settling the meaning of any divine prophecy. Prophecy was never given to gratify anyone's curiosity about the future; its purpose is that, when we look back, we may be assured that God has spoken, and thus may have faith for the future. The lapse of more than two millenniums ought to enable us to decide how best to interpret the actual meaning of the prophecy. Over and over we are told that the prophecies of Daniel were not for his day, but were to be closed up or sealed until the time of the end, at which time "they that are wise shall understand." Chapter 12:10. Accordingly, the Jews of the times of the Maccabees could not be expected to understand them.

The relationship between this time period of 2300 years and the much shorter one of seventy hebdomads (490 years) mentioned in the next chapter will be more fully explained in connection with the comments there. Suffice it now to repeat that no starting point for these 2300 years is mentioned or hinted at in Daniel 8. If the seventy weeks are not a part of these 2300 days, thus making the two periods begin together, then this longer time period is left hanging in the air, with no beginning that we can definitely locate. This would mean that this period is useless for us. Such is not the usual way with any announcement



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by God; we are not left to flounder in uncertainty about anything that God has definitely revealed. If we connect these two periods together, making them both begin at the same point, namely, 457 BC, then it is easy to see that the longer period must end in the autumn of 1844.

Beginning in the autumn of 457 BC, that is, 456 full years and a fraction of another one, the 70 hebdomads, or 70 times 7 years 490 years, and will extend to the autumn of AD 34.

But 490 years cut off or subtracted from 2300 will leave 1810 years yet to run after AD 34.

From AD 34 these 1810 years will extend on to the autumn of 1844.

As many special discussions of this part of the subject will be found in Adventist literature, it will not be necessary to spend more time on it here.

Since this time period of 2300 years must inevitably extend long past the end of the Jewish temple and its services, it is evident that we must search for a meaning of the term "the sanctuary" and its cleansing which will be suitable for the Christian dispensation. The book of Hebrews and other passages in the New Testament give us much positive information about a sanctuary service in heaven during this dispensation. Hence we might expect that there is very probably something in this dispensation corresponding to the cleansing of the sanctuary under the Mosaic system.

In the notes on the earlier verses of this eighth chapter of Daniel, we have seen that the taking away of the "continual mediation" from the Prince of the host (verse 11) must mean the false system of theology which has completely changed and spoiled the divine plan of Christ's continual mediation on man's behalf in the heavenly sanctuary. The question was then asked, How long would be the vision? or how long would this perversion of Christ's work be allowed to continue, giving both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot? The answer was: Unto 2300 prophetic days or literal years, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed, or "justified," as in the marginal reading.

On this long-time application of the prophecy, where it obviously must apply to some event far along in the Christian dispensation, when the Jewish temple and its services are things of the long past, the only mediatorial service now being carried on is that of our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, a service which is spoken of in some detail in the book of Hebrews, chapters 8 and 9.

For the benefit of those among my readers who are philosophically minded it may be stated that there are other aspects of Christ's death and continual mediation in heaven which may be more important than the reconciliation of men toward their Creator, important as that may be. This other and larger aspect of Christ's entire work is the settling of the sin problem for the universe as a whole. It may even be said that the vindication of God's reputation before the on looking universe is and always has been of far greater importance than the mere rescuing of a few million rebel humans from their careers of sin. The divinely enacted drama of Yom Kippur, or the cleansing of the sanctuary on the last day of the Jewish sacred year, was a sort of kindergarten lesson designed chiefly to teach this larger aspect of settling the sin problem for the universe as a whole. This cosmic aspect of the final settlement of the sin problem for the entire universe is the chief subject of this question and its answer; indeed, it is the chief point in this entire prophecy.

Long centuries passed after sin first entered the universe before much progress seemed to be accomplished in this larger aspect of winning over the extra mundane parts of the universe to Christ's side of the great controversy with Lucifer. Finally Christ's life of sinless perfection as a man, His murder at the instigation of Satan, settled or made secure of settlement all the chief points in the controversy. Then a new stage in the affairs of the universe occurred when Christ was reinstated as the acting Manager of the universe, an event which took place with a formal inauguration in heaven, but which was signalized on earth by the manifestation of Pentecost, as is expressly stated by Peter in Acts 2:33. This was the beginning of His work as High Priest.

Lucifer and the other cosmic rebels were not then destroyed. The rebellion still dragged on, though now in its final stages. At a later date, or shortly before the closing out of the mundane aspects of the great rebellion and Christ's coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords, it becomes necessary to conduct a judicial inquiry or investigation to determine who among all the successive generations among mankind are to be resurrected to enjoy eternal life with their King on the earth made new, and also to pick out among the last generation of living human beings those who are fit to be immortalized at the Second Coming.

It is the beginning of this judicial court (conducted in heaven, with the loyal angels as the jury) which is announced in this prophecy, Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. In other words, this prophecy announced the beginning of the great Yom Kippur of the universe as a whole, a work which when completed will see the final and complete eradication of sin from the entire universe. Since the beginning of Christ's priestly work in heaven was prophesied beforehand in Psalm 68:18, which is quoted and interpreted in Ephesians 5, and then was definitely announced on earth by what took place at Pentecost, it

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is only reasonable that the close of this work should similarly be announced to mankind. It is the beginning of this Yorn Kippur for the universe which is spoken of in this prophecy as being initiated in 1844; and it is reasonable to suppose that not much more time will be required to complete it, though we have not been given any information as to when it will end.

It is not to be forgotten that Daniel was in a certain sense definitely limited in even his inspired language to the theological terms with which he and his fellow Hebrews of that age were familiar. We may even say, and say it with the utmost reverence, that the Holy Spirit was also thus limited, humanly speaking, if He were to speak to Daniel in language which Daniel and his countrymen could understand. The center of all the worship, both public and private, in Daniel's day was built around the daily and yearly services carried on first in the Mosaic tabernacle and afterward in the temple of Solomon. This beautiful temple, as I have already stated, was, in Daniel's day, still lying desolate, and the entire nation of the Jews was scattered among the heathen. Yet, while these captives in a heathen land could still individually pray to Jehovah in the land of their exile, though they were unable to offer any of the accustomed sacrifices, they did not have any other language in which to express the divinely revealed modes of worship, or indeed the only authorized method of approaching God, except that connected with the temple service. Much simpler ceremonies had been used by their ancestors, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. But since the establishment of the Jewish nation and its central place of worship in the temple, these more elaborate methods of worship had become vital parts of their religious lives, and they felt lost without them. Accordingly, whenever they thought or spoke of worshiping Jehovah, they were obliged by their own mental habits and those of their ancestors for many centuries back, to do so in terms of the Mosaic temple services. These services had not been invented by the people; they had been expressly taught them by God Himself.

Hence it is self-evident that when the Holy Spirit undertook to describe a series of conditions in the then far-distant future which would be blasphemous and of a nature to desecrate the fundamental worship of Jehovah during a period this side of the cross (to speak in Christian terms), Inspiration could not be expected to use any other language than those terms and phrases with which Daniel and his people were familiar. We have already explained how just such a blasphemous substitution and desecration is seen in the Roman mass and all that goes with it; yet this may be regarded as only typical or symbolic of all the false system of belief and worship by which Christ's true mediatorial work in heaven has so long been obscured and nullified. Indeed, all false systems of worship might be looked upon as thus typified or symbolized.

In the light of these principles, we may well ask again, What is the real meaning of the clause, Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed?

As has been stated already, the original Hebrew of this last word, "cleansed," is not the usual word for made clean; and this is the only instance in the Old Testament where it occurs in this precise form. The marginal note in our Bibles gives the literal Hebrew as "justified." Driver, in commenting on it, says that it means that at this time the sanctuary will "have justice done to it." Similarly A. A. Bevan says: "The justification of the sanctuary is the vindication of its cause." Others have translated the clause: "Then shall the sanctuary come into its own again." In harmony with this idea, the modern Jewish translation of the Old Testament, bearing the authorization of the combined rabbinical scholarship of the English-speaking world, renders it: "Then shall the sanctuary be victorious."

The antonym of "cleansed" would be "defiled;" but there is not one word in this entire chapter about the sanctuary's being "defiled." The term that is used is "trodden underfoot," a vastly stronger expression. Accordingly, we find that in the answer the Hebrew word is not "cleansed," as the Authorized Version gives it, but rather "justified," or "vindicated," or some other similar term. Probably "atoned for," or "have atonement made for it," would be still more appropriate, and would conform more fully to the essential meaning of the whole prophecy. In the mind of Daniel and of others familiar with the Mosaic ritual, this idea of atonement would no doubt be plainly implied by the term, Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

We need also to remember that, in the eyes of all good Hebrews, the last ministrations in the sanctuary were always looked upon as the final adjustment of all problems of right and wrong. The psalmist said that he was envious at the arrogant, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, until he "went into the sanctuary of God, and considered their latter end." Psalm 73:1-17. Wickedness and wrong may seem to prosper for a while; but when we understand the meaning of God's sanctuary system, we will become reassured, and will realize that God will work out all these problems in a wise and wholly satisfactory manner. In other words, the sanctuary system as a whole was designed to teach mankind the everlasting solution of the dark mystery of evil

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From all this discussion it should become clear that this answer, Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed or justified, has a depth of meaning in it, much more than might appear on the surface. In fact, it may mean either or all of the following:

1. It might signify that at the end of this period all human devising of self-righteousness and self-salvation, and especially the blasphemous substitute worship of the Catholic mass, would be seen in their true light, and the true mediatorial work of Christ would be recognized by God's people. Some may say that this was accomplished at the Reformation under Luther and his fellow reformers. Even so, the prophecy might mean that this principle of imputed and imparted righteousness by faith would become more widely recognized, or that new light on this fundamental truth would become manifest from this period and onward.

2. It might also mean that the crucially important truth about the sanctuary in heaven would then begin to be opened up for study by God's earthly worshipers, and that Christ's work as High Priest in heaven would be seen in a new meaning.

3. It might also mean that this date would mark a turning point in Christ's work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, just as the initiation of this priestly work was signalized by the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after the ascension. The last part of Christ's priestly work would correspond to the special service on the great Day of Atonement, Yom. Kippur, in the typical Mosaic system, as described in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Such a final priestly work of Christ is positively affirmed in Hebrews 9:23 and elsewhere.

It seems clear that all three of these meanings are wrapped up in this expression about the sanctuary's being cleansed or justified at the end of the 2300 days or years. The first and second of these meanings are more obviously the answer to the question asked by the angel. While the third, when considered as an actual or objective fact of vast importance to the universe as a whole, would carry so much significance as to involve or imply the other two. In reality, all are combined and interrelated in their meanings; hence all taken together constitute the real facts or ideas about which the question was asked and the answer given. Such a form of question, and such an answer, were obviously about the only language forms under which the people of Daniel's day could be given any information concerning what was to take place in the real service of the heavenly sanctuary then so many centuries in the future.

Besides being a matter of reason and good sense, there is Scripture proof that this earth, or rather the Christian church on this earth, constitutes what may be called the outer court of God's great cosmic sanctuary or temple. Hence, the cleansing of the sanctuary in the largest sense means that the outer court or the church must also be cleansed or purified as never before in her history, as a preparation to meet her returning Lord.

The scripture involved is Revelation 11: 1, 2, where, under the symbol of measuring the temple of God, the apostle was told that "the court which is without the temple" would be trodden underfoot for forty-two prophetic months, or 1260 literal years. This being "trodden underfoot" is exactly the same expression as is used here in Daniel, and "the court" is explained as synonymous with "the holy city," or the church. The time period involved is less than the 2300 years, because the subject is being looked at from a slightly different angle.

The sanctuary in Jerusalem never had any intrinsic meaning of its own except as symbolical of the sanctuary in heaven. If the time period of 2300 years here spoken of must run far along into the Christian dispensation, or long after the Messiah had made the Mosaic "sacrifice and the oblation to cease" in the midst of the prophetic week (chapter 9:27), and long after the people of the prince that was to come had destroyed the city and the sanctuary (verse 26), then the conclusion is inevitable that the sanctuary here spoken of and its cleansing or justification must refer to something of vast importance in connection with Christ's mediatorial work in heaven. The language of this question and answer can have no other meaning in the Christian dispensation.

It is clear from the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of the book of Hebrews that God desires His pilgrim people here on earth to keep themselves intelligent regarding the progress of the mediatorial work of our great High Priest in heaven, as He works out the final settlement of the great cosmic drama of the sin problem for the universe as a whole. The general knowledge of Christ's priestly work as stated in these chapters in Hebrews and elsewhere in the New Testament was given for all Christians during all ages. But this specific prophecy in Daniel clearly foretells an amplification and an intensification of this understanding of Christ's work in heaven, which would be due twenty-three centuries later, or in the time-of-the-end period. The time when this increased knowledge of Christ's mediatorial work would be due we learn from other data to be 1844. This agrees with the explanation given by the angel later in this chapter,

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that the vision about the 2300 evenings and mornings would be “shut up” or not understood for a long time. “For it belongs to many days to come” (verse 26) and “the vision belongs to the time of the end” (verse 17).

Since this point of time (1844), when this vision about the sanctuary would be no longer “shut up,” it is not sufficient for intelligent students of God’s revealed will merely to discard the blasphemy of worshipping the wafer god of the Catholic mass; all good Protestants do that. Not until the expiration of these 2300 years in 1844 did any group of people have an intelligent conception of the progress made in the priestly work of our Savior in the heavenly sanctuary, that is, the progress being made in the final settlement of the sin problem for the universe as a whole. God wants His people to understand the progress being made in the settlement of His controversy with Satan. An important turning point in this controversy is pointed out by this prediction about the sanctuary’s being cleansed or justified at the end of these 2300 years. This turning point was symbolized in the Levitical ritual by the change of the work of the high priest from the service of the “daily mediation” to that of the last day of the year, the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur.

By analogy we see the reasonableness of God’s announcing beforehand exactly when this final work of our great High Priest would commence. The definite commencement of Christ’s work as priest in heaven was foretold in Psalm 68:18, and was announced by the manifestation of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, as Peter expressly states (Acts 2:33; see also Ephesians 4:8). This was not at the time of the crucifixion, nor yet at the ascension, but at a definite period thereafter. How reasonable, then, that this second and final stage in His priestly work in heaven should be definitely pointed out by this prophecy in Daniel, so as to keep God’s people on earth informed concerning the progress being made in the mediatorial work in settling the problem of sin for the universe as a whole.

This change in Christ’s work for mankind and for the universe at large, as symbolized by the change from the daily ministrations to the divine drama of Yom Kippur, was a momentous event. We earth-bound mortals do not readily comprehend its transcendent importance for the rest of the universe, marking as it does the final stage in the controversy between good and evil. Another aspect of this cosmic change is set forth in the judgment scene described in the seventh chapter of Daniel, which in reality is exactly parallel to the events given here in the eighth. While the final service of our High Priest is typified by the service called the cleansing of the sanctuary as described in Leviticus 16, we should not forget that this typical Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, was always regarded by the Jews as a day of judgment; and it is this aspect of this event which is so vividly represented in Daniel 7:13, 14, 22, 26. In other words, the solemnly impressive judgment scene of Daniel 7 is parallel to and the equivalent of this cleansing of the sanctuary in chapter 8. Thus these two chapters are parallel and complimentary to each other. The difference between them is due to their mentioning different aspects of the same events and to the limitations of human language, for the latter is always clumsy and inadequate for the representation of important aspects of any divine truth.

If some objector should ask why it was important for the people of God to become aware of the change in the priestly work of Christ which was predicted to take place at the end of the 2300 years, or in 1844, we may reply by asking another question: Why was it important for the people of the time of the apostles to understand the exact time when Christ’s high-priestly work began in heaven, which Peter says was proclaimed to the people on earth by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? Acts 2:33.

Was it not sufficient for a devout Hebrew to follow the ritual prescribed by God? This ritual had exerted a sanctifying influence on the Israelites for the millennium and a half from the time of Moses. Yet it was in the plan of God that when a most profound change in the work of salvation took place at the cross, an interval of more than six weeks occurred before the official announcement came from heaven (on the day of Pentecost) of the inauguration of Christ as High Priest. Thus was initiated an entirely new method in the worship of God. Though God had once ordained this routine of services, after Pentecost it became obsolete. After Pentecost, those who persisted in clinging to the Mosaic ritual and refused to believe in the new order of things were ere long rejected by God. That old Mosaic style of worship had for many centuries been blessed by God; but now a new order of worship was instituted, an order of worship based on things unseen. It required a somewhat lengthy and abstract line of theological reasoning.

It was exactly the same at the end of the 2300 years (1844). Those who had up to that time followed Christ’s priestly work as initiated by His inauguration at Pentecost, had been owned and blessed by God. There are many who are not aware of this change in Christ’s priestly work, and they may still receive the divine blessing as did Apollos and others who knew “only the baptism of John.” Acts 18:25. Yet if any are presented with this new light and refuse to accept it, they will inevitably go into darkness and



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be ultimately rejected by God. They will not be accepted by Him if they do not walk in the advancing light which He in wisdom and mercy lets shine upon their pathway.

From this discussion we see that the statement in the fourteenth verse, Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (margin, “justified”), is a candid and complete answer to the twofold question asked in the first part of the thirteenth verse, “How long shall be the vision?” The sanctuary in heaven would continue to be trodden underfoot so long as the true significance of the work of our heavenly High Priest remained obscure and misunderstood by God’s worshipers here on earth. This obscurity and misunderstanding would end whenever the true light about the entire sanctuary service and its meaning was seen by the people of God. This new light was permitted to shine forth under the providence of God, at the beginning of the new and final work of our High Priest in heaven, just as the events of the Day of Pentecost synchronized with the beginning of His first work in the sanctuary. Each aspect of Christ’s official ministry as High Priest in heaven was signalized here on earth by a special manifestation—the first, by Pentecost, and the second, by the new light on the sanctuary question in 1844. Since this second event was to happen at the end of the long time period, the angel gave a candid and understandable answer in saying that at that date the sanctuary would begin to be cleansed or justified, or would “come into its own again,” as one translation expresses it, or “be victorious,” as the modern Jewish translation reads.

The other part of the twofold question asked how long the host or the people of God would be trodden underfoot. As we have already seen, this part of the question had its answer postponed until the last vision given to Daniel, as recorded in Daniel 12:1: “At that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book.” Only at the Second Coming of Christ, or, to speak more precisely, at the standing up or the beginning of the kingly reign of Michael (Christ) and His assumption of the kingly power (in heaven), a very short period before His Second Coming, will God’s people be fully and finally “delivered” from all fear and possibility of evil. This, too, is a heavenly event which is to be signalized on earth by an appropriate manifestation to His waiting people, near the close of the seven last plagues. Revelation 16:17.

Thus we find that there are three events which take place in heaven, each being of prime importance in the work of our High Priest in eternally disposing of the sin problem of the universe as a whole:

1. Pentecost at the beginning of Christ’s work;
2. The beginning of Yom Kippur in 1844;
3. The end of all priestly work for sinners at the close of probation, signalized by the announcement from heaven, “It is done” (Revelation 16:17), which synchronizes with Christ’s assumption of His next work as King of kings and Lord of lords. This third event takes place in heaven, shortly before He returns to this earth; for He returns only after “having received the kingdom.” Luke 19:15.

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

The angel here called “Gabriel” is named twice in the Old Testament, here and in chapter 9:21. The profuse apocalyptic and pseudo-graphic literature of the Jews during the last two or three centuries of the Jewish commonwealth developed an elaborate angelology, with many names and imaginary lines of activity invented for them which are wholly unknown to the Bible. Here we have the simple announcement that when Daniel became anxious to understand what he had seen, this heavenly messenger was commissioned to explain it to him. We shall find in the sequel that Gabriel began to do this, and got through with his explanation of all the symbols of this vision except the time symbol. At this point Daniel became so shocked that he fainted, so the angel had to postpone any further explanation until sometime afterward. After a period of anxious prayer by Daniel, the angel reappeared (chapter 9:21, 22) and told the prophet that he was come to give him wisdom and understanding: “Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision” (verse 23), obviously that part of the vision of this chapter which he had left unexplained, namely, the part relating to time, or the 2300 days.

In the New Testament we have Gabriel appearing to announce the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-13), and six months later to announce to Mary the birth of the Messiah (verses 26-31). On the first of these occasions he said: “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.” Verse 19. From these words it is clear that he is a being of exalted rank and occupation, yet from the words used in the conversation overheard by Daniel, another Being of still higher rank and authority was the One who asked him to



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explain matters to Daniel. Theologians are agreed that this higher Being can be none other than the One repeatedly mentioned throughout the Old Testament as the Angel of Jehovah, which seems to mean Christ in His pre-existent form. He is also called “Michael your Prince” in chapter 10:21; and His standing, up or taking over the ruler ship of the world is announced in chapter 12:1, where He is termed “the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people.”

***17. So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was affrighted, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man; for the vision belongs to the time of the end.***

In the account given by John in the Revelation, the sight of the angel had a very similar effect upon the apostle. There was however this difference: John fell at the feet of the angel to worship, from which act he was abruptly restrained; while Daniel on this occasion seems to have been completely overcome with awe and reverence. With gentle, kindly touch the angel assured him that the vision was concerning times long in the future, and that its chief statements deal with the special and significant phrase termed the time of the end.

This last phrase is used repeatedly in the book of Daniel, and R. H. Charles remarks: “This phrase is always used eschatologically in our author and refers definitely to the advent of the kingdom.”- Commentary, page 394.

A careful consideration of this chapter shows that the first part of the prophecy is merely introductory, definitely preparing the way for the more important part later, the culmination being the end of all human affairs. This remark by the angel is proof that the vision would not be correctly understood until long centuries had passed, or until the time of the end had arrived. This most important fact, that the visions of the entire book were not meant to be understood by the people of Daniel’s day, but would be understood only down near the end of the world’s history, is stated twice more in this same chapter (verses 19, 26), and is repeated twice again with still greater emphasis and definiteness in the last chapter (chapter 12:4, g). No wonder, then, that the interpretations of Daniel’s prophecies adopted by the Jew’s of the times of the Maccabees, or even those adopted by the post apostolic church, were imperfect and misleading, as we have pointed out in the Introduction, pages 8-10. The real meaning and importance of any prophecy can be understood only by the specific enlightenment of the same Holy Spirit which indicted the vision or the prediction in the first place. This enlightenment would be given only at the time specified.

Accordingly, the application of these prophecies to the doings of Epiphanes, as made by the Jews of that day, could not be other- wise than inadequate and mistaken. The true meaning of these prophecies was “shut up” until the time of the end.

***18. Now as he was speaking with me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face toward the ground; but he touched me, and set me upright.***

***19. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the latter time of the indignation; for it belongs to the appointed time of the end.***

The further effects on Daniel of the presence of the angel are here vividly stated, with the repeated announcement of the purpose of his mission.

The latter time of the indignation. The last word of this phrase is the specific term used in the Old Testament for the destruction of a person or a nation under the wrath of God. Primarily this wrath or indignation had already been incurred by Judah and Israel; and they were now in captivity because of it. Yet as this prophecy extends nearly two thousand years after the time when the Jewish people were to be finally destroyed as a nation, this term, “the latter time of the indignation,” must refer to the final judgments upon the entire world. Since Gabriel’s reappearance later with his message recorded in the ninth chapter is really only a subsequent part of what is here given, all that is recorded in the ninth chapter should be considered as a part, and a most important part, of this present vision. In the prophecy of the seventy weeks given in the next chapter, we have explicit mention of the final end of the Hebrew nation, which was accomplished AD 70. That was indeed indignation or wrath, so far as that nation was concerned; but the wrath at the time of the end will apply to the entire world of mankind.

That God never contemplated any reversal of this end of the Hebrew nation as final and complete, is shown very clearly by the prophecy recorded in Ezekiel 21. The king of Judah then reigning was denounced as profane and wicked, and the dreadful sentence was: “Remove the miter, and take off the crown.... I will overturn, overturn, overturn it [the kingdom]: this also shall be no more, until He come

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whose right it is; and I will give it Him.” Ezekiel 21:26, 27. The One whose right it is means Christ; and clearly this passage means that there will never again be any renewed Jewish nation until King Jesus returns the second time. When He returns in person, He will be the everlasting King of the entire earth made new, not merely in one small sector, such as Palestine.

The theory of a renewal of the Jewish nation in Palestine is a fond dream and a fatal delusion, which has been misread from the many promises of the renewed earth, which is to be the eternal home of all God’s redeemed people, Jew and Gentile alike. “And so all Israel [that is, all the spiritual seed of Abraham, Gentile and Jew alike] shall be saved.” Romans 11:26. The context of this passage proves clearly that the word “so” means by the resurrection of all the righteous dead of all past ages; for “if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise.” Galatians 3:29. The recent proclamation of an independent Jewish state in Palestine is no more a fulfillment of the divine prophecies than was the revolt of the Zealots in the days of Vespasian and Titus, or the similar revolt in the time of Hadrian. “Every plant which My heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up.” Matthew 15:13.

It belongs to the appointed time of the end. As we have seen above when studying the subjects of “the continual mediation” and the cleansing of the sanctuary, this prophecy does not refer to the comparatively trivial events of the times of Epiphanes, but is specifically dealing with the last days of time; and only at this time of the end was it designed to be understood. In a measure this is true of all the predictions of the book of Daniel, but it is pre-eminently true of this chapter and this vision. In verse 26 the angel told Daniel: “But shut thou up the vision; for it belongs to many days to come.”

***20. The ram which thou saw, that had the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia.***

***21. And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.***

***22. And as for that which was broken, in the place whereof four stood up, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not with his power.***

When we consider that this prophecy was written before the fall of Babylon, when all these events—the full career of the Medo-Persian Empire, the meteoric career of Greece under her first king Alexander, his untimely death and the breaking up of his empire into four parts—were still in the future, we cannot but marvel at the minute accuracy with which all were fulfilled. Here is no hazy, ambiguous, equivocal pronouncement, like those of the oracles of Greece and the other heathen nations, which were designedly arranged so as to come out true no matter what might happen. Porphyry and all other unbelievers have known how to dodge the truthfulness of the prophecy only by declaring that it was written after these events had taken place, a vaticinium post eventum, as they express it. Their method of reasoning is that the accuracy of the agreement between the events and the prediction is proof that the book must have been written after the events. This reminds one of the Scot who declared that he was honest and open to conviction, but he would like to see the man who could convince him.

These historical events have already been considered in our notes on verses 3-8; hence there is no occasion to amplify them here. They were intended as but preliminary to the career of the next symbol in the vision, as is shown by the condensed form in which they are stated. The value of these preliminary parts of the vision is seen after they have been fulfilled; for by their accomplishment fully and accurately, we become assured that the rest will surely follow as predicted. By them also we are guided in interpreting what follows. And the latter parts of any line of prophecy are the more important, for they lead to the grand climax.

***23. 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.***

***24. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and do his pleasure; and he shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people.***

That the power here brought to view is considered far more important than any of the others preceding it in this prophetic chain, is shown by the much larger space devoted to it, both in these verses and in the original specifications in verses 3-12. The power here described is of course the same as the one already called the little horn,” which ultimately “waxed exceeding great” (A.V.). How can men who wish to be regarded as scholars apply this term “exceeding great” to Antiochus Epiphanes, or even to the degenerate line of sovereigns which he represented, when they are compared with Medo-Persia or

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Alexander the Great? Of Medo-Persia it is said that it “became great” (verse 4, A.V.); Greece under Alexander “waxed very great” (verse 8, A.V.); while this next power which we say is Rome and the “critics” say means Epiphanes, “waxed exceeding great” (verse 9). The description fits Rome and Rome alone. It is sheer non-sense to apply this ascending climax and try to make it culminate in Epiphanes.

In the latter time of their kingdom. This means after these four divisions of Alexander’s empire had existed for some time. The empire of Rome arose gradually and attained supremacy only when the four kingdoms following Alexander had become weak and incapable.

When the transgressors are come to the full. In the books of the Old Testament the heathen kingdoms are frequently spoken of as God’s instruments for the punishing of the ungodly. See Isaiah 10:3-7. This means more than simply punishing Israel and Judah for their sins; for the Scriptures consistently represent a conquering nation as being allowed to do what it does as a scourge or a punishment upon the other nations which have wearied the divine forbearance. Conversely, nations are always represented in the Bible as being allowed to continue and to prosper so long and only so long as they permit God’s people to have liberty and do not stand in the way of God’s plans. Acts 17:26, 27.

A king of fierce countenance. This is a direct quotation from the prophecy of Moses in Deuteronomy 28:49-55, where the reference can apply only to the Romans in the days of the empire, with especial emphasis on the complete destruction of the Jewish nation under Titus AD 70. Since it would be absurd to apply the original prophecy of Moses to Epiphanes, it is equally absurd to apply this divine commentary on Moses’ prophecy to the Syrian kingdom.

