

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

A VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY

Compiled and Written By

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Preface

Personal background

Stephen Mendis is a Christian, originally from Colombo, Sri Lanka. He now lives in Canada. His parents grew up in the Roman Catholic church but became part of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church when he was 8 years old. He grew up with the SDA community, and attended SDA schools. He has served in the Sri Lanka Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists as an Associate Youth Director, a lay preacher, and an adult Sabbath School teacher. He ran his apologetic SDA blog ministry defending and promoting SDA doctrines passionately for nearly 10 years. When he began restudying the old and the new testaments, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book and especially the covenants God made with His people, he discovered that SDA truth is far from the Bible truth. There are many good people in the SDA church. The SDA church has been responsible for doing many good things around the world especially through their humanitarian programs in developing countries. But there are some significant theological problems, which can take years to fully comprehend. In 2015, he withdrew his membership from the SDA church, and now enjoys sharing the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Purpose of this Daniel Commentary

The compilation of this Daniel's Commentary was an attempt to conduct a verse-by-verse exegesis of this inspired Book. The primary objective was to spiritually enrich my soul. As an SDA, I was immersed in the SDA interpretation of the Book of Daniel and Revelation. Since leaving Seventh-day Adventism, I wanted to relook at the Book of Daniel from a fresh perspective. The result is this commentary. Now I want to share this commentary with anyone who is passionate about deep diving into God's word.

In conducting this commentary, I have referenced various authors and resources (see [References](#)) which I have used and adapted some of it to fit the text, where I taught was applicable. My prayer is that whoever reads this commentary will be encouraged to study God's word more deeply.

All Scripture quotations, —except where otherwise noted, —are from *The New American Standard Bible*.

Introduction

The prophet Daniel lived in the 6th century before the birth of Jesus. The Book of Daniel records the events of Daniel's life and the visions that he saw from the time of his exile (Daniel 1:1) in Babylon in 605 B.C. until 536 B.C., the third year of King Cyrus of Medo-Persia (Daniel 10:1). The book's central theme is God's sovereignty over history, empires, and kings. All the kingdoms of this world will come to an end and will be replaced by the Lord's kingdom, which will never pass away. Daniel chapters 1 through 6 describe the life and times of Daniel. Chapters 7 through 12 describe visions Daniel had.

Critics argue that the book of Daniel was written by some writer in 2nd century B.C, and not 6th century, by pointing five main historical blunders.

- The date for Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah.
- Using the word *Chaldeans* to describe a class of soothsayers.
- The account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness.
- King Belshazzar and his relationship to Nabonidus.
- The figure of Darius the Mede.

The above aspects will be addressed briefly in this commentary.

Daniel 1:1-21 Daniel in Babylon

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it (Daniel 1:1)

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim. There is no contradiction between Daniel (who said this happened in the third year of Jehoiakim) and Jeremiah 46:2 (which said it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim). Daniel reckoned a king's years after the Babylonian method: the first year of a king's reign began at the start of the calendar year after he took the throne. Jeremiah used the Jewish method.

Jehoiakim king of Judah. This was a Judean king placed on the throne by the Pharaoh of Egypt. His name means "Yahweh raises up," but the LORD did not raise him up at all. Pharaoh did.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. This was the mighty ruler of the Babylonian Empire. The name Nebuchadnezzar is a Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian name *Nebukudduri-utzur*, which means "Nebu protects the crown." Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem because the Pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon. In response, the young prince Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Charchemish, then he pursued their fleeing army all the way down to the Sinai. Along the way (or on the way back), he subdued Jerusalem, which had been loyal to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god (Daniel 1:2)

The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand. In this 597 B.C. deportation, Jehoiakim and others were taken away. This deportation is described in 2 Kings 24:14-16.

Some of the vessels of the house of God. Nebuchadnezzar did not take all the furnishings of the temple, only some. The remaining furnishings were either hidden before Nebuchadnezzar came or they were brought to Babylon later.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, 4 youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every branch of wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and he ordered him to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:3-4)

Bring in some of the sons of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar not only confiscated holy things from the temple but also the shining lights of Judah's future (young men perhaps 13 to 17 years old).

Who had the ability to serve in the king's palace. Nebuchadnezzar demonstrated that he was a wise administrator and a shrewd tactician. Taking these young men as hostages reminded the people back in Jerusalem that they should not revolt against the recently imposed Babylonian rule.

The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and appointed that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service (Daniel 1:5)

A daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine. It was a given that the Babylonian government would provide for these young men in training. Yet, having the same food and wine prepared for the king was intended to be a special honor. In the ancient world much more than in the modern world, there was a huge difference between the food enjoyed by the elite and what common people ate.

Educated three years. The purpose of the food, names, and education was simple. This was an effort at total indoctrination, with the goal of making these young Jewish men leave behind their Hebrew God and culture. Undoubtedly, Nebuchadnezzar wanted to communicate to these young men, "look to me for everything."

Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego (Daniel 1:7-8)

To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: Daniel tells us about four of these youths, and their new Babylonian names.

- The name **Daniel** (meaning God is my judge) was changed to Belteshazzar (meaning Bel's prince).
- The name **Hannaniah** (meaning Beloved by the LORD) was changed to Shadrach (meaning Illumined by Sun-god).
- The name **Mishael** (meaning Who is as God) was changed to Meshach (which may mean Who is like Shach, which some believe was a Babylonian goddess corresponding to Ishtar or Venus).
- The name **Azariah** (meaning The LORD is my help) was changed to Abed-Nego (meaning Servant of Nego).

But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself (Daniel 1:8)

Daniel made up his mind: In this, Daniel illustrated how to conquer a difficult trial and glorify God before others in the midst of testing.

Not defile himself. Daniel purposed in his heart, making up his mind beforehand that he would not compromise. The ancient Hebrew word defile carries the thought of polluting or staining (see also Isaiah 59:3, Zephaniah 3:1, and Malachi 1:7). That Daniel requested that he might not defile himself implies that he explained the spiritual basis for his request. He didn't make it seem that he wanted to avoid the king's food out of other reasons. Daniel and his friends considered the king's food defiled for at least three reasons. First, it undoubtedly was not kosher (did not comply with the Levitical Old Covenant law). Second, it was probably sacrificed to idols. Third, eating the king's food implied fellowship with Babylon's cultural system.

Daniel did not object to the name given to him, because he knew who he was and others could call him what they wanted. Daniel did not object to the Babylonian education, because he knew what he believed. Daniel did object to the food from the king's table because eating it was direct disobedience to God's word. By eastern standards to share a meal was to commit one's self to friendship; it was of covenant significance.

Nor with the wine which he drank. God did not forbid drinking wine (He forbade drunkenness). Nevertheless, in pagan cultures most wine and meat were dedicated to the gods, so Daniel and his friends refused it. In Daniel 10:2-3, it is clear Daniel ate meat, and drank wine. *"I did not eat any tasty food, nor did **meat or wine** enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed"* (Daniel 10:2-3).

So he sought permission: Daniel made a remarkably courageous decision, especially when we think of all the reasons why it was a hard decision to make. Daniel requested to be excused from the king's table. He made a polite request, showing discretion. Making a stand for Jesus Christ does not mean we must be obnoxious.

Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials (Daniel 1:9)

God granted Daniel favor. God did not abandon those who stood for Him. Daniel entrusted himself to God and God came through – though it was no doubt a stretching experience for Daniel and his friends.

Compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials. God moved upon the authorities, so they regarded Daniel with goodwill; but God also worked through the wise actions of Daniel to cultivate this goodwill.

And the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." 11 But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water

to drink. 13 "Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see (Daniel 1:10-13)

Please test your servants: Daniel saw the situation through the steward's eyes and addressed his legitimate concerns. He wouldn't let the chief of the eunuchs pay the price for Daniel's conscience. In it all, Daniel was willing to put himself and his faith in God to the test.

Vegetables to eat and water to drink. Vegetables refers to all kinds of grains and plants, not strictly vegetables. Basically, this was a vegetarian diet, chosen because the meat at the king's table was not prepared in a kosher manner or it was sacrificed to idols.

So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables. (Daniel 1:14-16)

So he listened to them in this matter: This was the hand of God at work. The chief of the eunuchs had all the power in this situation. Daniel and his friends seemed to be completely at his mercy. Yet God moved upon this man, and he consented with them in this matter.

Their appearance seemed better: This was the hand of God at work. There was no biological reason why a vegetarian diet should make them appear better and fatter. God blessed Daniel irrespective of whether he ate meat or not (*Daniel 10:2-3*). The next verse indicates who blessed Daniel and his friends.

As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams. 18 Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 1:16-18)

God gave them knowledge and intelligence. The special intellectual ability of Daniel and his companions was not due to their diet, but to the special intervention of the LORD.

Daniel understood all kinds of visions and dreams: This shows that purity of heart and faithfulness to God come before enlightenment in divine mysteries. Daniel would later receive great revelation, but now he simply showed himself a dedicated follower of God.

The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. 20 As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and conjurers who were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king (Daniel 1:19-21)

None was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: These young men from Jerusalem were immersed in the study of Babylonian culture, literature, and religion; yet they remained faithful to God. The work of the prophets like Jeremiah, Zephaniah and Habakkuk was not in vain. They were in Babylon, but not of Babylon.

Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. Daniel had a long, successful career in the worst of circumstances. He worked for tyrants who thought nothing of killing their staff and advisors, much less of firing them. His employer suffered the worst kind of hostile takeover when the Medo-Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian Empire. The seeds of his great success are evident in the very first chapter of the Book of Daniel.

Daniel 2:1-49 The dream of King Nebuchadnezzar

Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him (Daniel 2:1)

Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Most Scholars point to 602 B.C. to be the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

His spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him: There was something disturbing about this dream and Nebuchadnezzar knew that it was unusually significant.

Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream (Daniel 2:2-3)

It is hard to say if Nebuchadnezzar really remembered the dream or not. Perhaps he had a general sense of it but only a vague remembrance of the details. Nebuchadnezzar could not know for certain that the wise men gave a correct interpretation of the dream. But he could test their ability to tell what he dreamed.

Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation (Daniel 2:4)

Despite their protests, Nebuchadnezzar did not ask too much of these magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans. This is the first mention of the Chaldeans as a class of soothsayers to the king. Linguistic research has demonstrated that the Babylonian word for an astrologer-priest was Chaldean. These men made their living on their supposed ability to contact the gods and gain secrets from the spirit realm. If they were really what they claimed to be, they should be able to tell Nebuchadnezzar both the dream and its interpretation.

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, “My decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation.” They answered again and said, “Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation.” The king answered and said, “I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, there is only one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the time has changed. Therefore, tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can give me its interpretation (Daniel 2:5-9)

The harsh threat of Nebuchadnezzar and the method of execution he described are both perfectly consistent with the character of ancient eastern monarchs.

The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, “There is not a man on earth who can tell the king’s matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh (Daniel 2:10-11)

When the Chaldeans said this, they admitted that true revelation comes from God down to man. They understood – perhaps against their own inclinations – that revelation was not the achievement of man. Despite all their wisdom – real and imagined – these wise men had no answer for Nebuchadnezzar, because only God could bring an answer to the king. They were like some modern ministers of our own day who spend their time studying philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, social science, political science, and then continue under the pretense of being God’s messengers to men.

No king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things: The strategy of the wise men was to convince the king that he was unreasonable, not that they were incompetent.

Except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh: As far as these pagan magicians, astrologers, and wise men knew, this was true. They did not know what we know about the revelation of Jesus, God in the flesh, that He is Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23).

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them (Daniel 2:12-13)

The king was angry and very furious. Though he was a ruler, Nebuchadnezzar knew that false religion is worse than useless. He knew that it was a curse, and he had no use for wise men that could not bring him wisdom from God.

Gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. As a new king, Nebuchadnezzar also perhaps used the situation to test the suitability of his father's old advisors. The dream provided him with a good reason to clean house. Those who were in charge of executing the decree sought also Daniel and his companions for execution.

Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation (Daniel 2:14-16)

With counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch. Daniel was obviously innocent in all this, yet he calmly and discretely dealt with the crisis. Daniel's calmness in this crisis showed what kind of man he really was. In one sense, crises do not make the man. Instead, they reveal the man.

Asked the king to give him time: This was not just a stalling tactic. Daniel knew that it takes time to listen to the Lord and to wait upon Him, and Daniel was willing to take the time if the king would grant it.

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon (Daniel 2:17-18)

That they might seek mercies from the God of heaven: Daniel was in the type of situation where only God could meet his need. Therefore, he knew how important it was for both him and his companions to pray. The battle was won when Daniel prayed with his friends. Praying friends are a blessing, and in prayer meetings such as this history has been made.

Concerning this secret: Daniel had confidence that God could do an unprecedented miracle. Joseph had interpreted dreams with God's help but had not reconstructed the dreams.

Might not perish: Considering what was at stake, there is little doubt that their prayers were extremely earnest. God listens to earnest prayer.

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven (Daniel 2:19)

The secret was revealed to Daniel: This was not religion, but revelation. Daniel did not find it out, God revealed it to him. Christianity begins with the principle of revelation. What we know about God is what He has revealed to us. We do actively seek Him, but we seek what He has revealed. Our job is not to figure things out about God, but to understand what He has revealed to us.

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him. I thank You and praise You, O God of my fathers; You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of

You, for You have made known to us the king's demand. (Daniel 2:20-23)

Daniel praised God for His power and might. Daniel thought of how God is in command of all things, and how God is mightier than a mighty king like Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel praised God for His communication to man. All God's power and might were of little help to Daniel if God stayed silent. Daniel was grateful that God revealed His great knowledge. Daniel had the certainty of faith to believe that God gave him the answer, even before confirming it before Nebuchadnezzar. Our level of faith is often indicated by how long it takes us to start praising God. If we will not praise Him until the answer is in hand, then we don't have much faith. Greater faith is able to praise God when the promise is given and received.

Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation." Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation." The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?" Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be. But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart (Daniel 2:24-30)

I have a found a man: Arioch tried to glorify himself and Daniel for the answer to the king's dream. But Daniel refused to take credit, recognizing that the credit went to God, who revealed this dream to Daniel.

What will be in the latter days: Nebuchadnezzar's dream did not just concern himself or his kingdom, but future. However, we are not told if it is the "latter days" of his kingdom, or the earthly kingdoms that follow, or our last days. The context will tell us what future it is.

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. (Daniel 2:31-35)

Behold, a great image: Daniel's description was clear. This was a massive and spectacular image.

Head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. This image was made of different materials (fine gold... silver... bronze... iron... partly of iron and partly of clay). The materials descended in value from top to bottom, with gold at the top and iron mixed with clay at the bottom.

A stone was cut out without hands...broke them in pieces: This spectacular image was destroyed by a stone made without hands, and what remained of it was blown away like worthless chaff.

The stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

“This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all; you are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others (Daniel 2:36-40)

Now we will tell the interpretation: Daniel first accurately reported the content of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. This gave Daniel credibility when explaining what the dream meant.

You are this head of gold: Nebuchadnezzar was clearly said to be the head of gold.

But after you shall arise. After him would come **three other kingdoms**, each represented by the different materials Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream.

This prophetic dream was clearly fulfilled in history. Three dominating empires came after Babylon: **Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome**. The nature of these empires was accurately reflected by the nature of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream.

That kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Crush all the others does not mean Rome will conquer all others. Babylon fell in 539 BC. Medo-Persia fell in the fifth century B.C. The Greek Empire began its decline and eventual fall after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., and none of the empires were conquered by Rome. The Roman empire, which is here intended will crush out all traces that remain of preceding empires, just as iron is capable of breaking gold, silver, or copper. Of the second and third empires, each borrowed something from that which preceded it. The fourth empire (Rome) introduced a new system, and a new civilization.

Moreover, the empires succeeding Babylon were inferior to Nebuchadnezzar's head of gold in the sense of their centralization of absolute power. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch, and the succeeding empires were progressively less so. They were larger and lasted longer than Babylon, but none held as much centralized power as Nebuchadnezzar did. **Babylon**, the head of gold, was an absolute autocracy. **Persia**, a monarchical oligarchy with the nobles equal to the king in all but office, is represented by silver. **Greece** is set forth by brass, indicated the still lower value of its aristocracy of mind and influence. **Rome**, a democratic imperialism, with military dominion dependent upon the choice of army and citizenry and administered in the spirit of martial law, is set forth by iron.

Daniel 2:41-43 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay.

Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided. The kingdom becomes divided (not conquered!) after an element of "clay" is mixed into the kingdom. This represents the Roman Empire that will become a divided kingdom.

The kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. There is only ONE kingdom (singular) described here. There are not ten kingdoms! The Bible describes a single kingdom that becomes divided after an element of "clay" is mixed into the kingdom. It will have more the *image* of true strength than the *substance* of strength.

As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. Mingling with the seed of men is an allusion, to the intermingling through marriages of rulers with other nations which so remarkably characterized the Roman empire, which arose partly from its conquests, and partly from the inroads of other people in the latter days of the empire. We know iron is the Roman empire. What about clay in the

context of Daniel? Two major prophets that preceded Daniel both spoke of clay in their prophetic writings. In Isaiah and Jeremiah we find:

*" But now, LORD, You are our Father; **We [Israel] are the clay**, and You our potter, And all of us are the work of Your hand" (Isaiah 64:8).*

*" Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, house of **Israel**." (Jeremiah 18:6).*

To the Hebrews, clay was not only a symbol of mankind (Job 10:9, 33:6; Isa. 29:16, 45:9), but more specifically, it represented Israel (Isa. 64:8; Jer. 18:4-6). Daniel's reference to clay would be understood as a reference to their own nation, **earthly Israel**. Therefore, the feet of clay symbolize the incorporation into the **gentile Roman Empire** of a discordant element that undermined its cohesiveness, namely the **Jews**.

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure (Daniel 2:44-45)

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And in the days of these kings [i.e., during the period of the Roman Empire who mixes with clay] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.

And the kingdom shall not be left to other people. The ruling power appropriate to God's kingdom or dominion shall never pass away from its rightful possessor to other hands.

It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. This is the impact caused by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, impinging on the image. This kingdom was to fill the whole earth, to become universal, and to stand for ever.

The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The stone will utterly break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms, that came before it.

God has made known to the king what will come to pass. God showed Daniel an outline of history in which a towering statue is struck down and crushed by a stone. "*The stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the entire earth.*" (Daniel 2:35). Speaking of Christ, 1 Peter 2:17 says, "*The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner **stone**,*".

Christ is that stone. The question is, when does Christ strike the image? As noted above, **the feet of iron and clay is the divided fourth kingdom which is the Roman Empire with an element of earthy Israel.** Since the fourth kingdom is Rome, then the stone struck the image during the days of the Roman Empire. Did Christ come during the time of the Roman Empire? He most certainly did. In fact, He made it abundantly clear that **He came to establish a kingdom, and He is the stone that will break all earthly kingdoms, and consume them all.** Christ's kingdom is said to break in pieces or conquer all the previous four empires. As Christianity spread throughout the previous four empires, the kingdom of the world had been gradually consumed and conquered by Christ's kingdom.

Matthew 21:43-45: "*Therefore I say to you, **the kingdom of God** will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit. And the one who falls on this **stone** will be **broken to pieces**; and on whomever it falls, it will crush him. When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was **speaking about them [the Jews]**.*"

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "*Repent, for **the Kingdom of heaven is at hand***" (Matt. 3:1-2).

The Apostle Peter understood that the meaning of the **Ascension** of Christ was also Christ's enthronement in heaven and reigning over God's spiritual kingdom. Citing a prophecy of King David, Peter said:

*“So because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on **his throne**, he looked ahead and spoke of the **resurrection of the Christ**... God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both **Lord** and **Messiah**.” (Acts 2:30-36).*

The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. Daniel did not guess or analyze. Through him God announced the future. The only reason that God can predict history is because he can control it.

Did the Jews form a union with Rome? They most certainly did when the Roman Senate designated a Jew named Herod as the "**King of the Jews**" in 40 BC (which became effective in 37 BC). Jesus Christ, by His death and resurrection strikes a death-blow to the feet of the Jewish/Roman union. *“In the days of those kings (Herod and Caesar) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom” (Daniel 2:44)* by His Resurrection and Ascension. It is also at this time that the Jewish leaders reject the rule of Jesus and accept the rule of Caesar: *“We have no king but Caesar.”* (John 19:15). This prophecy in which the iron **would not remain** united with the clay was fulfilled in A.D. 66 when Israel revolted against Rome.⁸

Was the kingdom of God established at Jesus’ resurrection? The kingdom of God was established at Jesus' resurrection and went forth like a white horse to conquer. It spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire, culminating in the nominal conversion of Emperor Constantine (ruled 306-337 AD) to Christianity. Afterwards, nearly ever Roman Emperor in both the western and eastern branches of the empire was a Christian. In fact, Theodosius I (ruled 379-395) outlawed paganism and made Christianity the state religion. As Christianity spread throughout the previous four empires, the kingdom of the world had been gradually spiritually conquered by the saints as more and more people came to submit to the heavenly kingship of Christ thereby becoming part of the kingdom of heaven, the Christian Church.

Moreover, the metal statue of Daniel 2 represents the authority of Satan over the world. He is called the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Christ establishing His spiritual kingdom at His first coming also coincided with the judgement of Satan, who was the “prince” behind these earthly powers. In John 12:31, Jesus says, *“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”* God judged Satan at the cross, but Satan will be brought to an end after the second coming of Christ. Similarly, God judged

Roman Empire at the cross. Though the verdict may not be executed instantly, the verdict is final. Rome fell in 476 AD.

If Jesus is King now, why aren't all the nations converted? Why is there so much ungodliness? Why isn't everything perfect?" In the first place, there is no 'if' about it. Jesus is the King, and His Kingdom has arrived. The Bible says so.

*“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to **the kingdom of His beloved Son**”* (Col. 1:13). We have been already transferred to the kingdom of Christ.

In the second place, things will never be "perfect" before the creation of new heavens and new earth. Third, although the Kingdom was established definitively in the finished work of Christ, it is established progressively throughout history (until it is established finally on the Last Day).

*"The **kingdom of heaven** is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field; and this is **smaller** than all the other seeds, but when it is **fully grown**, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree"* (Matthew 13:31-32)

*“Then **comes the end**, when He hands over **the kingdom to our God and Father**, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For **He must reign** until He has put all His enemies under His feet”* (1 Corinthians 15:24-25). Christ is already reigning now.

The Kingdom was established when Christ came and He is already reigning, putting His enemies under His feet during the church age, until He hands over the Kingdom (people) to the Father, says Paul. His kingdom will be fully realized (fully grown) after Christ's second coming just as the stone Daniel saw became a mountain and filled the whole earth.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief

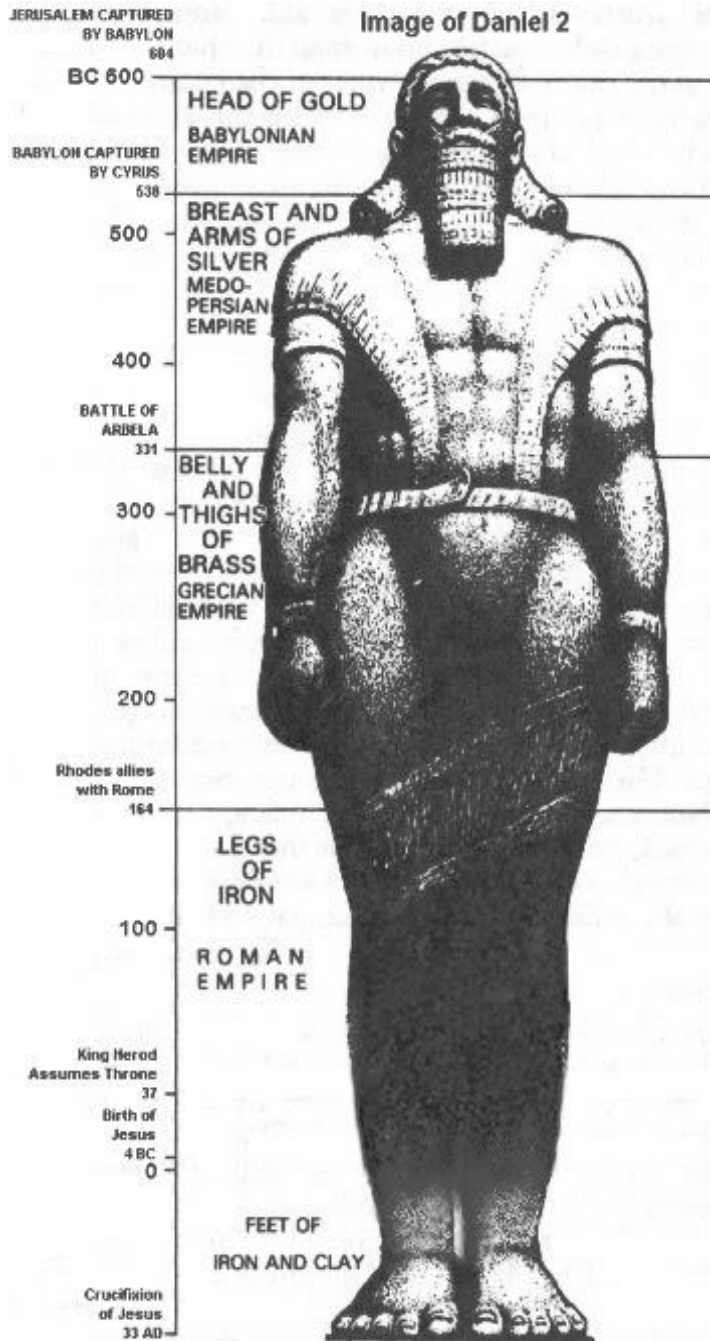
administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king (Daniel 2:46-49).

Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face: This great king was obviously impressed. He was not in the habit of showing such respect to anyone, especially a foreign slave who was about to be executed with the rest of the wise men. This confirmed that Daniel accurately reported the dream and skillfully explained its meaning.

Your God is the God of gods: Nebuchadnezzar knew that it was not Daniel himself that revealed these things, but Daniel's God revealed it through Daniel. Daniel wanted the glory to go to God, and it did.

The king promoted Daniel: Daniel not only had his life spared, but he was promoted to high office – and he made sure his friends were also promoted. It was fitting that Daniel's friends got to share in his advancement, because they accomplished much of the victory through their prayers.

Summary: Christ's spiritual kingdom began at His resurrection (it will grow and will be consummated with the creation of new heavens and new earth after the second coming of Christ). Interestingly enough, this view matches the visual representation of the image in an astonishing way. The length of each section of the body is roughly synonymous with the amount of time that the Jewish nation was ruled by each foreign power. 。



Seventh-day Adventist interpretation

SDAs teach that the ten toes of the image denote the ten parts into which the Roman Empire was divided. This division was accomplished between A.D. 351 and 476. The ten nations which were most instrumental in conquering the Roman Empire are as follows: Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and Lombards.

Problems with this view:

1. There were over 40 tribes that were involved in the downfall of the western Roman Empire. Adventist have cherry picked 10.
2. The 40 tribes never conquered the Eastern Roman Empire. Therefore, there was no "iron mixed with clay" in the Eastern Roman Empire. *"The Byzantine Empire or Eastern Roman Empire, known to its inhabitants as the Roman Empire, the Empire of the Romans, was the continuation of the Roman Empire during the Middle Ages, centered on its capital of Constantinople, and ruled by Emperors in direct succession to the ancient Roman Emperors."* (Wikipedia)
3. Daniel said, "it will be a divided kingdom" (Dan. 2:41). The Bible describes a single kingdom that becomes divided (not conquered!) after an element of "clay" is mixed into the kingdom. Therefore, the Bible describes the feet of iron/clay as being the SAME power as the fourth kingdom.
4. In order for the SDA teaching to match the visual picture of the Daniel 2 image, the image would need to have one leg with forty toes on its clay/iron foot, (to represent the 40+ tribes that conquered the western half of the empire). The second leg, representing the eastern part of the empire, would need to have a foot of solid iron with no toes!

Daniel 3:1-36 Daniels friends in the fiery furnace

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon (Daniel 3:1).

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold. There is considerable debate regarding when this happened. Some think it was a short time after the events of Daniel 2, but others think it happened many years later.

The height of which was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. The image was more like a stylized obelisk rather than a normal statue, being 90 feet (30 meters) high and 9 feet (3 meters) wide. Being so large, it is safe to say that it was not made of solid gold but probably wood overlaid with gold. This was a common method of construction in the ancient world.

On the plain of Dura. On the plains of Dura there stands today, a rectilinear mound, about twenty feet high, an exact square of about forty-six feet at the base, resembling the pedestal of a colossal statue.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up (Daniel 3:2-3)

Assemble the satraps. Satrap is a Persian loan word that means protector of the realm. It refers to a specific category of public officials.

All the rulers of the provinces. The demand that all come to the dedication ceremony means that Nebuchadnezzar meant to use the worship of this image as a test of allegiance.

Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and men of every language, ⁵ that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. ⁶ "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire (Daniel 3:4-6)

Horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery. Some of these musical instruments are difficult to define precisely but the idea is still clear. This was an impressive orchestra.

Whoever does not fall down and worship. The command was backed up by a powerful threat. Nebuchadnezzar regarded the refusal to worship the image as treason, not only as a religious offense.

A furnace of blazing fire. Nebuchadnezzar was not a man who allowed lawbreakers to go unpunished. In an ancient cuneiform writing, Nebuchadnezzar was described as so devoted to justice that “he did not rest night or day.”

Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up (Daniel 3:7)

When all the peoples heard the sound. Nebuchadnezzar’s grand idolatry was accompanied by music – elaborate and well-produced music. This reminds us of the great inherent power in music, both for good and for evil.

Fell down and worshiped the golden image. There was total and immediate obedience to Nebuchadnezzar’s command

For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. 9 They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! 10 "You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. 11 "But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. 12 "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up (Daniel 3:8-12)

Certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. These Chaldeans had an obvious political motivation against these Jews who were promoted to high office along with Daniel in the events recorded in the previous chapter.

They do not serve your gods or worship. Apparently their failure to worship the image was not discovered until these certain Chaldeans made it known. With so many thousands of government officials in attendance, it would be easy to overlook these three. Their actions were not public but neither were they hidden. These three Hebrew men must have known they would be discovered, yet they obeyed God rather than man.

Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands? (Daniel 3:13-15)

Is it true. Nebuchadnezzar did not accept the accusation on hearsay. He made sure of it with a personal interview. This was an even greater test for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. It is one thing to make a stand for God; it is a greater thing to stick to your stand when pointedly asked, "Is it true?"

If you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace. Nebuchadnezzar would not tolerate losing face on such an important occasion.