Understanding dark sentences. R. H. Charles renders this phrase: “skilled in double dealing.” Since this prediction extends far on into the Christian dispensation, and applies to Rome in both its imperial and its papal phases, Dr. Charles’s rendering would apply with much appropriateness to the clever diplomacy and deceptive tactics of the Roman Church. On the other hand, the original phrase may be a modified form of the striking language used by Moses in Deuteronomy 28, just referred to: “A nation whose tongue thou shall not understand.” This description could hardly apply to any of the nations around the Jews, such as the Babylonians, the Persians, or even the Syrians; but it would be appropriate for the Romans, whose language was in no way related to the Semitic tongues.

Stand up. This expression is constantly used in the sense of reigning or taking the royal power. It occurs frequently not only in Daniel but elsewhere.

Mighty, but not by his own power. One of the early Greek versions omits all of this expression except the first word. Much speculation has been indulged in regarding its meaning. It is evident that it is a proper part of the text, and that it must somehow be the equivalent of the striking statement in the last part of Revelation 13:2: “The dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.” Some commentators contend that John was here quoting from some early Greek translation of this phrase in Daniel, giving it a clearer and more precise statement. It seems to imply that a supernatural spirit of evil would energize this “king” (kingdom), enabling him to accomplish deeds of wickedness otherwise impossible.

He shall destroy wonderfully. The Jews were warned by the prophet Ezekiel that they would be delivered into the hands of a people who would be “skillful to destroy.” Ezekiel 21:31. The language here in Daniel would apply either to the Romans in the days of the empire, or to the centuries-long persecutions systematically carried on by the most horribly tyrannical ecclesiastical power which this world has ever known. That is, this work of destroying the mighty ones and the holy people might refer to the work of the Romans in uprooting the Jews from Palestine, or it might be applied to the work of the papacy for more than a thousand years. It would be true of both these powers, though the deceptions of the latter would be even more effective than the coercion and terror of the former. It was thus that “the host” or the people of God were trodden underfoot. Chapter 8:13. Their final deliverance does not take place until the standing up or reigning of Michael (Christ), which means His taking over the kingly power at the termination of His work as High Priest. Chapter 12:1.

***25. And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and in their security shall he destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.***

This may be regarded as a summary of the entire career of this arrogant, persecuting power.

As in other prophecies covering much the same ground, there is here a blending of the characteristics and work of Rome in both stages of her career. The standing up against the Prince of princes

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obviously refers to the death of Jesus of Nazareth, who was executed under the official orders of a Roman governor. On the other hand, the prediction that he shall magnify himself in his heart is much more applicable to the papal phase. For this is the outstanding characteristic of the papacy when it is described under the title of the man of sin, or the lawless one, in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, which is plainly an inspired commentary on this and other prophecies of Daniel. Both this passage by Paul and the one in this chapter of Daniel seem to be parallel to the description of what is usually called the willful king of Daniel 11:36, 37, which will be considered in due course.

The policy by which he caused craft to prosper in his hand probably refers to the devious methods of the Roman Church; for Protestants have frequently charged the officials of that church with sanctioning the policy of doing evil that good may come, believing that the end justifies the means. They may disavow this policy by words; but they follow it in their actual practice. The strange thing about it is that they have prospered in so doing.

He shall be broken without hand. This of course is still future. It is the one expression in this prophecy which carries us onward to the setting up of the kingdom of God. As the former phrase of standing up against the Prince of princes means a violent opposition, like a personal encounter or a war to the death, so this clause means a violent end to this power. The popular notion of the gradual triumph of Christianity and the peaceful displacement of evil by its overpowering influence is not found anywhere in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The evil of the world can be overcome only by a sudden and catastrophic act of God. This expression, "broken without hand," is exactly equivalent to the term used in the second chapter about the end of the great image; for that was destroyed by a stone cut out of the mountain "without hands." Chapter 2:34. Both imply a supernatural intervention, a violent end by some power other than those which we term natural. Both would be exactly parallel to the term used at the end of the eleventh chapter, "He shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

***26. And the vision of the evenings and mornings which hath been told is true: but shut thou up the vision; for it belongs to many days to come.***

This of course refers back to the period of time given in answer to the question asked in the thirteenth verse, namely, the period of 2300 evenings and mornings, or this many days, since the Hebrews always began their day with the evening.

Although the angel had been ordered to explain the vision to Daniel, he stopped abruptly after explaining the animal symbols, and made no attempt to explain this period of time, which seemed so incredible and heart sickening to the prophet. Daniel was familiar with the symbolism of a day for a year and evidently thought that it meant 2300 years before the temple at Jerusalem would be restored. The angel merely assured him that this time symbol was true and reliable, though it did point forward to many days to come. Thus the prophet was assured that his idea of a day for a year was correct, and the vision pointed to 2300 literal years in the future.

The plain reason why Gabriel left this time period wholly unexplained is that he knew Daniel had heard about all he could stand, and was about to collapse. Accordingly, since further details would require considerable time, he broke off all further explanations. Shortly afterward he again visited the prophet and said he had returned to help him to understand the vision, meaning of course this one part of the vision, the time symbol, which he had declined to explain the first time. That subsequent explanation gave many subdivisions of the first part of these 2300 years, and constitutes the famous evangelic prophecy of the seventy hebdomads (weeks), which will be considered in the next chapter.

As has been so often pointed out already, this statement about shutting up the vision because it belongs to many days to come precludes any possibility that it can refer to events of the time of the Maccabees.

***27. And I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick certain days; then I rose up, and did the king's business: and I wondered at the vision, but none understood it.***

What sublime devotion to duty and to the cause which he loved! He was a high official at the court of what was then the mightiest empire on earth. He had routine duties which must be performed, each in its day. His heart was elsewhere; he was a citizen of another country, that is, a heavenly one (Hebrews 11:16); and he was sickened and dismayed at what seemed an almost endless postponement of the promised restoration to the country of his fathers of that "sanctuary," the temple, without which the worship of

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Jehovah could not be properly carried on.

Twenty-three centuries more! What a sad and discouraging outlook! He was now an old man. He had been serving as a virtual slave nearly all his life, even though he was considered a trusted official in high position; and he had grown old with the confident hope that the seventy years of the predicted captivity (Jeremiah 25:11) were soon to expire, and that a restoration to Jerusalem was then to take place. Every intelligent Jew knew that this prophetic time was about up, and he hoped that he himself, old as he was, might soon return to the land of his forefathers, the sacred mother country. Now this legitimate hope seemed rudely dashed to the ground.

No wonder he fainted. Also no wonder, considering the kind of man he was, that we find him, as soon as he could get around again and could find some relief from pressing official duties, entering upon a definite program of prayer and seeking God, to learn the plain truth about it all. The sequel to this will be found in the next chapter.

Note on the History of Interpretation of the Eighth Chapter. At the close of the notes on the second chapter, I gave a short history of the methods of interpreting that chapter. A similar historical outline is given at the close of the seventh chapter. A similar brief sketch will be given at the close of the ninth chapter, and also at the end of the eleventh.

However, the general outline of such a history is evident enough. All the Jewish writers of the times of the Maccabees and thereafter, applied the predictions about the little horn to the career of Epiphanes, either to him personally or to him and his successors in the Syrian kingdom. Also all the early Christian writers who have left us anything on the subject, such as Hippolyttis and Jerome, gave a similar interpretation.

Evangelical commentators of a previous generation, like Pusey, Hengstenberg, and Stuart, with the more modern ones, Wilson and Wright, point out the many serious discrepancies between the predictions about the little horn and the career of Epiphanes, though admitting a rough, general similarity between them. In general they seem to think that the prophecy refers to some future antichrist which is yet to appear. All the German "critics," with Driver and Charles in England and Montgomery in this country, treat this vision as a pseudo prophecy, written after most of the events were already history. They consider it to be a sort of political propaganda document, written for the purpose of inspiring the Jews to further resistance against their oppressor, Antiochus. Montgomery chides the evangelicals for their obstinacy or perverseness in not applying the whole thing to Antiochus. While Charles makes the glaring misfit between the 2300 days and the actual period of the profanation of the temple under Epiphanes the ground for dating the writing of the book as just before the erection of the heathen altar in the Jewish temple, otherwise the writer would have made a better fit between the prophecy and the event. This part of Daniel's prediction, he says, was then still in the future, and thus was a genuine prophecy-but it was a mistake. The other parts of the visions of Daniel were already history; hence they were given accurately. This is his argument.

It is to the credit of the entire book of Daniel that such visions as this have never been well understood until recent times; for that was exactly what the angel declared: "Shut thou up the vision; for it belongs to many days to come."

One writer of three hundred years ago, John Tillinghast (1654), recognized the seventy weeks of chapter 9 as a part of the 2300 days; but in general the vital connection between these two periods was not recognized until about a century ago. At that time the recognition of this connection became one of the foundations for the Adventist movement of that day. Since then most believers in the premillennial advent, unless muddled by futuristic and dispensational theories, have recognized this connection between the two prophetic periods.

If these two periods must begin together, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the 2300 years must have expired about a century ago.

(For a sketch of the history of the interpretation not only of this chapter, but also of chapters 2, 7, 9, 11, and 12, the reader should consult a chapter in the General Articles of volume 4 of the forthcoming Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary.)

## 9. THE TIMES OF THE MESSIAH

The preceding chapter ended with Daniel in wonderment and dismay at the prospect of 2300 more years passing before the sanctuary would be justified or cleansed. Daniel was bewildered in spite of the fact



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that he well understood that the seventy years of captivity foretold by Jeremiah were soon to end, and thus he had a right to expect that he and his people would soon be restored to their native land.

This chapter opens with art impassioned prayer by Daniel, seeking mercy and forgiveness from God for his country, and asking that God might turn away His wrath from Israel and cause His face to shine upon His “sanctuary that is desolate.” Obviously this prayer is not a make-believe, as the “critics” tell us; it has every hallmark of absolute sincerity and reality. The occasion for it was undoubtedly the crisis hour of his nation’s history, together with the dismaying announcement given in the previous vision that 2300 years would have to elapse (as he understood it) before he and his people could return home. This horrible delay made him almost desperate.

Forthwith, however, Gabriel again appears and begins an explanation of the first part of these 2300 days or years, this first part constituting the famous evangelic prophecy of seventy weeks, or 490 yours. Gabriel gives here the starting point for these 490 years, which were to be “cut off” from the larger period of 2300 yours, the two thus beginning together. The exact number of yours until the Messiah is also given, with the date in which He would be “cut off” or executed, with a further extension of a brief period after this horror until Jerusalem would again and finally be destroyed.

All these events were still for In the future. In the meantime it was implied is clearly as could be that the nation of the Jews would be returned to their own land for another trial. This implied fulfillment of the promise given through Jeremiah must have been of much encouragement to the aged prophet.

Other prophecies in the Old Testament had already spoken of a long-promised King and Deliverer, but this prophecy of four verses (verses 24-27) is the only one which professes to give in advance definite information about the time of His coming. For centuries these four verses have been looked upon by all Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, as among the clearest and most unequivocal of oil prophecies. If this be so, then when its precise fulfillments are matched against its unequivocal predictions, this chapter should constitute the most indisputable evidence of divine foreknowledge and thus of the supernatural inspiration of the prophecy itself. In short, this set of four verses, so packed with specific statements, has for centuries been considered the most powerful apologetic both for the Messiah-ship of Jesus and for the inspiration of the Bible.

All this has been true in spite of the express statement over and over again in the book of Daniel that its predictions would not be fully understood or appreciated until the very close of human history, or what the angel repeatedly terms “the lime of the end.” In our own days we ore finding that the few remaining puzzles which had not hitherto been fully understood are now becoming cleared up; so thot every date and every crucial statement in this prophecy con now be confirmed by the appropriate fact from history.

But the “critics” touch otherwise. With them it is a cardinal point that the entire book of Daniel was written, not in the times of Babylonia and Medo-Persio, but in the times of the Maccobees, and that nothing in its pseudo prophecies con extend (except by accident and mistake) beyond the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. Hence this chapter, as well as chapters 2, 7, 8, and 11, must be interpreted as applying to the Greek tyrant. Those of my readers who have always been accustomed to thinking of “the Anointed One, the Prince” (verse 25), as meaning Jesus of Nazareth, His being “cut off” as meaning the crucifixion, and His causing “the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” as meaning the complete end of the entire Jewish economy which was effected by the cross and further ensured by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple AD 70, will be surprised and incredulous of the way the “critics” try to explain away all these things.

It is not expected that any determined will to disbelieve con be convinced by anything which I present here, but it is expected that those who sincerely desire to know the truth about these matters may have a chance to do to. “None of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand.” Chapter 12:10.

The details of these problems will be considered in due course.

- 1. In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans,***
- 2. In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolation of Jerusalem, even seventy years.***

The interval between the date here mentioned, the first year of Darius, and the date of the

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preceding chapter, the third year of Belshazzar, seems to have been several years. The kingship had been conferred on Belshazzar in the winter of 553/552 or 550/549, so that his third year was probably the year 550/549 or 547/546, while the first year of Darius began with the spring New Year in 538 BC. The rule of Babylon had ended, and the dominion of Medo-Persia had begun. This Darius, we are told, was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, and is the same person who is called Darius the Mede in chapter 5:31. Montgomery (Commentary, page 266) says that the original Hebrew of this expression, was made king, is a technical term meaning that he succeeded to the supreme power in the regular or ordinary manner. This would imply that Cyrus, in spite of his obvious power as the military conqueror of Babylon, was content to bide his time and allow the old king of Media, Cyaxares II, his uncle and father-in-law, to take over the supreme authority of conquered Babylon. In other words, this language would favor the theory that Darius is the name for Cyaxares II.

Since that eminent scholar Robert Dick Wilson declared that the name Gubaru (Greek, Gobryas) is the language equivalent of Darius in the Aramaic, many evangelicals have considered that this practically settles the question. T. G. Pinches seems to have been the first to make this identification. But the new evidence in favor of Cyaxares II has opened the discussion all over again. At the present writing perhaps it is best to say that the problem has not been positively settled either way. See pages 42-44, also pages 120, 122.

The term the books is considered to be equivalent to our modern term the Scriptures, meaning the sacred or holy writings. By the use of this term it seems to be clear that the works of Jeremiah must have been included among them, or in what we now call the "canon." It is possible that Daniel is here referring only to the "writings" of Jeremiah, apart from any idea of their formal inclusion in an official collection of holy writings, such as we now have. But it is very clear that Daniel regarded Jeremiah's work as inspired of God. The parts of Jeremiah referred to are 25:11, 12; 29:10. If the year in which Daniel had this experience was 538 BC, and the date for the beginning of the captivity was 605, there would be still two years more to run before the end of Jeremiah's predicted period of seventy years. With different methods of reckoning, it may be made to appear that this was the very year in which the captivity was to end.

It may be difficult or impossible to settle the exact dates here involved; but it is clear that Daniel thought the seventy years must be about up; and he was greatly disturbed because in the preceding vision, which had been given several years before, a horrible period of 2300 days (or years) had been mentioned as due to elapse before the sanctuary would be cleansed.

***3. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.***

Evidently there was nothing of the attitude of the fatalist in Daniel. God had promised to bring about the release of the Jews and their return to their own land at the end of seventy years. Daniel felt obliged to pray about it anyway. His eloquent, impassioned prayer is an example of how earnestly we ought to seek the Lord for the good things needed by His people and His cause, even though we know that these good things have already been promised.

Some have supposed that this was the year in which he had the experience of being cast into the den of lions. Hence the prayer here recorded may have been such as he repeatedly offered during a considerable period three times a day; and if so, his enemies seized upon it when they conspired for his destruction.

***4. And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made confession, and said, Oh, Lord, the great and dreadful God, who keeps covenant and loving-kindness with them that love Him and keep His commandments,***

***5. We have sinned, and have dealt perversely, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even turning aside from thy precepts and from your ordinances;***

***6. Neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, that spoke in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.***

***7. O Lord, righteousness belongs unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face, 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.***

***8. O Lord, to us belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers,***

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*because we have sinned against Thee.*

*9. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; for we have rebelled against Him;*

*10. Neither have we obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.*

*11. Yea, all Israel have transgressed Thy law, even turning aside, that they should not obey Thy voice: therefore bath the curse been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God; for we have sinned against Him.*

*12. And He bath confirmed His words, which He spoke against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil; for under the whole heaven bath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.*

*13. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet have we not entreated the favor of Jehovah our God, that we should turn from our iniquities, and have discernment in Thy truth.*

*14. Therefore hath Jehovah watched over the evil, and brought it upon us; for Jehovah our God is righteous in all His works which He does, and we have not obeyed His voice.*

*15. And now, O Lord our God, that has brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and has gotten Thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.*

*16. O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, let Your anger and Thy wrath, I pray Thee, 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 round about us.*

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

*18. O my God, incline Your ear, and hear; open Your eyes, and behold our desolation, 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' sake.*

*19. O Lord hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Your own sake, O my God, because Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.*

This is in every way a remarkable prayer. In fact, it is one of the few outstanding prayers recorded in all literature. An analysis of its features or of its parts and subdivisions is not necessary here; but attention should be called to the central entreaty or request, which comes in the latter part. He intercedes for the city and for the sanctuary, the latter of course implying both the city and the nation. The sanctuary or temple could not be restored without also a restoration of both the city of Jerusalem and the nation as a whole.

This whole prayer was occasioned by the conviction that the seventy years of captivity must be almost ended. From the specific mention of the sanctuary it is evident that he was greatly worried by his (quite natural) misunderstanding of the meaning of the vision regarding the 2300 days (really years). Daniel was sufficiently familiar with the usage of symbolic prophecy to know that a day stands for a year; and 2300 years in the future before the temple services would be resumed was more than he could stand. Even if these days should be taken literally, they would make nearly six years and a half; and this would be much longer than Jeremiah's prophecy specified. But it is clear that Daniel understood the figure as so many years; and it completely dismayed him.

This wrong impression was corrected by Gabriel, as given in the verses following. True, this angelic explanation needs careful study to show how it fits into the previous prophecy of the 2300 days; though on its face, as it outlined the events of the times of the coming Messiah, these statements must have seemed very wonderful indeed to the enlightened and keen student of world affairs that we know Daniel was.

In reply to the theories of the "critics" that this whole book is a pseudo prophecy and that this prayer must therefore be a literary fiction, we reply that this remarkable prayer has every mark of reality and sincerity about it. As C. F. Keil remarks, how could it ever come into the mind of a pious Jew of the time of Epiphanes, when the city of Jerusalem and its temple had already been rebuilt for three and a half centuries, that Jeremiah's prophecy was an entire failure in foretelling the return from the captivity? How could this Jew of the time of Epiphanes create the fiction of Daniel's praying for the restoration of the Holy City, and then represent the angel Gabriel as coming to Daniel with the word that Jeremiah's original seventy years of captivity would now have to be extended to seven times this length of time, that is, to 7 X 70 years, or 490 years in all, the termination being still a considerable period in the future? This imaginary

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extension of Jeremiah's prophecy would be preposterous enough to begin with. But in view of the fact that the restoration from captivity had already been accomplished, as clearly affirmed by Ezra and Nehemiah and as any man could see by looking at the rebuilt city and temple, it is like adding insult to injury for the "critics" to invent such a preposterous fiction to evade the manifest proof of inspiration in this book of Daniel.

E. B. Pusey remarks: "Nothing is impossible for unbelief to believe, except what God reveals."

***20. And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God;***

***21. Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, 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.***

From this mention of the evening oblation it is evident that this prayer was the third of the daily series which he prayed concerning the matter which was upon his heart.

The angel Gabriel has been mentioned only once before, when he appeared to explain the vision of the eighth chapter to Daniel. On that occasion he had completed the explanation of all the main symbols; but the time symbol, about the 2300 evenings and mornings, was left wholly unexplained, and without the slightest hint of the time of its beginning.

It would be wholly unreasonable to think that they should begin with the time of Daniel or the giving of the vision; for the other symbols with which this time period was connected, that is, the little horn and its doings, were not themselves to begin until many centuries yet in the future, at least not until after the empire of Babylonia and that of Medo-Persia had passed away. Thus it is self-evident that Gabriel had not completed what he had been told to do: "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." Chapter 8:16. At the end of the same chapter, after Gabriel had completed his partial explanation, Daniel says: "I wondered at the vision, but none understood it." Verse 27. Gabriel now appears to complete his work, and from what he tells Daniel, it is evident that his statements are of the nature of an enlargement or explanation of the time period of the 2300 evenings and mornings.

All these facts prove the close connection between this ninth chapter and the preceding eighth, making them in effect one vision; though this connection seems to have been strangely overlooked by most commentators. This intimate connection between the periods of the Messianic prophecy of this chapter and the 2300 days of the eighth chapter will become still clearer as we proceed. Neither is complete without the other.

***22. And he instructed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding.***

***23. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.***

The angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who are heirs of salvation. It is well for us here on this sin-cursed earth to remember that the unseen powers of heaven go and come at the needs of God's waiting, trusting people.

Consider the matter. What matter? Evidently the matter or subject which he tells us he had not understood. Gabriel had been commissioned by High Heaven to make Daniel understand the vision, and Gabriel had started in and had got as far as the time symbol of the 2300 days, when Daniel fainted and was sick certain days. After recovering and going about the king's business, he declares that he still wondered at the vision, "but none understood it." Obviously Gabriel had not fully completed what he had been commanded to do.

Understand the vision. In the light of all this, it is as clear as sunlight that Gabriel is not referring to some vision yet to be announced. To make such a remark about some vision which had not yet been given would be superfluous, to say the least; for if he had some further vision to announce to Daniel, it was his business to make Daniel understand it in the right way. But he had been expressly told to make Daniel understand the vision of chapter 8; yet after he had given what explanations he did give in that chapter, Daniel was still in the dark concerning part of it, and declared that neither he nor anyone else understood it. Hence it is clear that Gabriel is here directing Daniel's mind back to the unexplained part of the preceding vision. This unexplained part dealt with the matter of time and the date of certain events; likewise in Gabriel's present message the subject is the same, the times and dates of certain events. Moreover, he

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begins by saying that a certain period is to be “cut off” and assigned to the Jewish people. Accordingly, we are absolutely shut up to the conclusion that the periods of time here given must be parts or subdivisions of the long period mentioned in chapter 8, namely, the 2300 evenings-mornings. No other conclusion is possible.

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

Many peoples of ancient times, the Romans and the Greeks scarcely less than the Hebrews, were fond of dwelling on the mystic meanings of numbers. Such persons must have found much pleasure, if not instruction, in comparing the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity with the 70 x 7 years spoken of in this prophecy with its many subdivisions, and then comparing all of these with the “seven times more” (Leviticus 26:18), which was the term God used in His threat to chastise the Israelites for their sins. It is probably true that some mystical values of seven do enter into these predictions here in Daniel; though our present purpose is not to discover any mystical or recondite meanings which may underlie them, but to deal with the obvious facts which lie on the open face of these predictions.

Above all other prophetic periods given in the entire Bible, this period of seventy weeks, or seventy hebdomads, to use a term familiar to the Greeks which has become sufficiently Anglicized to be used in the plural form, stands out as a definite, unambiguous prediction, of vast importance to Christian doctrines, and easily capable of definite location both as to its beginning and its termination. Yet, because of the chronic blindness and perverse ingenuity of many who have dealt with the subject, J. A. Montgomery has termed the history of its exegesis or interpretation, “the Dismal Swamp of Old Testament criticism.” - The Book of Daniel, page 400.

In the year 1654 John Tillinghast published a book in London entitled, Knowledge of the Times, in which he dealt with these prophecies of Daniel and took the position that the seventy weeks “is a lesser epoch comprehended within the greater epoch of the two thousand three hundred days.” William Miller and his friends of about a century ago took the same position.

This situation has come about partly because hasty interpretations were made two thousand years ago or so, when no one had sufficient accurate historical facts to ensure a correct interpretation; then subsequent commentators have followed this wrong example. Over and over again the angel warned Daniel that his visions belonged to, or could only be correctly understood in, “the time of the end.” We need not expect to find that Jerome or even Luther or Calvin had a sufficiently accurate knowledge of the chronology involved to make an exact application of the dates here indicated. Even the great and pious Sir Isaac: Newton, only some two hundred and fifty years ago, was astray in some of the chronology regarding the crucifixion, even though he had the correct starting point for these seventy weeks, namely, 457 BC.

These observations ought to correct the general misunderstanding that people of antiquity were better informed concerning the dates of ancient events, merely because they lived nearer to them. This view is contrary to all the facts. We in modern times are better equipped to work out the true dates of ancient events, except for those persons who were directly or at least very closely connected with them. Thus the prophecy was absolutely correct in stating that the true chronology of the dates involved, like the true meaning of the symbols, would be “sealed until the time of the end.” Both the dates and the symbols would be correctly understood only at the time specified, or in what we now term modern times.

The radical disagreements among the “critics,” involving every single point in all these prophecies, and based on anti-Christian theories “made in Germany” and derived from Jewish scholars who have a settled antipathy toward Jesus as the Messiah, have been the chief factors in making this field of exegesis “the Dismal Swamp of Old Testament criticism.”

Yet it would seem incumbent on modern Christian scholars to reach a correct understanding of every detail of this great prophetic period, the most exactly measured off among all the prophecies of the entire Bible. Far more also depends upon its correct understanding. If the events connected with the career of Jesus of Nazareth agree with these numerous and precise predictions, then we have here a most powerful apologetic to prove that He was the true Messiah. Whereas, if the events do not thus agree with the predictions, the reverse of this is true. Surely it ought to be an axiom of Christian scholarship that what has been revealed is for our understanding, if we approach its study in the proper spirit. James 1:5. Also in the time of the end, the statement of the angel to Daniel will be realized: “None of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand.” Daniel 12:10.



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We should today be able to understand everything about this prophecy. The angel's interdiction is now removed, for the time of the end is fully come. Besides, we have available all the data necessary to pin down every date and every attendant specification of this period of the seventy weeks, if we approach the subject in the true spirit of scientific investigation. We should be aware of all the difficulties, while assured that we are now living in the days when the visions of Daniel are no longer sealed up, but are open for the understanding of all who are truly wise.

This entire question is so profoundly important that we shall do well to consider each item fully, even if need be at the expense of repeating some matters already stated.

Does this period of seventy weeks stand alone, as an independent line of prophecy? Or is it a part of, a supplement to, the much longer period of 2300 days brought to view in chapter 8:14? The latter had no assigned beginning, and can be measured only if its beginning is found somewhere else, as would be the case if this is a part of it. William Hales (1747-1831), William Miller 1782-1849), George Bush, Joseph Wolff, and all Adventists ever since have always contended that this period of seventy prophetic weeks is merely a part of the much longer period of 2300 days or years, and that the two begin together. The "critics," however, deny any such connection, and treat the two periods as independent. The futurists not only treat the two periods as independent, but have adopted the additional peculiarity of breaking off the last week of the seventy (or the last half week, equaling 3.50 years), postponing this final period until after the Second Coming of Christ. Which system is right?

If it were merely a literary or historical problem, to be decided by the strict laws of language and common sense, there would be little difficulty in settling the matter; but man is seldom a logical or wholly candid animal. Theological and moral issues, far-reaching and profound, are so involved that what is obvious from a literary-exegetical point of view is ignored or flatly denied because of a priori considerations. Consistency is verily a rare jewel.

Seventy weeks. The original word here translated weeks is merely the plural for seven; thus it means seventy of these periods of seven, or a total of 490 in all; that is, 490 years. The Greeks and the Latins, as well as the Hebrews, were familiar with the custom of counting many things in groups of sevens, and of reckoning long periods of time in units of seven years each. The Hebrews not only reckoned their days in sevens, but years were also grouped in sevens, and then seven times seven years gave them their period of jubilee. Pusey (page 165, footnote) gives examples from the classical writers of a similar use of seven-year units.

Few scholars deny that these seventy weeks are meant to represent 490 literal years. The "critics," however, for some unaccountable reason, wish to connect this period with the seventy years of Jewish captivity announced by Jeremiah. Jeremiah 29:10; 25:11. They tell us that by the time this pseudo Daniel was writing (assumed to be the time of the Maccabees), all pious Jews realized that Jeremiah's term of seventy years had long passed, and that the return from captivity had not been fulfilled. Hence this pseudo Daniel invented this, another vision, to piece out Jeremiah's period to a much later date, hoping that in the meantime something would happen to bring a real restoration from the captivity, and thus save the credit of the prophecy. Accordingly, this period of Daniel's seventy weeks of years (so the "critics" tell us) was just a magnification or a prolongation of the original period of captivity foretold by Jeremiah, invented after the failure of Jeremiah's prophecy had become apparent and the horrible persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes had begun. Daniel's pseudo prophecy merely tried to encourage the Maccabees to persevere, they say, for soon Epiphanes would be destroyed, and the Jews would again enjoy peace and prosperity.

Hence the "critics" make a clumsy attempt to have Daniel's period of seventy weeks begin with the prophecy given by Jeremiah, either 604 or 596 BC. R. H. Charles says that it should be dated from the actual destruction of Jerusalem, 586 BC. See his Commentary, page 244. However, Pusey justly remarks that though they may "place the beginning of the period where they will, they cannot make either the whole sum, or its several portions, agree with any event in history before Antiochus, if only they adhere to the obvious principle, that the parts are equal to the whole, and so, that 7 + 62 + 1 are the same as the 70 mentioned just before." - Daniel the Prophet, page 194.

We may pass from such a confusing of the prophecy to something more reasonable.

Are decreed upon thy people and upon thy Holy City. The Hebrew verb here translated "are decreed" is not found anywhere else in the Old Testament; hence the translators did not have much to work with to determine its true meaning. All scholars agree that the primary meaning of the word is "to cut," or "to cut off," and it is so rendered in the early translations of Daniel into Greek and Latin. Boutflower renders it "cut off, portioned off;" and similarly many others, including Moses Stuart and Montgomery, as well as Hengstenberg and Gesenius. No Semitic scholar denies that this is its primary meaning. But the

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English translators, not seeing any connection between this period of seventy weeks and the longer period of 2300 days, and thus seeing nothing from which this period of seventy weeks could literally be cut off, gave the word its secondary meaning of “decreed,” or “determined,” or “assigned.”

The meaning of the passage here under consideration therefore becomes about as follows:

“Seventy weeks are cut off [from the 2300 days] and are assigned to thy people and to thy Holy City.”

“[From the 2300 days] seventy weeks are portioned off to thy people and to thy Holy City.”

“[From the 2300 days] seventy weeks are allotted to thy people and to thy Holy City.”

It may be well to recall here the close logical connection between the eighth chapter and the ninth, even at the risk of seemingly tiresome repetition.

In the eighth chapter we find recorded the vision of the ram and the he-goat, followed by the question about the length of time involved in certain of the statements: “How long shall be the vision?” The answer was given: “Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (verse 14; margin, “justified”).

Daniel desired to understand the vision further, and he heard a heavenly voice which said: “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.” Then followed a plain, straightforward explanation of the various symbols. But when he came to the portion dealing with time, the angel merely said: “And the vision of the [2300] evenings and mornings which hath been told is true: but shut thou up the vision; for it belongs to many days to come.” Chapter 8:26.

Of course, there was only the one part of the vision which the angel had not explained, namely, the part dealing with time. The temple and the city of Jerusalem were still in ruins, though Daniel knew that Jeremiah’s prophecy about the definite length of the captivity was soon to end. Though now an old man, he had cherished the hope that even he might personally return to his native land within a few years. But here he had a direct message from heaven about the taking away of the daily sacrifice and the treading down of the sanctuary for 2300 years more. The whole thing seemed too horrible for Daniel; and the best he could say was that no one understood what it meant. Had he been as rash as some people of these days, he might have said that there must be some mistake regarding these 2300 days or years; for clearly he could not reconcile it with Jeremiah’s prediction of a return from the captivity at the end of seventy years.

The next thing that Daniel records is that he dedicated himself to fasting and prayer to gain a better understanding of the great discrepancy apparently involved between the prophecy of Jeremiah and the statement of the angel in the preceding vision. His pathetic and impassioned prayer had as its central theme the entreaty that God would have mercy and cause His face “to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate.” When Gabriel again appeared, he expressly announced: I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding. . . . Therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.” Verses 22, 23. What vision? Clearly enough, this can refer only to the preceding vision which he had been commissioned to make Daniel understand, but which Daniel declared nobody understood. It is thus as certain as language could make it, that the further statement which the angel proceeds to make in this ninth chapter about the seventy weeks and its various subdivisions is to be regarded as a part, the initial part, of the previous period of 2300 days; and the two periods begin together.

As we now proceed to consider the rest of this chapter, it is evident that the six points made in the verse before us constitute a sort of summary of what is to be accomplished during these seventy weeks.

To finish transgression, and to make an end of sins. This means the filling up of their cup of iniquity by the Jewish nation. R. H. Charles translates it: “To complete the transgression and bring sins to the full.” This the Jewish nation did when they rejected and crucified their Messiah. The remaining specifications in this summary are more hopeful.

To make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Reconciliation was provided for by the sacrifice of the spotless Son of God. He also provided everlasting righteousness for everyone who will accept it. Clearly nothing in these statements can fit anything done during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

To seal up vision and prophecy. That is, to set the seal of attestation to the vision and prophecy. When this period of seventy weeks had elapsed, so the world could see that all its specifications and subdivisions had been accurately fulfilled, this would be a guarantee that the remainder of the long period of 2300 days would also come about in due time. The fulfillment of all these specifications regarding the seventy weeks is also a tremendous certification of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to being the long promised Messiah.

To anoint the most holy. The margin reads, “a most holy place.” Hebrew scholars agree that the

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expression here used refers to a place, not a person. Apparently it does not refer to the anointing of the Messiah, which is also mentioned in this same prophecy, but to the inauguration by an anointing ceremony of the holy of holies in the heavenly sanctuary. This was accomplished at the beginning of our Savior's work as high priest in heaven, when He entered upon His work soon after His ascension, an event which was signaled on earth by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. See Acts 2:33; Hebrews 6:20. The type or foreshadowing of this is recorded in Exodus 40:9, 10, where Moses was commanded: "Anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein.... The altar shall be most holy."

Regarding this last statement, as the culmination of the five preceding ones, Uriah Smith justly remarks:

"Thus this first division of the 2300 days brings us to the commencement of the service in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, as the whole period brings us to the commencement of the service in the second apartment, or most holy place, of that sanctuary." - Daniel and the Revelation, 1912 ed., P. 218.

Also regarding these six predictions packed into this single verse, C. H. H. Wright declares:

"No grander expressions have been used of Messianic days by any of the prophets, and no language more suitably depicts the Christian Era and its blessings, than these six sentences of Daniel which speak of the six acts of divine grace to be performed within the compass of the 'seventy weeks.'---Daniel and His Prophecies, page 202.

***25. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Anointed One, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times.***

Moses Stuart renders the first expression "Mark well and understand." Evidently the angel is about to begin his formal statement.

From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. We get the setting of this announcement when we remember that at the time when this vision was given to Daniel, Jerusalem and its temple were still in utter ruins. Now the God of Israel, through His authorized messenger from heaven, announces that at some time in the future, whether soon or remote is not stated, a commandment would go forth to restore and build Jerusalem. From that date a definite number of years would reach to that long-looked-for event, the coming of the Messiah. What could be plainer or simpler?

The "critics" have a different theory. They point us to Jeremiah's prophecy (Jeremiah 30:18; 31:38-40), where it was predicted that Jerusalem would be built again after the captivity, and they tell us that this is the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. The date for Jeremiah's prediction is usually given as 606 BC. But when we try to measure from this date the specified number of years, we get to about 123 BC, which does not fit the times of Epiphanes or anything else. Besides, this prophecy of Jeremiah was in no possible sense a commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. It only predicted that at some indefinite time in the future the city would be rebuilt.

A hundred years before Jeremiah, however, Isaiah had given a more specific prophecy. He had foretold that a king named Cyrus would arise who would say of Jerusalem: "She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isaiah 44:28. Also God had said through this same prophet and about this same Cyrus: "He shall build My city, and he shall let My exiles go free, not for price nor reward, said Jehovah of hosts." Isaiah 45:13.

Thus we have even the name of the king who was to let the exiled Jews return to their land, and who was also to order the rebuilding of the city and the temple.

Then by looking at the history of the restoration, as recorded by Ezra and Nehemiah, we find that Cyrus, the king of Persia, did this very thing.

The matter of who issued this commandment to restore and build Jerusalem is not so simple as this would make it appear. When we look carefully into history we find no less than four imperial edicts which might appear to answer the specifications. These four edicts are listed below for comparison, showing how the full period of seventy weeks, or 490 years, comes out when reckoned forward from them, the predicted time of the appearing of the Messiah being of course in each case seven years before the final dates here given.

| Description of                      | The Edict  | Beginning | Ending |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|--------|
| I. First year of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4) | 538/537 BC | 48/47     | BC.    |

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|   |          |           |
|---|----------|-----------|
| II. Third year of Darius Hystaspes<br>(Ezra 6:1-12) | 519/8 BC | 29/28 BC. |
| III. Seventh of Artaxemes (Ezra 7)                  | 457 BC   | AD 34     |
| IV. Twentieth of Artaxemes (Nehemiah 2)             | 444 BC   | AD 47     |

The ending dates are of course obtained by following down the chronology 490 full years from the dates of the decrees. If a part of the year had already elapsed when the edict was issued, then the end of the period would actually be a corresponding part of the year beyond the ending date as here given. For example, in the case of the third of these edicts, the actual time when the edict went into effect was when Ezra finally arrived at Jerusalem with the royal command forbidding any and all opposition, and this was on the first day of the fifth month, or sometime early in the autumn of that year, since the Persians made their years begin in the spring, usually about the time of the vernal equinox. Thus the full period from this seventh of Artaxerxes would run on into the year AD 34. All the subdivisions of the seventy weeks would need to be reckoned in a similar way, to make the calculations exact. The last "week" or hebdomad of seven years would thus begin in the autumn of AD 27, and "the midst of the week," or halfway between 27 and 34, would fall in the spring of AD 31, when the crucifixion took place, at the time of the Passover. The baptism took place 3.50 years before, and this was the beginning of His official work as the Messiah; for He was then anointed with the Holy Spirit. The full "week" of seven years, during which He "made a firm covenant with many," for the first 3.50 years personally and then by His disciples working exclusively for the Jews for another 3.50 years, or until the death of Stephen and the final rejection of the gospel by the Jewish nation, extends to the autumn of AD 34.

When we examine these four imperial decrees, we find that the third is the only one which answers the conditions of the prophecy; but everything about this third edict fits the specifications exactly.

The first two may be dismissed with scant notice. Cyrus, indeed, ordered the rebuilding of the temple (and by implication the rebuilding of the wall of the city to protect it), and Darius confirmed this decree. But neither of them seems to have made any genuine provision for the restoration of the civil state as a complete unit, though a restoration of both the religious and the civil government was promised in the prophecy, "to restore and to build Jerusalem." The seventh of Artaxerxes was the first to give the Jewish state full autonomy. Besides, if we reckon the 490 years from either of the first two edicts, we fall a full generation short of even reaching the Christian Era. Neither of them can be made to fit into any system of chronology about the Messiah or about the final rejection of the Jewish nation, both of which are crucial events in the prophecy. However, they were preliminary, and prepared the way for the more full and important edicts which followed.

Thus the choice narrows down to the third or the fourth. Each has had its advocates; but there are many objections to the fourth. It seems to have been merely a verbal or oral permission to Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and to adjust matters there. The record clearly shows that the walls and gates had already been built under the decree of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, some thirteen years before. But the enemies of the Jews had been busy hindering the work and trying to undo what had been done, for these were some of the "troubled times" foretold in Daniel 9:25. What Nehemiah did was accomplished in less than two months. Besides, if we start from this date, 444 BC, the 490 years will run on to AD 47, with nothing significant to mark their termination; while all the other subdivisions of the prophecy are similarly thrown into confusion. Such reckonings of the prophecy have been the occasion for unbelievers to declare that the entire prophecy is a failure.

Intelligent Christians ought to work on the supposition that this prophecy is actually of divine origin, and that if we adopt the correct interpretation, then every date and every specification will fit the event, as every cog of a wheel meshes into the mate for which it has been made. This we find to be the case when we begin with the seventh year of Artaxerxes, in 457 BC.

Not only so, but we find a statement in Ezra which definitely speaks of all the first three decrees as in reality one. In telling of the rebuilding of the temple Ezra says: "And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia." Ezra 6:14.

Thus we have the Bible itself treating the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem as a unity, one threefold decree, given in its final form by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. Obviously this is the starting point of the prophecy.

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This date of 457 BC. as the seventh year of Artaxerxes is one of the best-established dates in ancient history. It is found in the margin of most Oxford Bibles opposite this decree of the seventh chapter of Ezra, being the date assigned for this event by Ussher's chronology. In fact, it is established in so many ways and by such a wealth of authorities that it is not worth while laboring the point here. See Source Book for Bible Students, 1927 edition, pages 554-562; also Horn and Wood, The Chronology of Ezra 7, Review and Herald, 1953.

Unto the Anointed One, the Prince. The Hebrew for these two nouns is Mashiach Nagid, and the A.V. translates them as "the Messiah the Prince." The translators of the Revised Version leaned over backward to give what they regarded as a literal and "impartial" translation, avoiding any appearance of a Messianic interpretation. We should remember, though, that S. R. Driver and other notorious "critics" were on this translating committee. The two Hebrew words have no article, and Boutflower states the reason: "As both Mashiach and Nagid are titles, they are treated as proper names and appear in Hebrew without the definite article." - In and Around the Book of Daniel, page 191. Hengstenberg, Auberlen, Pusey, Wright, and other eminent scholars might be quoted to the same effect. There is no doubt that the King James Version is correct in translating these words as "the Messiah, the Prince," a combined title and official name, or as Boutflower and others render them, "Prince Messiah," or "King Messiah."

No informed person can deny that for many centuries there had been prophecies in the Old Testament telling of a coming King who would deliver Israel from all her enemies. But the "critics" say that no such official title had been given to this future King, and hence they quibble about the use of this word as a title here in Daniel, and deny that Daniel was foretelling any such use of the title by Jesus of Nazareth. In accord with their settled plan of denying any predictions in Daniel, they wish to apply this title to some person before the time of Epiphanes, such as Cyrus, Onias III, or someone else.

Obviously there must have been a first occasion for the use of this term Messiah as a title for this future King of Israel; and why not here in Daniel as well as by someone else? It cannot be denied that in the time of Christ the name Messiah was being used by everybody, Samaritans and Jews alike. The woman of Samaria, not a conspicuously religious person, said: "I know that Messiah comes (He that is called Christ)." John 4:25. In reply Jesus declared: "I that speak unto thee am He." One of the first disciples announced to another: "We have found the Messiah." John 1:41. In numerous other passages we have profuse testimony that the name Messiah, which is the exact Hebrew equivalent of the Greek word Christ, was almost universal among the common people of that day, whether Jews, Samaritans, or even Gentiles.

The leading Jewish authorities were constantly pressing Jesus to tell them plainly whether or not He was indeed the Christ, or the Messiah. Pusey well remarks: "The name was not taught them by our Lord; they knew it already."--Page 181. Where did these people learn of this title, except from this very prophecy, of Daniel now before us? This is the only place in the Old Testament where it is found. It is idle to deny that Daniel's prophecy is the source, the solitary source, in the entire Old Testament for this title and its use as a proper name, applying to the long promised Deliverer.

Nor can any quibbler deny that Jesus appropriated this title to Himself, and that His disciples universally followed His example. Now, was Jesus mistaken in this claim? Was He an impostor? We might expect unbelieving Jewish scholars to take this position; but it is preposterous that professed Christians, professors in theological seminaries in Germany, England, and America, should follow these Jews in this respect.

The only candid, scholarly position to take is that Daniel predicted that the long-looked-for Prince Messiah would appear at a certain specified time. At this very date Jesus of Nazareth appeared before John the Baptist and demanded baptism. When this rite was completed, He was anointed from heaven by a special manifestation of the Spirit of God. Forthwith Jesus went forth proclaiming: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Mark 1:15. What time was it to which He thus referred? Obviously, the very time foretold by Daniel in this prophecy. This is confirmed by noting that this act of being anointed, thus becoming the Messiah or the Christ, occurred in the autumn of AD 27, which is exactly the predicted number of years given here by Daniel: "Unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks!" Daniel 9:25, A.V. How could anything be plainer or more undeniable?

Shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks. Together these two amounts make a total of sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years. The natural method of reckoning them is of course to make them consecutive, the sixty-two weeks beginning where the seven weeks end. But the "critics" shy at this method, because they have found that they can get nothing significant to mark these periods in the times of the Maccabees, even though they claim that this pseudo prophecy was all made up after the events themselves were already past. So they want to begin the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks at the same



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place, and have them run parallel. Even thus, however, they get a number which is “too large by sixty-seven,” as Driver expresses it, and as many others agree. Let them, says Pusey, “place the beginning of the period where they will, they cannot make either the whole sum, or its several portions, agree with any event in history before Antiochus, if only they adhere to the obvious principle, that the parts are equal to the whole, and so, that  $7 + 62 + 1$  are the same as the  $70$  mentioned just before.” -Daniel the Prophet, page 194.

The reason why the first seven weeks, or forty-nine years, is set off by itself, seems to be that this period was allotted to the extremely difficult task of rebuilding the city and re-establishing the Jewish commonwealth. This is indicated by the accompanying remark, it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. We know practically nothing of this long period extending from Artaxerxes down to the time of Alexander, or some 170 years, during which period this re-establishment of the Jewish nation took place. Thus we have no exact dates here to which we can refer; but it is reasonable that it took the forty-nine years here specified. Wright remarks: “No writing is in existence which gives the history of Jerusalem between Nehemiah and Alexander the Great.” - Daniel and His Prophecies, page 238. But there is no reason to doubt that the number of years here assigned for the “troublous times” of rebuilding are correct.

How do these seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks, or 483 years, reach to the Messiah? Certainly not to His birth; and it is probable that this seeming disagreement misled many, especially during the early days of the church.

But Jesus did not become the Anointed One, that is, the Messiah or the Christ, at His birth. Nothing of the kind. He became officially the Anointed One at His baptism, at which time He began His formal work for mankind. The baptism was in the autumn of AD 27, which is exactly 483 years from the beginning of the period in 457, and as far along in 27 as the original decree was in the year 457.

This exact fit becomes apparent when we consider that 457 full years BC and 27 full years AD make 484 years, not 483. But a considerable part of the year 457 had elapsed when the decree went into effect; and thus by the autumn of AD 27 the exact period had been reached. What occurred then?

At the baptism of Jesus the Holy Spirit descended in a visible form upon Him, and a voice spoke from heaven: “This is My beloved Son.” Matthew 3:17. This, and no other, was the time referred to by the prophecy, for it was then, as Peter says that “God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power!” Acts 10:38. It was then, and not before, that He became officially the Anointed One, the Messiah. Directly thereafter He went forth “preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled. Mark 1:14, 15. Obviously He was referring to the time foretold in this very prophecy of Daniel. The exact time pointed out in the prophecy had arrived, and He was calling attention to the fact that the event corresponded exactly to the prediction.

How dare anyone quibble or doubt the divine origin of the prophecy, when Christ’s own words thus attested its fulfillment? Surely this announcement of Christ set the “seal” to the entire “vision and prophecy,” as had been announced. Thus Jesus positively authenticated Daniel’s entire prophecy, for by this announcement, “The time is fulfilled,” He was clearly referring to the time pointed out for the coming of the Anointed One, the Prince. So here is another way mark settled.

***26. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the Anointed One be cut off, and shall have nothing. 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 even unto the end shall be war; desolation are determined.***

We seem to have in this verse an example, so common in all extended prophecies both in the Old Testament and in the New, of a brief summary of the most important events, followed by further particulars, but without any attempt at any over-all orderly succession of the details. At any rate, this verse is an independent statement, the next one going back and giving further details.

The general meaning of the first part of this verse seems to be that the Messiah, instead of showing Himself as a glorious conqueror and deliverer, would meet a violent death soon after His appearance. When it says that the Anointed One is to be cut off, we have a very clear and definite prediction of the death by violence of the very One for whom the people of Israel had so long waited and desired. The term “cut off” is one frequently used throughout the Old Testament for death by public execution. It is the term used for the fate of reprobates under the Mosaic law, who were to be “cut off” from their people. Exodus 12:15, 19. A parallel expression, also applied to the future Messiah, though under the equivalent name of the Servant of Jehovah, occurs in Isaiah 53:8, where it is said: “He was cut off out of the land of the living.” It is the same event spoken of in the very same way. The Messiah was not to have a happy and prosperous career,

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but was to be cut off almost immediately after His appearance.

After the threescore and two weeks. There is no occasion for a quibble here, because this did not occur immediately when the threescore and two weeks had expired. The plain meaning is that this cutting off of the Anointed One would occur, not within this period of time, but soon after it was completed, and with the plain implication that there would be no great lapse of time after His first appearance before he would meet with a violent death. We frequently use the term “soon after” with this meaning. As has been stated above, this verse is an introductory summary of the chief events, and this expression is not intended to fix the exact time when this sad and calamitous cutting off of the Messiah would occur. The exact time comes in the next verse, in the midst of the week.

And shall have nothing. This expression has given rise to much discussion. The King James Version renders it, “but not for Himself,” which of course would mean a vicarious death. The literal Hebrew is, “and there shall be nothing to Him.” As Wright remarks, it was left for the future to reveal the real meaning of the phrase. John 1:11 seems to be a divine commentary on this passage: “He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.” No matter how we may render this passage in Daniel, it very clearly implies His rejection as the Messiah.

If we are to trust Jerome, the Jews with whom he was acquainted were willing to admit a prophecy of the death of Jesus in this passage, but made the last part mean: “But the kingdom of the Jews will not be His,” meaning that Jesus was not the true Messiah. See Montgomery, Commentary, pages 397, 382, top.

Of course the “critics,” who deny any Messianic application of this entire prophecy, apply this passage about being cut off and having nothing to one of the high priests, Onias III, who was deposed in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and was afterward put to death by a Syrian official, with or without the connivance of the king. But this ex-high priest was in no sense a “confessor” or a “martyr” for his faith. Also, the time of his death cannot be made to fit into the predicted dates of this prophecy. The whole affair seems a perverse and sacrilegious resort of unbelief, to evade the clear evidence of predictive prophecy pointing forward for hundreds of years to the Messiah.

Furthermore, it seems far from reliably proved that this high priest, Onias III, was actually assassinated, or that he met a violent death of any sort. This idea rests wholly upon a statement in 2 Maccabees, which is known to contain other unhistorical statements; and it seems to be directly contradicted by Josephus in his Wars of the Jews (Li, 1:VIIX : 2, 3), who tells us that Onias, after the capture of Jerusalem by Antiochus, fled to Egypt and founded another temple in the vicinity of Heliopolis. On account of all this, Wellhausen, the famous German Semitic scholar, “brands the whole record of the assassination of Onias as apocryphal.” Charles thinks Wellhausen mistaken; but see Driver, page 140, note.

And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The literal Hebrew of this passage turns the structure of the sentence around, making it read, “And the city and the sanctuary will the people of the prince that is to come destroy,” thus throwing a strong emphasis on “destroy,” and another emphasis on “the city and the sanctuary.” Clearly enough it means a complete obliteration of both the temple and the city of Jerusalem. This we know the Romans did accomplish in AD 70. Antiochus Epiphanes, on the other hand, did nothing of the kind, though the “critics” apply this prophecy to him. He did take possession of the city, and he desecrated the temple by making it over for a short time into a heathen temple. But Montgomery says: “There was little destruction effected by the Greeks in the Holy City.” - Commentary, page 383.

If it were not so serious a matter, it would be amusing to watch the twisting and turnings which are performed to make this passage apply to Epiphanes, and thus avoid the clear prediction of the coming of the Romans and their destruction of the city and the temple. The minute accuracy of the prediction is seen when we remember that it was not Titus who destroyed the temple. He wished above all things to preserve it intact, and gave stringent orders to that effect. But some of the soldiers took blazing firebrands and set fire deliberately to the hangings and the wooden framework of the building, and soon nothing could save it.

Thus it is strikingly accurate for the prophecy to say, the people ... shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. By Contrast, under Epiphanes neither the city nor the sanctuary was destroyed at all, and only a few houses were burned.

But is it right to apply the prince that shall come to the Roman general Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian, who afterward became emperor himself? Many have thus made the application, and all the “critics” tell us that this “prince” must be a different person from the one already mentioned in verse 25 as Prince Messiah. They have no reason for this, except they want to apply the first “prince” to Onias III or some other Jewish dignitary, while they are bound to apply this second “prince” to Epiphanes.

It would seem more natural to say that the “prince” must be the same in both instances. This offers

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no difficulties, and it is certainly more consistent to make both references apply to Christ. The application would still be exactly as above. As Boutflower has pointed out, Christ seems to have referred to this prophecy of Daniel in His parable of the marriage of the king's son, where it is said: "The king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city." Matthew 22:7. Clearly Jesus was here foretelling the fate of Jerusalem, the "king" in this parable representing God the Father. The avenging Roman armies are spoken of as coming at the command of God, a form of language which is constantly used in the Old Testament of armies sent to punish the Jewish nation for their sins. Accordingly, it is entirely proper to say that the destroying Romans were sent by God as the messengers of His judgments.

In passing, it should be noted that this prediction of the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple does not say that this would occur within the times embraced by the period of seventy weeks. It gives no hint of any such thing. What logical or other reason is there for thinking that nothing outside the compass of these seventy weeks should ever be mentioned in this prophecy? However, though the final ruin of Jerusalem and the nation was in mercy postponed for another generation after their crime in murdering their own Messiah, everybody knows that this utter ruin was due to their murder of the Messiah, the climax of all their apostasy and wickedness; and this is sufficient reason for making mention of it here.

And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolation are determined. Throughout the Old Testament destructive war is often spoken of as "a flood." In this instance the prophecy plainly states that it will be a war to the bitter "end" of both city and nation. Such it surely was. It is reliably estimated that more than a million Jews perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, while an enormous number were sold into slavery. From that day to this the Hebrew people have had no national home. Complete and utter desolation are determined for not only the city but the nation. Thus was fulfilled the still older prediction recorded in Leviticus: "And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste." Leviticus 26:33.

***27. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. And upon the wing of abominations shall come one that makes desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate.***

To whom does the he of the first clause refer?

The "critics," of course, try to put Antiochus into this verse; but to do so they have to resort to many changes of the text, and all of them acknowledge that with them this verse is one of "great difficulty." This only means that they have great difficulty in making any sort of fit between these statements and the events of the times of Epiphanes, even though they tell us that this book of Daniel was written post event, or to fit the history.

The futurists apply this text to some future antichrist, but they are not at all agreed among themselves. Of course, if it is all still future, we need not discuss its accuracy of fulfillment. There can be no "difficulties" in such a futuristic application, if everything is pushed over into an unknown future period where almost anything may be possible.

The scholarly E. B. Pusey, who is sometimes spoken of as a futurist, in that he did hold to the coming of a future antichrist, is entirely with the historical school of interpretation in this entire prophecy. He gives a sound and consistent interpretation of it, and of course he identifies the he of this verse with the Messiah, the "Anointed One," of the preceding verses. In this way the entire prophecy is maintained as a consistent unit, and all its statements can be applied in a natural way to actual events running down to the times of the Messiah, with all the dates agreeing accurately with the history. No part has to be broken off arbitrarily and postponed to the future, to fit some supposed future antichrist. It seems a thousand pities that the sober good sense of such eminent scholars as Hengstenberg, Auberlen, Pusey, C. H. H. Wright, Charles, and Boutflower is not followed by all modern writers on this prophecy. Boutflower gives an especially detailed exposition of this chapter.

The Messiah is here foretold as making a firm covenant with many for one week. The literal Hebrew is "make mighty a covenant," which Driver says is a peculiar expression, but probably means "make strong," or "confirm." - The Book of Daniel, page 141. He adds: "The subject is naturally the 'prince' just named [in verse 26]."

This of course refers to the gracious offer of salvation which was made to all who would accept it

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among the Jewish nation for seven full years, beginning with the personal ministry of Jesus after His baptism in AD 27, extending to the crucifixion in the midst of the week in the spring of 31, and then through His disciples until the Sanhedrin finally rejected the gospel in the autumn of 34, after which the disciples turned to the Gentiles. Here is a full seven years, or a prophetic week, during which the offer of salvation was made specifically to the Jewish nation.