What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands. Nebuchadnezzar thought nothing of insulting all gods with this statement. He is more of a secularist or a humanist than a theist. The god he really believes in is himself, not the gods of Babylon.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up (Daniel 3:16-18)

We do not need to give you an answer. They had no need to defend themselves. Their guilt in the matter was clear – they clearly would not bow down to this image.

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. In this, the Jewish men showed a good understanding and appreciation of God's great power. In fact, they knew that God was able to save them from both the burning fiery furnace and from the hand of Nebuchadnezzar himself.

But even if He does not. In this, the Jewish men show they had a good understanding and appreciation of submission to God. They knew God's power, but they also knew that they must do what was right even if God did not do what they expect or hope Him to do.

We are not going to serve your gods. The statement of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego is remarkable for what it does not have – any hint of an excuse. In a time of testing like this it is easy to think of a thousand excuses that seem to justify compromise.

Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 He commanded certain valiant warriors who were in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace of blazing fire. 21 Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. 22 For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. 23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up (Daniel 3:19-23)

Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath. No matter how brave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were, facing the fury of a king was still extremely intimidating. After hearing their bold challenge the expression on his face changed.

Tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast them into the furnace...the furnace had been made extremely hot. Everything was done to make sure that the three Hebrew men were quickly and completely burned.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." 25 He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" (Daniel 3:24-25)

The king was astounded. It is astonishing that anyone survived for a moment inside the furnace when others perished at the door.

I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire... the fourth is like a son of the gods. Nebuchadnezzar tells us who the fourth person was – the Son of God. Jesus was literally with them in the worst of their trial. We don't know if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego knew that the Son of God was with them in their fiery trial. Sometimes we are aware of Jesus' presence in our trials and sometimes we are not – but He is there nonetheless. Nebuchadnezzar also observed that the four men were free in the fire. The fire only burnt the ropes that bound them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. 27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them (Daniel 3:26-27)

Come out, you servants of the Most High God. Before they were out of the furnace, Nebuchadnezzar recognized that these men served the true God, the God Most High.

The fire had no effect on the bodies of these men. The trial had no power over these men because they were thoroughly submitted to the power

and will of God. The smell of fire was not on them. This demonstrates how complete their deliverance was.

Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God (Daniel 3:28)

Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. Nebuchadnezzar gave glory to God, but he recognized that this great God is not his God. He was still the God of these three brave men.

"Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." 30 Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon (Daniel 3:29-30)

I make a decree. The three Hebrew men did not ask for Nebuchadnezzar to make this decree, and they probably did not want him to. Coerced worship isn't good, either towards an idol or towards the true God.

There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way. Seeing God at work in the life of His people was an extremely effective testimony to Nebuchadnezzar. Paul expressed the same idea in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3: *"You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart"*.

Daniel 4:1-37 Nebuchadnezzar humbled

This unique chapter is the testimony of a Gentile king and how God changed his heart. In this, Nebuchadnezzar is a good example of a witness (one who relates what he has seen and experienced).

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! 2 "It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me (Daniel 4:1-2)

It has seemed good to me to declare. It is good to declare what God has done for us. Satan has a huge interest in keeping us unnaturally silent about the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for us.

"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 (Daniel 4:3)

Nebuchadnezzar was a great king, but in this chapter he recognized that God's kingdom was far greater and His dominion was completely unique because it is an everlasting kingdom.

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace (Daniel 4:4)

Nebuchadnezzar was at ease, which was the false peace of the ungodly. God soon shook him from his false security.

"I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. 6 "So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 "Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me (Daniel 4:5-7)

This is not the same dream as in Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar readily told his counselors this dream, but they did not tell him what it meant. The dream was fairly easy to interpret; the wise men probably lacked courage more than insight. Nebuchadnezzar said they did not make it known, not that they could not make it known.

"But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, saying, 9 'O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation (Daniel 4:8-9).

Finally Daniel came. Why was he not sooner sent for? If the soothsayers and sorcerers could have served the turn, Daniel had never been sought to. This is the guise of graceless men; they run not to God till all other refuges fail them. Nebuchadnezzar appear to have simply forgotten Daniel and the events of chapter two, many years having passed since that event.

Belteshazzar according to the name of my god. Before Daniel interpreted the dream described in this chapter for Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon considered the Babylonian deity Bel his god.

Nebuchadnezzar explains the dream (Daniel 4:10-18)

'Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great 11 'The tree grew large and became strong And its height reached to the sky, And it was visible to the end of the whole earth. 12 'Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, And in it was food for all The beasts of the field found shade under it, And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches, And all living creatures fed themselves from it. (Daniel 4:10-12)

The tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was noted for its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter.

'I was looking in the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed, and behold, an angelic watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven (Daniel 4:13)

The watcher (an angel) explained the fate of the tree.

'He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; Let the beasts flee from under it. And the birds from its branches. "Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it, in the new grass of the field; and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth (Daniel 4:14-15).

He noted that the tree was to be chopped down, and it would lose its size, strength, prominence, beauty, fruit, and shelter for creatures. The tree was to be bound with a band of iron and bronze. These were either for the tree stump's confinement or protection. The stump would remain in the open field where the grass grew, until it should shoot up again. The dew would fall on it and continually moisten it perhaps to preserve it. "Let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth". This is a change evidently from the tree to something represented by the tree. Instead of feeding on royal dainties, as he had all his days, let him eat grass like the beasts of the field appears to be the meaning.

"Let his mind be changed from that of a man. And let a beast's mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him (Daniel 4:16)

Let him live seven years as a beast in man's shape. The Aramaic word for "time" is *'iddan*. This word appears several times (Daniel 2:8,9,21; 3:5,15; 4:16,23,25,32; 7:12,25). The word means time or a year, depending on the context. When it is used with a definite article or a fixed amount, it refers to years.

"This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers. And the decision is a command of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whom He wishes and sets over it the lowliest of men. (Daniel 4:17)

Nebuchadnezzar heard these words in his dream from an angel. In light of this, the dream wasn't hard to interpret – it clearly dealt with the humbling of a great king. No wonder none of Nebuchadnezzar's counselors wanted to interpret the dream for him. At the end of the day, Almighty God disposes of human empires as He pleases.

'This is the dream which I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belshazzar, tell me its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you. (Daniel 4:18)

Nebuchadnezzar knew Daniel can tell him the interpretation.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: its interpretation 4:19-27

"Then Daniel, whose name is Belshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, 'Belshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you ' Belshazzar replied, 'My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! (Daniel 4:19)

Daniel genuinely cared for Nebuchadnezzar and was clearly affected by the meaning of the dream. He didn't want it to be true of his friend Nebuchadnezzar.

'The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth

21 and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged-- 22 it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth (Daniel 4:20-22)

It is you, O king. Daniel applies the point without ambiguity. Instead of reaching for a general point ("we all could use a little more humility") Daniel brought the truth in love. This reminds us of what the prophet Nathan said to King David: You are the man! (2 Samuel 12:7). The great tree depicts Nebuchadnezzar's prosperity and power.

23 'In that the king saw an angelic watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him," 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. 'And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules (Daniel 4:23-26).

Chop down the tree. The great tree destroyed shows Nebuchadnezzar's punishment.

Driven away from mankind... you be given grass to eat like cattle... be drenched with the dew. When Daniel explained this to Nebuchadnezzar, the king probably couldn't have guessed just how literally it would be fulfilled.

Seven periods of time will pass over you. That is this it will happen for seven years.

Until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind. This was God's intended purpose for Nebuchadnezzar. The king could have avoided this humiliating fate if he genuinely humbled himself.

'Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity. (Daniel 4:27)

Break away now from your sins. The right reaction to the threat of judgment is a humble repentance. Unfortunately, Nebuchadnezzar did not do this. He should have followed the example of the repentance of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3).

All this happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king (Daniel 4:28)

All of it were fulfilled on Nebuchadnezzar.

"Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon (Daniel 4:29)

God gave Nebuchadnezzar twelve months to repent, and he probably forgot about the dream during that time - but God didn't forget.

"The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' 31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, 32 and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever

He wishes.' 33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws (Daniel 4:30-33).

Babylon was truly one of the spectacular cities of the ancient world, including the famous "hanging gardens" built by Nebuchadnezzar. There is no corresponding record of this seven-year (seven times) period of insanity in the secular historical records of Babylon - exactly as we would expect, considering the custom of the times. Nevertheless Abydenus, a Greek historian, wrote in 268 B.C. that Nebuchadnezzar was "possessed by some god" and that he had "immediately disappeared."

A repentant Nebuchadnezzar is restored, and praises God (Dan 4:34-37)

"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' (Daniel 4:34-35)

But at the end of that period. Nebuchadnezzar could not break free from his madness until God appointed the end of the time. Then, he had the opportunity to humble himself and lift his eyes to heaven.

I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him. Nebuchadnezzar could only see who the truth about himself when he saw the truth about God. The Babylonian King did see who God was, and he eloquently praised His sovereignty - then, his reason returned.

"At that time my reason returned to me and my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride. (Daniel 4:36-37)

God wanted to restore Nebuchadnezzar. The goal wasn't to bring him low, but to bring him to his proper place before God and among men. Truly, Nebuchadnezzar learned that those who walk in pride He is able to humble. Was Nebuchadnezzar converted? Although the faith of Nebuchadnezzar may indeed have been weak and his knowledge meagre, yet his faith was a saving faith, and his knowledge true as he acknowledges the utter sovereignty of God with respect to his own experience.

Daniel 5:1-31 The Fall of Babylon

When we come to Daniel 5, Nebuchadnezzar is no longer the king of Babylon. How did it pass from Nebuchadnezzar to **Belshazzar**? The ancient historian Berosus gives us the following order of events: Nebuchadnezzar died after a 43-year reign. His son, Evil-Merodach (described in 2 Kings 25:27-30 and Jeremiah 52:31-34) ruled for only two years when he was assassinated by his brother-in-law Neriglassar, because his rule was arbitrary and licentious. Neriglassar (mentioned as Nergalsharezer in Jeremiah 39:3, 13) ruled for four years until he died a natural death. His son, Laborosoarchod, only a child and of diminished mental capacity, ruled for only nine months when he was beaten to death by a gang of conspirators. The conspirators appointed Nabonidus, one of their gang, to be king. He ruled until Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon.

Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand (Daniel 5:1)

Belshazzar the king. For a long time, historians and archaeologists knew that Nabonidus was said to be the last king of Babylon, not Belshazzar (who was Nabonidus' eldest son). The solution to this so-called discrepancy was apparent when evidence was uncovered indicating not only Belshazzar's association with Nabonidus on the throne, but also demonstrating that during the last part of his reign Nabonidus lived in Arabia and left the conduct of the Kingdom of Babylon to his eldest son Belshazzar.

Held a great feast. Belshazzar was not afraid of the siege surrounding the city. He was confident because of Babylon's impressive defenses and his vast supplies.

When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them (Daniel 5:2)

Vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple. Nebuchadnezzar was not the direct father of Belshazzar. Either Nebuchadnezzar was his grandfather through his mother's side, or he was Belshazzar's father in the sense of having previously occupied the throne Belshazzar now sat on. Either usage of the term father was accepted in ancient times.

Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone (Daniel 5:3-4)

The scene of partying while a hostile army surrounded the city reminds us of the spirit of our present age. Many today have the idea that the best response to the seeming danger of the times is to forget about it and escape into the pursuit of pleasure.

Suddenly the fingers of a mans hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the kings palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing (Daniel 5:5)

The fingers of a mans hand appeared. God can and sometimes does communicate to man in unexpected and even shocking ways. Here, a hand mysteriously appeared and wrote on a wall.

The king saw the part of the hand that wrote: This, of course, is where we get the proverbial phrase *the writing on the wall*.

Then the kings face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together (Daniel 5:6)

Daniel's vivid description shows us that Belshazzar was terrified. His carefree partying was so shallow that it turned from merry to terrified in a moment.

The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:7)

Explain its interpretation...third ruler in the kingdom. Archaeologists have discovered why Belshazzar offered the interpreter of the dream the third place in the kingdom. The real king was Nabonidus, and his son Belshazzar ruled as second in the kingdom. Belshazzar couldn't give away the second place in the kingdom, because he was the second in the kingdom at the time. The best he had to offer was the third place.

Then all the kings wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. 9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed (Daniel 5:8-9)

When Daniel came to interpret these words, it does not seem so hard to figure out. It may be that God deliberately put a veil over the minds of these men so Daniel would be called.

The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale (Daniel 5:10)

This queen (or queen mother) is hard to identify with certainty. Probably it was Belshazzar's mother, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.

There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners. 12

This was because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation (Daniel 5:11-12)

There is a man in your kingdom. When the wise men were called to explain the writing on the wall to Belshazzar, Daniel apparently was not called. It seems that Daniel was semi-retired, still holding a government office yet not a main figure in the administration.

This Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. The queen referred to Daniel by his Jewish name, thus showing respect for his faith and background.

Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? 14 Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. 15 Just now the wise men and the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message. 16 But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:13-16)

Then Daniel was brought in before the king. When everything seems great – when the party is going non-stop – God and His servants are mocked, neglected, and hidden away. But when the hand of heaven wrote a sobering message, panic-stricken worldlings cried out for the one who had the Spirit of God.

I have heard about you: Since Belshazzar didn't think to call for Daniel himself, it seems that his remembrance of Daniel was either long ago or just now by the queen.

Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him (Daniel 5:17)

Let your gifts be for yourself. Remember that Daniel was troubled when he had to give Nebuchadnezzar bad news (Daniel 4:19). This wasn't the case here. Daniel was not impressed with this successor of Nebuchadnezzar.

O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. 19 Because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and men of every language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled. 20 But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken away from him 21 He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes (Daniel 5:18-21)

Daniel reminds Belshazzar what happened to Nebuchadnezzar when he became proud.

Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, 23 but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and all your ways, you have not glorified (Daniel 5:17-23)

Daniel was so harsh because Belshazzar should have known better. Even if he was not raised in a godly home, Romans 1 reminds us that all men know of God through creation. Belshazzar should have known even more through God's dealings with and through Daniel. We are all responsible to honor God according to what revelation we have.

Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out. 25 Now this is the inscription that was written out: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of the message: MENE--God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. 27 TEKEL--you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. 28 PERES--your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians (Daniel 5:24-28)

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the message. "It should be observed, that *each word* stands for a *short sentence*; *mene* signifies NUMERATION; *tekel*, WEIGHING; and *peres*, DIVISION."

Been weighed on the scales and found deficient. A mighty army and brilliant tactics overcame the Babylonian Empire, yet it still fell from within. The armies of the Medes and Persians could only conquer because Belshazzar and his kingdom were found lacking in spiritual and moral values.

Given over to the Medes and Persians. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus relates that the Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon by diverting the flow of the Euphrates into a nearby swamp. This lowered the level of the river so his troops marched through the water and under the

river-gates. They still would not have been able to enter had not the bronze gates of the inner walls been left inexplicably unlocked. This was exactly what God predicted in Isaiah 44:28-45:7 and Jeremiah 51:57-58. God opened the gates of the city of Babylon for Cyrus, and put it in writing 200 years before it happened. In October **539 BC**, Cyrus advanced into lower Mesopotamia and, leaving Babylon till last, conquered and occupied the surrounding territory.

Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom. (Daniel 5:29)

They clothed Daniel with purple. Though his words were harsh, Daniel was quickly rewarded. Either Belshazzar knew that Daniel was right and bravely tried to do the best under the inevitable circumstances, or he disbelieved the whole thing and promoted Daniel in a display of big-hearted fun

He should be the third ruler in the kingdom. Daniel held this post for only a few hours. This shows how temporary the awards and accolades of this world are. In the kingdom that succeeded Belshazzar Daniel was also promoted, but that was due to God, not to Belshazzar.