It was exactly in the midst of the week, or in the Passover season of 31, just 3.50 years after His baptism in the autumn of AD 27, that Jesus, by the voluntary sacrifice of Himself, caused all other sacrifices and oblations to cease for evermore. The rending of the temple veil by an invisible hand from the top to the bottom, at the very instant of the death of the Messiah, was a divine notification that henceforth all the temple services were at an end. True, the Jews continued to offer sacrifices on their polluted altars; but the sacrifice of the Messiah rendered them henceforth unnecessary and blasphemous. Some years later, or AD 70, they were ended physically and literally by the Romans. Pusey records a remarkable Jewish tradition that for about thirty-nine years preceding the destruction of the temple by Titus, the sign of acceptance which the high priest always looked for on the Day of Atonement, never took place. See Lectures on Daniel, page 172, note. From the midst of the week in the spring of 31, all further offerings of sacrifice and oblations in the temple became a mockery and a denial of the Messianic promises.

Even if we adopt the reading “for half of the week,” as given in the modern Jewish translation and favored by some scholars, the meaning would still be essentially the same. The clear meaning of the passage is that, though the national probation of the Jews would be extended mercifully for another 3.50 years beyond AD 31, yet during this last half of the prophetic week all the temple sacrifices and ritual would be null and useless in the sight of God, even though the deluded priests did keep on with their accustomed round of service. All that they did had indeed become useless and meaningless for this last “half of the week,” and the God of heaven regarded them as an insult and a mockery.

The date 31 as the year of the crucifixion is supported by eminent authorities. Other dates both before and after have been advocated at times; for, strange as it may seem, the actual date of the crucifixion is probably the most difficult of definite location of any important event in the world’s history. Very probably it is not capable of satisfactory settlement for those who do not admit this very prophecy as a genuine Messianic prediction. Pusey and Hales and other eminent scholars can be quoted for this date; but to avoid further discussion here I would refer the interested reader to the Source Book for Bible Students, pages 560, 561, and to the authorities there cited.

Perhaps the most conclusive argument for this date is founded on a consideration of this prophecy of Daniel as a whole. If we begin the 490 years with 457 BC, then there is no other place for them to end except AD 34. On this basis, the “one week,” in the midst of which the sacrifice and oblation were to be made to cease, must begin with the autumn of the year 27, which is the date of the baptism as given in most Bibles. From this the halfway mark, or “the midst of the week,” cannot be other than the spring of AD 31.

In this way there is perfect harmony and a perfect fit with the facts of history. If one of these dates is disturbed, all the others are thereby thrown into confusion and to an equal extent. Accordingly, we have an abundance of evidence on which to rest our faith that this is a true Messianic prophecy and that Jesus was the long-predicted One named in the prophecy. Even after Jesus had appeared by definite appointment in His glorified state to His disciples on the mountain in Galilee, the record is: “But some doubted!” Matthew 28:17.

And upon the wing of abominations shall come one that makes desolate. There seems little doubt that we have here a poetical expression dealing with the sad, dark fate of the Jewish nation, where desolation is pictured as being carried along upon the wing of abominations. One translator renders the passage: “Upon the wing of abominations comes the Desolater!” In more than one place in the Old Testament, God is represented as riding upon a cherub for the deliverance of His people. In a contrasted figure of poetry, as C. H. H. Wright expresses it, “the Desolater is represented as borne aloft upon the wing of the abominations committed. In other words, the abominations committed in the temple and in the Holy City were the cause of the desolations threatened by the prophets of old.” Daniel and His Prophecies, page 228. Few persons outside of a small number of specialists in this period of history have any idea of the horrors and atrocities which flourished during the closing days of the Jewish nation and the ruin of Jerusalem. Perhaps never before nor since in the history of the race were fanaticism and savage cruelty so combined in the internal disintegration of a besieged city, and never did they result in a more complete ruin for a people who declared to the very last that they were the special favorites of Jehovah and therefore never could be \*Overthrown. Paris in the fiercest days of the Terror is the nearest to it by way of a comparison, but Paris was not being besieged by the most efficient military machine which the world had



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up to that time ever seen. John of Gischala told Josephus that he had not the slightest fear of the city's being taken, because it was God's city. However, every breathing spell which they had from the attacks from without was used in fighting among the factions within, by drunken debauchery in the very temple itself, and by blasphemous practices which are so incredible that they tend almost to discredit the reputation of the Jewish historian who records them.

I quote briefly from Boutflower and Auberlen, who have given us some of the best comments on this awful period of the moral nadir of humanity, as a comment on the passages we are here studying from Daniel.

"The Zealots, whom Josephus so sternly denounces as the direct cause of the destruction of Jerusalem, received their name from their affected patriotism and pretended zeal for the law. In reality they were robber bands, cutthroats and murderers, the Bolsheviks of those days; and are more truthfully described by their other name, Sicarii or Assassins. Herod the Great in his early days did much to put down these robbers, who had made their strongholds in the precipitous hillsides of Galilee. But in the last years of the Jewish state this evil broke out afresh in the same quarter. A strong band of these men had held the town of Gischala against the Romans; but when they saw its capture to be certain, they contrived by a stratagem to make their escape to Jerusalem under the leadership of John of Gischala. Having made their way into the capital, they set to work to corrupt the younger men, and stirred them up to rebel against the Romans. Meanwhile they were joined by many like characters from all parts of the country, and were able by making themselves masters of the temple to turn it into a fortress, from which they could sally out into Jerusalem and commit any acts of tyranny and savage barbarity which might serve their purpose. There could be no better description of the prosperous career for the time being of atrocious wickedness, violence, murder, rapine, and pollution, engaged in so lightly by the Zealot army, and of the terrible gloom which it cast over Jerusalem, than those brief words of Gabriel, 'Upon a wing of abominations shall come one that makes desolate.' These bold, determined, desperate robber-ruffians, who jested over holy things, and yet when it suited their purpose professed a zeal for the law and a belief in the prophets, sailed forth boldly on their career of crime like some powerful bird of prey the terror of the flocks.... Thus they seized the appointment to the high priesthood, and elected by lot to that sacred office a rustic clown, whom they decked with the priestly robes and brought him forth as if on the stage, indulging in uncontrolled merriment over his awkwardness, while the more earnest-minded of the priests shed hot tears of indignation at this horrid profanation." - In and Around the Book of Daniel, pages 200, 201. I give also some statements by Carl A. Auberlen:

"After the crucifixion of the Messiah, abomination was heaped upon abomination, till, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, they reached their height-in the devastation of the temple by the Zealots, who were specially meant by the prophecy of Jesus, and of whom Josephus says, with evident reference to our passage [here in Daniel]. 'They thought that the prophecy against their country was approaching its fulfillment. For it was an old prediction, that the city would be destroyed, and the sanctuary, according to the usage of war, be burned down, when a revolt would break out, and native bands desecrate the temple of God. The Zealots believed this, and offered themselves as the instruments of its fulfillment.'" -The Prophecies of Daniel, etc., page 107, Andover, 1857.

And even unto the full end [of the Jewish nation], and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate. The full meaning of these terrible words is not clear, but it seems evident that they refer, as do some of the preceding expressions, to the sad fate of those who had rejected their only hope of salvation, and who became controlled by evil angels for the more perfect ruin of themselves and their nation.

It is usually thought that it is to this verse, in its Septuagint form, that our Savior referred in His great prophecy of Matthew 24. He warned His disciples to be prepared to flee instantly from Jerusalem, when they saw "the abomination of desolation," which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, "standing in the holy place." Verse 15.

Christ was quoting these words from the Septuagint version of Daniel, which in some portions is much more like a paraphrase or an interpretation than a literal translation. Yet we cannot fail to note that Jesus evidently had not the slightest sympathy with the interpretation of this prophecy which was common in His day, which applied these and other parts of Daniel to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. Such an application of the prophecy Jesus implicitly brushed aside without notice, and made these predictions apply to events still in the future in His day. Wright neatly expresses the alternative: "A professedly Christian commentator ought to follow the teachings of Christ.... Persons who accept the teachings of the divine Master ought to oppose all hypotheses which affirm that Christ was ignorant of the history of the past, or of



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the future which He revealed.'--Daniel and His Prophecies, Introduction, pages vii, viii.

Elsewhere (see pages 182-184, see also the note on chapter 8:13) we have discussed the somewhat complicated topic of what is meant by this expression from the Greek Septuagint, "the abomination of desolation." It is sufficient for our present purpose to remark that Jesus applied the term to something connected with, or occurring at the same time as, the Roman invasion of Judea and Jerusalem. Whether He had reference to the vicinity of Jerusalem as "the holy place," which was to be occupied by the Roman armies, or referred to the temple itself, which was to be desecrated by the Zealots at the very time of the Roman invasion, makes no difference in this connection. The words of Jesus, though, definitely preclude our applying this "abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet," to Antiochus Epiphanes. It was something still future in Christ's day.

What difference does it make that the Jews of the times of the Maccabees, and later, thought they saw a fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in the persecutions which they were compelled to endure as Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to Hellenize the Jewish nation? Neither then nor since could any detailed similarity be shown between the prophecy and the actual history of those times. There is no doubt that such an application served for the time being to satisfy the uncritical Jews of that time and for a century or so afterward. However, it is significant that Josephus was not by any means satisfied with this interpretation, and himself applied some of the more important parts of Daniel's prophecy (the fourth kingdom, etc.) to the Romans. Yet in spite of this testimony of Josephus, and of Jesus Christ Himself, with all the detailed and exact confirmations of history now shouting to us across the centuries, the modern "critics" still keep on with their vain attempts to deny any true prophecy to Daniel's book, and say that it was written after the events, and is only a pseudo prophecy, designed to encourage the Jews of the times of the Maccabees.

In closing our remarks on this wonderful ninth chapter of Daniel, it should be remembered that these sad predictions of the final destruction of Jerusalem and the utter uprooting of the Jewish nation from their national home should not be looked upon as simply an announcement of the implacable wrath of Jehovah. Rather let us look upon these predictions of the 490 years still future in Daniel's day as a definite announcement on the part of God that mercy would still be extended toward His people for nearly five more centuries.

In spite of Israel's sins in the past, in spite of her still unrepentant condition after the captivity, the well-merited destruction would still be deferred century after century, until the cup of her iniquity would be full to overflowing. Mixed also with the sad announcement of the final doom was the bright promise of the definite date for the coming of the long-looked-for Messiah, "the Anointed One." From Daniel's time forward, every son of Israel who longed for the Messianic coming, so frequently foretold in ways hazy and ambiguous to the prophets of the past, could now read the definite date for the coming of the long promised One, who would break the power of the destroyer and establish an eternal kingdom of His faithful people where righteousness would endure forever.

Many more centuries have since come and gone; and still the final and complete form of the promised deliverance awaits its complete fulfillment. Yet by every milestone which has already been passed along the path of the centuries, all illumined by the light of the divine predictions, we realize more and more that the vision and the prophecy is thereby attested and made more sure to us: "For yet a very little while, He that comes shall come, and shall not tarry." Hebrews 10:37.

The following diagram will illustrate the seventy weeks and its subdivisions.

The next diagram will serve to show the connection between this first prophetic period of seventy weeks and the much longer one of 2300 days.

If now we glance backward at the various ways in which the modern "critics" evade the plain intent of the predictions of this chapter, we are reminded of the wise remark of Ellen G. White: "All who look for hooks to hang their doubts upon, will find them." The eminent Hebrew scholar, E. B. Pusey, when confronted with the same phenomenon of theophobia, remarked: "Of a truth, unbelief imposes hard laws upon the intellect of man." The apostle Paul spoke of this same psychological phenomenon as evidence of the "carnal mind." Romans 8:7, AV. Even Edward Gibbon, a notorious skeptic and the historian of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, whose six-volume work I had to study more than sixty years ago as a history textbook, involuntarily acknowledged the true cause of all such unbelief when he wrote concerning some specific example of God's intervention in the affairs of mankind: "But the stubborn mind of an infidel is guarded by a secret incurable suspicion."

It has been remarked concerning the use of such symbols as beasts and other non-human things in prophecy, that God more or less had to employ these ambiguous symbols in order to keep evil angels and wicked men from combining to deliberately thwart definite predictions which God had made centuries in

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advance. Certainly it is one of the wonders of all history that, while allowing complete freedom of choice to even wicked humans and evil spirits, God could reveal so much about the future, and still have all these events come out exactly as predicted and on schedule time.

In this chapter we have few if any symbols. True, many generalized statements are made, and some that are more or less enigmatic; but what a long list of definite, specific events, with exact dates for so many of them. No such series of specific events, in such a precise order, many of them even dated, could have been predicted and then matched with the exact fulfillments long centuries afterward, without omniscient wisdom followed by omnipotent power in the management of all human contingencies. In spite of these specific predictions having been recorded centuries in advance, no combination of evil men and demons ever succeeded in deranging the steady progress of events, as they marched steadily forward to fulfill everything on schedule time. Similarly, the modern efforts inspired by the same theophobia to discredit these wonderful prophecies will be equally ineffective upon all except those who love darkness rather than light.

Pusey gives an admirable summary of the chief points in this Messianic prophecy, from which I may quote as follows:

“Look then at this harmonizing prophecy as a whole, the completeness of its symmetry, its complicated harmony. . . . There is a whole of time, 490 years, distributed into periods of 49, 434, and 3.5 years, twice repeated, and these four periods not to be taken anyhow, but following in this exact order. Then, in this series of years, as in every other part of prophecy, there is a nearer prophetic foreground of events, whose fulfillment was to guarantee the more distant, the restoration of the city and polity in a period of 49 years from a decree to be issued. 434 years, from the end of those 49, were to reach to the coming of Messiah the Prince. At a time within the 490 years, but after the first 483, i.e. in the last 7, Messiah was to be cut off; in the midst of those 7, He was to make sacrifice to cease, but to confirm a covenant, not with all, but with the many. Transgression, sin, iniquity were to be effaced: everlasting righteousness was to be brought in. But city and sanctuary were to be destroyed by the overwhelming tide of the armies of a foreign prince; coming down upon the pinnacle of abominations, and the desolation was to endure.” - Daniel the Prophet, page 188.

It should also be noted that while the prophecy as a whole ends on a sad note, giving the utter and lasting destruction of the Jewish city and nation, there are in contrast many and vitally important announcements of gospel mercy and hope. Especially does this chapter give the first specific and dated announcement of the long-promised coming of the Messiah, and a statement of His chief work. So there is a remarkable blending of mercy and evangelical proclamation along with the prediction of judgment. A new covenant is to be proclaimed for the many, following the end of the long-established sacrifice and oblation, the latter being done away only to be succeeded by something far nobler and better.

All this, says Pusey, became a reality through the literal and accurate fulfillment of this prophecy. “He, the so-long-looked-for came; He was owned as the Messiah; He did cause the sacrifices of the law to cease. He was cut off; yet He did make the covenant with the many; a foreign army did desolate city and temple. The temple for these 1,800 years has lain desolate; the typical sacrifices have ceased, not through disbelief in their efficacy on the part of those to whom they were once given. The city rose from its ashes, but not for them.” - Ibid., p. 189.

There have been many who have sought to determine all the dates in this complex prophecy by first fixing the date of the crucifixion, and then measuring the other dates from this datum. This method has proved confusing and disappointing, hence it must be fallacious. For one thing, incredible as it may appear to some, the exact date (I mean the year) of the crucifixion is probably the most difficult to settle conclusively of all the major dates in the world's history. We know the day of the week—it was on the day before the Sabbath. We know the time of year; for it was in close connection with the Passover, and this was near the vernal equinox. However, the Passover was a movable period, like our modern Easter, sometimes early in the season, sometimes late, depending upon a complicated series of preceding events, and (unlike the modern Easter) would occur sometimes on one day of the week and sometimes on another. One might think that it would be easy to determine by astronomy just what year (in the half dozen years before and after AD 30) the Passover would fall on a Friday. But the conditioning factors seem to be so complicated and so difficult of conclusive determination that every year from 29 to 33 has been advocated by some group of scholars, men of learning and of a sincere desire to learn the truth, from the days of Sir Isaac Newton down to the recent computations of certain professors in the University of Chicago. But the date would seem impossible of determination by this means alone.

I mean, apart from its pivotal place in this prophecy now before us. But if, as specified in the

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prophecy, we first fix on 457 as the date for the beginning of these seventy weeks or 490 years, which is the date given in the margin of most Bibles, then we have AD 27 as the date of the manifestation of the Messiah, and this date also is given in some Bibles as the date of the baptism and the anointing of the Holy One. Mark 1:9-11; Acts 10:38. Since this baptism took place in the autumn, it is as inevitable that 3.5 years more will bring us to the spring of 31. This event is thus the midst of the week spoken of in the prophecy, the full week running on to 34. Then Stephen was stoned and the Jewish nation definitely rejected the gospel, with the result that the apostles turned to the Samaritans and the Gentiles. Thus with these terminal dates established, every subdividing date falls into place like a cog in a well-designed wheel meshing into its partner, predictions and events matching one another perfectly. All this is proof of inspiration, and proof also of the Messiah ship of Jesus of Nazareth.

Note on the History of the Interpretation of the Seventy Weeks. One learns with astonishment that the religious leaders in the time of the apostles and immediately thereafter had only vague and in many respects inaccurate ideas about the periods connected with the career of the Messiah and their relation to this prophecy. Although there are clear data in the Gospels to indicate that Jesus attended four Passovers, in conformity with the fact that His public ministry extended from the baptism in the autumn of 27 to the spring of 31, or three and one-half years, yet the working out of all the related facts was unclear to the church fathers of the post apostolic period. As many modern people seem disposed to trust to apostolic tradition in such matters, instead of going at the problem by a more scientific or historical method, the result has been that the confusion and inaccuracy of the early church fathers have become a permanent heritage in the modern church.

Many people still think that the date of the crucifixion is pivotal in this entire prophecy, and that when this is first established, the other dates will necessarily be fixed thereby. As has been remarked above, however, the date of the crucifixion is the most difficult to determine independently; it is far better to settle the terminus a quo, after which all the other periods and subdivisions will automatically fall into line.

Literally hundreds of diverse methods of reckoning or applying the subdivisions of the seventy weeks have been presented; but this is not the place to attempt even a cursory glance at the details of what Montgomery has termed "the Dismal Swamp of Old Testament criticism." It may suffice to distinguish three leading groups of interpretations, though the medley is so confusing that any clear-cut classification is almost impossible.

1. First there is what we may term the contemporary or the Maccabean interpretation. The Jews of the times of Antiochus evidently had definite opinions about many things in this book of Daniel, quite oblivious of the fact that contemporary interpretation of any prophecy has not usually been successful, and also forgetful of what the angel so repeatedly told Daniel that the prophecy would be understood only in the last days, or at the time of the end. Under this Maccabean interpretation, all the periods and dates mentioned in the book, and specifically those of this chapter, were applied as best they might to events connected with the persecution by Epiphanes.

The modern "critical" view may be considered a variation of this original view, though its advocates frankly admit that this chapter, like all the others in this book, is no real prophecy, is in reality a vaticinium ex eventu, or a dressing up of history in the guise of prophecy, in other words, a pseudo prophecy. No agreement is to be found among those who in the past have adopted this view, nor among those who today are still teaching to America and England these infidel theories dating from Porphyry and passed along to modern times by the skeptical "critics" (mostly Jews) of the German universities of the middle nineteenth century. E. B. Pusey gives a table on page 215 of his Daniel the Prophet, wherein are listed some of the main points in the theories of about two dozen of the German "critics" of the last century. They had one thing in common, they were all intent on denying the Messianic interpretation of this prophecy. But on most other points and facts they are as diverse as Babel itself.

2. The second may be termed the Jewish interpretation. It is what the Jews of the post apostolic period, or even down to modern times, have taught about this chapter. It turns on the view that the destruction of Jerusalem is the chief point in the chapter, and that all the other parts are to be adjusted to fit it, though those who take this position do not agree among themselves as to whether it should be the first destruction under Titus, AD 70, or the final and more complete one under Hadrian, AD 135. For each of these conflicts the Jewish leaders are able to point out a period of approximately 3.5 years which they say is specified in the prophecy. If we are to trust Jerome, some Jewish interpreters even admitted a reference to Jesus in the prophecy of the Anointed One who was to be "cut off," but gave a turn to the middle of verse 26 by which it would mean, "but the kingdom of the Jews will not be his."

It should be taken for granted without my saying it, that all such "interpretations" never try to hold

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themselves down to specific dates for any large number of the ones given in the prophecy, to say nothing of giving an application of all the many statements in it. They try to show how one or two specifications in the prophecy fit their theory, and quietly ignore all the others.

3. The third interpretation seeks to find a starting point in one or another of the four imperial decrees or commandments to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. From the terminus a quo thus obtained, it ought to be a simple matter of arithmetic to find the other dates. As a matter of fact, a variety of methods are used, with terminations at various events in the life of Christ, with dates for the crucifixion varying under apparently able and sincere men from AD 29 to 34, with the 3.5 years still remaining interpreted in all sorts of ways. Jerome tells us that in his day there were nine different ways of interpreting this Messianic prophecy, concerning which he thought it “dangerous” to decide. Since his day the number has become more like ninety-nine. But why all this confusion? What is the truth?

In the comment on chapter 9:26, as well as in the diagrams at the end of the chapter, we have what seems to be a self-consistent and absolutely historical method of reckoning these dates. The starting point there adopted, 457 BC, is one of the most securely fixed dates in all ancient history. It has behind it the data assembled by the great Sir Isaac Newton, and since added to by other eminent scholars. When this starting point is adopted, all the other dates as given in the diagram must follow with mathematical precision and necessity. Why should not all lovers of truth settle on this as the true interpretation?

While this may be termed the Adventist view, it is also agreed to in all essentials by such diverse scholars as Pusey, Charles, Boutflower, and many others.

The position is also taken in this book that only down at the true “time of the end” could anyone hope to arrive at a sound and correct understanding of these Messianic prophecies. This is doubtless the reason why we do not find any attempt in the entire New Testament to compute these periods of the Messiah (though very likely Stephen and Paul and the other apostles did have some of the dates computed), and why we have to come down to fairly modern times before all the historical facts for their full computation were available.

Now we see that Christ Himself set the seal of His certification to one of the important milestones in the calculation, when He declared: “The time is fulfilled.” Mark 1:15. At this time He was officially proclaimed from heaven as the Messiah, and the date, 27, corresponds exactly with the predicted date for the coming of the Anointed One. Then with this milestone fixed, 3.5 years later brings us to the Passover of 31, at which precise time the Messiah was cut off, thereby making the sacrifice and offering to cease, though in the person of His apostles He kept on confirming the new covenant with the many for a half hebdomad more, or another 3.5 years, until the autumn of 34, when the end of the 490 years was reached.

Then, if these seventy weeks are only a first part of the longer period of 2300 years, from which they were “cut off” or assigned to the Jewish nation, as argued in the preceding pages, we arrive inevitably at the date of 1844 for another most important evangelic event, the beginning of the judgment work in heaven, preparatory to the return of Jesus to claim His people and His kingdom.

## 10. BY THE BANKS OF THE HIDDEKEL

We now enter upon the study of the lost recorded vision of Daniel. All of this chapter is introductory to the account of the vision proper, which occupies all the next chapter, or chapter 11, and runs over into chapter 12. The division of the Bible into chapters and verses seems to have been first made by Stephen Longdon, who became archbishop of Canterbury and died AD 1228. It is unfortunate that this vision has been divided among three chapters, for the division has resulted in much confusion and misunderstanding.

It has been thought by some that these three chapters (chapters 10-12) are not really another and separate prophecy, but only the third and final installment of the vision of chapter 8. It will be remembered that Gabriel was commanded to make Daniel understand the vision. Chapter 8:16. Forthwith some explanation of the symbols was given; but because Daniel fainted, the angel had to top. At the end of the chapter Daniel declared that he did not understand it, to Gabriel had not finished the work he was divinely commanded to do. Some time later, therefore, Gabriel again appeared and explained further details of the prophetic time periods. Chapter 9. It would seem that this third appearance of Gabriel in chapters 10, 11, and 12 might well be regarded as only a further attempt to have Daniel understand more details or expansions of the prophecy which was initiated in chapter 8.

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If this be so, it would explain why in these lost three chapters no further symbolism is introduced, but the prophecy is almost wholly in plain literal language, at least of the first. It begins with what is little more than the mere mention of a few kings of Meda-Persia, followed by a list of some of the successors of Alexander and the Syrian wars, then a few high lights of the rulers of imperial Rome, followed by a vivid picture of the career of the papacy, and finally some statements (probably figurative or symbolic) about the lost stages of human history under the final and revived phase of the papal power. Apart from these final symbolic or figurative terms, all the first part at least of chapter 11 is given in plain, straightforward language, just as “explanations” of symbolic prophecies are generally given. Hence all this would seem to confirm the theory that in chapter 11 we have only a further and final installment of the explanation which was begun in chapter 8.

No matter how we interpret the predictions in chapter 11 (and this prophecy has been considered the most difficult in the book), it is very plain that the detailed naming of kings one after another is done chiefly for the purpose of proving the divine character of the rest of the prophecy. With absorbing interest the Jews of the centuries immediately following the return from the captivity must have followed the unrolling of the prophetic scroll, and these early kings of the north and the south contended for the supremacy. Thus almost immediately following the age of Daniel the gradual fulfillment of these first literal predictions must have enormously established faith in the book as a whole. There is good evidence that it was largely because of these visions of Daniel that the Jews of the times of the Maccobees were inspired to gain their notional independence. If the rank and file of professed Christian people could only catch some of the some inspiration, through seeing the marvelous fulfillment of all these prophecies, there would follow a spiritual revival such as has not been seen since apostolic times.

As already explained, it is a vital factor in the system of interpretation here adopted that this entire vision, is given in detail in these final chapters, should be regarded as running parallel to all the other visions in this book. That is, that this vision, like those preceding, should be regarded as running from the days of the prophet down to the consummation of all things. It follows, therefore, that expressions which we find in this vision which seem equivalent to other words or phrases which we find in one or more of the previous visions, ought to be regarded as being equivalent in meaning. This principle will help us to assign meanings to some of the terms used in this vision which, without this guiding rule, are liable to be misunderstood. On this basis, all the visions of the book may be regarded as arranged in a series of increasing difficulty; the prophecy of the second chapter being the most elementary and furnishing the key to the rest. That of the seventh chapter being a little more advanced in difficulty (and also in importance); that of the eighth and ninth chapters (really one vision) being much more difficult, and also much more important, to the people of God in the lost days. If on this basis we find the final vision very different from the others, since it seems to be given in plain, almost literal and matter-of-fact statements, or perhaps as an angelic explanation of the lost part of chapter 8, the actual difficulty of the entire latter part may be an indication of its real importance.

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, even a great warfare: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

Since Cyrus, who had previously been king of Anshan, became the conqueror of Babylon in 539 and began to count his reigning years from the spring of 538 BC, his third year as king in his new position would last from the spring of 536 to the spring of 535 BC. The title here used, king of Persia, is peculiar, since Cyrus and his successors abandoned this title after the conquest of Babylon, and used instead “the great king,” or “king of kings,” or “king of the countries.” Cyrus made his son Cambyses “king of Babylon,” and he made various officials subordinate “kings” here and there over his vast empire. Among the thousands of business tablets of this period which have been discovered and read, only one or two use the title “king of Persia.” This title was not big enough, after the Persian monarchs became emperors of the world.

For some reason not well understood, the prophet in this verse resumes the use of the third person, as in the first verse of the seventh chapter; though elsewhere in this vision the first person is used.

Since the prophet had now been in captivity more than seventy years, it is evident that he must by this time have attained a great age; though any attempt to measure it in exact years can be only a guess.

***2. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three whole weeks.***



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***3. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine into my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.***

The precise cause of Daniel's concern and anxiety on the present occasion is not stated, but it is evident from the words of the angel in the twelfth and fourteenth verses that his perplexity had to do with the welfare of his people. If our dates are correct, the return of his people from the captivity (though confined to a pitifully small number) had already taken place, and Daniel, possibly on account of his great age, had been left behind. At any rate, whatever the specific occasion, he was again in great anxiety concerning the welfare of his people in the future; and on this account he set himself by fasting and prayer to intercede with God about the matter.

His fasting was only a partial one; though this was the usual form that fasting took among the Hebrews, since such a fast could be carried out for a considerable length of time. The term pleasant bread is a Hebrew expression in contrast with what they termed "bread of affliction," the latter being probably a form of unleavened cakes.

The Oriental anointing was regarded as a luxury, and when it was omitted was taken as a sign of mourning.

Three whole weeks. The original of this expression is "three weeks of days." It may have been used here to distinguish it from the weeks of years previously used.

***4. And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel,***

***5. I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz:***

***6. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as flaming torches, and his arms and his feet like unto burnished brass, and the voice of his words Eke the voice of a multitude.***

The river here mentioned is the Tigris, which at its nearest point is some fifty miles distant from Babylon, which probably continued to be Daniel's home. Some have inferred that the prophet (and his human companions) were simply transported in spirit to this locality. There may be some significance in the fact that the former vision was by the Ulai and this by the Tigris. The Tigris is a swift, turbulent river of some 1,100 miles in length, and the name here used, Hiddekel, signifies the river of the date palm. The description of the being who here appeared to the prophet is very similar to that of Jesus in the book of the Revelation, though Uriah Smith argues that it is not Christ but only Gabriel in a transcendent form. Any statement on this point must necessarily be a matter of one's opinion.

***7. 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, and they fled to hide themselves.***

***8. So I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.***

***9. Yet heard I the voice of his words; and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I fallen into a deep sleep on my face, with my face toward the ground.***

The circumstances here, where the men were frightened but did not see the vision, are similar to those of Paul on the way to Damascus, in Acts 9:7. The phrase deep sleep is generally thought to be what is meant by a swoon, or a complete loss of physical consciousness; but it must have been radically different in some respects, for in it the prophet heard and saw all that the angel was to give him. His experience here following is called a vision; it is not one of symbols, but of a clear statement of facts and events communicated to Daniel by the heavenly messenger. In this respect it is of a higher order than a mere vision of symbolic pictures; it is similar to the verbal explanation which usually follows a vision of symbols.

***10. And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.***

***11. And he said unto me, O Daniel, thou 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***

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*me, I stood trembling.*

**12. Then said he unto me Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou did set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard: and I am come for thy words' sake.**

This assurance by the angel that Daniel was a man greatly beloved is the second time that such an assurance has been addressed to him. Surely it is a wonderful fact that any human being can be said to be an object of such regard on the part of the great God of heaven. We may learn also from the words of the angel that every sincere prayer is heard in heaven, even though the answer may seem to be delayed beyond our understanding. Daniel's prayer on this occasion was for understanding, for a better knowledge of what would happen to the Jewish people in the then future; and no such prayer for wisdom and understanding is ever disregarded. James 1:5. On this occasion Daniel was praying three full weeks before any answer appeared. Yet the angel told him that from the first day of his prayer his words were heard and that in spite of the seeming delay, the angel had been sent to inform and enlighten him on the subject of his anxiety.

**13. 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 [margin, "was not needed"] with the kings of Persia.**

The "critics" generally have taken the absurd position that the expression here used, the prince of the kingdom of Persia, refers to some angel who was looked upon as the patron or the guardian of the interests of Persia, in opposition to those angels who were the guardians of the other countries. Thus they have created an imaginary conflict behind the scenes between these antagonistic spirit beings. Of course, there are antagonistic spirits of good and evil; but this is not the meaning of the text here.

The obvious meaning is that there was some important action which the angel now talking to Daniel had been trying to get the king of Persia to do, probably something in connection with the young nation of the Jews at this time striving against great odds to establish themselves in their old national home. But the king of Persia did not respond to the work of the angel. Since human beings are given real free will, not a mere make-believe of free will, they do have the power to resist the workings of the angels of God, even when the latter are sent on profoundly important missions. In this case the king stood out for fully three weeks. The meaning of the last clause in this text seems to be that Michael came and relieved this angel (Gabriel?) so the latter could come on this errand to enlighten Daniel.

Who is the being called Michael in this connection? The margin of the A.V. would give him the title of "the first of the princes," while in the first verse of Daniel 12 he is termed "the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people." Jude 9 calls him "the Archangel," a title which would seem to be distinctive, for there would seem to be but one Archangel. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 we are told that the voice of the Archangel will raise the dead, while in John 5:28 this work is predicted of the voice of the Son of God. It seems legitimate to conclude from these passages that the name "Michael" is one which is applied to the pre-existent Son of God, who in His career of condescension took the place of one of the angels before He became human.

**14. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for the vision is yet for many days.**

The announcement here made that the vision is yet for many days is a clear intimation that the vision here following is parallel to the other prophecies of the book of Daniel, running from the days of the prophet down the many subsequent centuries to the very climax of human history and the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God. Yet it would seem reasonable that the vision here to be given in detail would necessarily have distinctive features of its own, though at the same time having terms or expressions common to the visions already given, so as to guide the student in the identification of the predictions made, by comparing them all together.

In chapter 8:13 the question was asked, How long will be the vision concerning both the sanctuary and the host? The latter meaning the true people of God. The answer about the sanctuary was given back there in chapters 8 and 9; but the answer about "the host," or the true people of God-not the apostate Jews-is here taken up and will be given presently; for the angel declares that he has come to tell Daniel what shall befall thy people in the latter days. As this present chapter is only an introduction to what is given in

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chapter ii and running on into chapter 12, the final answer to this part of the question is found in chapter 12:1: "At that time thy people shall be delivered." Until that time, or during the long intervening centuries, Daniel's spiritual kin, the true people of God, must drink of the cup and be baptized with the baptism, as was the case with the Master Himself.

James Moffatt translates this verse thus: I am here to let you know what is to befall your people at the end of the ages; for this vision relates to the far future."

Evidently it should be difficult to limit such a prophecy to the persecutions under Epiphanes.

***15. And when he had spoken unto me according to these words, I set my face toward the ground, and was dumb.***

This inability to speak was not voluntary on Daniel's part; but he was overwhelmed with the conviction that there impended long ages of suffering and distress for the people he loved. He was, as we have seen, a very old man. Yet he had cherished the hope that, although he himself might not live to see the fulfillment of all the blessed promises which had been given in such profusion to his people, yet this glorious period could not be much longer delayed. Now he remembered with dismay the previous visions, especially the one about the 2300 years. That, with the present announcement that the vision was yet for many days, completely overcame him, and he swooned away.

***16. And, behold, one in the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spoke and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by reason of the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I retained no strength.***

***17. 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 was there breath left in me.***

It would seem probable that the vision to which Daniel here makes reference is the vision of chapters 8 and 9, which, we have seen, constitute really one connected whole, and therefore might be termed one vision, though given in two separated parts. However, it may be that the present appearance of this celestial being had overpowered him.

***18. Then there touched me again one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me.***

***19. And he said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he spoke unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou has strengthened me.***

We have here an illustration of the fact that the commands of God have in themselves the power of their own accomplishment. The various imperatives here given by this heavenly visitant might be thought as only equal to the word of an angel; but they were much more than this. As this being had been expressly sent by God, the commands he issued were truly the commands of God; and like the word of command in the beginning, "Let there be light," this word of the one who was visiting Daniel, be strong, yea, be strong, had within itself the power of bringing about its own fulfillment. In this sense the moral commands of God, like the Ten Commandments, are for the Christian far more than forbidding; these ten words are so many big promises which will surely be fulfilled to every trusting child of God when battling with sin and Satan. Daniel in this case was strengthened by believing and accepting for himself the command to be strong. Every command of God implies a promise.

***20. Then said he, Know thou wherefore I am come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I go forth, lo, the prince of Greece shall come.***

***21. But I will tell thee that which is inscribed in the writing of truth: and there is none that holds with me against these, but Michael your Prince.***

Some of the "critics," always very free to change the text, do not like the interrogative form of the angel's first statement, so they change it over to: "Thou knows wherefore I am come unto thee." There is no real difference in the two forms of expression.

To fight with the prince of Persia. This means to fight on the side of the prince of Persia. The powers of heaven were on the side of the Persians so long as God's wisdom and foreknowledge saw that

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this would be for the best. When I go forth, that is, when I have completed this work of upholding the Persian cause, lo, the prince of Greece shall come. In the preceding vision, that of chapter 8, it had been definitely announced that Greece would be the next great world empire, succeeding Medo-Persia. It was to outline the future of the divided Greek kingdom and the next great world empire, that of Rome, that the celestial messenger had now visited Daniel.

That which is inscribed in the writing of truth. Reference is here made to the heavenly tablets, where the times and seasons of all the nations of earth are inscribed. In primitive times, all important records were made on clay tablets; and even in Daniel's day, though other forms of records were known, still all legal or annalistic records were made on tablets, which of course had to be inscribed. The books which are mentioned in the Apocalypse of John the apostle correspond to the later developments in the art of writing; but Daniel was more familiar with tablets in which documents were "inscribed."

In addressing the Athenians, Paul declared that God has determined for all the nations of the earth, "their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation." Acts 17:26. That is, everything about the nations of the world is supervised and controlled by divine Providence. Paul went on to say that the reason for all this strict supervision of the nations is "that they should seek God." Verse 27. In other words, the destinies of all nations are so controlled and managed as to promote the best interests of the purposes of God. This is the Christian philosophy of history.

None that holds with me against these. What wide vistas of world philosophy and theology are here opened up before us! Michael your Prince has been already identified with the preexistent Son of God, who, after the rise of the great rebellion, stepped down to take the place of the fallen Lucifer. The two covering cherubs over the ark of the Mosaic dispensation are understood to symbolize the two angels with official positions directly subordinate to the Son of God Himself in the original management of the universe. We infer that Lucifer at first held one of these positions; when he went astray and had to be dismissed, the Son of God voluntarily stepped down to take the place thus made vacant. And throughout the Old Testament dispensation, under the name of the Angel of Jehovah and other titles, He was the intermediary between God and guilty man. In the visions of Daniel He is referred to as Michael your Prince. In the present passage the angel who is speaking to Daniel, perhaps Gabriel, announces that he and Michael have the entire burden and responsibility of holding in check the forces of evil among the nations and of managing the larger affairs of the world.

What a field of historical research will be opened up for our reverent study when the official archives of the universe are made accessible to the redeemed people of God to examine and explore. What greatly improved ideas we will then have of the relative importance of the various problems of human life. Many little things will then seem big, and the big, very little. How we ought to be striving here and now to train ourselves for that point of view which we will have to adopt "over there."

## 11. A DETAILED HISTORY

All commentators acknowledge that this chapter is extremely difficult to understand or to interpret. But there are many evidences that this line of prophecy must be of profound importance to the people living in our day, so near the close of human probation. Hence we should take up its study with more than usual interest; but also with extreme caution, knowing that, amid the great diversity of interpretations, many must be wrong.

The first few verses are so plain and unequivocal that they resemble a simple chronicle of historical events. So plain and accurate indeed is this first part that Porphyry and many others since his day have denied that they were written as predictive prophecy centuries before the events took place. They tell us that it is never the custom (they do not bluntly say that it is impossible) for prophecy to give such minute and accurate predictions in advance. This is their real reason for wanting to have this entire book of Daniel written in the times of the Maccabees, or after these events had become history.

The many long-range predictions about Rome, both imperial and papal, as given in chapters 2, 7, and 8, have been as strikingly and accurately fulfilled; and they cannot be brushed aside, even if the book was written in the times of the Maccabees. Hence the strange efforts of the "critic" to apply these prophecies to the career of Epiphanes.

If the prophecies of chapters 2, 7, and 8 run down to the end of human history, and in their latter portions give many predictions about Rome and its warfare against the people of God and the truths which

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they hold dear, it is highly reasonable to expect that this eleventh chapter will also cover the some ground and give additional details. We also have a right to expect that some mention will be made in it of the crucifixion, that pivotal event of all history. Since the book of the Revelation is rightly regarded as a further expansion of these prophecies of Daniel, especially of their latter portions, which deal more specifically with our own days, is the period just preceding the resurrection and the Second Coming of Christ, with the revived or rejuvenated papacy as the final persecutor of the people of God, we surely have a right to expect in this chapter some mention of this final, deadly conflict of the church with the powers of darkness.

This statement of some outstanding events which we may reasonably expect to find mentioned in this prophecy gives us a method for seeking the right interpretation of this chapter. For by pinning down a few of the outstanding historical events, such as the crucifixion, the papal persecutions, the nearly fatal collapse of the papacy near the close of the eighteenth century (French Revolution), with its astonishing revival to the prospect of a second world dominion in our own day, we can feel confident of our general correctness of interpretation, even though some details here and there along the line are confessedly obscure and hard to be understood.

Since the terms “king of the north” and “king of the south” figure so prominently in this chapter, some geographical and historical facts need to be kept in mind. From the geographical Position of Palestine it is readily seen that the north and the south were the only two directions from which any formidable invasions could occur. On the west was the Great Sea; and no maritime enemy existed to invade the country from that direction. On the east the country was similarly protected by the impassable desert. Hence Israel could be attacked or invaded only from the north or from the south.

Furthermore, in almost innumerable passages in Jeremiah and other Old Testament prophets the Israelites were warned against the king of Babylon as the king of the north, who would invade and subdue the land. Consequently, when the king of Syria, Seleucus, became also the king of Babylon in the breakup of Alexander’s empire, it was only natural for this enemy of Israel to be described as “the king of the north.” Later, as the rising power of Rome look over the empire of Babylon and Syria, it in turn become the king of the north.

The “critics” all declare that the first third or more of the chapter is so plain and so accurate in its history of the Syrian wars that the book cannot be a prophecy; it must be a document posing as prophecy, but really written after the events. They say that with the twenty-first verse we begin the history of Antiochus Epiphanes, and that all the rest of the chapter deals with him and his doings. A shall not here attempt to show the many, many places in the chapter where this interpretation does not fit the text, and the many other places where they admit that they have no historical records to cover the statements in the text.

Uriah Smith carried the Syrian wars down through verse 14, where he introduced the Roman power. He continued a straightforward course with imperial Rome down through verse 22, from which point he went backward to the Jewish league of 161 BC, and again carried forward the Roman history down through the barbarian invasions, as spoken of in verse 30, from which point he depicted a transition from pagan to papal Rome.

One of the certain mileposts in this difficult portion of the chapter is the reference to the breaking of “the Prince of the covenant” in verse 22, which cannot possibly be mistaken as meaning the death of the promised Messiah, which occurred under the reign of Tiberius. The next six or seven verses are difficult to understand on any method of interpretation. However, I suspect that Dr. Edward Heppenstall, of La Sierra College, may be right in his suggestion that the two kings mentioned in verse 27 must somehow refer to the pope and the emperor, their speaking lies at one table having reference to the union of church and state thus established. Verse 31, in its mention of the taking away of the daily mediation and the placing of the abomination of desolation, must positively refer to the papal establishment of a false system of mediation, shown in a multitude of ways but culminating in the idolatrous “sacrifice of the mass.” The exact date for this is difficult to determine, for the transition seems to have been a gradual one; but the date AD 508, when Clovis established the Romish priesthood for the first time, would seem to be the date for the beginning of the 1290 days (years) mentioned in chapter 12:11.

From this point onward everything in the chapter seems to be plain and clear.

### ***1. And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.***

The identity of Darius the Mede is not positively known. For many years it was thought that Gubaru, or Gobryas, might be the same as Darius. He was the companion of Cyrus in the final capture of Babylon, he personally slew Belshazzar in the palace, and was appointed governor of the captured city. On



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the other hand, Cyaxares II, the uncle and father-in-law of Cyrus, seems to have been honored by Cyrus as the supreme ruler, while Cyrus after the death of Cyaxares assumed sole ruler ship within two years after Babylon's conquest.

All historians now agree that there never was a separate or independent Median kingdom following the Babylonian. This imaginary Median kingdom was simply an invention of the "critics" to enable them to have four world empires before Rome.

The Septuagint here reads: "In the first year of Cyrus the king," which would make its date coincide with the royal Persian proclamation for the return of the Jews to their own land. If we had more facts we would be in a better position to clear up the historical situation.

***2. And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and when he is waxed strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.***

The most authoritative work on the chronology of this period, R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein's *Babylonian Chronology 626 BC - AD 45* (Chicago, second edition, 1946), provides the following dates for kings dealt with in this period of Median and Persian history.

|         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| 539-530 | Cyrus            |
| 530-522 | Cambyses         |
| 522     | Smerdis          |
| 522-486 | Darius the Great |
| 486-465 | Xerxes I         |

A usurper, the false Smerdis, held command for some seven months during 522. At the time the usurper came to power Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was away in Egypt. Cambyses, thinking the situation desperate, committed suicide. Because of these circumstances this usurper can be inserted in this list. The first of the four kings spoken of by the angel would have to be Cyrus himself; for the one who stirred up all against the realm of Greece is certainly Xerxes. If Smerdis is to be included, then the first of the four would be Cambyses. On either method of reckoning, the one here referred to as invading Greece must be Xerxes, who was so overwhelmingly defeated at Salamis, 480 BC. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the Persian army amounted to some five and a quarter millions of men-if any such disorganized, tatterdemalion collection of human beings ought to be called an army. The tradition that Xerxes, when he looked over this sea of humanity, wept at the thought that in a hundred years not one of them would be alive, gives more credit for humanity to this king than he deserves. The useless and uncalled-for sacrifice of so many poor, helpless beings indicates a callousness and a colossal egotism and selfishness which is seldom found except in the commanders of armies, but which seems to have been pre-eminently characteristic of the Assyrian and Persian kings.

***3. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.***

***4. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion wherewith he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides these.***

One of the peculiarities of this prophecy is the abrupt and unannounced way in which a wholly new power is introduced from time to time, making it difficult to follow. Here we pass without any clear explanation from Persia to Greece under Alexander. There can be no possible doubt about the meaning of this text; every specification fits the case of Alexander, and it fits no one else. But in order to make this application, we must ignore the nine or ten Persian kings who succeeded Xerxes, and have to ignore the fact that the mighty king here introduced is not given any definite location either of place or of time. But the passage must mean Alexander; for every single statement fits his case completely. Hence when we find further on in the prophecy that some other power is similarly introduced without any apparent antecedents, we may expect to have to ignore some intervening rulers, perhaps pass over a long period of time, and also perhaps pass to an entirely different land, in order to find the power that is being introduced. This is a fundamental principle in seeking to understand this chapter. But we are enabled to understand this prophecy

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by comparing it with the ones preceding, especially with the terms used in chapter 8:8. The specifications are so nearly identical in both cases that the one might almost be termed a quotation from the other.

***5. 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.***

This text seems ambiguous, even equivocal; hence commentators have, perhaps rightly, appealed to the facts of history to determine the meaning of the text.

In this case we know that, when Alexander's empire was divided among his four leading successors--Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy--it was not long before these four were reduced to two, Seleucus in the north--that is, north of Palestine, and Ptolemy in the south. As Seleucus had nearly three fourths of the old Alexandrian empire, and Ptolemy one fourth, it is not at all difficult to determine which must be the power here spoken of as being strong above him. Evidently it must be Seleucus, who was one of his [Alexander's] princes; and perhaps this is the original meaning of the text, though the margin reads: "shall be strong; but one of his princes shall be," etc. Various emendations of the text have been suggested, and the text as we have it may 'need some correction; but the evident meaning is to point out the king of the north, or Seleucus, as the one whose dominion shall be a great dominion.

***6. And at the end of years they shall join themselves together; and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the strength of her 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 those times.***

A brief sketch of the history here involved will clear up these specifications.

We come to the second generation of these two dynasties, of Syria and of Egypt. Almost perpetual wars, termed by historians the "Syrian wars," prevailed between these two powers, the Jewish people being in the midst and suffering from both sides. At the close of his reign, 248 BC, the king of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus--son and successor of Ptolemy I, surnamed Soter,-tired of the perpetual struggle, gave his daughter Berenice in marriage to Antiochus Theos, and accompanied her with a rich dowry, hoping thereby to establish a lasting friendship between the two nations. By the marriage agreement Antiochus was to divorce his wife Laodice, declare her children illegitimate, and establish the offspring of his new wife as heirs. Presently the father of Berenice died; then Antiochus divorced her and took back his former wife, Laodice. When opportunity offered, Laodice poisoned her husband the king, and had her son, Seleucus Callinicus, put on the throne in his place. Not long afterward she had her rival, Berenice, assassinated, together with her infant son and many of her Egyptian friends, they that brought her. Such deeds could not fail to undo all the planned agreement between the two nations; hence wars were renewed with all the former savagery.

It might help the reader to understand the sordid and petty history of these times if he remembered that the ruling families of both Egypt and Syria were Greeks, descendants of Alexander's officers. They were all Greeks by descent, and the court language of all these countries was always Greek, so that the wars between these kings were much of the character of family rows. The people never had anything to say about their government. The common people were considered as only so many inferior beings who existed for the purpose of paying taxes and to furnish the soldiers with which the rulers might carry out their own selfish and cruel designs.

Thus far all is plain and straightforward. We are now down some seventy-five or eighty years this side of Alexander, and well on toward three hundred years after the time of the prophet Daniel. The details of these petty wars are still given by the prophecy, not because of their being of any world importance, but because, when they were seen to have been fulfilled literally and accurately, everyone might acquire confidence in the similar fulfillment of the rest of the prophecy. The Jewish nation was the center of all this conflict; they were the losers no matter which of the two sides won the day. They were placed in a strategic position to check up on the prophecy and its verification as no others could. As all these events were still more than two centuries before the coming of Christ, there was still much to observe in the way of the fulfillment of the vision. The Jews of that-time must have watched these events with absorbed interest.

***7. But out of a shoot from her roots shall one stand up in his place, who shall come unto the army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall***

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*prevail.*

This is applied to a war of revenge which was carried on by the brother of Berenice, Ptolemy Euergetes. Some have objected to the expression here used, out of a shoot from her roots shall one stand up. These persons think that such an expression ought to indicate rather a son than a brother. Bevan and other critics would have the passage read, “an offshoot of the roots from whence Berenice had sprung,” making “her roots” mean “her parents.” This may not be the usual meaning of the term, though it may be the meaning here. At any rate, when Euergetes succeeded to the throne, he raised a large army and invaded the countries of his sister’s slayers. He succeeded so well that when he finally felt obliged to return to Egypt on account of an insurrection he brought a large amount of booty, as is specified in the next verse. By this expedition he conquered Syria and a large part of the upper Euphrates Valley, and also Seleucia, on the coast of the Mediterranean, which is the fortress here mentioned. This city remained for a long time in the hands of the Egyptians. In all these various ways he fulfilled the prediction that thus he would prevail.

***8. And also their gods, with their molten images, and with their goodly vessels of silver and of gold, shall he carry captive into Egypt; and he shall refrain some years from the king of the north.***

***9. And he shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but he shall return into his own land.***

Among the booty brought into Egypt by Ptolemy from this expedition was about forty thousand talents of silver and costly vessels, besides many images of various gods, including a large number of Egyptian deities which Cambyses had carried away into Syria some 280 years before. Because of the latter feat, the people of Egypt bestowed upon him the title of “Euergetes,” or Benefactor. Thereafter he did refrain some years from the king of the north. But the ninth verse would seem to shift the subject back to the king of the north, for when Seleucus Callinicus had re-established his power in Asia (242 BC), he made an expedition into Egypt, but was unable to accomplish anything, and was obliged to return into his own land.

Up to a few years ago we were dependent upon scattered references in the classical historians for our knowledge of these events; but an inscription has been discovered which gives in considerable detail the large areas of Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Media, and Persia which were overrun by Ptolemy Euergetes. Also at Tanis in the delta of Egypt has been discovered a decree of the Egyptian priests issued in 239 BC in honor of Euergetes, and mentioning the fact that he had brought back home large numbers of the sacred images which had been carried off by Cambyses. Thus the facts spoken of in this verse have now been confirmed by these recent archaeological discoveries.

***10. And his sons shall war, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall come on, and overflow, and pass through; and they shall return and war, even to his fortress.***

We are still on ground where all commentators are agreed. This and the verses immediately following refer to the times of Antiochus III, surnamed Magnus, or the Great, who became the father of the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes. He gained the throne in 223 BC, having been preceded by an older brother who had a short and insignificant reign. This, it will be noted, is exactly one century after the death of Alexander. Antiochus III became king of Syria when only fifteen years of age. At this time the king of Egypt, Ptolemy Euergetes, died, and was succeeded by a worthless fellow, Ptolemy IV, who gave himself largely to dissipation.

In the fifth year of his reign, or in 218, Antiochus declared war against Egypt, and in a brilliant campaign took possession of Seleucia, on the Orontes, following which the Syrian armies swept, like an overwhelming flood, over Phoenicia and Judea, taking Tyre and other chief cities. After an armistice which lasted only until the next spring, the two countries were again at war; but this time the king of Egypt defeated Antiochus at the battle of Raphia, 217 BC, and Judea and Coele-Syria again changed hands, falling back into the hands of Egypt. This campaign is probably what is described in the next verse.

***11. And the king of the south shall be moved with anger, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north; and he shall set forth a great multitude, and the multitude shall he given into his hand.***

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As remarked above, this undoubtedly refers to the campaign of 217, ending with the battle of Raphia, where Antiochus lost some 10,000 on the battlefield, besides 4,000 who were taken prisoners.

***12. And the multitude shall be lifted up [margin, "he carried away"], and his heart shall be exalted; and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.***

This is merely a continuation of the events already spoken of. Ptolemy was more desirous of getting back to his debaucheries in Egypt than of following up his victories. So he made peace with Syria; and after entering Jerusalem in triumph, where he was angered by being forbidden to enter the holy of holies in the temple, he returned to Egypt, where after some twelve years more of dissipation he died, though not until he had carried on a severe persecution of the many thousands of Jews then residing in Alexandria.

In the meantime, or during these twelve years of a breathing space, Antiochus had greatly strengthened himself by successful wars against the Parthians and other nations to the north and east. He even marched clear to India, where he secured another supply of elephants for another war against Egypt, as is described in the next verse.

***13. And the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former; and he shall come on at the end of the times, even of years, with a great army and with much substance.***

The ruler of Egypt was but a child, and Antiochus thought he should have an easy victory. He was also joined by the powerful Philip V of Macedon and by influential parties among the Jews. Thus we can see the appropriateness of the first clause of the next verse.

***14. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the children of the violent among thy people shall lift themselves up to establish the vision; but they shall fall.***

As was stated above, many of the surrounding peoples thought it a good time to combine against Egypt, for the king was a mere child. The guardian of the young king was inefficient and unpopular, which gave rise to seditions and dangerous revolts.

For the first time in this chapter we meet with a statement regarding which commentators are not agreed, and concerning which they differ widely in their application. The phrase here rendered the children of the violent among thy people is by some applied to a set of unprincipled Jews who became known as "the sons of Tobias," and who took the side of Antiochus in the wrangle between the rival interests of Syria and Egypt, while most of the men of Jerusalem took the other side, or wished to retain a position of neutrality. The latter position was clearly impossible, while leaving either side for the other was only a change of masters, and whichever side gained in these perpetual wars, the poor Jews were sure to lose.

Some of the Jewish commentators of the period just before the time of Christ, also some of the early church fathers, applied this passage to this faction of the Jews mentioned. They also sought to apply all the rest of this chapter to those times of distress to the Jewish nation, culminating in the savagery and persecutions of the years following under Antiochus Epiphanes.

Other students of prophecy, especially some in modern times, think that we are here being pointed to the rising power of the Romans, who about this time certainly did come into connection with the Jewish nation. The Roman power certainly is brought to view in the twenty-second verse, for Rome and no other was the power which overwhelmed and broke "the Prince of the covenant," an expression which can mean only Christ. But if the children of the violent among thy people refers to the Romans, the statements in this verse about them must be regarded as a mere introductory summary of their career, for the larger part of the remainder of the chapter deals with the Roman power in its two phases.

After taking all things into consideration, it seems better to apply this expression to some faction among the Jewish people, who were seeking to do evil that good might come, a form of action which has been all too common among the nominal people of God all down the ages.

At a much later period we have an outstanding example of a fanatical party who lifted themselves up to establish the vision. From about AD 6 down until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, the political party known to history as the Zealots were in almost continual revolt against the Romans, seeking to establish a Jewish theocracy over the entire world, and appealing to a twisted interpretation of the

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prophecies of the Old Testament, those of Daniel among the rest, to justify all they did. Josephus assigns them as among the chief causes of the complete destruction of the city of Jerusalem under the Romans. Quite likely-although our historical data are scanty-some similar fanatical faction is referred to in the verse here under consideration.

***15. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mound, and take a well-fortified city: and the forces of the south shall not stand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to stand.***

The young king of Egypt, against whom so many were at this time conspiring, was under the legal guardianship of the Roman senate, according to the will of the late king. The two kings already mentioned, Antiochus of Syria and Philip of Macedon, were planning to seize all the territory of Egypt outside of Egypt itself. The Romans as the guardians of the young Ptolemy intervened in the year 200 BC, declaring war against Philip and commanding Antiochus to make peace with Egypt. Antiochus, however, hearing that the Egyptian forces under the famous general Scopas had retaken Coele-Syria and the land of Palestine during the winter, renewed the war and defeated Scopas 1 at Pancas, a place which afterward became known as Caesarea Philippi. This battle put a final end to the rule of Egypt in Palestine, that country being henceforth under either Antiochus or Rome until it was finally ended as a nation by the armies of Titus.