That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. 31 So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two (Daniel 5:30-31)

The word was fulfilled just as Daniel said. God's Word is always reliable and true. Darius was a sub-king under Cyrus the Persian. He is referred to in secular history as Gubaru.

Daniel 6:1-28 Daniel in the Lion's Den during the Medo-Persian Empire

It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom (Daniel 6:1)

It seemed good to Darius. Secular history of this period has no record of a ruler named Darius in the particular period and place recorded in Daniel 6. There are a couple of possible explanations for the Darius of Daniel 6. It may be that Darius was simply another name for Cyrus, who ruled the Medo-Persian Empire during this period. It may be that Darius was an ancient official known as Gubaru in ancient documents, whom Cyrus appointed as ruler over Babylon immediately after its capture.

Appoint 120 satraps. Satrap is a Persian loan word that means protector of the realm. It refers to a specific category of public officials.

And over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom (Daniel 6:2-3)

Daniel was one of three leaders directly under Darius, and he shined above the other two leaders because he had an excellent spirit. Daniel had a good attitude in his work and life, and this made him the object of attack.

Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him (Daniel 6:4)

Daniel was such a faithful man that those who looked for a flaw in his actions or his character came up empty. This wasn't to imply that Daniel was actually sinless, but that he was a man of great integrity. We could also say that Daniel was especially blameless in the conduct of his professional life.

Then these men said, We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God. 6 Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: King Darius, live forever! (Daniel 6:5-6)

These men knew Daniel well. They knew he could not be trapped into evil, but they also knew that he would be faithful to his God in all circumstances. Every Christian should consider if others could say the same about them.

All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions den (Daniel 6:7)

If the enemies of Daniel knew him, they also knew Darius. They knew they could appeal to Darius' pride and his desire for a unified kingdom. Daniel's enemies also knew that people could be persuaded to do things they wouldn't normally do if they thought everyone else approved of that thing.

Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked. 9 Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction (Daniel 6:8-9)

It was an established principle in the Medo-Persian Empire that when a king formally signed and instituted a decree, it was so binding that not even the king himself could change it. The decrees of a Persian king were unchangeable because he was thought to speak for the gods, who could never be wrong and thus never needed to change their minds. Therefore King Darius signed the document.

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three

times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously (Daniel 6:10)

When Daniel knew that the document was signed. Daniel was confronted with a test of loyalties. He was a loyal subject of his king, yet he knew that the King of Kings deserved a higher loyalty. Daniel refused to give to the government the measure of obedience that belonged to God alone.

Praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. Daniel didn't let the decree change his actions one way or another. He didn't do more praying or less; he simply continued his excellent prayer life. Doubtless he prayed 300 times a day if necessary – his heart was always having commerce with the skies; but thrice a day he prayed formally.

Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. 12 Then they approached and spoke before the king about the kings injunction, Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions den? The king replied, the statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked. 13 Then they answered and spoke before the king, Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day (Daniel 6:11-13)

They found Daniel just as they knew they would – deep in prayer. For Daniel prayer was both communion with God and pleading for His will to be accomplished. Daniel intended no disrespect for the king, only a higher respect for God.

Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set his mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him (Daniel 6:14)

There is a lot to like about King Darius, and one of the admirable things about him is that he was displeased with himself. Instead of blaming others, he

knew that he was at fault. We can be sure that he wasn't happy with Daniel's enemies, but he knew that ultimately he was responsible. Like Darius, our foolish decisions often haunt us. Often all we can do is pray and ask God to mercifully and miraculously intervene when we make foolish decisions. He kept exerting himself to rescue him. This means that he worked as long as he could. According to ancient eastern custom, the execution was carried out on the evening of the day that the accusation was made and found valid.

Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed. 16 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you (Daniel 6:16)

Your God, whom you constantly serve will deliver you. Darius had faith, and it was faith born out of Daniel's trust in the Lord. The idea was, "I tried my best to save you Daniel, but I failed. Now it is up to your God."

A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel (Daniel 6:17)

The king sealed it. This may have been to protect Daniel as much as to make sure someone didn't rescue Daniel. Darius knew that Daniel had powerful enemies who might kill him if the lions didn't.

Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him (Daniel 6:18)

Undoubtedly, Daniel had a better night's rest than Darius. We can be sure that Daniel prayed in the lions' den, because it was simply his habit to pray.

He did not need to start praying on this remarkable occasion because the habit of prayer was well ingrained in his life.

Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions den (Daniel 6:19)

Since he could not sleep, it was easy for Darius to rise very early. We imagine him waiting for the first glimmer of dawn so he could see how Daniel fared.

When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions? Then Daniel spoke to the king, O king, live forever! 22 My God sent His angel and shut the lions mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime (Daniel 6:20-21)

When Darius heard Daniel's voice he knew that he had survived through the night. The lions would not or could not touch this servant of God. We don't know if Daniel saw an angel or not, but he certainly knew that God sent His angel to rescue him. Hebrews 1:14 says angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation. God sent an angel to serve Daniel's need. How the angel stopped the lions' mouths, whether by the brightness of his presence, or threatening them with his finger (Numbers 22:27, 33), or by making a rumble amongst them like that of an empty cart upon the stones, or by presenting unto them a light fire (which things lions are said to be terrified with), or by causing in them a satiety, or by working upon their fantasy, we need not inquire.

Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God (Daniel 6:23)

Daniel was preserved through *faith*. Though his cause was righteous and he was unjustly accused, those things alone did not protect him before the lions. Daniel needed a living, abiding faith in God, even in the most difficult circumstances.

The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones (Daniel 6:24)

No one had to *ask* Darius to do this. He was ready and willing to bring justice to those who plotted against Daniel, and also to their children, and their wives. **The lions overpowered them... before they ever came to the bottom of the den:** This proved that it was genuinely angelic protection that saved Daniel. It proves there was no *natural* reason why the lions did not eat Daniel. Daniel's accusers perished in the same trap they set for Daniel.

Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language who were living in all the land: May your peace abound! 26 I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, And His dominion will be forever. 27 He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian (Daniel 6:25-28)

Then King Darius wrote. The Book of Daniel follows a familiar pattern. God's people stand firm in their convictions, God honors and protects them, and the testimony of God's work makes the ungodly see and tell of the greatness of God.

The God of Daniel. In a small way, this helps us diagnose Darius' spiritual condition. It isn't enough to say, "the God of Daniel." Saving faith says, "the God of Darius."

Daniel enjoyed success in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus. Some take this to mean that Darius was Cyrus the Persian. This is one of the three theories about the identity of Darius (mentioned at the beginning of this chapter).

Daniel 7:1-28 The Four beasts and the little horn

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and told the following summary of it (Daniel 7:1)

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. This places the time of the vision as occurring toward the end of the Babylonian empire. Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon. This ties in closely with the account in the fifth chapter, where Belshazzar made a great feast and handwriting appeared on the wall and that night the kingdom was taken by the Medes and the Persians. This vision then occurs perhaps thirty or thirty-five years after the great dream image that was recorded in Chapter 2. This time it is Daniel that has a dream and this is his summary of it.

Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea (Daniel 7:2)

The four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. This perhaps pointing to the Mediterranean Sea. Each one of the empires mentioned in this vision had a geographical connection to the Mediterranean Sea. The "four winds of heaven" usually stand for the four points (North, South, East, West) of the compass (Jeremiah 49:34). Here, however, the winds are pictured as actual forces dashing down upon the sea, which probably points to the various political and social agitations which disturb the world's history. Something is about to rise up from the sea.

And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another (Daniel 7:3)

Four large, ferocious animals emerged from the Sea, each one distinct from the other. A little later (Daniel 7:17) Daniel tells us that these four beasts are four kingdoms ruling over the earth.

The first was like a lion but had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and set up on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it (Daniel 7:4)

The first kingdom is the Babylonian Empire, represented by a lion and an eagle. This fits in well with the majesty and authority of Nebuchadnezzar in his reign over the empire of Babylon. Jeremiah used both the lion and the eagle as pictures of Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 49:19-22), and Babylon's winged lions can be seen at the British Museum today. But this majestic beast was humbled as the wings were plucked off and made to stand as a mere man. The meaning of the symbol is not difficult. The ferocity, and the power, and the energy of the lion would now be replaced with the comparative weakness of a man.

And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and they said this to it: 'Arise, devour much meat!' (Daniel 7:5)

Another beast, which is the second one, is a bear, which represented the Medo-Persian Empire, that succeeded the Babylonian Empire. In this partnership between the Medes and the Persians, the Persians dominated the relationship, therefore it is said that "it was raised up on one side". Most think the three ribs represent their three great military conquests: Babylon, Egypt and Lydia. The command to arise and devour much flesh indicates the extreme cruelties often practiced by the Persians, and the wide extent of their conquests.

After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it (Daniel 7:6)

Then came the leopard represented by the Greek Empire. Alexander the Great quickly and swiftly conquered the civilized world by age 28, which appears to be represented by the swiftly flying "wings of a bird" it had. After his death his empire was divided into four parts (or four heads). Specifically,

the four heads were Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who inherited Alexander's domain after his death.

After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns (Daniel 7:7)

The fourth beast was indescribable, and uniquely horrific in its power and conquest, portrayed also with large "iron teeth" able to crush his opposers. In the ancient world horns expressed the power and fearsomeness of an animal. This fourth beast was so strong it had ten horns. In historical fulfillment, the fourth beast represents the Roman Empire, which was the largest, strongest, most unified and enduring of them all. It had ten horns, which represents rulers and kings.

While I was thinking about the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the previous horns were plucked out before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like human eyes, and a mouth uttering great boasts (Daniel 7:8)

While I was thinking about the horns. That is while Daniel was thinking about all the ten horns.

Another horn, a little one, came up among them. The text does not say the little horn came up "after them", meaning after the 10th horn, but "among them". This little horn is not a 11th horn, but a horn among the ten, that started out to be "little", but grew in size compared to its associates (that is the other 9 horns). Daniel does not see the ten horns coming up one after another. Therefore, the ten horns appear to come up as a totality, but a little one becomes "*larger in appearance than its associates*" (Daniel 7:20).

Three of the previous horns were plucked out before it. From among the ten horns, three are replaced by this little horn.

“I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were serving Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court convened, And the books were opened (Daniel 7:9-10)

I kept looking Until thrones were set up. When the Apostle John saw heaven, he also saw thrones, but he also saw those who sat on those thrones – the 24 elders described in Revelation 4:4. Daniel made no mention of these elders, perhaps because the 24 elders represent the church, and the church was an unrevealed mystery to Old Testament saints (Ephesians 3:1-7). Thrones being set up indicate rulership and reign in heaven.

And the Ancient of Days took His seat. Daniel 7:13 seems to make a distinction between the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man, and this supports the idea that the Ancient of Days here is God the Father, not God the Son.

His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. White represents age, righteousness, purity and justice. God is a wise and righteous judge, and he is about to sit before a judgement scene.

His throne was ablaze with flames: This was a brilliant manifestation of God’s splendor and the fierce heat of His judgment. There seems to be something lava-like in the stream of fire pouring from the throne; it was like a river of vast destructive power. *“For our God is a consuming fire”* (Hebrews 12:29).

Its wheels a burning fire. Many commentators say that in the ancient eastern world royal thrones were often on wheels. Yet it is just as likely that they represent the endless activity of God.

A thousand upon thousands ministered to Him and myriads. This describes the innumerable company of angels surrounding the throne of God. This must also include the saints in heaven represented by the 24 elders.

Court was seated, and the books were opened. The Almighty is represented as holding a court of judgement in heaven. The Bible describes several books before God, and any of these or combination of these could be meant. The book of the living (Psalm 69:28). The book of remembrance (Malachi 3:16). The Book of Life (Philippians 4:3, Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27 and 22:19). Some power is going to be judged. Who is it?

Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was killed, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time (Daniel 7:11-12).

The sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking. Here the “little horn” of the fourth beast speaks pompous words. It appears he is the one that is going to be judged.

I watched till the beast was killed and its body was destroyed. This could happen only as a result of the judge’s verdict. The little horn is not judged alone. The beast (Roman Empire) will be punished for all its horns and sins. Though the verdict may not be executed instantly, the verdict is final.

The rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away. The destiny of the first three beasts (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece) is different. They are stripped out of their political dominion, though their life continue as nations without dominion for a God ordained time.

“I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Honor, and a kingdom, So that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a son of man was coming. Clouds represented divine presence or judgement. The title Son of Man was a favorite self-designation of Jesus, used more than 80 times in the four Gospels. When Jesus ascended, “a cloud took Him up” (Acts 1:9). Here, Jesus moves with the clouds of heaven. Where does He go?

And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. The Hebrew expression “came up to” is used for someone being brought before a royal audience. This is not Jesus coming to earth at the second coming, but Jesus ascending to the Father after his resurrection, and He is to be enthroned before all the hosts of heaven.

And to Him was given dominion, Honor, and a kingdom, so that all the peoples, nations, and populations of all languages Might serve Him. Christ receives all dominion, honor, and worship. The reign of Jesus begins at His ascension and will be consummated when He creates the new heavens and new earth, so that all the peoples, nations, and tribes will serve Him.

“As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. I approached one of those who were standing by and began requesting of him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things” (Daniel 7:15-16).

Daniel saw all this, and in more detail than he describes for us. He did not really understand all that he saw and was troubled because of his lack of understanding.

These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth (Daniel 7:17)

The divine interpretation of the dream shows that this vision covers the same material as Nebuchadnezzar’s vision in Daniel 2, which also described the rise of four empires, or four kings (same as kingdoms) which will be succeeded by the kingdom of God.

But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and take possession of the kingdom forever, for all ages to come (Daniel 7:18)

The saints of the Highest One, who is none other than Jesus, will receive the kingdom, which is an eternal kingdom.

“Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet (Daniel 7:19)

Daniel desired to know more about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceeding dreadful, which is the Roman Empire.

And the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three of the horns fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates (Daniel 7:20)

Daniel desired to know more about the ten horns, and the little horn that grew larger among them, and plucked out three of the horns. The little horn started out little but was “**larger in appearance than its associates**”. Size may indicate it started out small, temporal in power, but its power grew, and it spoke boastfully. It says it had “eyes” which are often associated with pride (Isaiah 2:11, 5:15).

I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom (Daniel 7:21-22).

Horn was waging war with the saints. This horn was successful in its war against God's people, and prevailed for some time, but not for too long. Who came in judgement against this horn power?

Until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One. The little horn was judged by God the Father and would not continue to persecute the saints. Instead, "judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One", meaning justice was granted to the saints by the act of judging and putting an end to the little horn's schemes. Judgment includes the granting of the "kingdom" to the saints.

The time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom. The giving of the kingdom to the saints of the Most High began when Christ established his kingdom on this earth. "*For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son*" (Colossians 1:13). "*To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be a kingdom...*" (Revelation 1:5-8). The church is His kingdom now on earth.

"This is what he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and will devour the whole earth and trample it down and crush it (Daniel 7:23)

The fourth beast signifies the Roman Empire, which was different in character from all the kingdoms. By the whole world, it is meant, wherever the Roman Empire became masters of, and caused destruction and desolation.