The well-fortified city of Gaza stood out against Antiochus for a time, but it was finally taken by storm; and thus having retaken all of these Asiatic possessions of Ptolemy, a forced peace was then concluded.

Rome could not be expected to tolerate all this, for the king of Egypt was under her protection. A further cause of war was the fact that Hannibal, the veteran enemy of Rome, had now joined Antiochus. After considerable diplomacy, Rome declared war upon Syria in 191 BC, and after defeating Antiochus on the seas and in Greece, the important battle of Magnesia, near Smyrna in Lydia, settled the war; and Antiochus was obliged to accept the same terms which the Romans had offered him before the war. One of the conditions of this agreement was that Antiochus was to send his young son-afterward the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes-as a hostage to Rome and to pay besides a yearly tribute to the Roman senate.

Thus it is that Rome comes into this prophetic picture. If this prophecy was given for the especial benefit of God's people in the latter days, as is over and over affirmed, it would be unreasonable to suppose that this rising power, which was so soon to become the all-important head of the entire civilized world, would be wholly ignored, but that instead the vision would keep on with the petty, sordid details of the little kingdoms close around Palestine, while not only the fate of the Jewish nation but the destinies of the people of God for hundreds of years after the fall of Jerusalem were to be determined, not by the kings of either the north or the south, but by the absolute will of this young, rising power of the West. The verses following have often been applied to Antiochus Magnus and his son Epiphanes; but this seems to me a great mistake, for reasons which will appear in the sequel.

***16. But he that comes against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, and in his hand shall be destruction.***

It should be evident that a new power is here brought to view. He that comes cannot be the king of the south, for the previous verse has declared that the forces of the south shall not stand. Against him must refer to Antiochus, and the one that comes against him must be the Romans, who not only dictated terms to Antiochus, but who henceforth became more and more the complete masters of the entire East. By the battle of Pydna, June 22, 168 BC, the Romans under Aemilius Paulus crushed forever the last traces of independence among the states of Macedonia and Greece. Mommsen expresses it: "The whole empire of Alexander the Great had fallen to the Roman commonwealth, as if the city had inherited it from his heirs. From all sides kings and ambassadors flocked to Rome to congratulate her, and they showed that fawning is never more abject than when kings are in the antechamber."

The glorious land undoubtedly refers to Palestine. And while this country was not to be immediately destroyed, yet the ultimate fate of the entire nation of the Jews rested absolutely with this new power from the west, which so soon and so completely changed the entire face of the political world.

In his hand shall be destruction. As is so often the case in the prophecies of the Bible, we have here a brief statement which gives us in a few pregnant words a summary of the entire case here introduced. For some two centuries, Rome controlled the destinies of "the glorious land" of Judea; but at the end was a



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complete and irremediable destruction of the nation of the Jews.

***17. And he shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and with him equitable conditions; and he shall perform them: and he shall give him the daughter of women, to corrupt her; but she shall not stand, neither he for him.***

The meaning of the original text is not clear; so the various translators have tried their hands at “correcting” it in accord with what they think it means, that is, so as to make it more in accord with the history to which they think it applies. Wright remarks: “The correction of the text in order to bring it into harmony with history is, however, a doubtful expedient, and has in this chapter too often to be resorted to.”

Another reading of the first part of the verse would be, “He shall set his face to enter by force the whole kingdom,” meaning the whole kingdom of Alexander. Whether or not this reading is allowable, it is a fact that by gradual but steady progress, largely by diplomacy and by fortunate turns of circumstances, Rome absorbed the ruler ship of the various lands around the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

With him equitable conditions. The Romans were famous for plausible and apparently just terms which they imposed on their conquered provinces. Also they gained the reputation of living up to their agreements: and he shall perform them. It was the boast of one of the prominent Romans that neither friend nor enemy ever did anything to him without being repaid many fold.

The daughter of women. This extremely peculiar expression has given rise to much speculation. Those who apply this verse to Antiochus III (Magnus), assign this expression to his daughter Cleopatra (the first of several of this name), whom Antiochus gave in marriage to the young king of Egypt. However, those who make this application are confronted with the historical fact that this Cleopatra “bears an excellent character in Egyptian history.” - J. P. Mahaffy, *The Empire of the Ptolemies*, page 330. On the basis of applying this passage to the Romans, it is not clear to what this phrase and the remaining part of the verse may refer.

It has been thought that this verse looks forward in history to the time of Julius Caesar, who carried on a war for the headship of the Roman world with Pompey, the latter having been appointed guardian, under the Roman senate, of the two children of Ptolemy Auletes, who died in 51 BC Caesar defeated Pompey at Pharsalia, in Thessaly, in 48 BC, Pompey escaping and fleeing into Egypt. There he was killed by the king of Egypt, and Caesar forthwith took the position of Roman guardian of the throne of Egypt. Confusion and turmoil followed Caesar’s attempt to bring the Egyptian government under his personal rule. In the end, Caesar gained complete control of the country. It is doubtful if Caesar’s intrigue with Cleopatra is what is referred to in the middle part of this verse; but if it is, the phrase next following may be read: “but she shall not stand nor avail him,” as Montgomery translates it.

This is admitted by everyone, “critics” and conservatives alike, to be a difficult verse. Uriah Smith applied the first clause to Caesar’s campaign against the son of Mithridates, in Asia Minor in 47 BC, as the result of which he sent the famous report, “Veni, vidi, vici,” “I came, I saw, I conquered.” But there is not any satisfactory application of the latter part of the verse. It may refer to the assassination of Caesar by Brutus and his fellow conspirators.

From here onward the application is clear enough for several verses again.

***18. After this shall he turn his face unto the isles [margin, “coast lands”], and shall take many: but a prince shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; yea, moreover, he shall cause his reproach to turn upon him.***

***19. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.***

This verse fits admirably the last years of Caesar’s career. After subduing all his opponents in the East, he proceeded to North Africa, where he defeated Cato and Scipio; then to Spain, where Labienus and Varus suffered the same fate. Thus with all the Mediterranean basin subdued, he was free to turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, that is, to Rome, where he was made perpetual dictator, with so many other offices and dignities that he could hardly keep track of them. In fact, though the old forms of the republic were still maintained, they became a mere pretense; for Caesar was as truly an emperor as any of his successors.

He shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found. The language plainly implies a sudden, violent death. Uriah Smith expressed it: “This man, who it is said had fought and won fifty battles, taken one

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thousand cities, and slain one million one hundred ninety-two thousand men, fell, not in the din of battle and the hour of strife, but when he thought his pathway was smooth and danger far away.” He was set upon in the senate chamber, at the opening of one of the regular sessions, falling under the daggers of Cassius, Brutus, and other conspirators, in the year 44 BC, his assassins thinking that they were thereby restoring the grand old days of the republic. Alas, the rolling streams of gold which had been pouring into Rome for several generations had completely corrupted that stern morality, when Romans were fit to rule the world because they had first learned to rule themselves. The murder of the greatest of the Julian line was only to change masters. The old days of the republic were gone, never to return.

***20. Then shall stand up in his place one that shall cause an exactor to pass through the glory of the kingdom; but within few days he shall be destroyed [Hebrew, “broken”], neither in anger, nor in battle.***

Caesar left no legitimate sons, but had made his nephew Octavius his heir. With two others, Lepidus and Mark Antony, Octavius combined to form the first triumvirate and to punish the assassins of Caesar. For some years civil war raged throughout much of the Roman world; but at length, by the Battle of Actium, in 31 BC, Augustus (Octavius) was left as the sole ruler of the world empire, as it had now become. Civil war and turmoil for nearly a century had made great havoc with the ancient customs and laws. Augustus was strong enough and wise enough to remake this chaos and anarchy into an imperial organization with such vitality that it lasted with varying vicissitudes for another five hundred years.

Cause an exactor to pass through, of course, for gathering taxes. Augustus was an outstanding example of a ruler who could levy taxes without making the people feel it severely. His methods were perhaps the most cleverly devised and the most efficiently carried out of any such exactions in ancient days. His taxes were light; but they were universal, and in this universality was their power and their efficiency in supplying abundant funds for the carrying on of the imperial government.

It is to the enrollment for taxation that reference is made in Luke 2:1: “Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled.” As this enrollment had to occur in everyone’s native place, Joseph and Mary were obliged to repair to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born according to the prediction of the prophet Micah. See Micah 52.

This rule of Augustus was emphatically the period of the glory of the kingdom. Ever since it has been known as the Augustan Age. He boasted that he had found Rome built of brick, but he left it marble. Never before and never again did Rome have greater peace and prosperity. Wise laws were enacted and impartially enforced. The temple of Janus, which was closed only when there was no war going on anywhere within the Roman rule, was closed for the third time since the foundation of the city of Rome; and it was to this fact that Milton refers as the condition prevailing when Christ was born as a babe in Bethlehem:

No war, or battle’s sound, Was heard the world around.

Within few days. Augustus lived some eighteen years after the taxing brought to view in the first part of this verse; but this would appear but a “few days” to the angel who was revealing these things to Daniel. Neither in anger, nor in battle. Augustus died peacefully in his bed, at the age of seventy-six, at a place called Nola, near the base of Mount Vesuvius, AD 14.

***21. And in his place shall stand up a contemptible person, to whom they had not given the honor of the kingdom: but he shall come in time of security, and shall obtain the kingdom by flatteries.***

Tiberius succeeded Augustus, and he fits the description perfectly. The A.V. gives “a vile person” instead of the term here used, a contemptible person. Tradition has it that when Augustus was about to nominate his successor, he said to his wife Livia of her son Tiberius (by a former husband): “Your son is too vile to wear the purple of Rome.” Agrippa, a highly respected man, was nominated; but he died before Augustus; so finally Livia had her way, and Tiberius gained the throne of the Caesars. His character was certainly vile and contemptible enough, and it is also true that such a person could never win the respect of intelligent citizens. Thus he was never, either before his accession to the purple nor afterward, given the honor of the kingdom.

In the year 26 he retired to Capreae in the Bay of Naples, never again returning to Rome, but

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spending the rest of his career in dissipation and infamy. Seneca declared that Tiberius was never intoxicated but once in his life, which means that he was always under the influence of drink. He ruled by favorites, chief of whom was Sejanus, who fell because he plotted the emperor's death. Tiberius lived to be an old man, and he was finally made away with by some of the officers around him while in a stupor induced either by sickness or by drink.

One of his periodical letters to the senate has become famous. It began: "What I shall write to you, conscript fathers, or what I shall not write, or why I should write at all, may the gods and goddesses plague me more than I feel daily that they are doing, if I can tell." Probably this was written under the influence of liquor; if not, it would indicate a state of mental distress quite appropriate in view of his manner of life.

The flatteries or smooth sayings here mentioned were characteristic of not only Tiberius, but of all his times. He affected to decline the appointment to the throne, and obliged the servile senate to urge it upon him repeatedly, until he finally accepted. His reign was one long series of flatteries and servilities on the part of all the members of the Roman government, and lying and hypocritical pretense on the part of the emperor himself.

***22. And the overwhelming forces shall be overwhelmed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the Prince of the covenant.***

The first part of this verse probably refers to the uniformly successful wars which the Roman Empire carried on around the outskirts of the empire, though most of them were on a small scale. They were generally if not uniformly successful, even though the headquarters at Rome were becoming increasingly corrupt and inefficient. Possibly it refers to the growth of the system of delators or informers. See Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., Volume 26, page 916.

The Prince of the covenant. This undoubtedly refers to "the Anointed One, the Prince," of chapter 9:25-27, who, it was foretold, would "make a firm covenant with many for one week." All attempts to apply it otherwise, as for instance to Onias III, as is the custom of modern commentators, are weak and highly unsatisfactory. It is a fact that under the rule of this same Tiberius, in faraway Judea a crucifixion occurred which has influenced the subsequent history of the entire world far more than any other event that ever took place. Tacitus, the Roman historian, whose works are regarded as among the most important that have come down to us from that epoch, lived from about AD 55 to 120. He has left us the following authoritative statement: "Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontus Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius."

The chronology of this event has been considered in the comments on chapter 9:24-27. For additional testimony based on original sources, see Source Book for Bible Students, pages 554-562. Here it may be briefly stated that Jesus began His work as the Anointed One at His baptism, in the autumn of 27; His public work continued for three and one half years, or until the spring of AD 31. The death of Tiberius took place in 37.

***23. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up, and shall become strong, with a small people.***

We have here apparently another break in the continuity of the vision. The power here spoken of must be the same as that with which we were previously dealing. But whereas individuals were spoken of who were leaders or heads of the Roman government, we now appear to go back a certain distance in the history and deal with the Roman Empire in its more general aspects, leading up gradually to the transformation of the empire into the religion-political power which for well over a thousand years the world has associated with the name Rome.

As we have seen, all the first portions of any long prophecy are to be regarded as preliminary, given for the purpose of confirming our confidence in the remainder, assuring us that God has given it, and will assuredly accomplish what is still in the future. When we see the first part of a long vision already fulfilled to the letter, we cannot but have increased confidence in what still remains to be done.

In the present instance we have seen how remarkably this prophecy fits the history of the first three Roman rulers, Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Tiberius. The first on returning to the fortresses of his own land in triumph, is accurately spoken of as having stumbled and fallen. The second was the world's greatest tax gatherer, who reigned in the glory of the kingdom long and peacefully, and died neither in anger nor in battle. The third is well described as a contemptible person, who was not given the honor of

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the kingdom either during his life or after his death, but whose reign was founded upon deception and flattery. During his reign the Prince of the covenant was broken in the Roman province of Judea. In all these diverse particulars we acquire confidence that our interpretation of this line of prophecy must be correct, that we must be on the right road. One or two points of agreement we might attribute to chance; but it is incredible that such a combination of incidents could be the result of mere coincidences; the last event in particular, the death of the Prince of the covenant, must apply to Christ and to no other.

Now, having told the story of Rome down to the most important event of all the ages, the tragic death of the Prince of the covenant, the angel takes us back to a famous event in the history of the Jewish people for a new start in the narration of the history of the world. This famous event is the league made with the Jews in the year 161 BC. During the period when the Maccabees were trying to free themselves from the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, Judas Maccabeus sent an embassy to Rome to solicit friendship and help. This was readily granted, and the two peoples entered into a league of mutual friendship and assistance, as narrated by Josephus.

At this time the Romans were only a small people; but by their clever methods of leagues and alliances, by which they always professed themselves ready to go to the assistance of the weak and oppressed, they were rapidly becoming strong, as here stated.

Another line of reasoning leads to the same conclusion. In a previous note (on chapter S:13 et seq.) we have given an argument to show that this entire eleventh chapter is an angelic explanation of the symbols given in chapter 8. But in verse 9 of chapter 8 Rome is symbolized as a little horn coming out of one of the four horns of the Grecian or Macedonian goat. Accordingly we might expect to find some language here in this eleventh chapter (the explanation) which alludes to this small or insignificant origin of the empire of the Romans. Such an allusion or similarity of language we do find in this verse: He ... shall become strong, with a small people. Thus we have an additional reason for taking this passage as marking the beginning of the career of Rome, or its beginnings as a world empire.

***24. In time of security shall he come 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 prey, and spoil, and substance: yea, he shall devise his devices against the strongholds, even for a time.***

We have seen how the Roman senate posed as the defenders of the weak against the strong; but perhaps we hardly realize that they were the first in all human history to capitalize on the hopes of oppressed peoples in this way and on such a scale. By promising friendship and assistance to every people who appealed to them, the Romans rapidly became the world's national referee, and by the sense of security thus established, they were able to extend their authority far and wide. We have seen how, in the case of Egypt, the dying king left his kingdom under the guardianship of the Romans; but this became a fairly common custom, and in a similar way the Romans became the actual rulers of many other lands. Attalus III, king of Pergamum, died in 133 BC and bequeathed his kingdom to the Roman senate. In this way the old Babylonian sun worship, which had been transferred to Pergamum, was introduced into the Roman Empire. It was thus in a quiet and hitherto-unheard-of manner that Rome came even upon the fattest places of the province--the latter term being here used in the singular, meaning that this action was a general or common event.

The weak and non influential peoples especially gained by the Roman rule. All, however, were treated with justice and leniency. The Roman officers, scattered all through the vast extent of the empire, acted like so many international policemen, compelling the evil-minded and tyrannical to let others alone. The pax Romana [Peace of Rome] was extended to all the civilized world, and for a time, that is, the period decreed by God in His wisdom, the people of what may be called the entire civilized world enjoyed a peace and a prosperity which they had never known before, and would never see again.

If we regard this period, for a time, as a prophetic "time" or 360 years, the years should probably be reckoned from the event mentioned in the next verse, which is 31 BC. Counting 360 years from this would bring us to about the year 330, when the seat of the empire was moved from Rome to Constantinople. This may or may not be what is here referred to; but this removal to Constantinople marked the end of the exclusive rule of the seven hilled city, though the empire still continued.

Dr. Edwin R. Thiele, of Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, Michigan, thinks that the Crusades are the events referred to in this and several following verses. He would seem to be correct in his claim that a priori we might rightly expect these strange upheavals and dislocations of great masses of humanity to be mentioned somewhere. He does make out a good case in verses 28 and 30 for the notorious

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crusades against the Albigenses and Waldenses, as the armies of Rome shifted from crusades against the infidel to crusades against the “heretics.” However, the verses following thereafter would undoubtedly apply to the Roman persecutions anyway, even if Dr. Thiele’s interpretation of the passage from verses 25 to 30 were not followed.

On the whole, I do not feel at all certain about the meaning of several verses here around the middle of this chapter. But Uriah Smith’s notes seem about as likely to be right as any; hence we shall follow his lead regarding these verses.

***25. 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 war in battle with an exceeding great and mighty army; but he shall not stand; for they shall devise devices against him.***

This verse seems to bring us down to the battle of Actium, September 2, 31 BC, which was one of the most important battles of the world. It is sometimes spoken of as a battle during the Roman civil wars; but it may properly be regarded as a battle between Rome and Egypt, the latter being of course the king of the south mentioned in this verse.

After the death of the great Julius, the first triumvirate was formed to avenge his death and to settle the affairs of the empire. Soon Antony, who had been assigned to Egypt, began to regard himself as the master of the eastern world, and thus a duel was inevitable between him and Octavius, his brother-in-law. Antony collected all the forces of the east, with a dozen or more kinglets present either in person or by their troops and official representatives. Octavius (afterward Augustus) did not have as many ships or as many men, but his troops were better trained. The two forces met in the Gulf of Arta, opposite the promontory of Actium (modern Punta), in Greece, with the land forces standing on the opposite banks and watching the naval battle which was to decide the destinies of the ancient world.

Antony’s heavy ships tried to engage and crush the enemy with their machines; but the ships of Octavius were more skillful and avoided a direct issue. Finally Cleopatra withdrew, and the entire Egyptian squadron followed, with Antony in the rear. Then the fleet of Antony was set on fire and almost annihilated. Octavius was left as the undisputed master of the Roman world.

***26. Yea, they that eat of his dainties shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow; and many shall fall down slain.***

Antony, who before this battle may rightly be regarded as the ruler of Egypt and thus the king of the south here referred to, was destroyed by the desertion of Cleopatra and the sixty or more ships which went with her. His land forces which stood watching the battle of Actium went over to Octavius without a blow. Then when Antony gained the Egyptian shore, he found that the troops which he had left there had revolted from him and had taken up the side of the victor. Last of all, Cleopatra herself, for whose sake he had divorced his wife Octavia, the sister of Octavius, betrayed him, and all his men surrendered to the triumphant Caesar. In true Roman fashion, seeing all was lost, he committed suicide.

***27. And as for both these kings, their 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.***

As these two men were brothers-in-law, it is evident that they had associated intimately together. Naturally enough, their speaking lies at one table took place before the one defeated the other. Octavia, the sister of Augustus, said that she had married Antony solely for the purpose of keeping these two men as friends. All these people were actuated by selfish motives, and Antony’s side, at least, did not prosper. It is not clear what is meant by the last clause, that the end shall be at the time appointed; but in some way it means that God is always overruling all these selfish and wicked plans of men.

***28. Then shall he return into his land with great substance; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do his pleasure, and return to his own land.***

Obviously the power here mentioned cannot be the king of the south, but must refer to Rome, the victor in the previous conflict. We shall avoid some mental confusion if we think of the “king” here or hereafter mentioned, not as an individual, but as the idealized personification of the nation or power which



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he represents. It is thus that the paradoxical proclamation is made: "The king is dead: long live the king."

It is equally clear that two distinct returns from foreign wars of conquest are here mentioned, and these two returns must be separated by a considerable period.

Return into his land with great substance. This doubtless refers to the return of the emperor from the defeat of Antony and Egypt. So much booty and money were brought back by the victorious army that an inflation of about 50 per cent took place. Octavius was granted a three-day triumph; and while many illustrious or royal captives were shown in the train of the conqueror, Cleopatra was absent; she had avoided this disgrace by suicide with the poisonous cobra, often called the asp.

Against the holy covenant About a hundred years later, yet next in order, so far as this line of prophecy is concerned, came the Roman subjection of Judea and the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews had long been God's covenanted people; among them for centuries prophets had spoken with messages direct from heaven; yet when the greatest of all prophets had appeared amongst them, the Jews had refused to listen and had crucified Him. Moses had declared that whoever would not hear this coming Prophet should be destroyed or scattered to every nation under heaven. Thus nothing could avail the murderers of their promised Messiah; their holy and beautiful house was burned with fire in spite of the frantic efforts of Titus to save it. When all was over, nearly one and a half million Jews had been slain, and nearly an equal number sold into slavery; and the site of the temple was plowed with the Roman symbol of desolation and sown with salt.

When Titus saw that the temple could not be saved, he himself rushed in and carried out to safety the golden candlestick, with other sacred articles; and a likeness of this candlestick was afterward carved on the Arch of Titus, where tourists may yet see its partially obliterated outlines.

***29. At the time appointed he shall return, and come into the south; but it shall not be in the latter time as it was in the former.***

If we bear in mind that henceforth we are dealing with national affairs, not with individuals, we shall be prepared to understand and allow for a considerable lapse of time between some of the events here considered. The plan of the prophecy seems to be to give details near the beginning sufficient to enable us to identify the power spoken of, then to give larger events and broader sketches of the important later events for which the prophecy was especially designed.

The time appointed here mentioned may be the end of the period already mentioned in verse 24. If so, this would bring us to the year AD 330, and the removal of the capital from Rome to Constantinople. This would indeed be not in the latter time as it was in the former; for it is considered by many that the removal of the capital in this way resulted ultimately to the distinct loss of the empire to the barbarians. Yet it must be confessed that it is hard to see how this can be spoken of as coming into the south. However, this is the interpretation adopted by Uriah Smith and others.

The critics also admit that they have much difficulty in explaining some of these verses near the middle of this chapter. S. R. Driver takes refuge under the statement, "We are however imperfectly informed as to the events of Seleucus IV's reign." - The Book of Daniel, page 176. Montgomery says: "There is no evidence that he [Antiochus] came to Jerusalem after the second war." - Commentary, page 457. They all admit that there is no record whatever of a third expedition against Egypt, which their interpretation of the last of this chapter demands.

Dr. Edward Heppenstall, in a paper dealing with this chapter, says that somewhere along in these verses we have reference made to the persecutions under Diocletian and the transition of the policy of the empire to toleration and protection of Christianity, such as took place under Constantine. And he suggests that perhaps the two kings of verse 27, whose hearts are set on mischief and who speak lies at one table, may refer in a general way to the leaders of the church and the state, who then began the sad custom of uniting for carrying out their desires. This may be what is meant in some of these verses; but the details are not at all clear. Therefore I am here following along with Uriah Smith to verse 31.

Like other transition texts, which come in between two groups of texts which can be readily understood without any question, the twenty-ninth verse is a difficult one.

***30. For ships of Kittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and shall return, and have indignation against the holy covenant, and shall do his pleasure: he shall even return, and have regard unto them that forsake the holy covenant.***

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Here we seem to be getting onto somewhat surer ground; though the exact meaning or application of the passage is not above question.

There is no uncertainty about the meaning of the name “Kittim.” Primarily it means the island of Cyprus, which is visible from the Lebanon mountains; but Josephus tells us that all the islands to the west and “most of the parts beyond seas are called Kittim by the Hebrews.” In this text the name would be appropriate as the designation of a maritime power which would rise against Rome. Such a maritime power we find in the Vandal state of Genseric, with headquarters on the site of old Carthage, but with warlike bases around almost the whole circle of the Mediterranean.

The Vandals were the only ones among the Gothic tribes who maintained a fleet and who habitually carried on their depredations by way of the sea. Here they are taken probably as symbolic or representative of the entire barbaric invaders of the Imperial City.

Gibbon describes the army from the ships of Genseric as advancing from the port of Ostia in the year 455. “The pillage lasted fourteen days and nights: and all that yet remained of public or private wealth, of sacred or profane treasure, was diligently transported to the vessels of Genseric.” Among these were the golden candlestick and other sacred objects from the temple at Jerusalem which Titus had brought to Rome to adorn his triumph.

Year after year they returned to Rome or to the other cities which could be easily reached from the sea; and as Gibbon remarks, “their arms spread desolation, or terror, from the Columns of Hercules [Strait of Gibraltar] to the mouth of the Nile.” Gibbon further states that before Genseric died, in 477, “in the fullness of years and of glory, he beheld the final extinction of the Empire of the West.”

This end of the Western Empire is usually dated from 476; for in that year the senate packed up the official emblems of the imperial government and sent them to the Eastern emperor, saying that they had no further use for them. This event was far more important as an emblematic gesture than as a reality; yet when we next view the Imperial City, we find another kind of sovereign occupying the throne of the Caesars, the bishop of Rome. This transition from imperial to papal Rome is without doubt what is referred to in the closing clause of this verse—have regard unto them that forsake the holy covenant. Since the crucifixion no event more important in its effect upon the history of the human race has occurred than the establishment of the papacy upon the ruins of the Western Roman Empire.

***31. And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering, and they shall set up the abomination that maketh desolate.***

This verse, with many following ones, gives us a picture of the papal power in its various aspects. The expression, forces shall stand on his part, doubtless refers to all those agencies of power and wealth which the Roman bishops so effectively gathered to themselves. Profane the sanctuary might be understood of the profanation of the true church of Christ which the papacy effected. But more likely it refers to that desecration of the true worship of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary which was so surely brought about by the adoption of the doctrine of transubstantiation, whereby every fundamental idea of the mediatorial work of our heavenly High Priest is either parodied or denied. See the comment on chapter 8, verse 11.

Shall take away the continual burnt offering. This is exactly the same expression which is used in the eighth chapter, where we found it to refer to the taking away, or the making ineffectual, of the “continual mediation” carried on by our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. See the note on chapter 8, verse ii, and following verses.

Shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. This we have found to refer to the blasphemous claim of the Roman Catholic Church that at the word of the priest, in the so-called “sacrifice of the mass,” the actual body and blood of Christ are reincarnated, and that this wafer god becomes all that Christ in person would be if here present in the flesh. The notable victory of Clovis in 508, whereby the Catholic priesthood was for the first time officially established by law, is probably as good a date for these events as any.

It is no valid argument against this view that Christ, in His great prophecy on the Mount of Olives, used this term, “the abomination of desolation” (quoting from the Greek Septuagint form of the expression, or from the corresponding one in Daniel 9:27), as applying to the Roman armies, or perhaps alluding to the idolatrous symbols which were always carried at the head of the Roman troops. At any rate, Christ applied it to something connected with imperial or pagan Rome, while we are here applying it to papal Rome. It will be admitted by everyone that it would be only by the figure of metonymy, where some significant part

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or feature is used for the larger or more important word, that what Christ spoke of can be understood for the Roman government itself. In the eighth chapter of Daniel at least, and perhaps also here in this eleventh chapter, the imperial government of Rome and the papal form are not discriminated, but the one blends into the other, and both are treated as one entity—a view of the matter which is confirmed by history and by common sense. In the sight of heaven, Rome papal is only a modified form of Rome pagan, having a thin veneer of pseudo Christianity spread over it. This term from the prophet Daniel is even more appropriate when applied to the blasphemous sacrifice of the mass than to the Roman military insignia, for the former is even more a genuine “abomination” than the latter.

***32. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries; but the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.***

The word covenant as here used might be thought of as equivalent to true religion, or as meaning possibly the revealed will of God, the Scriptures. Accordingly we would have here the statement that those who renounce or despise the Scriptures, and who think more highly of the decrees of the church and the decisions of the councils than they do of the Scriptures, will be perverted by the flatteries of the head of the Catholic Church, being confirmed in their course by the honors or by the wealth thence bestowed. On the other hand, this apostasy is not to become universal.

There will still be some people that know their God; and these shall be strong, and do exploits, or will be “stout to do,” as one translation puts it. During the long, dreary centuries, while the system of Rome reigned in seeming supremacy over the minds and the bodies of mankind, there were always some here and there who kept the true light still burning, and who accomplished astonishing feats of heroism and fidelity to what they believed to be right. By the arrogant church authorities they were always termed heretics; but we know them by such names as Waldenses, Albigenses, and later as Huguenots, Anabaptists, etc. Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old, When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones.

***33. And they that are wise among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days.***

The same term here used, they that are wise, occurs also in chapter 12, verses 3, 10, in all these instances meaning the true people of God, whose truest instinct has always been to tell others the glorious news of the gospel. In all ages they have sought to instruct many. One of their numberless disguises during the days of persecution was that of peddlers or traveling salesmen, so beautifully described by “the Quaker Poet.” See “The Vaudois Teacher,” by John Greenleaf Whittier.

They shall fall by the sword. One of the methods adopted by Rome for the crushing out of what she termed heresy was organized raids or invasion of the villages and towns among the Alps and elsewhere by armies of French, or Spanish, or Italians. But individual executions might also be described by this clause.

And by flame. As everyone knows, one of the favorite methods of executing heretics was to burn them at the stake. This seems to have been adopted under the perverse idea that thus they were not really shedding blood!

By captivity and by spoil. Another method of treating those who disagreed with Rome was to compel them to work as galley slaves until they were exhausted and died. John Knox had a period of such slavery, but he escaped and became the Reformer of Scotland. Perhaps the most drastically effective of the methods employed to exterminate the true faith was by what is termed the dragonnades. This took place after the rise of the Protestant Reformation, and by this plan large numbers of brutal, licentious soldiers were quartered in the homes of the Huguenots of France, with orders to do anything they liked, short of actual murder, to make the people become Catholics.

Many days. This term undoubtedly refers to the 260 prophetic days or literal years, which is repeatedly spoken of in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation as the fixed period of papal supremacy. It is variously called, “forty and two months,” “a time and times and half a time,” “a thousand two hundred and threescore days;” all of which expressions mean the same thing. These “many days” are to be reckoned from AD 538 to 1798. The equivalent expressions occur in Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5.

Truth never dies. The ages come and go;  
The mountains wear away; the seas retire;

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Destruction lays earth's mighty cities low,  
And empires, states, and dynasties expire;  
But caught and handed onward by the wise,  
Truth never dies.

***34. Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help; but many shall join themselves unto them with flatteries.***

In the book of Revelation (12:13-16), where a parallel account is given of this long period, the statement is that “the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth.” This has been interpreted as referring to the way in which the New World was discovered and opened for people to flee to, when persecuted in the Old World. Helped with a little help, however, would cover all the various agencies which arose to mitigate the severity of the papal warfare against God's people. The Reformation which was initiated by Luther in Germany and by other Reformers in various lands, was one of these methods of help. Yet as has so often been the case, when the cause of reform was adopted by kings and men of high social or political position, many would join them from unworthy motives, because they found it “prosperous to be just,” as Lowell expresses it. A cause must have great intrinsic value and vitality when it can stand being advocated by such false friends.

***35. And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed.***

Dr. R. H. Charles says that this expression, the time of the end, is “always used eschatologically” in the book of Daniel, that is, it always refers definitely to a period down near the end of all earthly affairs and the ushering in of the kingdom of God. (Commentary, page 394) However, it seems clear that here it refers rather to the end of the period of 1260 years of papal supremacy, which as we have shown elsewhere (page 151) is regarded by the prophecy as terminating in 1798, when the pope was taken prisoner by Berthier, one of Napoleon's generals, who declared the papacy abolished.

Four verses of description here intervene before the narrative of events is resumed in verse 40. These four verses of description and characterization have been thought by some to refer to the atheistic regime of the French Revolution, which held sway for a brief time at about the termination of these 1260 years. However, it is contrary to all legitimate rules of interpretation to say that a new power is brought in here without any notification that it is wholly new. Besides, this atheistic power of the French Revolution maintained its character of atheism for only a brief period. It is incredible that the prophecy should turn aside from the consideration of the career of the papal power, which was by no means ended at the time here spoken of, and take up the career of France, which was and is by no means the most outstanding power in the world, or most important in its connection with the people of God for the last days.

These four verses of description contain so many phrases and expressions which are similar or identical to the other well-known prophecies of the papal power in the seventh and eighth chapters of this book, and in Paul's description in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12, that it is unreasonable to abandon all the parallels and identities to bring in another power which is not elsewhere mentioned in any of the prophecies of this book of Daniel, and only once in the Revelation.

***36. 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 he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done.***

We understand this to be an attempt to characterize or to describe the essential character of the Roman power. Shall do according to his will means that he is so strong or so influential that he can overcome all opposition.

Magnify himself above every god. This is very similar to Paul's description of the man of sin who “opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

Out of many arrogant and blasphemous claims of the Roman Catholic Church, we shall mention only one. It is officially taught by that body that when the priest pronounces the words of consecration over the bread and wine, Jesus Christ is compelled at these words to become again incarnate in these emblems; thus the priest is said to command his Creator. This is such a common and universal claim on the part of the

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Roman clergy that there is no need of quoting specific references. See the note on chapter 8, verse ii.

Shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods. This is similar to the words used of the little horn of Daniel 7: "He shall speak words against the Most High." Verse 25. It is also like the language used about the leopard beast of Revelation 13: "There was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Verses 5, 6.

Till the indignation be accomplished. This is clearly a direct reference to Isaiah 10:25; 26:20, 21. It refers to the final utter destruction of all sin and sinners. Since the power here spoken of is to continue down until the final destruction of all sinners at the Second Coming of Christ, it cannot refer to infidel France during the time of the French Revolution, as some commentators have supposed. Obviously it must apply to some anti-Christian power which continues its blasphemous work to the end of time. Rome answers these conditions, and nothing else does.

Thus we have another and strong proof that this entire passage. from verse 36 to verse 39, inclusive, is meant to apply to Rome.

***37. Neither shall he regard the gods of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all.***

This is a tremendous indictment; but most of these expressions are repetitions or modifications of what was stated in the preceding verse.

The gods of his fathers. Systematically during its long career, and in all the countries where it has gone, including its modern entrance into Africa, China, India, or Japan, the Roman Catholic Church has always taken over and made use of the temples and shrines of other religions, as well as the local feast days and ceremonies it found popularly observed. Christmas and Easter and Halloween, to say nothing of "the venerable day of the sun," as Constantine called it, may serve as examples of the innumerable pagan festivals which have been incorporated into the Roman Catholic calendar. In every country on the globe we find local pagan shrines and ceremonies which have been blessed by Roman Catholic decree and dedicated anew to the uses of the so-called Holy Mother Church. Few heathen festivals, or shrines, or local ceremonies are ever discarded; essentially all of them have been blessed with the formularies of purification, and then have been incorporated bodily into that vast conglomeration of cults which constitutes the Roman Church.

Nor the desire of women. To have children of her own is a desire of every normal woman. The Roman Catholic Church contravenes this desire by its vows of celibacy which it exacts of all its more devout followers entering the church orders, men and women alike. This characteristic of the church is spoken of also in 1 Timothy 4:15.

Nor regard any god. This statement has been emphasized by those who wish to interpret this prophecy to mean atheistic France; they say that this has never been true of the papacy. But the very next word in this text indicates its true meaning. For gives the reason for the statement that this power does not regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. Any man who, even in his heart, magnifies himself above all other beings human and divine, may truthfully be said to regard no other god, no matter how many deities he professes to revere. And any mortal who thinks that he can manufacture his Creator by repeating a few Latin words, is clearly magnifying himself above all.

As already stated in the discussion of verse 36, the apostle Paul, in his second Thessalonian letter, makes a clear and incontrovertible reference to this passage in Daniel, by his remarks concerning the antichrist. 2 Thessalonians 2:4. We have a right to say that this statement by Paul indicates what this passage in Daniel was intended to mean. Paul seems to be giving a divine commentary on this text.

***38. But in his place shall he honor the god of fortresses; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things.***

The first phrase of this verse, in his place, means in his official position as the leader of the people. The god of fortresses is an expression which has been shown by Sir Isaac Newton, Mosheim, and E. B. Elliott to refer to the saints, with their relics and images, which the Roman Catholic Church has from its earliest days regarded with worshipful reverence as the "mahuzzim," or patron protectors, of the places where they were buried or were deposited.

Thus the pantheon at Rome was by Emperor Phocas turned over to the bishop of Rome, who rededicated it to all the saints, with the Virgin Mary as their head, in the place formerly held by Cybele, the



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so-called mother of the pagan gods. It is in this spirit of invoking a divine protector that the Greeks still pray to Mary: "O thou Virgin Mother of God, thou impregnable wall, thou fortress of salvation." Every important locality is supposed to have its patron saint as a protector and guardian. The Roman Catholic Church has long claimed the exclusive right of canonization, or the right of making saints to whom prayers and worship may be addressed. See E. B. Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*, 1851 ed., vol. 3, P. 164.

This saint making and saint worship throughout the centuries has, as the next verse declares, been uniformly carried on in a venal or mercenary manner, "for a price."

A god whom his fathers knew not. Obviously this refers to the wafer-god which the Catholic Church calls the host, a word from the Latin which originally meant a victim or a sacrifice. Anyone who has witnessed the elaborate ceremonial, and the profusion of wealth and ornamentation which is associated with the public display of the consecrated bread, especially at the eucharistic congresses which are held from time to time in various strategic parts of the world, will appreciate the remarks of this verse. This is most assuredly a kind of god that his fathers never knew or dreamed of; and it is honored with more than royal luxury and pomp.

***39. And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god: whosoever acknowledges him he will increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for a price.***

Probably the foreign god here mentioned is the same as the "god whom his fathers knew not" of the preceding verse. The ceremonial of the mass and all the other acts associated therewith are the very center and essence of the entire Roman Catholic Church. The second clause means that the road to glory and honor is through acknowledging this "foreign god," the wafer god of the Eucharist.

He shall cause them to rule over many. The high officials of the church have long been termed the "princes of the church," and no kings or potentates of earth can vie with them in their asserted, and even their actual, power over the bodies and souls of men.

Shall divide the land for a price. All history testifies to the fact that the way to almost any position in the church is open to the one who possesses the golden key. Simony is the term used for the traffic in sacred offices; and this coinage of a specific term to describe the practice, is sufficient proof, if proof were needed, of the fitness of the prophecy.

In looking back over these four descriptive verses, no one can deny that every major term found in the prophecy is matched by the facts regarding the power here considered. The fitness of all these terms is incomparably more complete than they would be if we should attempt to apply them to France or to any other power.

***40. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south contend with 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 through.***

Only a slight uncertainty can surround the meaning of the time of the end. We have already seen that it means the period following the 1260 years of papal supremacy, that is, the period subsequent to 1798. This is the definition of the term as used in *The Great Controversy*: "But that part of his prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal 'to the time of the end.' . . . But since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near." - Page 356.

Among those who agree in identifying the power designated in the preceding verses as the papacy, two opinions prevail as to the interpretation of this verse and the ones following. Let us call them Interpretation No. 1 and Interpretation No. 2.

1. This may also be termed the triangular view, for it turns largely on the view that the papacy is here treated as a third power which is being attacked from the two opposite sides, the south and the north. On this view all the pronouns in the third person which are here and hereafter used, "he" and "him," are uniformly applied to the papacy, though the terms "south" and "north" are not applied as strictly along geographical lines as was done by Uriah Smith, who applied the third power to France instead of to the papacy. This modern revised triangular view also tends to emphasize the time since 1844 as pre-eminently "the time of the end," and applies this verse and all those following to either the present or the future. Those who hold this view also think that verse 45, at the last of this chapter, may mean that at some future time

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the papacy may set up temporary headquarters in the city of Jerusalem. This would be to say that we have in these verses, 40-45, a blending of literal (geographical) with the figurative or symbolic. Such a partial blending of literal with symbolic is not wholly unknown in prophecy, as has been pointed out elsewhere.

In dealing with unfulfilled prophecy it behooves us all to be modest, for we may be mistaken. Hence without giving arguments for or against this interpretation, we simply pass to a second view.

2. The second system of interpretation is different only in a few minor details. Both views agree in saying that the main world power here dealt with is the Roman papacy, and both say that the final verses of this chapter mean the same power. But the second interpretation says that the name "king of the north," though not repeated throughout many preceding verses, should be applied to the power spoken of from about verse 16 onward. In other words, this interpretation says that the papacy is "the king of the north," as described in the preceding verses. This view eliminates any third power in verse 40, for it interprets it in the following manner as simplified by this paraphrase:

"At the time of the end shall the king of the south contend with him [the king of the north, or the papacy]. And the king of the north shall come against him [the king of the south] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he [the king of the north] shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass through [he shall come off triumphantly victorious]."

Since both of these views are alike in reading the Roman Catholic Church into this entire latter part of this eleventh chapter, and both apply the closing verses (verses 44, 45) to the same power, we need not dwell on the minor points of difference, but note the simplicity and unity which these views bring into this prophecy.

This interpretation brings this eleventh chapter of Daniel into full parallelism with \* the lines of world history traced in chapter 2, in chapter 7, and again in chapter 8, all of which tell of the desolating power of Rome exercised on a world-wide scale. This was a line of argument which appealed so strongly to James White, who time and again declared that all four of Daniel's lines of prophecy covered the same ground, and all end in the same way.

We have a right to expect that somewhere in the book of Daniel we will have a detailed mention of the final conflict between the papacy and her associates and the true church of Christ which is to take place just before the Second Coming of Christ. The book of Revelation is full of this final conflict, for almost half of the Revelation is devoted to the various aspects of this great crisis. But in the entire book of Daniel there is not the slightest hint of this final struggle, if this last of the eleventh and the first part of the twelfth are not to be thus interpreted. The seventh and the eighth chapters of Daniel, of course, have much to say about the age-long career of the Roman apostasy, but nothing is set forth concerning this final struggle with the triumphant resurgent papacy, unless it is here in the final verses of chapter 11. This final life-and-death conflict between the church and all the combined powers of earth, in which the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet combine in the attempt to obliterate the very name of Christ's true church, must surely be given some place in this book of Daniel.

From about the middle of the eleventh chapter onward, the prophecy becomes less local and nationalistic, and more and more distinctly religious and of global significance. It is absolutely certain that in its outcome (which of course reaches over into the next chapter, for the chapter divisions obscure the unity of the entire vision) the prophecy is of world-wide application. It deals with the close of probation, the time of trouble on all the nations of the world, and the final deliverance of the people of God, which in this age must be in all the earth. Both God's work and that of His enemy are today on a global scale.

Moreover, it is a principle of universal validity that all the other prophecies of the Old Testament, if they reach down to periods this side of the cross, always become more abstract and spiritual. For the concrete, objective things of the Old Covenant have now become spiritualized, what was local and nationalistic now becoming world-wide and universal. Literally hundreds of terms, like Zion, Israel, etc., have since the cross come to us with wider and more spiritual connotations. One reason for this providentially planned situation is that the people of God are now found on all the continents of the world; hence the new wine positively cannot be confined in the old bottles. "If you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." The book of the Revelation also has many examples of the greatly enlarged, or global, application of the various prophecies of the Old Testament, especially in those dealing with the closing events of the gospel age.

Since all this cannot be denied, we have a right to expect that from this fortieth verse and onward we shall be dealing with more abstract and more religious, or spiritual, ideas. These will also be more world-wide, though spoken of under the old familiar terms used by the Jews of twenty-five centuries ago, which must now be treated as symbols.

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***41. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.***

One of the chief problems from here to the end of the chapter is to decide how much of the language is symbolic or figurative, and how much is to be understood literally.

Some who believe that the papacy is the power here spoken of think that the glorious land must be taken literally, as referring to Palestine. They probably are looking forward to verse 45, and feel sure that Rome will one day move its headquarters to Jerusalem. Others think that “the glorious land” probably means the Protestant world as a whole; and they point to the fact that millions of Protestants are now ready to apologize to Rome for their former distrust. It is extremely difficult to see how the other localities mentioned, “Edom,” and “Moab” and “Ammon,” can possibly be taken literally. Thirty centuries ago, when Israel and these other tribes were of about the same size, it was predicted that Israel would become scattered among all the other nations, but would never lose its identity, while all the other tribes mentioned above would completely disappear. All this has come to pass; Israel still exists, though scattered in all lands, but no such nations or tribes as Edom, or Moab, or Ammon have existed for more than a thousand years.

To me it seems more reasonable to interpret these names symbolically, in harmony with the rest of the prophecy. Then these long-extinct enemies of God’s people, “Edom,” and “Moab,” and “Ammon,” would represent modern groups or organizations with characteristics similar to those displayed by the three named ancient tribes. The text would probably mean that some of these modern peoples will become truly converted or join God’s remnant people, thus being delivered from the bondage of error, so that they will not fall under the hand of the king of the north.

***42. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape.***

It is at least curious to find the land of Egypt here differentiated from the king of the south. The apology of some of the “critics” that it means the country in distinction from the king is not convincing. We have already seen that in a symbolic sense (e.g., Revelation 11:8) the name “Egypt” is used to signify organized atheism or open anti-Christianity, as in the French Revolution and its modern counterpart, international communism. J. P. Lange, the eminent commentator of nearly a century ago, says: “Egypt is the symbol of a magical natural science and deification of nature.” In this sense it would be synonymous with the modern fashionable philosophy of “progress,” or evolutionism, which is about the same thing.

***43. 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.***

A few years ago some well-intentioned people were quite ready to interpret this passage in a literal way. However, the fortunes of war have since put a question in such an interpretation and ought to show the danger of a hasty interpretation of what may be merely coincidences.

***44. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; and he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to sweep away many.***

Many are inclined to interpret the first part of this text literally and to apply it to contemporary events. The misapplication of prophecy to contemporary events has always been a more common blunder than that which has resulted from trying to interpret prophecy in advance. Why, may perhaps be hard to explain; but the history of the centuries shows that so it has ever been. Not only does personal bias work to vitiate the result, but the chromatic aberration of mass prejudice tends to throw both the prophecy and the contemporary events out of focus, so that people do not see either in their true perspective.

It is far better to exercise more of “the patience and the faith of the saints” (Revelation 13:10), and wait a little longer. “They that are wise shall understand.” Daniel 12:10.

I think all are agreed that the many whom this evil power goes forth to destroy and utterly to sweep away must be the true people of God, not some opposing military force. Also it is extremely interesting to note that, according to some Hebrew scholars, the expression here used implies something

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like a universal boycott or outlawry, an idea which will be readily understood by most of my readers, in the light of Revelation 13:17 and the many related statements in The Great Controversy, and elsewhere.

***45. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.***

Here we have presented the last act of this power before its end, which would come, not in a “natural” but in a supernatural manner. It is the same sort of catastrophic end, brought about by direct divine intervention, as marks the termination of all the other lines of prophecy given in this book of Daniel. In the second chapter the great image was destroyed by a stone cut out of the mountain “without hands.” Verse 45. The beast of the vision of chapter 7 “was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire.” Verse 11. Of the terrible horn of chapter 8 it is said: “He shall be broken without hand.” Verse 25. Here this God-defying power shall come to his end, and none shall help him. The meaning is that all these powers exist down to the close of all human history, but all are terminated by the supernatural intervention of the powers of heaven at the Second Coming of Christ.

The peculiar phrase here used, the tents of his palace, means a large and luxurious tent or collection of tents, such as would naturally be used as the field headquarters of an Oriental king on a military campaign. A similar term was used for the temporary headquarters of Cambyses when he invaded Egypt. The word here translated “palace” is a Persian word, *appeden*, and meant a large hall or throne room, such as most Oriental kings used to provide for themselves on their expeditions. They carried their luxurious habits along with them. The whole passage is a military one and fits appropriately into the rest of the prophecy.

Since all the rest of the language here used employs the highly symbolic terms of ancient Oriental life, it seems to me unreasonable to try to find a literal or geographical meaning for the locality here specified, between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. The modern Jewish translation renders the phrase, “between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain.” So far as locality is concerned, this would mean between the Mediterranean and the hill of Zion in Jerusalem, for the Mediterranean is often used in Hebrew as a poetic plural. In the days of the Israelites this would mean about the center of the land of Judah. The evident meaning of the whole statement is that this power takes a strongly strategic position for a direct attack upon the Holy City—the latter, of course, meaning the true church of Christ in the last hours of time. One more move on its part, and the church would supposedly be overwhelmed.

The King James Version reads: “Between the seas in the glorious holy mountain,” which literally would mean in the city of Jerusalem. Such, of course, has long been the usual understanding. As this entire passage is still in the future, we must not become dogmatic about its true meaning.

If we adopt the more figurative or symbolic interpretation, it would seem that we have here in these last verses of Daniel 11 a parallel to the many passages in the book of Revelation and elsewhere which speak of the final “war” of all the powers of earth against the church of God. The dragon of Revelation 12 goes forth to make war against the remnant of the woman’s seed. Verse 17, A.V. The combined powers spoken of in Revelation 17 “shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them.” Verse 14. “The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat upon the horse, and against His army.” Revelation 19:19. Also in the sixteenth chapter, under the sixth of the seven last plagues, the three unclean spirits emanating from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet gather “the kings of the whole world” together “unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.” Verses 13, 14. In all these instances the combined powers of all the world are led on by the same leaders; they try to make war against the same apparently helpless church of Christ; but in each case the King of kings intervenes at the critical moment, and the trusting followers of Jesus are gloriously delivered. All these various descriptions deal with the same final stage of the age-long controversy between Christ and Satan, the latter in this instance employing as his tools the united powers of a confederated world. It is this union of all the world against God in the person of His people that makes it essential for Jehovah to intervene.

I have repeatedly stated that it is dangerous to try to interpret prophecy in advance. Thus it has been always in the past, and thus it still remains. Yet the people of God are entering upon unusual times, and unusual enlightenment has been given God’s remnant church concerning the times immediately ahead. “You, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” 1 Thessalonians 5:4. Obviously, if this prophecy is to be of any help to us in the struggle ahead, we must seek to understand its meaning.

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Perhaps it is best to stop right here. This text has so long been bandied about with a background so different from the present, that time may be necessary for the students of this subject to become readjusted. So many and so various have been the ideas which have been held about it, that time and further study may be essential before any final interpretation is attempted.

Of one thing I believe we can be assured. When this text is fulfilled, perhaps when it is about ready to be accomplished, the true people of God will all realize the situation, and will be enabled to act accordingly.

“None of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand.” Daniel 12:10.

Note on the History of the Interpretation of Chapter 11. This chapter has long been used as the playground of the imagination by commentators. Jewish writers treat it like a fairy story, in the interpretation of which any fanciful allegory or flight of imagination may be appropriate. Some of the early Christian writers, like Polychronius and Ephraem Syrus, treated the chapter as literal history for a few verses, and then applied all the rest to the times of Epiphanes. This method has been followed by many since, though in modern times this almost always involves the idea that it was not written by the pseudo Daniel until after most of the early events were already history. Jerome carried the literal history down to the twenty-first verse, though he made the mistake of following too credulously the pagan Porphyry for even this historic part. From this point onward Jerome applied the statements to the antichrist, which he regarded as still future in his day (AD 340?-420).

The history of the intrigues and petty wars of the successors of Alexander is obscure at best; but Porphyry seems to have invented a considerable amount which he claimed matched the statements of the middle and later parts of this chapter. Even the modernistic R. H. Charles admits that much of the latter part of Porphyry’s “history” is mythical, and “apart from one or two details, could all have been drawn from the text of Daniel.” - Commentary, page 34. That is, Porphyry invented the history to correspond with the statements here in Daniel, on the basis that it all applied to the times preceding and accompanying the times of Epiphanes. No less a scholar than Dr. Pusey declares: “This school continually draws its statements as to ‘the Hasmonaean age’ from Daniel alone, and is seemingly unconscious that it is ‘begging the question.’”-- Daniel the Prophet, page 224.

Pusey here means that Porphyry first invented large parts of the alleged history of this period, like the mythical third expedition of Epiphanes into Egypt, making this invented “history” fit the verses given by Daniel, and then triumphantly pointed to the close agreement of this “history” and the prophecy of Daniel as proof that the entire book of Daniel was only a pseudo prophecy, or a vaticinium post eventum, written to fit the history. As stated above, even the eminent modernistic scholar, R. H. Charles, admits that at least the latter part of the “history” given by Porphyry was probably built up in this way by interpreting Daniel backward. The actual history of those times is still obscure; and it is highly probable that even more of the supposed agreement of Daniel’s statements with the times of the Maccabees or of Epiphanes should be looked upon with suspicion.

The early church writers in their comments on this chapter of Daniel all followed the history as best they could for the first part of the vision, but understood the middle and latter part to mean the antichrist, which they all believed to be still in the future in their day. As already remarked, Jerome believed that the then future antichrist comes into the vision near the middle, and from that onward. Theodoret (390?-457?) made a similar interpretation, beginning the career of antichrist with verse 36; while Chrysostom (345?-407) thought he found the antichrist throughout the greater part of the chapter. We need not wonder at all this; for the entire career of the papacy, the real antichrist, was then future. Most modern Roman Catholic scholars follow Jerome or some other of the Fathers in their views of this chapter. Doubtless they feel it to be a discouraging experience to have to compare their own church’s history with any of these prophecies.

Modern futurists adopt similar methods of interpreting this chapter. They follow down the doctored “history” as fraudulently given by Porphyry and mistakenly followed by Theodoret and the other Catholic Fathers; then about the end of the thirty-fifth verse they break it off (so as to follow their dogma that no prophecy in either Daniel or the Revelation deals with events in the Christian dispensation). Then all the rest of the chapter is entirely postponed until the end of the Christian dispensation, and they say that the remainder of the chapter will run its course during the times of the future antichrist. All this is done, as one of their leaders expresses the case, because “there must be a break somewhere in this eleventh chapter,” and the break “might as well come here” (at the end of verse 35) as anywhere else. For the latter verses must apply to their hypothetical revived future kingdom of Israel after the Second Coming of Christ. It is surely interesting to see the Roman Catholics and the Protestant futurists agreeing so closely in this matter



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of the antichrist.

The modern “critics” also have interesting methods of procedure. They first settle in their own minds that this eleventh chapter, and also the eighth, must apply to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, and affect to deny that any educated person can possibly believe otherwise. They then reason that all the four lines of Daniel’s prophecies must run parallel with one another, and should be interpreted similarly. So they extend this method backward to include the seventh chapter and also the second. But this is to take the more difficult as the guide, and to force the more simple and obvious to conform to the theories adopted for the more difficult and obscure. Thus the entire book of Daniel is emasculated, so far as having any dynamic message for our day is concerned.

Many devout Christians have become confused concerning all the major or more important parts of all the prophecies which deal with the Messianic kingdom, because of the fatal error of believing that this kingdom must have been set up in the days of Christ and His apostles. This latter idea becomes a major factor of confusion in understanding any of the lines of prophecy.

In the present work the fundamental parallelism of all the four lines of prophecy in this book is admitted. If we settle once for all that the Messianic kingdom has not yet been established on the earth in the form of the Christian church (see John 18:36, etc.) and then begin with the easy prophecies of Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, it is not at all difficult to make good sense out of the more difficult visions of chapter 8 (including the ninth), and that of chapters 10, 11, 12, Which are properly one vision.

Which is the correct method of procedure? Which is the method most in accord with common sense and true science?

Moreover, if we first believe that these prophecies were actually given by God, that Daniel and other holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and if we adopt sound methods of study, we shall at least have a far better chance of learning the true meaning of these visions for our day. Of course, the test of any interpretation of any prophecy is its agreement with the events predicted. When we do find the true interpretation, the two must make a perfect fit, not merely in a few points here and there, but in all the important particulars.

As it would be quite impossible here to trace a full history of the ways in which this eleventh chapter has been interpreted down through the centuries, it may suffice to call attention to the fact that Elder James White and some others of the Adventist pioneers applied the last part of this chapter to the career of the papacy.

For instance, we find James White, in an editorial in the Review and Herald, November 29, 1877, appealing for caution in applying this portion of the prophecy to events at that time taking place. He remarks that some appear to “think more of future truth than of present truth.” He goes on to point out that the same ground is covered in the four great prophetic lines of Daniel, and it is reasonable to think that they all end similarly with the destruction of the same power, namely Rome. He asks: “Does the eleventh chapter of the prophecy of Daniel cover the ground measured by chapters 2, 7, and 8? If so, then the last power mentioned in that chapter is Rome.”