As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will humble three kings (Daniel 7:24)

As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise. The Bible clearly says the ten kings (ten horns) will arise out of this kingdom meaning from within the Roman Empire. This could not possibly refer to outside entities or European tribes that invaded and conquered Western Rome. The kings arise from within. Note well that the ten horns are "kings." The Aramaic word used is *melek* which literally means "king" and is only translated "king" in the Old Testament. It is never translated as "nation" or "kingdom".

And another will arise after them. After them means, after he saw the ten horns that arose, "from among them" (Daniel 7:8) another one of the horns will arise starting out little but became "larger in appearance than its associates" (Daniel 7:20) and will pluck out three kings. In other words, the little horn was seen coming up last among all the others, because he was different, and not because he was chronologically the last one to rule in time.

Therefore, the ten horns represent ten kings or rulers of the Roman Empire. Now "ten" in prophesy can symbolize totality of its rulers or powers. After all, Roman empire was not ruled by just 10 rulers. However, since Daniel is concerned with the coming of Christ's spiritual kingdom (Daniel 2), there is another fitting interpretation.

Interestingly, history records that there were, in fact, ten Roman Caesars who ruled Rome prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The first king was Julius Caesar. According to historical sources, Julius Caesar played a critical part in ending the Roman Republic and establishing the Roman Empire. In fact, he was the first historical Roman to be officially deified. Here then are the ten Caesars (kings) that ruled before the destruction of Jerusalem:

- Julius Caesar 49-44BC
- Augustus (also known as Octavian) 31BC-14AD
- Tiberius (Luke 3:1) 14-37AD
- Gaius (also known as Caligula) 37-41AD
- Claudius (Acts 17) 41-54AD
- **Nero 54-68AD**
- Galba 68-69AD
- Otho 69AD
- Vitellius 69AD
- Vespasian 69-79AD

John Calvin, among others, held that the ten horns in Daniel 7 referred to Caesars. Many scholars hold that the Little Horn of Daniel 7 is Caesar Nero. His actual birth name was Lucius. The Latin meaning of Lucius is Light Bearer. The name Lucius is a synonym of the name Lucifer. Many Christians in the early centuries regarded Nero Caesar as the anti-Christ. Interestingly enough, his Hebrew name numerically adds up to 666.

He will humble three kings. Three Emperors, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius were assassinated to make way for Nero, who was not in the line of succession.

And he will speak against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half a time (Daniel 7:25).

And he will speak against the Most High. Nero encouraged emperor worship and had a huge statue of himself erected in Rome. Inscriptions found in Ephesus called him "Almighty God" and "Saviour...."

Wear down the saints of the Highest One. Nero is different from the rest of the Caesars in that he is the only one from Julius to Titus to persecute Christians. Hence, Nero was the first Roman emperor to launch a persecution against Jews and Christians. Some of the saints slain during his persecution include the apostles Paul and Peter. Historians have described the persecution as "*the most cruel that ever occurred.*"

They will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half a time. Time (1 year), Times (2 years) and half a time (1/2 year) equals to 3 1/2 years or 1260 days. Nero's persecution began in November of 64 AD and ended with his death in June of AD 68, a period of 42 months (1260 days).

He will intend to make alterations in times and in law. Change in "times" and seasons refers to changing kings. "*It is He [God] who **changes the times and the periods; He removes kings and appoints kings***" (Daniel 2:21). Nero tried to alter constitutions of kingdoms and to set up and pull-down kings at pleasure. Tacitus Annals records that Nero "uprooted" three Parthian the kings, Vologases I, Tigranes, and Tiridates I in the Armenian wars AD 43-66.

Nero changed and intended to change laws. The word Law in Daniel 7:25 is the word "*dat*" meaning "decree", not "*Torah*". Thus, this is speaking of a ruler who would change laws is not in reference to the Decalogue and certainly the Sabbath is not in view. In declaring war on Jerusalem, Nero officially changed the treaty law between Israel and Rome that dates to 161 BC. Nero sent Vespasian to destroy Jerusalem in December AD 66 as an act of formally breaking the treaty.

Moreover, few emperors were more lawless than Nero. The great Roman historian Tacitus describes his lawless behavior in his writings. Nero was known for numerous brutal executions, including that of his own mother. When his second wife, pregnant at the time, complained that he had returned home late from the races, Nero kicked her and her unborn baby to death. He killed his Aunt by having her poisoned. Nero was a non-stop assault on marriage, the family, and the law of God. Nero had two homosexual marriages to men. When he wed Pythagoras, Nero put on the bride's veil, and Pythagoras was the "groom." According to Tacitus, Nero engaged in "every filthy, depraved illicit act."

But the court will convene for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever (Daniel 7:26).

But the court will convene for judgment. God judged this little horn power. The Roman Senate eventually voted to put Nero to death, thus effectively taking away his dominion. In 68 AD, after a turbulent 13-year reign, the Roman senate ran out of patience and declared **Nero** a public enemy. **Nero** then fled, and on June 9, 68 AD, at the age of 30, he committed suicide.

Who is being judged? As noted earlier, the judgment of Daniel 7 is a judgment against the little horn and the beast power, not an investigative judgment of the saints as Seventh-day Adventists would teach. It was the Roman Empire, under the guidance of Satan, acting through a Roman governor and Roman soldiers, that crucified the Son of God. The judgment, although decided in heaven, was not instantly executed upon Rome when Jesus died, just as Jerusalem was not instantly punished. Time was given to allow for Rome to manifest what it was going to do with Christ and Christianity.

Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the empires will serve and obey Him.’ (Daniel 7:27).

The dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms will be given to the people. “*For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to **the kingdom of His beloved Son**” (Col. 1:13). We have been already transferred to the kingdom of Christ, and this kingdom will be fully consummated when Jesus creates a new heaven and new earth.*

It is a mistake to think this passage is a reference to God's eternal literal kingdom that will be realized after the second coming of Christ. This is a reference to the establishment of God's spiritual kingdom, which was announced in approximately 30 AD when John the Baptist announced, “*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” (Matt. 3:2).

Christ talked about the "kingdom" as being contemporary, present while He was on earth, not in the far distant future.

“But if I cast out the demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matt. 12:28)

“I will give you **the keys of the kingdom of heaven**; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19)

Daniel wrote about a kingdom that gradually fills the earth (Dan. 2:34-35). Jesus spoke of a Mustard seed which grew into a great tree (Matt. 13:31-33). Therefore, the giving of the kingdom to the saints of the Most High began when Christ established his spiritual kingdom on this earth, and the kingdom continues to grow until one day Jesus will create a new heavens and new earth, and all people and powers will serve and obey Him.

Jesus' death was as a mustard seed being planted in the earth. After His resurrection, the gospel sprouted and spread throughout the empire. Nero and later Caesars manifested a satanic hatred towards Christianity. They thought to persecute it into non-existence, and Nero almost succeeded. However, he was killed, his persecution halted and his dominion was taken away. The very persecution he started in an attempt to stamp out Christianity would later become the seed that fueled an even more explosive growth of Christianity. Eventually the dominion of Satan was broken in the Roman Empire and it became the dominion of the saints. Christianity was recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 380 AD.

Every specification of Daniel 7 came to pass just as predicted. In fact, the fulfillment is so incredible that atheists and agnostics have long insisted the book of Daniel was written after Nero's death. At the time they were making such claims, the oldest copies of Daniel were dated a thousand years after Christ. However, these enemies of God were silenced when the book of Daniel was discovered amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. In all, eight copies of the book were found. The oldest was carbon-dated to 165 BC. That was long before Nero or any of the ten Caesars. Only God could have known the unfolding of the Roman Empire hundreds of years beforehand. Praise God!

At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face became pale, but I kept the matter to myself (Daniel 9:28).

Many things might trouble Daniel at this vision – such as the ferocity of the attack to come against his people from the conspicuous horn. Daniel was convinced that the prophecy was true, and that it was the word of God. He was so convinced of its truth that his countenance changed and he considered what would happen his people and the saints of God.

Alternative interpretation: Emperor Domitian as the 11th horn

Some scholars apply the little horn to Emperor Domitian (the son of Emperor Vespasian), who is viewed as the 11th horn, coming after the ten horns. He was the 11th emperor of Rome. He revived the imperial cult and promoted emperor worship (boastful). Domitian attempted to change the legal and calendar systems under his rule (change laws). It is said the outright persecution under Domitian lasted this long (3 1/2 years). After him, while Rome continued for a time (Daniel 7:12), they did not exercise the dominion or authority of Domitian. Indeed, what followed next were known as the “good emperors”, who ruled relatively benevolently. Domitian appears to be also a possible fit for the little horn.

Other commentators apply this little horn symbol to either the papacy or the entire Roman Empire and later pagan institutions that arose from the influence of Greece and Rome. Such an *application* can be made. However, extending the *interpretation* of the “Little Horn” beyond AD 70 is irrelevant to the context and purposes of Daniel.

Seventh-day Adventist interpretation

1) **SDA’s teach that the ten horns are ten tribes that conquered the western Roman Empire.** Out of the twenty or more tribes that actually conquered the western Roman Empire, Adventists selected ten tribes and declared these ten were the tribes represented by the ten horns (Vandals, Ostrogoths, Heruli, Visigoths, Burgundians, Anglo-Saxons, Alamani, Suevi, Lombards and Franks). Daniel 7:24 makes it abundantly clear that the ten horns are **not** other nations that conquer Rome: “As for the ten horns, **out of this kingdom** ten kings will arise”. The Bible clearly says the ten kings will arise from **within** the Roman Empire. Contrast that with the tribes that SDA’s give. The tribes all arose **outside** of the Roman Empire. Moreover, the Bible says the ten horns are kings, not nations or tribes. Besides, history says over forty tribes fought with the Roman Empire, not ten.⁸

2) **SDA’s teach the little horn is the Papacy and it uprooted three tribes: Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Heruli ?** None of these tribes were destroyed by the Pope (Papacy benefited from their destruction by the hand of others). Any history textbook will explain that the Heruli were defeated by the Lombards, the Vandals and Ostrogoths by the Byzantines. (see: www.historyworld.net ; www.britannica.com/topic/Heruli).

3) **SDA's teach that the papacy changed the Sabbath commandment.** Seventh-day Adventist misquote certain Roman Catholic & Protestant Confessions as proof that the Roman Catholic Church changed it. But in this SDA's ignore, fail to state, another claim which all these same Roman Catholic authorities always make just as strongly, namely, that their Roman Catholic Church extends back to, and began with the apostles, who started this practice of meeting on Sunday. The "official" teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is that the abolition of the ceremonial seventh day Sabbath was confirmed by the **apostles**. The very highest authority, in the Catholic Church – the Council of Trent, "**The Catechism of the Council of Trent,**" published by order of Pius IV, contains the creed of the Church. It devotes eight pages to the Sabbath question. It says:

*"The Sabbath was kept holy from the time of the liberation of the people of Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh; **the obligation was to cease with the abrogation of the Jewish worship, of which it formed a part; and it therefore was no longer obligatory after the death of Christ.** **The apostles** therefore resolved to consecrate **the first day of the week** to the divine worship, and called it 'the Lord's Day'; St. John, in the Apocalypse, makes mention of 'the Lord's Day'; and the apostle commands collection to be made **'on the first day of the week,'** that is, according to the interpretation of St. Chrysostom, on the Lord's Day;" (pages 264, 265).*

SDA top scholar Samuel Bacchiocchi showed that Ellen White and the SDA denomination's claim that Pope changed the Sabbath were false: "*I differ from Ellen White, for example, on the origin of Sunday. She teaches that in the first centuries all Christians observed the Sabbath and it was largely through the efforts of Constantine that Sunday keeping was adopted by many Christians in the fourth century. My research shows otherwise.*" ("Free Catholic Mailing List" on 8 Feb 1997).

Another SDA scholar, C. Mervyn Maxwell, Ph.D., professor of church history at Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan writes: "*There is little evidence that **the sun** occupied the unique position attributed to it by some modern authors. When the Emperor Caracalla tried to impose sun worship in the early years of the third century, the Romans laughed at him. Although sun worship has always played a role*

*in pagan religions, it wasn't until the end of that century (3rd century) that the sun enjoyed real prominence among the Roman gods—and by that time **many Christians, at least, had been observing Sunday for 150 years.** In his Apology addressed to the Roman Government, the great Christian writer Tertullian specifically refuted the charge that Christians worshiped on Sunday in honor of the sun” (Source: Ministry Magazine, 1977).*

Does Daniel 7 Describe an Investigative Judgment of the Righteous as SDA's teach? Notice the order of events presented in Daniel 7:

- Little horn came up (v. 8)
- Little horn spoke great things (v. 8)
- The judgment was set (v. 10)
- The beast was slain and burned (v. 11)

There is nothing in this sequence of events about investigating the deeds of the righteous. The context is that the little horn spoke blasphemous words, and then judgment occurred. The very next event after the judgment was the destruction of the beast. The only conclusion that can be arrived at from reading this passage is that the ones being judged are the little horn and the beast power. Now notice the sequence in the latter, interpretive section of the chapter:

- Little horn arises (v. 24)
- Little horn speaks against Most High (v. 25)
- Little horn persecutes saints for 1260 days (v. 25)
- The judgment shall sit (v. 26)
- The little horn's dominion is taken away (v. 26)
- The little horn's kingdom is given to the saints (v. 27)

Daniel 8:1-27 The rise of another little horn

In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously (Daniel 8:1)

The third year of the reign of King Belshazzar: This vision happened while Babylon was securely in power. Though the vision will deal with the emergence and destiny of the Greek Empire, the Greek Empire was not much of anything at the time the prophecy came to Daniel.

I looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal (Daniel 8:2).

Daniel was in **Susa** or **Shushan** (in Persia) on business for the king (Daniel 8:27).

Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last (Daniel 8:3)

A ram which had two horns. In this same chapter (Daniel 8:20) this **ram** was clearly identified as representing the Medo-Persian Empire, which succeeded the Babylonian Empire.

Two horns were long, but one was longer than the other. The ram was noted for the proportion of its two horns – one was higher than the other. This was an accurate prediction of the partnership between the Medes and the Persians, because the Persians were larger and stronger in the partnership. They also emerged *after* the Medes (the longer one coming up last).

I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself (Daniel 8:4).

Butting westward, northward, and southward: The Medo-Persian Empire exerted its power to the north, south, and west. It took territory but made no major conquests towards the east.

While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes (Daniel 8:5)

A male goat came from the west. In this same chapter (Daniel 8:21-22) this male goat was clearly identified with Greece and its horns are identified with the rulers of the Greek Empire. The goat was a common representation of the Greek Empire.

Over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground. This prophetic description of the male goat was proved to be accurate regarding the Greek Empire. The Greek Empire rose from the west of previous empires. The Greek Empire rose with great speed suddenly (without touching the ground). The Greek Empire had a notable ruler (horn), Alexander the Great.

He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath (Daniel 8:6).

The Greek Empire had a famous war with the Medo-Persian Empire.

I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. (Daniel 8:7)

The Greek Empire and the Medo-Persian Empire greatly hated each other (was enraged at him). Some of the greatest, fiercest battles of ancient history were fought between the Greeks and the Persians. The Greek Empire conquered the Medo-Persian Empire and no one could rescue the ram from the Greek Empire.

Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven (Daniel 8:8)

Male goat magnified himself exceedingly. Male goat gained dominance exceedingly.

But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken. The reign of the notable leader of the Greek Empire (Alexander) was suddenly cut short (the large horn was broken).