## 12. FINAL EXPLANATIONS

The wrong of separating these last three chapters, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, has already been spoken of; for this separation tends to obscure their essential unity. They all together constitute one vision, not three. Yet there may be another way of viewing the matter. Dr. Charles remarks that this twelfth chapter is properly set off from the preceding; for he says chapter 11 is concerned largely with human history which is already almost wholly in the past, only one or two items impending in the proximate future, while chapter 12 passes over from the temporal to the eternal. In this he is certainly correct.

The beginning of the kingly reign of Christ introduces the Chapter, followed by a time of trouble for all the nations of the world, and the final deliverance of God’s people. A partial resurrection is also mentioned, with the glorification of oil those who are truly wise. Repeatedly the angel tells Daniel that the prophecies which have been revealed to him are not for his especial benefit, but are intended for those who will be living down near the end of human history, and indeed will be fully understood only by them. Peter alludes to the some important principle, when he says that the prophets often greatly desired to understand what had been revealed to them, but were told that “not unto themselves,” but to the people of a later age their prophecies applied. 1 Peter 1:11, 12.

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***1. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince who stands 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 at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.***

The time here mentioned is coincident with the last move made by the haughty, anti-Christian power mentioned in the preceding chapter. It must be understood as preceding the end of that power, with none to help him; for it is this act of Michael, in taking control of the situation, which brings about that end. Who or what can help any earthly power, when Christ, the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people, stands up in opposition?

The final move on the part of the papacy, as stated in the last verse of the former chapter, planting his headquarters between the sea and the glorious holy mountain, we have interpreted as meaning that it takes up a position of strategic advantage for the final assault against the true church. But the enemies of God's people proceed no further. For at that time they are halted. How often during the long, painful centuries the church has had to present her "back as the ground, and as the street, to them that go over." Isaiah 51:23. How often have her enemies been permitted to "wear out the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:25), until they have become "drunken with the blood of the saints" (Revelation 17:6). Now all this is changed. For when the final stage of the controversy between Christ and Satan has been reached, then a radical change is seen in God's plan of dealing with such matters; and at that time thy people shall be delivered.

The term stand up is frequently used both in Daniel and elsewhere to mean "begin to reign," or to "come to the throne." This may be its meaning here. However, it is also used (Daniel 8:25 etc.) in the sense of exercising some special power, such as attacking an enemy. Hence it may be used in the latter sense here, meaning that Michael [Christ] at this time intervenes to protect His people. This is implied in the descriptive clause, the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people. Both aspects of the term may be included here; for this period marks the change in Christ's work from the priestly to the kingly, a most momentous change for the universe as a whole, and a change which is signaled here on earth by the end of human probation, and the sealing of the destinies of all human beings for weal or for woe. When He assumes His position as King of kings and Lord of lords, although there may be a short interval of seeming delay, He takes measures for the protection of His sorely tried people, who are at that time still on earth and threatened by the combined powers of the beast and the false prophet. Revelation 13:15-17.

In the note on Daniel 10:21 we have already explained that Michael means Christ, this being the name He assumed when, in His pre-existent state, He stepped down to take on the duties of an angel, thus filling the station made vacant by the great rebel, Lucifer. In Jude 9, Michael is called "the Archangel," which would show that He must be above all other spirit beings; for there can hardly be more than one thus designated. We are also told that at the voice of the Archangel the righteous dead are to be raised (I Thessalonians 4:16); while Jesus tells us that His own voice is to summon the dead to life (John 5:26-29). This line of reasoning shows that the term "Michael the Archangel" refers to Christ. Besides, we have an equally clear statement in the present text that Michael is the great Prince who stands for the children of thy people, an expression which can refer only to Christ.

Is not Christ reigning now? Of course, in one sense; for we are told in Ephesians that at His ascension He joined the Father on the throne of the universe. Ephesians 1:20-22. In another sense the Scriptures always represent the Messiah as ultimately taking the throne of David, a kingdom which is never to end. Luke 1:32, 33. In one of His parables He also represents Himself as going into a far country, "to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return;" and when He was come back, "having received the kingdom" (Luke 19:12, 15), He settles with the servants whom He had commissioned to handle His affairs, "till I come."

This is hardly the place to discuss the details of this complicated theological doctrine. It may suffice to say that Christ is now a priest-king, mediating the cases of His earthly people. Soon He will cease His work as priest, and all the kingdoms of the world will then become "the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ." Revelation 11:15. In other words, this vision, like all the others in this book of Daniel, conducts us down to the end of the present order of human affairs, a change coincident with a radical change in the affairs of the entire universe, which is the assumption by Christ of His long-deferred rightful position as King of kings and Lord of lords. And it is this turn in the affairs of the universe which is indicated by this verse.

When Lucifer, then first of the covering cherubs or "presence angels," started his revolt in heaven,

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he quit his official position (Jude 6) in protest, and thereafter was driven from heaven. The Son of God stepped down into the place of universal service thus made vacant, and during the entire Old Testament period He carried out the work which would have been that of Lucifer, plus the additional duties resulting from the presence of sin among mankind. During this period He carried the name of Michael, the Archangel. Jude 9; Revelation 12:7. When He stepped down still lower and became incarnate, it appears that Gabriel was promoted to the first place among the angels. See *The Desire of Ages*, page 693; *The Great Controversy*, page 669.

A time of trouble. This refers to a period of unprecedented distress among the nations, just preceding the Second Coming of Christ. The people of God are still here on earth in their mortal state, and must pass through this time of trouble without sin, for probation is ended, and there is no merciful High Priest to intercede for them in heaven. But this "time of trouble" is directed chiefly against the wicked and continues until their complete destruction at the Second Coming. This is the period of the pouring out of the seven last plagues of Revelation 16, and it occupies a short period, perhaps about a year, after the close of probation and before the actual return of the King.

Another time of "great tribulation" is mentioned by Christ in Matthew 24:21, but it is spoken of as a time of tribulation or of persecution for the righteous. Both are spoken of as the greatest in all human history; but they are two very distinct events, many centuries apart, the one falling upon the people of God during the long term of papal persecution during the Dark Ages, which had to be shortened for the sake of the elect (verse 22), the other being the one here mentioned in this verse of Daniel, which falls upon the wicked and ends only with their complete destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8).

At that time thy people shall be delivered. In the eighth chapter the question was asked, "How long shall be the vision.... to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?" This question was partly answered then and there, so far as the part about the "sanctuary" was concerned; but no answer at all was given as to how long "the host," or the people of God, would be trodden underfoot. Now the answer is being given to the prophet. "At that time thy people shall be delivered." This ultimate deliverance must have seemed painfully deferred to Daniel; but its accomplishment is sure, even though it does not take place until the close of all human affairs.

As intimated above, God miraculously intervenes to save His people from the designs of their enemies a short period before the actual appearance of Jesus in the clouds of heaven. While the people of God have to remain on earth a little longer after the close of probation and the scaling of everyone's destiny, and while they are not entirely exempt from the effects of the seven last plagues which are falling upon the wicked all around them, they have the blessed assurance of deliverance from all that has vexed and threatened them. They comfort themselves with the forty sixth psalm, "the refuge psalm," which applies to their experience at this time.

Written in the book. Paul mentions certain friends "whose names are in the book of life." Philippians 4:3. Similar phraseology, "the book of life," occurs in other places, while the Revelation gives us a vivid picture of the final judgment which will be based on the records in the books of heaven.

***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.***

This is hardly the place for a complete statement about the resurrection, as a Bible doctrine. In Ezekiel 37 and in a few places elsewhere in the Old Testament, a resurrection of the righteous is alluded to; but this is the first passage where a similar future is predicted for at least some of the wicked. For it needs to be expressly noted that this awakening from the dust of the earth is here affirmed only of many, not of all. But if it is to be literally true that "they that pierced Him" (Revelation 1:7) are to see Christ when He comes with the clouds, it is evident that some of the wicked must have been raised preparatory to the second advent, to witness with the righteous the glorious Parousia of the returning Son of God.

A study of the subject in the much fuller light of the New Testament shows that all the righteous dead of all the past ages are raised at the Second Coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16); but the vast number of the wicked dead do not rise then at all. In the twentieth chapter of the Revelation it is expressly stated that there are two resurrections, one of the righteous and the other of the wicked, and that these occur a thousand years apart. Revelation 20:5. After the righteous have been raised, "the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished." Clearly it is not a mixed or total resurrection which takes place at the second advent, only a resurrection of the righteous. This awakening from the dust of the earth mentioned in the verse here before us is a mixed one, "some to everlasting life," but also "some to shame and everlasting

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contempt.” Accordingly, the conclusion is inevitable that this resurrection of many must apply only to some special ones, preliminary to the resurrection of all the righteous at the actual appearance of Christ.

Since the fate of all the people living on the earth is settled for both righteous and wicked some short time prior to the actual appearing of Christ, this fixing of their destiny would amount to a deliverance of the righteous, since nothing thereafter could hurt them or cause them to stumble. And how eminently fitting at such a time, when the final scenes of human history are opening up before an amazed world, that God should give still another manifestation of His power and of His care for His people, by raising from the dust a few, both good and bad, to witness the actual events of the Second Coming.

Only in this way can Revelation 1:7 be literally fulfilled: “Behold, He comes with the clouds; and every eye [of them living at that time] shall see Him, and they that pierced Him,” that is, those who took a personal part in the crucifixion. It is clear that, except for this special resurrection before the second advent, those wicked ones who had a personal part in the tragedy of the cross would naturally remain in their graves until the end of the thousand years. This special preliminary resurrection mentioned here in Daniel explains how “they that pierced Him” will actually see the Crucified One coming in the clouds of heaven.

Some to everlasting life. This is the first time in the Bible that this term is found, though it recurs frequently in the New Testament.

Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Perhaps it may not be considered too finical to point out that the term “everlasting” is not applied to the “shame,” which would be subjectively felt by the wicked, but only to the “contempt,” which would be felt by those who witness them and their fate.

***3. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.***

This is the antithetical contrast to the fate of the wicked mentioned in the previous verse. Turn many to righteousness is similar to the language of Isaiah 53:11, which Driver translates: “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant make the many righteous.”

***4. 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.***

This admonition to shut up the words is similar to the command given in chapter 8:26, and the idea of the meaning of the vision being understood only at the time of the end is repeated over and over again throughout the book. That all these visions of Daniel were poorly understood by the early church and even by the Reformers and up until recent years, is exactly what is here foretold.

The use of the plural words would seem to extend the command about sealing to all the visions. This text states expressly that the entire book would be sealed up and not understood until the time of the end. It is not that the meaning of the visions was to be arbitrarily concealed from the understanding of mankind, least of all (as the “critics” affect to understand the expression) that the book was to be hidden away until a certain time when it would be brought out from its concealment. The meaning clearly is that from the very nature of predictive prophecy the meaning of a long series of predictions can never be fully understood in advance; they are to be comprehended in their full relationship with each other and in their setting regarding the work of God, only after at least the most of the series has been fulfilled. When the majority of the events predicted in a long line of prophecy, perhaps covering two thousand years, can be shown to have been accurately fulfilled, we gain increased confidence in the remainder, and the prophetic message has a powerful evangelistic effect. This is exactly the design of all these prophecies of the book of Daniel. Down at the time of the end, after nearly twenty-five centuries have elapsed, then and not until then the same Spirit which indited these statements in the first place would impress the faithful believers with the true meaning of all these visions, and their message would not only become a mighty apologetic for the great truth that Jehovah has spoken, but would also become a forceful warning for all mankind that the end of all things is impending, and a solemn admonition: “Prepare to meet thy God.”

Many shall run to and fro. The primary or literal meaning here is that of a movement of people hither and thither. The same language appears in Jeremiah 5:1 and in Amos 8:12. It is not difficult to see in this language a vivid description of our modern times, with air travel and automobiles in every part of the world. But the “critics” keep trying to apply this entire prophecy to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, and of course can’t see how to apply it back there.

The connection of this passage with what has gone before and what follows, strongly suggests that

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it may more especially refer to a searching back and forth through these prophecies of Daniel to know their true meaning. In either case the statement here has been strikingly fulfilled.

And knowledge shall be increased. Remarks similar to those above might be made concerning this clause. In both the literal and the secondary senses it has been most strikingly fulfilled. Knowledge in general, also knowledge of the meaning of the prophecies, has been enormously increased.

Driver, putting these two statements together, calls it a famous phrase, and quotes Bacon as applying it to what he hoped would be accomplished by the complete exploration of the natural world and the scientific discoveries thus induced. A hundred years later, Sir Isaac Newton, who was an even more diligent student of the prophecies of Daniel, declared on the strength of this passage that he would not be surprised if at some time in the then future, people would be hurrying hither and thither at the then-unheard-of rate of fifty miles an hour. Still later, Voltaire quoted this remark of Newton's as an example of how the study of the prophecies had led a wonderful scientist to make a fool of himself. But how blind is modern unbelief when it cannot see that this prediction of the angel, given to a captive Jew some twenty-five hundred years ago, has now in our day been most strikingly accomplished, and on a global scale. The God who foresaw and planned our modern global conditions is the same God who revealed these facts to Daniel twenty-five centuries ago.

***5. Then I, Daniel, looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on the brink of the river on this side, and the other on the brink of the river on that side.***

These two beings are in addition to the celestial visitant who has been giving these things to Daniel. This device of one being asking a question and another answering it in the hearing of the prophet, and for the information of the prophet, is similar to the incident recorded in chapter 8:13, 14. It concerns matters which could not be presented by symbols.

***6. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?***

This question and its answer given in the next verse seem to be a sort of summary of the most important time elements involved in all the previous visions.

***7. And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that lives forever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.***

The act of lifting up the hand before making a statement is often mentioned in the Scriptures as an appeal to Heaven, and is a frequent gesture accompanying an oath. In this instance, both hands are thus uplifted, seemingly to give added emphasis to the importance and the truthfulness of the declaration.

The period here mentioned, for a time, times, and a half, is the same 1260 years of papal supremacy and the oppression of God's people which is repeatedly mentioned in Daniel and in the Revelation. See a summary of these instances in the comments on chapter 7:25. This period seems to be the most important prophetic period given in the Scriptures, though the 2300 days of chapter 8:14 cover a much longer period of time, beginning earlier and ending later. The latter points out something taking place in heaven-of tremendous importance to human beings, it is true, yet of a less tangible and more recondite character; while the 1260 years represent a period of long-drawn-out agony for the true church of Christ, when, like poor Job, she seemed to be abandoned by Providence and delivered over to the power of demons, not because of her sins, but to bring out the innate cruelty and baseness of the persecuting powers, and to illustrate how much the grace of God can enable His people to endure.

On the supposition that the previous chapter ends with the career of the obscure kingdom of Turkey, whose closing days at least have essentially no bearing upon the work of God's remnant church, this question and the time period here mentioned would seem wholly strange and inappropriate. Uriah Smith, who followed that interpretation, wondered why this period of 1260 years is brought in here. But if the previous chapter ends with Rome, not Turkey, then this period is exceedingly appropriate right here.

And when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people. The original Hebrew word here translated "power" is literally "hand," and it occurs in Deuteronomy 32:36, where it is



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similarly translated “power” “when He sees that their power is gone.” It occurs also elsewhere in the same sense. In the text of Daniel here before us we have the figure of breaking the hand in pieces, or of shattering the hand. In the old days of personal conflict, to shatter the hand of an adversary would be to reduce him to utter helplessness. This A.R.V., with most other modern versions, uses the plural form they as the subject of this clause. The meaning would be that when the Roman power and all other enemies of God’s people have had their complete way with them in persecuting them to the limit, then will be the time for God to intervene and finish up the history of mankind. Similar language is used in Deuteronomy 32:36 to indicate the crisis demanding divine intervention on behalf of God’s oppressed people.

Thus we may look upon this declaration as one of the most astonishing in all the Bible. The patriarch job was, as we might say, turned over to the demons for them to work their will with him—at least up to a certain point of limitations. Why, oh, why? The answer can best be understood in the light of the great controversy which has so long prevailed in the universe between Lucifer and the Son of God. Job may be regarded as a symbol of the church. Not for his sins, nor even perhaps for the purification of his character, though this was probably also accomplished as a sort of spiritual by-product of the process - but as a demonstration to the on looking universe, did Job go through those bitter experiences. In his case, when the work was complete, the trials ended and Job entered upon a renewed period of peace and prosperity. In the case of the church this period of relief and prosperity and peace is postponed until the redeemed state. Not until Michael stands up and takes His kingdom can the church hope for any relief from the fearful onslaughts of demons and wicked men in trying to “shatter the hand” of all who are resolved to be true and loyal to their Creator. It is thus that the people of God “are made a spectacle [Greek, a theater or an exhibition] unto the world, both to angels and men.” 1 Corinthians 4:9. When in the wisdom of God this work is sufficiently accomplished, or in the words of our text when the hostile powers of earth, with Satan behind them, have made an end or have completed their work and have done their very worst, then and only then all these things shall be finished.

If we go back to the main statements of this verse, as an answer to the question of “How long?” (Daniel 8:13), we see that the answer really consists of two parts: a specified period of 1260 years with a definite beginning and end, and a further period of indefinite or undefined length, though of a similar character, when the people of God must still longer endure the persecutions of their foes. The definitely measured period ended about 1798; since then we have been in the unmeasured period of indefinite length. But from all the other signs of the times, this, too, must be near its termination.

***8. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the issue [margin, “latter end”] of these things?***

Daniel’s intelligent anxiety for the ultimate outcome of all human history is manifest on many occasions in this book. In this he shows an example worthy of imitation by the people of our day. For a pious Jew who was living with his people in captivity under an alien and hostile world empire, the future must have looked dark and full of perils. When, in addition, several divine visions had been given him, and in all of them the future was stretched out into centuries and even millenniums, with apparently no break in the steady monotony of national calamities, there is little wonder that he asked, What shall be the issue of these things?

***9. And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end.***

This is a restatement of what had been already given. The people of the days of the prophet need not be concerned to try to interpret these visions in advance. Their meaning would not become clear until a large portion of them had already become history. From there on the meaning of these prophecies would grow more and more plain for the faithful people of God, or “the wise,” as they are termed in the following verse.

***10. Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and he refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand. But they that are wise shall understand.***

This does not mean that anyone can actually make himself pure and holy; but the reflexive verb is used here to express the profound truth that not even God can make our characters pure and holy without our consent, nor indeed without our active cooperation. The process of purifying and refining is repeated

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over and over again, until at last the Great Refiner can view His own image perfectly reflected in the pure metal which has been separated from all dross. Such is the figure here used.

None of the wicked shall understand. One can hardly fail to be forcibly reminded of this text, when one sees the perverse ingenuity of men who seem determined to avoid the plain meaning of such a prophecy as that of the seventy weeks of chapter 9, which has been so twisted and mutilated by the “critics” that Montgomery calls the history of these perverse interpretations “the Dismal Swamp of Old Testament criticism.” The same determined will to disbelieve is seen in the way by which students of natural science pervert or reject every evidence of a literal creation and every evidence of the same Creator’s tireless watch care over His people and His works. Matthew Arnold said that there is a power not ourselves which makes for righteousness; but it is equally true that there is a power not ourselves which makes for devilishness; for the phenomena here referred to of a determined will to disbelieve cannot otherwise be explained.

But they that are wise shall understand. Throughout the Bible wisdom is associated with those who love and obey God. The promise is given that if anyone lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God; and it shall be given him.” James 1:5. Another assurance is that “if any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching.” John 7:17. Thus according to the Bible the lack of “wisdom” is a moral twist or disease, which can be cured by the individual’s changing his attitude of rebellion to one of loyalty, ceasing to exercise his will to disbelieve, and beginning instead a will to believe. Then and then only he shall understand. When divine wisdom is thus freely at our demand, a Christian has no more justification for being a fool than for being a sinner.

For well over a century now there has been a growing interest and increased understanding of the meanings of Daniel’s visions; and all this is evidence that the predictions of this verse are being fulfilled all around us.

Dr. R. H. Charles declares that the genuine book of Daniel ends here or with this verse; he thinks that the three verses following were added later by another author, in an attempt to extend the time elements a little further into the future. One suspects that the theory of this eminent “critic” is only a part of the main theory that this entire book was not genuinely written in the times of Babylon and Medo-Persia, but in the times of the Maccabees. While I admit that the prophetic periods in the following verses seem to offer some difficulty, I think these difficulties have been largely resolved.

***11. And from the time that the continual burnt offering shall be taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.***

We have already learned that the taking away of the continual burnt offering or the continual mediation refers to the way in which the great apostasy takes away or nullifies the mediation of Christ in the heavenly temple. See the comments on chapter 8:11-14. Doubtless the 1290 prophetic days here spoken of indicate a corresponding number of literal years; the difficulty is in determining when they begin, for no date is here assigned for their beginning. However, from the margin of the Authorized Version we learn that the literal Hebrew is, “to set up the abomination.” This would seem to mean that the period here spoken of would begin shortly before the actual setting up of this abomination, and we have already learned that the latter event occurred AD 538. Consequently we might conclude that the date for the beginning of the 1290years would be shortly before 538.

We find such a date to be AD 508, which was the year in which Clovis, king of the Franks, who had defeated the West Goths and the Burgundians, stepped into the strategic position of the first civil power to join up with the rising Church of Rome. The politically minded leaders of the Roman Church were at this period surrounded on all sides by various kingdoms all of whom were Arians and consequently hostile to the claims of Rome. So when Clovis professed the Roman faith and soon afterward succeeded in putting himself at the head of the most powerful group of tribes in the west, it did not take long before he and the bishop of Rome came to an understanding which was profitable for both, and which laid the foundation for that centuries-long union of church and state which has had tremendous consequences in the history of Western civilization.

Thus we may rightly say that this first formal alliance of an important civil power with the Roman Church (in opposition to Arianism), was a vital event in the work of preparing to set up the abomination of the great apostasy. Since the date of this event was 508, we find that 1290years from it brings us to 1798, or the same date so often indicated in the prophecy as the terminal date for the career of this same union of church and state. Thus the two periods of 1260 years and 1290 years terminate together, which would seem reasonable and proper, for they are intimately associated, the 1290-year period beginning first and dating

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from an event essentially preparatory to the period of 1260 years. Accordingly we may say that the apparent reason for this additional period of 1290 years is to furnish another numeral check on the 1260 years, which is given in many of the prophecies of both this book of Daniel and the Revelation.

### *12. Blessed is he that waits, and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.*

Here is another period which is forty-five days, or years, longer than the preceding one. The special blessing pronounced on those who have patience to endure or wait until the designated termination, would seem to be similar to the case of those in the book of the Revelation who endure under the proclamation of the third angel. Revelation 14:12. A similar, or at least a parallel, blessing is given in Revelation 16:15 upon those who hold fast their faith, or keep their garments of character, until the seven last plagues have run their course. It would seem extremely probable that there must be some connection between these three pronouncements, though what this connection may be is not clear.

Where are these 1335 years to start? No beginning date is here given; and any attempt to assign their beginning must necessarily be only a hypothesis, or what scientists would call "an educated guess." Uriah Smith said they must begin AD 508, or from the same date as the preceding period of 1290 years. Thus this new period would terminate in 1843, which was the first date fixed upon by the Adventists associated with William Miller for the actual second advent of Christ. Undoubtedly there was a blessing experienced by those who began the study of the prophecies in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, and who confidently expected that their Lord would return in the spring of 1844, after a slight correction of their reckoning extending the period to the autumn of 1844. Certainly all these devoted believers experienced a very great blessing in "waiting" for their Lord.

Were they not disappointed? Yes; but so also were the disciples when they accompanied their Messiah on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The disciples expected Him then and there to take the throne of His father David; instead He was crucified and laid in Joseph's new tomb. Yet they certainly were "blessed;" similarly the early Adventists were blessed by "waiting" for their Lord's second advent, even though they did experience a disappointment. That period (1843, 1844) will ever remain as one of the outstanding periods in the entire Christian dispensation.

It is worthy of note here that this date of 1844 is the last to be specified in any of the prophecies in all the Bible. Thus there are absolutely no dates in any of the prophecies of either Daniel or the Revelation, or indeed in any other part of the Bible, for the end of the present age and the beginning of the kingdom of God. In other words, there are no time prophecies which tell when the second advent will occur. But from 1844 onward, or for more than a hundred years now, the world has been living in a short period of undefined length immediately preceding the Second Coming. The judgment session in heaven, spoken of in chapter 7, and briefly alluded to under the cleansing of the (heavenly) sanctuary in chapter 8:14, with one or two specifications at the last of chapter ii, are all that remain to be accomplished of these four great prophetic lines in this book of Daniel. In the Apocalypse the horrible final conflict with the dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet, which looms so large in the second half of the Revelation, still remains to be faced by the people of God; but essentially all the lines of prophecy in this book of Daniel are already matters of history, with only two or three items yet to be fulfilled.

### *13. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shall rest, and shall stand in thy lot, at the end of the days.*

These were the words of assurance to the aged prophet, who had already been twice informed by the heavenly messenger that he was greatly beloved. Thou shall rest. Like all the other people of God, no matter how faithful, he must be content to rest in the grave until the Life-giver shall appear to call him forth to everlasting life.

Stand in thy lot. The angel would carry the prophet's mind down to the last, when the decisions are arrived at for all the people of God, when "the dead, the great and the small," are to stand before the great Judge and are to be assigned each his proper place or "lot" in the future life. In other words, it was an assurance to Daniel that his case would be all right and that he would not fail of his just reward for his faithfulness.

At the end of the days. This phrase probably refers to the end of the longest prophetic period mentioned in these visions of Daniel, namely, the 2300 years of chapter 8:14. This period, as we have seen, extends from 457 BC down to AD 1843, or in reality, by making an adjustment for the part of 457 which

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had already elapsed when it began, down to the autumn of 1844. Here the great assize in heaven began, when the priestly work of Christ underwent a change, and He began the work of inspecting the cases of all mankind and deciding the eternal destiny of everyone. This period is doubtless “the end of the days” here referred to; and at this time (or in his proper serial order) Daniel’s case would come up for angelic investigation; and the prophet now had the assurance that his case would be all right at that time.

How happy would any of us be if we could have this positive individual assurance that we would be found standing in our lot “at the end of the days.” Yet we do have the blessed assurance of the One who gave His life to redeem us, an assurance which we can make as personal and as individual as we please, that not one of those who trust in Him for salvation will be forsaken, but each will be made conqueror and more than conqueror over all the powers of evil.

Some have expressed dissatisfaction regarding the two prophetic periods with which this book closes, the 1290 years and the 1335 years. They not only complain at the uncertainty of their beginnings, but they also seem to think that even if our interpretation is the correct one, those periods tend to give a sort of anticlimax to the book as a whole.

I cannot agree with such an attitude. Instead of indulging such a critical mood, would it not be better to seek to find the divine message which this part of the book may bring us in these last days, as we face the tremendous crises which are directly ahead? In spite of the slight uncertainty which may hang around these two periods, I refuse to look upon them as in any respect an anticlimax to the truly world-shaking messages which have gone before. No slightest uncertainty rests upon the main time periods of the book, the 1260 years of papal supremacy, or the 2300 years marking the beginning of the heavenly assize, the Yom Kippur for the universe. Nor can there be any possible uncertainty in the minds of truth-loving men concerning the divine foreknowledge here shown so many centuries in advance of the rise and fall of the great empires of human history.

Yes, Daniel is a unique book. No other Old Testament book has more timely words for the fast-recurring crises of our days. No other gives the exact dates clustering around the first advent of the Messiah. In no other do we have any such series of way marks from these ancient times down the long trail of the ages to the setting up of the Messiah’s eternal kingdom. Hence no seeming uncertainty concerning the exact meaning of these last two prophetic periods can rightfully dim the luster of the divine light which this book throws upon the pathway of those who are truly wise.

Yes, this book of Daniel is uniquely important for our day. And although the Apocalypse enlarges upon the closing portions of Daniel’s four tremendous outlines of prophetic world history, giving still more minute instructions for the church in her climactic struggle with the powers of evil, yet for the thoughtful mind no other portion of the entire Bible comes to us with a more powerful apologetic, convincing all who do not have an incurable theophobia that here the divine Ruler of the universe has indeed spoken to the children of men.

Let us heed the words of Christ Himself, who in His Olivet discourse quoted from Daniel the prophet, and said: “Let him that reads understand.” Matthew 24:15.