And in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven. After the end of Alexander the Great's reign, the Greek Empire was divided among four rulers (**in its place, there came up four notable horns**). The four rulers of the Greek Empire ruled their own dominions, not the entire empire together. That is why it is said, the four rulers came up "toward the four winds of heaven". Alexander did not divide the empire among his four generals himself. His four leading generals divided it among themselves by force after his death. The four generals were:

1) Cassander, ruling over Greece and its region. 2) Lysimachus, ruling over Asia Minor. 3) Seleucus, ruling over Syria and Israel's land. 4) Ptolemy, ruling over Egypt. The "four winds" refers to the four directions of the earth : north, south, east, and west (Jeremiah 49:36; Matthew 24:31).

Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land (Daniel 8:9)

Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn. Out of one of them, meaning out of one of the four horns (out of the divided Grecian empire), and not out of the four winds, came a little horn. It is a little horn that comes up, and not a little wind. Horns are attached to animals in the visions and only horns beget horns—the "little horn" comes out of one of the four Greek horns of the male goat. Horns are never pictured as coming out of the winds. Even if winds are meant, this little horn rises from the divided Grecian empire that spread dominion across the four winds or directions of the earth. This is further proved by Daniel 8:23, when it says the little horn (a king) will rise, "*during the latter time of their rule*". Whose rule? Daniel 8:22 gives the answer. The rule of the "*four kingdoms (four generals of Alexander) which will arise from his nation (Greece)*".

Daniel 8:9, 23 says the little horn would originate from one of the four divisions of Alexander's empire when these were in their "latter time of their rule" (Daniel 8:23). This points us toward a power originating from the Greek world sometime after 300BC. Rome was never part of the Alexandrian Empire, nor did it originate from one of the divisions of the Greek Empire. Rome came from Italy, and was founded in 750BC. Rome became a republic in 509BC. Rome did conquer the four divisions of the Grecian empire, but this is further proof that Rome did not arise from any of the four divisions of Alexander's empire. Therefore, Rome could not possibly fit the prophetic symbol of a horn arising from a horn within the Greek Empire.

Which grew exceeding great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the beautiful land. This was fulfilled by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who arose from one of the four successors to Alexander the Great. Antiochus' sphere of operations was precisely in the three areas that Daniel mentions. He was "exceedingly great" not compared to the previous empires,

but toward the south (Egypt), toward the east (Armenia & Persia), and toward the beautiful land (Israel). This is not true of Rome. Many of Rome's greatest conquests were to the North and West of Rome. Rome conquered large regions of northwestern Europe, the areas now occupied by England, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, and Portugal. Rome also conquered the northwestern regions of Africa, areas now occupied by Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia. Rome was definitely a power that waxed exceeding great to the north and to the west. Therefore, Rome cannot fit the specification of this prophecy.

Seventh-day Adventist's argue pointing to "exceeding great", that Antiochus was not "exceedingly great" compared with Persia and Greece. Again, verse 9 never says the little horn will be exceedingly great in comparison to Persia and Greece or the previous powers. The little horn is not compared with other powers, but merely said to wax "exceedingly great" in three regions: to the south, the east, and the pleasant land. Antiochus was not a big horn on a big stage. He was a little horn that played a big role on a little stage. His conquering of Egypt and his attack against Judaism can certainly be described as "exceedingly great" on the stage of Middle Eastern history during this time period. It can be argued that of all the foes of Judaism, Antiochus Epiphanes came the closest to stamping out the religion. His attack upon Judaism can only be described as "exceedingly great."

It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down (Daniel 8:10)

It grew up to the host of heaven. This verse is not talking about heavenly beings, because no empire, not even Rome, has cast down heavenly beings. Both the Bible and the Jewish Apocrypha use similar language to describe the priests and rulers of the Hebrew people.

“So it will happen in that day, That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high, and the kings of the earth on earth” (Isaiah 24:21).

“And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:41).

Some of the stars to fall to the earth. The terms stars of heaven (Genesis 12:3 and 15:5) and the hosts of the LORD (Exodus 12:41) are used of God's people in general. "*Behold, I have had yet another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon, and eleven **stars** were bowing down to me.*" (Genesis 37:9).

And trampled them. Antiochus was an infamous persecutor of the Jewish people. He wanted them to submit to Greek culture and customs and was more than willing to use murder and violence to compel them.

It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down (Daniel 8:11)

Magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host. Captain of the host is a term that was used for leaders of Israel: "*The third **captain of the host** for the third month was Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest: and in his course were twenty and four thousand*" (1 Chronicles 27:5).

When Judaea and Jerusalem were under the domination of foreign empires, **the priesthood of Jerusalem** played an important political role, the priests serving also as **leaders of the Jewish communities**.

Antiochus magnified himself to be equal to the leader of Israel and he did this literally, during his rule, when the high priest, Onias, was driven into exile and later killed in the cruelest manner, and he installed his own high priest. Furthermore, Antiochus figuratively magnified himself to the ultimate Prince of the host, God Himself. His surname, **Theo Antiochus**, declared him to be an effulgence in human form of the Divine, **a god manifest in the flesh** (see Edwin Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, vol. 2, p. 154).

Removed the regular sacrifice from Him. The sacrifice that was offered regularly or daily (*tamid*) in the temple by the High Priest, morning and evening, was suspended. Antiochus Epiphanes put a stop to temple sacrifices in Jerusalem.

And the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the earthly temple of the High Priest and of God.

And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper (Daniel 8:12)

And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice. Because of transgression of the Jews, an army was given over to the little horn to oppose the daily sacrifices. This was fulfilled in the terrors of Antiochus Epiphanes. The Jews, especially their leaders, invited God's judgment upon them through Antiochus because of their sin.

The Bible says these calamities came upon the Jews "on account of transgression." In other words, it was the sins of the Jews that brought this calamity upon themselves. It was the Jews who actually took the initiative in Hellenizing Jerusalem during this time period. A deputation of leading Jews came to Antiochus, shortly after he took power, begging for permission to convert Jerusalem into an Antioch and erect the essential mark of a Hellenic city, the gymnasium. Later, after Antiochus installed his own high priest, the gymnasium was built and soon thronged with young priests, pursuing the Hellenic ideal of bodily strength and beauty. (See Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, vol. 2, pp. 168-181).

Fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper. Antiochus, and his host and army did all these. Abolish true religion and godliness; he cut in pieces the copies of the book of the law and burnt them.

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled? (Daniel 8:13)

Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking. Daniel did not know the names of these two holy angels, but saw only that one was speaking to the other.

How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply. How long shall the daily sacrifice (*tamid*), that is offered morning and evening, be

suspended or trampled? The “daily” (*tamid*) sacrifice in the Hebrew sanctuary was a whole sweet-savor burnt offering which began each evening (*'ereb*) and again began each morning (*boqer*) of the year, including on the Day of Atonement.

While the transgression causes horror so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled. That is, how long will the vision about the daily sacrifice (offered morning and evening) being suspended continue while the act of iniquity (transgression) by Antiochus continues to cause such horror and desolation in the holy place (this is the entire sanctuary, not just the Most Holy place) and the trampling (persecution) of the host (Jews). The height of horror and desolation happened when Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the entire temple of God by offering sacrifices to idols upon the holy altar of God.

Daniel did not ask this question; he heard the holy ones speaking together and one of them asked this question. They wanted to know how long the **sacrifices** (*tamid*) would be suspended and how long the entire **sanctuary** would be desecrated, and the **host** (Jews) trampled? The next verse should answer this question, “how long”.

He said to me, for 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored (Daniel 8:14).

He said to me, for 2,300 evenings and mornings. How long? 2,300 evening and morning sacrifices would be suspended while the entire sanctuary was profaned. The Hebrew word for evening and mornings is *'ereb-boqer*. It is not the usual Hebrew word, *yom* for day, that is used here.

Then the holy place will be properly restored. After 2,300 evening and morning sacrifices, the holy place (entire sanctuary) will be cleansed, restored, and vindicated. The Hebrew word used for restored is *“tsadaq”*. A defiled “daily sacrifice” and “sanctuary” could only be restored by “dedication” and not by a Day of Atonement method of “cleansing”. Thus, Daniel 8:14 uses the Hebrew word *“tsadaq”* instead of *“ta-heer”*, which is the word used in Leviticus 16:19 for cleansing the sanctuary from the general sinfulness of God’s people. The only logical reason for using *tsa-da-q* (for re-dedication) in Daniel 8:14 instead of *ta-heer* (from Leviticus 16:19) is

because the defilement of the daily and the sanctuary was caused by the little horn and **not by the sins of God's people**.

The Sanctuary was cleansed and restored by Judas Maccabeus (a Jew) when he purified the holy places, sanctified the courts, rebuilt the altar, renewed the vessels of the sanctuary, and put all in their proper places. This is recorded in history as follows:

*"Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had **cleansed the sanctuary**. So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: Who **cleansed the sanctuary**, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place" (1 Maccabees 4:41-51).*

Hanukkah (the Feast of dedication) has been the Jewish festival that commemorates the purification and rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus after Antiochus defilement. Jesus attended the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-24) while on earth.

So, we are told after 2300 evening and morning sacrifices, the holy place (sanctuary) will be cleansed, restored, and vindicated (*"tsadaq"*). How do we make sense of 2,300? Some scholars prefer 2,300 actual days, while others prefer 1,150 days, with two sacrifices per day, for a total of 2300 evening-morning sacrifices. Interestingly enough, there are good reasons for both periods. Here it is:

a) 2300 days (2300 daily sacrifices): Starting on the fifteenth day of the month Cisleu, in the year 145 of the Selucidae (165 BC), Antiochus set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar (1 Maccabees 1:59), to the victory obtained over Nicanor by Judas, on the 13th day of the month Adar, Anno 151 (171 BC), are 2,300 days. The Jews kept an annual feast on the 13th of Adar, in commemoration of the victory.

b) 1150 days (2300 morning and evening sacrifices): Beginning with the desecration of the alter on the first day of the month Marchesvan, 168 BC. Ending with the reconsecration of the alter on the 25th day of Kislev, 165 BC.

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man (Daniel 8:15).

Daniel seeks to know the meaning of the vision, which is imparted to him by Gabriel.

And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision (Daniel 8:16).

Voice of man, probably God, said to Gabriel: explain it to Daniel so that he will understand its meaning. Now Gabriel better make Daniel understand the vision. If not, he will not have obeyed the command of God.

So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end (Daniel 8:17)

He came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face. Gabriel came near Daniel, that he might speak more familiarly to him, yet Daniel could not bear the glory of him.

Understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end. The time of the end is not our time of the end, but the “latter time of their rule” (Daniel 8:23), that is, the rule of the four Greek kings coming out of Alexander the Great, which happens “many days from now” (Daniel 8:26) to Daniel. Scholars often call this provisional, contextual “end”, the prophet’s own “eschatological horizon” and not the actual “end.”

Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright (Daniel 8:18)

When Gabriel spoke to him, Daniel fell paralysed and motionless— being terrified and astonished with the splendour and grandeur both of the messenger and message. But Gabriel restored him up.

He said, Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end (Daniel 8:19)

I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation. The final period of the indignation is the afflictions permitted to be brought upon the Jewish people.

For it pertains to the appointed time of the end. The appointed time of the end is not our time of the end, but the “latter time of their rule” (Daniel 8:23), that is, the rule of the four Greek kings coming out of Alexander the Great.

The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power (Daniel 8:20-22).

Ram represents kings of Media and Persia. Goat represents Greece. Four horns were fulfilled in history by the four generals who divided Alexander’s Empire between them, but they did not have the same power that Alexander had, that is why it is said “not with his power”.

In the latter time of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue (Daniel 8:23)

In the latter time of their rule. That is during the “time of the end” or “end times” of the Grecian empire when four generals were ruling the empire.

When the transgressors have run their course. That is, when the state of things, the prevalence of wickedness and irreligion in Judea, shall have been allowed to continue as long as it can be or so that the cup of sin shall be full. Then shall appear this formidable power during the latter days of the Grecian empire to inflict deserved punishment (indignation) on the guilty nation (Jews).

A king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. When will this King arise? 1) In the latter of their rule meaning when Greece was divided into four dominions. 2) When sins of the Jews have run their course. Here again, it is clear this little horn arises from the divided Grecian empire, and not Rome. He is insolent and skilled in intrigue. This is the very just character of Antiochus, according to Diodorus, Polybius, and all the historians.

His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people (Daniel 8:24-25)

Antiochus Epiphanes was mighty, but not solely by his power, for he was empowered by Satan. Antiochus Epiphanes looked like a total success. Antiochus Epiphanes not only destroyed his enemies (mighty men), but also harshly persecuted the people of God (Jews).

And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency (Daniel 8:26)

He shall exalt himself in his heart. The coins of Antiochus Epiphanes were inscribed with this title: THEOS EPIPHANIES meaning, “God manifest.”

He will even oppose the Prince of princes. Though Antiochus Epiphanes hated the people of God and fought against them, it was because he really hated God.

Broken without human means: History tells us that Antiochus Epiphanes died of disease, not by the hand of man.

The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, For it pertains to many days in the future (Daniel 8:26)

The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true. The vision of the suspension of 2300 evening and morning sacrifices and the desecration of the earthly sanctuary is certain.

But keep the vision secret. The revelation is to be kept safe and sealed.

For it pertains to many days in the future. When the “time of the end” of the Grecian empire comes, then this vision would no longer be “secret” and “sealed” but would begin to be understood by the original audience, the Jews. We see this unsealing of the book of Daniel predicted for the “time of the end” taking place when the Jews began reading and understanding the prophecies of Daniel, probably shortly after the end of the Babylonian captivity or at the latest when the book of Daniel became part of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the unsealing of Daniel in the “time of the end” is parallel to “the latter part [future] of their [Grecian] rule” in Daniel 8:23, that is, the rule of the four Greek kings coming out of Alexander the Great, which happens “many days in the future” (Daniel 8:26) for Daniel.

Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the kings business; but I was astounded at the vision, but none understood (Daniel 8:27)

Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business. Daniel was sick—through grief at the calamities coming on the Jews. He carried on the king's business. What business is not stated; nor can we be sure (Daniel 5:13).

But I was astounded at the vision, and but none understood. Daniel does not say, "*but I was astounded at the vision, and [but I did not understand]*". Then did no one understand the vision? Or did no one understand Daniel's reaction to the vision? This probably means *no one perceived* (1 Samuel 3:8) that Daniel had a vision, or of what nature it was. It appears "not understanding" was referring to the people Daniel worked with during King's business who did not comprehend why Daniel was ill and depressed. To make the claim that Daniel failed to understand this vision thus requiring a second visit from Gabriel later, one must first assume the angel failed in his first mission. However, in Daniel 8:16 a voice commanded, "Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision." Besides, regarding the visions of Daniel, Daniel himself writes later, "*none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand*" (Daniel 12:10).

SDA interpretation

1) According to Seventh-day Adventists, the "little horn" of Daniel 7 did not have its beginning until the 4th beast was divided into 10 kingdoms, which, according to Adventist interpretation, happened in 476 AD. The "little horn" of Daniel 8 was to come up "in the latter time of their kingdom" (Daniel 8:23). "Their kingdom" refers to the four divisions of the Alexandrian Empire. The "latter time" or last days of the four kingdoms was 200BC to 100BC. **Therefore, the little horn of Daniel 8 arose six centuries before the little horn of Daniel 7 (using the SDA date of 476 AD)!** This difference in timing is strong evidence that the two "little horn" powers are not the same. They arise at vastly different points in human history.

2) According to SDAs, the 2300 days began in 457 BC and ended in 1844 AD. During this time period the little horn of Daniel 8 is supposed to be "treading underfoot" the sanctuary. According to SDA teaching, this began with pagan Rome treading underfoot the earthly sanctuary, and then later became papal Rome treading underfoot the heavenly sanctuary. This presents a whole host of dilemmas:

- Rome did not have any contact with the Jewish nation until 161 BC. How could the little horn have begun its desecrating work in 457 BC, 296 years before it even came into contact with the Jewish state? Rome had no part whatsoever in the activities of 457 BC and thus could not possibly be the "little horn" described in Daniel 8.
- If Papal Rome is the little horn of Daniel 8 during the latter part of the 2300 days, then what happened to papal Rome on October 22, 1844? Did the Papacy suddenly stop defiling the Sanctuary in 1844? Was it "broken without hand" (Daniel 8:25) in 1844? Why is there no event in papal history to coincide with the end of the 2300 days?
- If pagan Rome neither persecuted the Jews nor stopped the sacrifices in 457 BC, and if there is no event in papal history to coincide with the close of the 2300 days in 1844, then how can we possibly attach Rome to this prophecy?

3) Is the sanctuary of Daniel 8:13-14 the heavenly sanctuary?

Notice the question: "**How long** shall...the sanctuary...be trampled?" (Daniel 8:13)

The answer is 2300 evenings-mornings. This puts the Seventh-day Adventists in a dilemma, because they insist that the sanctuary being "cleansed" in verse 14 is **the heavenly sanctuary**.

However, according to their own calculations, the papacy did not arrive until after 476 AD—nearly a millennium after the 2,300 years started! **Who was trampling the sanctuary for 934 years before the rise of the papacy?** Seventh-day Adventists claim that "Imperial Rome" trampled the earthly temple in 70AD when it was destroyed by Roman armies, but that was **the earthly**, not the heavenly temple. If the sanctuary is the heavenly

sanctuary in verse 14, then how could it be the earthly sanctuary in verse 13, since verse 13 is a question being answered in verse 14?

The truth is that there has **never in human history been a 2300-year period** where the sanctuary in heaven (or on earth) was trodden under foot. **This fact alone should prove that the SDA interpretation does not fit historical facts and is therefore invalid.**

From a Protestant viewpoint, Seventh-day Adventists are actually more guilty of “casting down the truth” about Christ’s high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary than are Roman Catholics. SDAs deny that Christ has been performing a uniquely high priestly ministry inside the Most Holy Place since His ascension. SDAs have destroyed the “truth” about any activity by Christ *as high priest* before 1844.

Daniel 9:1-23 Daniel's prayer about the 70-year prophesy

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years (Daniel 9:1-2)

In the first year of his reign. This is during the reign of King Darius, from the Median empire. Darius was a sub-king under Cyrus the Persian or perhaps another name for Cyrus.

I, Daniel, observed in the books. Daniel understood something from reading the words of God's prophets. Prophecy is meant to be understood – perhaps not in every detail, but certainly in its main points.

The number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah. His study of prophecy showed him a *specific number* – the 70 years described in Jeremiah 25:11-13 and Jeremiah 29:10, and his knowledge of the times led him to know those passages applied to his time. *“For this is what the Lord says: ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place’”* (Jeremiah 29:10).

For the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Daniel believed that God would restore the temple after the completion of the seventy years of Jewish captivity in Babylon and Jerusalem being left to desolations and ruins. In 605 B.C, Jerusalem was attacked and Daniel and other captives were taken to Babylon. The first year of Darius was 538/539 B.C, which was still three or four years before 70 years had passed from 605 B.C. Now Daniel is hoping God will restore the Jewish people back as Jeremiah's 70 years is about to end. So, he begins to pray to God.

So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (Daniel 9:3)

I gave my attention. This implies *determination* in prayer. Daniel had a goal to reach through prayer, and he approached God as a man who would not be denied.

Seek Him by prayer and supplications. He made a request, *asking* God to perform His promise in the way that Daniel thought would bring God most glory.

Fasting, sackcloth and ashes. This reflected Daniel's humble heart in approaching God. Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes are emblems of humiliation and mourning.

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments (Daniel 9:4)

Daniel began his prayer where we all should – by recognizing the greatness and goodness of God. Sometimes we approach God as if He were a stingy person who must be persuaded to give us anything. But Daniel knew the problem was not with God. God **keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him.**

We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. 6 "Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land (Daniel 9:5-6)

As Daniel confessed Israel's sin he prayed as if he were as bad as the rest of Israel. This was a confession of **we**, not *they*. In this sense, *they* prayers never really reach God; genuine **we** prayers see self correctly and see our fellow saints with compassion.

"Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day--to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You (Daniel 9:7)

Daniel knew that Israel's sin was not God's fault; God was utterly righteous and blameless. Any **shame of face** belonged to Israel, not to God.

"Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets (Daniel 9:8-9)

Daniel did not make the slightest excuse for Israel's sin. He knew the fault belonged to Israel and Israel alone. We are prone to make excuses for our sin and often even make excuses in our "confessions."

"Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him "Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem (Daniel 9:10-12)

Daniel realized that even in His judgment against Israel, God was totally faithful to His Word. He promised that curses would come upon a disobedient Israel (in passages like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) in the law of Moses and they did.

"As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth (Daniel 9:13)

As Daniel confessed his sin and the sin of Israel, he remembered the sin of *prayerlessness*. Even when they faced great trial and calamity, Israel still did not make their **prayer before the LORD**. When we sense trial or

difficulty, it should drive us *immediately* to prayer – when we are not so driven, it should be a wake-up call to the coldness of our heart.

"Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. 15 "And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day--we have sinned, we have been wicked (Daniel 9:14-15)

As Daniel prayed, he remembered that the LORD delivered Israel from Egypt. He remembers the Old Testament standard of God's power, the deliverance from Egypt. The New Testament standard of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus (Ephesians 1:19-20).

"O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary (Daniel 9:16-17)

After his confession of Israel's sin and God's great righteousness, Daniel simply asked God to mercifully turn His kind attention to Jerusalem and the temple (**let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary**). He also asked that God would do this without delay (**for your sake**). Daniel's prayer was consumed with the glory of God, not primarily with the benefit of man. His purpose in prayer was to see God's work accomplished and His cause glorified.

"O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion (Daniel 9:18)

Even before the time of the New Testament, Daniel prayed on firm New Testament ground. His confidence wasn't in *his* goodness, but in *God's* goodness.

"O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name (Daniel 9:19)

Daniel prayed like a great wrestler, eager to gain an advantage. He sensed God's openness to each request and he responded with many rapid requests.

Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering (Daniel 9:20-21)

Now while I was speaking and praying. This dramatic answer to prayer came even as Daniel prayed.

Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me. Gabriel, who spoke earlier in vision (Daniel 8), came quickly because there is no great distance between heaven and earth.

About the time of the evening offering. As a young man in Jerusalem, Daniel often saw the smoke rising from the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice. Gabriel comes to Daniel at such a time. This was a special time of day, when Moses offered the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:6) and when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:45).

He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding (Daniel 9:22).

In his prayer, Daniel didn't ask for understanding. His prayer demonstrated that his heart was close to God's heart, so as a friend, God revealed many things to Daniel (John 15:15).

At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision (Daniel 9:23)

For you are highly esteemed. Both Daniel and the Apostle John (John 13:23) were noted for their love-relationship with God. Both Daniel and John were also noted for receiving amazing prophetic messages from God.

So give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. Which vision? The vision that Daniel is about to explain from verse 24. Daniel had just considered the vision of 70 years upon the nation of Israel; the 70 years of promised captivity prophesied by Jeremiah. Now God says through Gabriel, "Now I will show you another 70 'sevens' that will really amaze you. The verses that will follow will explain it.

Seventh-day Adventist's teach that the vision [*mareh*] in Daniel 9:23 is a reference to 2300 days of Daniel 8:26. Apparently Daniel did not understand that vision, and Gabriel has now come to explain that vision. All of this is done to find a starting date for 2300 days (years according to SDAs). So, they say, 490 years in Daniel 9:24 are cut off from 2,300 years. Problems with this view:

- The context does not support such an interpretation, even remotely. Besides, 2300 days are not years. The Hebrew for evening and mornings is '*ereb-boqer*'. It is not the usual Hebrew word, *yom*, for day.
- Daniel never says, "I did not understand the vision", he says "*none understood*" (Daniel 8:27), probably a reference to the people who worked with Daniel who may have not understood the vision Daniel may have shared with them or who may not

have observed Daniel's reaction to the vision. He was feeling sick for many days after the vision.

- In Daniel 8:16, God commands, "*Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision*". If Daniel did not understand the vision, then Gabriel failed in his mission.
- In Daniel 8:26, Gabriel told Daniel to keep the vision sealed and "secret". If Gabriel told Daniel to seal and shut up the vision, then the vision would still be sealed after 11 years when Gabriel appeared to Daniel in Daniel chapter 9.
- It is not unusual to refer to the vision, before giving the vision. In Daniel 10:21, an angel tells Daniel, "*I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth*" (Daniel 10:21). The "writing of truth" is only revealed in Daniel 11:2 onwards.

Summary: So, did you notice what happened in Daniel 9:1-23 so far. In 605 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be taken captive in Babylon for 70 years and that Jerusalem and its First Temple would be destroyed. He also prophesied that at the end of this 70-year period, Babylon would fall. In 539 B.C., Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia. Consequently, in that very year, during the reign of Cyrus, sensing the completion of Jeremiah's prophecy, Daniel prays for the restoration of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:1-23). Daniel thought the 70 years had come to an end already, and in fact the Babylonian Empire had recently been overtaken by the Persians, yet the return to Jerusalem had not occurred. He feared that they were not worthy of the prophesied redemption and that it was going to be delayed. He began fasting and praying, beseeching God for His forgiveness, until the angel Gabriel came to him and clarified the future events – when the Second Temple would be rebuilt and how long it would stand. Gabriel now will respond to Daniel's prayer with a new vision: the famous prophecy of the 70 weeks.

Daniel 9:24-27 God's answer: 70 weeks prophesy

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place” (Daniel 9:24)

Daniel was told to give heed to the message and consider the vision that the angel was about to explain. Here is the vision explained.

Seventy weeks (sevens) have been decreed. Most Jews know the Hebrew for "*weeks*" because of the observance of the **Feast of Weeks**, and that Hebrew word is **shavuot**. However, the word that appears in the Hebrew text is **shavuim**, which means "*sevens*." The word refers to a "seven" of anything, and the context determines the content of the seven. Seventy weeks here refers to **seventy times seven (70x7)**, which gives us 490 years. By the way, the year-day principle is totally irrelevant and absent here. So, we have a total period of 490 years which are decreed (determined) for whom and what?

For your people and your holy city. Daniel's people would clearly be the **nation Israel**. But there is more. It is also decreed on Daniel's **holy city**. There is only one holy city that Daniel was interested in and that was the city of Jerusalem. If the 70 weeks are decreed for the holy city as well, then we have an indication here that the termination of the 70 weeks or 490 years must be associated with some significant event that affect Jerusalem. If this is so, then we can expect to see something said about the holy city, Jerusalem, in this vision. Thus, apart from the 70 years of actual exile, there would be an additional 490 years determined for Israel, until the Second Temple will stand.

What will happen when the 70 weeks are fulfilled? Daniel was told that by the end of the seventy weeks (490 years), God will do six things, three concerning sin, and three concerning salvation. Here they are.

To finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt. The mention of three things concerning sin: wrongdoing (transgression), sin, and guilt is significant in light of Daniel's prayer, which confessed Israel's sin (Daniel 9:4–15) and pleaded for mercy and forgiveness (Daniel 9:16–19). God was saying to Daniel, "I will take care

of the sin once for all. Atonement will be accomplished during the period of 490 years”.

To bring in everlasting righteousness. This is the first item concerning salvation. To bring in everlasting righteousness could be translated "to bring in an age of righteousness," since the Hebrew "olam" can be translated as "age" rather than as "everlasting." This could also refer to the justified state of the one who has faith in Christ (Rom. 3:21-22). The age of righteousness will be made available during the 490 years.

To seal up vision and prophecy. This probably means to authenticate “visions and prophecy” meaning prior revelation and prophecies would be fulfilled regarding the matters mentioned here, particularly about the coming anointed one.

To anoint the most holy place. Part of God’s atoning plan included anointing a “most holy” or, probably more accurately, “most holy one.” No anointing was ever reported for Solomon’s temple or the rebuilt temple under Ezra (aside from the single reference to Moses's anointing of the wilderness tabernacle in Lev. 8:10-11). An individual, not a structure, is meant here. All of the above things (atonement for wrongdoing, sin, guilt, the age righteousness, authenticating previous prophecies, and anointing a most holy one) will be accomplished during the 490 years. What else will happen during the 490 years? But first, the 490 years have a starting point.

So you are to know and understand that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with streets and moat, even in times of distress. (Daniel 9:25)

So you are to know and understand that from the issuing of a decree. Issuing of a decree is the starting point for the 490-year period.

Decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. It is a decree that gives permission for the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. A few dates are offered by scholars. We will look at them later.

Until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks. So, here we see the 70 weeks are broken into parts. From the going out of the decree to

restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of Messiah, the prince, at first, there will be “seven weeks” or 49 years.

And sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with streets and moat, even in times of distress. The next “sixty-two weeks” or 434 years specify that Jerusalem “shall be built again with streets and moat, even in a troubled time.”

The first “seven” and next “sixty-two” weeks seem to deal with the whole period of time (that is $49 + 434 = 483$ years) which covers the “going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of Messiah, the prince”.

The “streets and moat” were mentioned probably to indicate complete restoration. Moats refer to a trench cut into the rock on the exterior walls of a city in order to make the wall a strong defense from enemies. Gabriel did not elaborate on the “**times of distress**,” but it may refer to the atrocities committed by the Greek Empire under Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Then after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:27)

Then after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. Gabriel’s next words, “after the sixty-two weeks,” or 430 years indicate the 70th week (the last 7 years) is now in view. This “anointed one” is the prophesied Messiah, a figure fulfilled by Jesus, the “Christ”, i.e., the anointed one (Luke 2:11). The prediction that this anointed one would be “cut off and shall have nothing” was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross. He was taken outside the city gate and crucified, abandoned by his disciples and forsaken by the Father (Matt. 26:31; 27:60; Heb. 13:12–13). The 70th week of Daniel, then, included the redemptive work of Jesus.

The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Now we are still in the 70th week, the last 7 years of the 490-year period. Who is the “prince who is to come”? It is possible the “prince” who is to come is Titus, the Roman general, whose armies destroyed the city

of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 AD by God's permission. However, it is also possible that the "prince who is to come" is the same "prince" (or "anointed one") in verse 25: that is the Messiah, Jesus. This means "the people of the prince" were the Jews. The prophecy may seem outrageous, then, when it says the Jews will destroy Jerusalem and the temple! After the redemptive work of Jesus, the temple was destroyed in AD 70, and the Jews had a role in it. The Romans, led by Titus, were involved in the destruction, but the transgression of the Jews—particularly their rejection of the Messiah—led to the Messiah's judgment on their Second Temple and city, just as they were complicit when the First Temple was destroyed in Daniel's own day. The account of this event given by Josephus, in *The Wars of the Jews*, states, there "*is adequate historical proof that the destruction of Jerusalem was entirely the fault of the Jewish people, just as Dan 9:26 predicts.*"

And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. Gabriel's words were fulfilled in AD 70. The temple's end came like a flood of an invading army, with a war, for God had **determined its desolation** (ruin). The imagery "with a flood" pictures the total destruction by the Romans' over Jerusalem. Jesus had warned His followers of this event, quoting Daniel's words explicitly telling them that they should flee Jerusalem, "*Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through **Daniel the prophet**, standing in the **holy place**—let the reader understand, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*" (Matt. 24:15,16). "*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her **desolation is near.***" (Luke 21:20). Here will see that the termination of the 70 weeks which were decreed on "your people and your city" is associated with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus.

And he will confirm a covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come the one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate (Daniel 9:27)

And he will confirm a covenant with many for one week. Speaking of the anointed one, the prince who would come, Gabriel declared, “*He shall make a strong covenant with many [in or during] one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.*” The “one week” in view is the 70th week or 7 years. Gabriel was referring to the Messiah’s redemptive work as taking place in the climactic period of the 70th week.

The Messiah would make this covenant with “many” (Dan. 9:27; cf. Isa. 53:11–12), which seems to denote not universality but diversity: the new covenant would include Jewish and Gentile believers. God would bring “many” others into a covenant relation with God, besides Israel.

But in the middle of the week, he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering. The book of Hebrews explains that the Messiah’s vicarious offering has put an end to the sacrificial system (Heb. 9:11–10:25). The seventieth week (or 7 years), then, is divided further into half, with the first 3.5 years referring to the work of redemption.

And on the wing of abominations. “Wing” may mean “extreme”. Extreme or overspreading abominations would be in view brought about by a swiftly attacking Roman army, which was permitted by God on the Jewish people.

The one who makes desolate until a complete destruction. “The one who makes desolate” appears to be God who permitted complete destruction on the temple. This is what Jesus prophesied would take place when Rome invaded Judea and the “holy place” was desolated. In 66 AD, the armies of Rome, Syria, and Arabia encompassed Jerusalem. Approximately 3.5 years after Jerusalem was encompassed, the city and sanctuary were destroyed in 70 AD. The effects of the destruction are said in Dan. 9:27 to last “until a complete destruction”. Jesus explained:

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24)

Thus, the desolation spoken by Daniel that commenced in 70 AD continues to this very day, with Jerusalem a divided city occupied by Muslims, Christians, and other gentiles, and the temple is still in a state of destruction.

One that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate. However, destined judgement will also come down upon its desolator, its empire, as we saw the Roman empire is judged in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. Alternatively, some translations appear to say of the last verse: “*determined [judgement] shall be poured upon the desolate [Jerusalem]*.”

Making sense of the dates of the 70-week prophesy

When is the starting date?

The period of the 490 years begins with the word going out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (9:25). However, there are three historical events which could be described this way:

- a. **The decree of Cyrus (538 BC)** allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (1 Chr 36:22, Ezra 1:2-4).
- b. **The decree of Artaxerxes in (457/458 BC)** allowing the return of Ezra with a larger group of exiles in the seventh year of Artaxerxes to teach the law to Israel (Ezra 7:7). It was Ezra who restored the people spiritually and led the people in a renewal of the covenant (Nehemiah 9).
- c. **The decree of Artaxerxes (444 BC)** allowing Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem as governor to rebuild the walls of the city (Nehemiah 2:1-8).

Possible interpretations

1) The decree of Artaxerxes in (457/458 BC).

- Some prefer this date as it fits “better” with the math.
- 457/458BC would bring the 69th week of Daniel or 434 years to completion in AD 27/28, which is said to be the time when Jesus began his ministry. Then, he was “cut off” in AD30/31, the midst of the 70th week, and last 3.5 years were fulfilled by the stoning of Stephen or Paul taking the gospel to gentiles.
- **Problems with this view is:**
 - The decree of Artaxerxes (457BC) in Ezra 7:14–26 says nothing about rebuilding the temple or Jerusalem. To the contrary, it assumes that the city had now been successfully settled and was now ready to be properly governed (Ezra 7:25).
 - Was the stoning of Stephen the terminating point of the 70-week prophecy? Daniel 9:24 states: “*Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your **holy city***”.
 - Nothing of significance happened to either the Jewish people or the city of Jerusalem when Stephen was stoned in AD34. Some Christians may have fled Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen, but the Apostles stayed (Acts 8:1) and the Jerusalem church continued witnessing there until all the Christians fled Jerusalem just prior to 70 AD.
 - Some have said that the 70 weeks being determined on the “Holy City” may be explained by the fact that “the Temple and Holy City” are often spoken of as a **unit**, both by Isaiah 44:28 and Daniel (9:16–18, 26). When the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was ripped in two (Luke 23:45), and Messiah confirmed the new covenant, God abandoned His “temple and the holy city”. But this happened when Christ was crucified in the middle of 70th week. So, this still does not explain the last 3.5 years.
 - Some other says, in order to give the Jews more than enough opportunity to repent and to accept Jesus as the Messiah, God stopped the prophetic clock for forty years. God waited to complete the fulfillment of the prophecy– the judgment on those Jews who rejected the Messiah and the holy city. Although the time for judgment had come, God took a sort of cosmic time out

until AD70. To us, 490 years is 490 years. This explanation fits with the spirit of the grace of God. He pronounces judgment but suspends the time of judgment for forty years to allow the Jews to come into the Kingdom of God.

2) The decree of Artaxerxes 445 BC

- This view assumes that Daniel was referring to the Lunar years (360 days in a year instead of 365 days in a year). Counting from 445BC, 69 weeks or 483 years are thus reduced to 480 lunar years, which reaches AD30, which is said to be the date of Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday. When Daniel 9:25 says Christ is the "ruler" or "prince", it is said that His triumphal entry is in view as Christ presented Himself as the Messiah. Verse 26 is fulfilled after 69 weeks but before the 70th week where Messiah is killed, and In this view, the last 70th week (7 years) will begin in the future with a revived Roman Empire.
- A strength of this view is making the observation that often years in the Bible are counted as comprising only 360 days as in Revelation 11:2; 12:6, where 3½ years has only 1260 days. Thus, with this view, there is a remarkable precision in the various predicted figures.
- This view rejects other decrees as the proponents of this view say those decrees (538BC or 458BC) focused on the *temple*, not on **the street** or on **the wall**. However, it must be noted that the temple was not being built in the middle of nowhere, it was being built in Jerusalem! It seems obvious that the temple's reconstruction presupposes that the city was being resettled and rebuilt alongside it.
- This view says, the 70th week will begin when the coming prince (future antichrist) **shall confirm a covenant** with the Jewish people. It is said that these gaps or pauses in prophecy may seem strange to us, but they are common. Comparing Isaiah 9:6 and Luke 1:31-33 shows another significant pause or gap in prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah.
- **Problems with this view.**
 - Assumes there is a significant gap after the 69th week.
 - Assumes crucifixion of Jesus is not included in the 70th week.

2) The decree of Cyrus (538 BC)

- The decree of Cyrus has a command to restore and build Jerusalem. Not only that. The Lord prophesied through Isaiah that Cyrus would do it: "*It is I who says of **Cyrus**, 'He is My shepherd! And **he will perform all My desire.**' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid' (Isa. 44:28).*
- However, proponents of 457BC would argue that, “*Yes, Cyrus issued a decree about 538 B.C., freeing up God’s people to return to their country and to rebuild the temple. But, it was God (not Cyrus) who spoke regarding Jerusalem in Isaiah 44:28*”. Now if this is the case, then somehow Jerusalem lay unsettled for over 80 years (difference between 538BC to 457BC) even after the temple was already in operation. It must be noted that the temple was not being built in the middle of nowhere, it was being built in Jerusalem! It seems obvious that the temple’s reconstruction presupposes that the city was being resettled and rebuilt alongside it.
- 457BC also do not appear to go with the context of Daniel 9. Remember, in 605 BC, **Jeremiah** prophesied that Israel would be taken captive in Babylon for 70 years and that Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed (Jeremiah 25:11). He also prophesied that at the end of this 70-year period, **Babylon** would fall (Jeremiah 29:10). In 539 BC Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia. Consequently, **in that very year**, during the reign of Cyrus (Daniel 9:1), sensing the completion of Jeremiah’s 70-year prophecy, and probably having a knowledge of Isaiah’s prophecy about Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28), Daniel prays for the restoration of Jerusalem. Gabriel responds to Daniel’s prayer with the prophecy of the 70 weeks (490 years), the beginning of which would be a decree to rebuild and restore the city. In 538 BC, Cyrus issued just such a decree! It appears then that the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC is both the conclusion of Jeremiah's prophecy of captivity (2 Chron. 36:21-23) and the beginning of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy of restoration (Dan. 9:25).
- **Problems with this date:**
 - Some do not want to use Cyrus’ decree because if the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem is 538 B.C., then 483 years

from the 70 weeks prophecy would only take us to 55 B.C., some 80 years short of the manifestation of Jesus.

- There are also concerns about the veracity of 538BC. This date is derived based on secular chronology of Claudius Ptolemy, a Greek astronomer, astrologer, and geographer who lived in Alexandria, Egypt between 70 A.D. and 161 A.D. Ptolemy's chronology of the Persian period and the kings who reigned during this period is widely accepted as accurate because it is the only chronology of this period available. However, Ptolemy's chronology has come into question owing to the length of the Persian reign which appear to contradict with the duration suggested by many scholars, including Daniel's account. If this is the case, then this has implications for all the dates in concern.

3) Is the 70 weeks non-contiguous?

Another thing to notice is that Daniel's 70-weeks prophecy is broken into 3 parts:

- 7-weeks = 49 years
- 62-weeks = 430 years
- 1-week = 7 years (the 1-week is further divided into two 3.5-year parts)

Why is it broken thus into pieces? Is it required that the 70-weeks be contiguous? Or does the text allow for breaks between the periods? The fact that there are **several distinct time periods** could suggest the periods may be **non-contiguous**. If this is the case, then the time periods may not have been chronological, but "cronographical", i.e., a Jewish way of dividing time in **symbolic epochs of seven**.

If so, we may see that the 7-weeks and 62-weeks (i.e. 434 years) transpired prior to Christ's baptism, and then the first half of the final week (7 years) transpired between his baptism and death. Likewise, the second half of the 1-week (7 years) took place in the 3.5-year war and tribulation that transpired just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Assuming the "decree" to rebuild and restore Jerusalem was issued by Cyrus in 538 BC: We know the terminus point of the 490 years is the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in AD 70. Now we do not know the exact date of Jesus'

baptism, but we do know the date of Jesus' death was April 3, 33 AD (while other dates are possible). Since Messiah was cut-off in the middle of the week, we can subtract 3.5 years to arrive at a baptism date in the autumn of 29 AD. If the weeks are “non-contiguous” but “cronographical”, and one were to make sense of the dates, perhaps the following timeline is a way of understanding the commencement and end of “49 years, 434 years, 3.5 years and 3.5 years”, all of which adds up to 490 years.

- 69-weeks = 483 years (538 BC - 29 AD) – prior to the ministry of Christ
- 1-week: the first 3.5 years (29 AD – 33 AD) – crucifixion of Christ
- 1-week = the last 3.5 years (66 AD – 70 AD) – destruction of the City

Note: According to historical sources, the Jewish people who returned to Jerusalem built the Second Temple, completing it in 515 B.C. Artaxerxes, in a subsequent decree in 444 B.C., sent another wave of Jews back to Jerusalem under Nehemiah to rebuild the city walls (Neh. 1-2). Nehemiah encountered hostility from the (non-Jewish) local officials in neighbouring districts, but in the space of 52 days the Jews under his direction succeeded in rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls.

source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nehemiah>

4) Is 490 years literal or symbolic?

It is possible that the 70 weeks (490 years) are probably not to be taken with chronological precision by the fact that **the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy were not precisely 70 years.** The fall of Babylon by which the conclusion of Jeremiah's prophecy is reached occurred in 539 BC. There are several suggested beginning points for the prophecy, none of which, however, add up to precisely 70 years. My point is that 70 years is an approximate designation of length, such as we find in Jeremiah 27:7 and Ezek. 4:6-8. In Mesopotamian culture, 70 years refers primarily to a certain period of desolation followed by the visitation of God. If Jeremiah's seventy years turned out to be 66 or 48 years, we should not be too surprised if Daniel's seventy weeks turn out to be something other than 490 years precisely. Therefore, if Gabriel's message then used that number, perhaps we should not be applying 490 with strict literalism, for not even Jeremiah's seventy years applied the same sort of precision. Seven is a number of completion and perfection in prophesy, and numbers in Daniel and Revelation can have theological significance more than literal precision.

Daniel 10:1-11:1 God responds to Daniel's prayer.

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision (Daniel 10:1)

In the third year of Cyrus: By this time, the first wave of exiles had returned under the leadership of Ezra (Ezra 1-2).

The message was true, and one of great conflict. Daniel 10 sets the stage for the spectacular prophecy (**message**) of Daniel 11, which described a time of great persecution and testing for the people of Israel.

In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. 3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed (Daniel 10:2-3)

Some think that Daniel was in mourning because so few Jews had returned with Ezra from exile. Others believe it was because Ezra faced severe opposition in rebuilding the temple. It would be wrong to call what Daniel did fasting. The Biblical idea of fasting is to abstain from food altogether, drinking only water. Daniel definitely practiced a form of self-denial, but it was not fasting.

On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult. (Daniel 10:4-6)

There was a certain man dressed in linen. This appears to be an unnamed angel of high rank, and not Jesus, for Jesus would not need the assistance of Michael, mentioned in Daniel 10:13.

Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves (Daniel 10:7).

This shows that there was something supernatural about this vision. Daniel saw what he saw regarding the glorious man, but his companions could not see it. This is like the latter instance of Saul on the road to Damascus, when his companions could not hear the same voice from heaven that he heard. Of course they couldn't see the vision if they were hiding from it.

So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground (Daniel 10:8-9)

No strength left in me: As godly as Daniel was, he was undone by this vision of the glorious man. Daniel's experience shows us that even the holiest of men fall short before God and even before His closest associates. Daniel turned into death-like paleness, combined with a grotesque wrenching of facial features.

Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said to me, O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling (Daniel 10:10-11)

A hand touched me. As Daniel was laid out in weakness by this experience, he was strengthened by the touch of a **hand**.

O Daniel, man of high esteem: This was the second time Daniel was called a **man of high esteem** (Daniel 9:23 previous to this). Each time it was in relation to Daniel's being favored with a great and significant revelation of the future.

I stood up. When it was time for Daniel to hear and understand, he needed to **stand** in attention.

Then he said to me, Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words (Daniel 10:12)

God responded to Daniel's prayer the very moment he made his request known. Daniel had been in great and serious prayer for three full weeks (Daniel 10:2).

I have come in response to your words. We can't pass this over lightly. An angel was dispatched because of Daniel's prayer.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

The prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me: Since this **prince** was able to oppose the angelic messenger to Daniel, we know this was more than a man. This **prince** was some kind of angelic being, and we know he was an evil angelic being because he opposed the word of God coming to Daniel and stood against the angelic messenger. Apparently, this was a demon of high rank that opposed the answer to prayer. On three occasions, Jesus referred to Satan as *the prince of this world* (John 12:31).

For twenty-one days. Since the angel was dispatched immediately and Daniel's period of prayer and self-denial was 21 days (the *three full weeks* of Daniel 10:2), we see that the answer to the prayer was delayed by the prince of the kingdom of Persia.

Behold, Michael, one of the chief princes. Michael is one among other angelic princes or archangels. Michael is not Jesus.

Came to help me. Michael came to help the angel who was held by the demonic powers behind Persian kings.

Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future (Daniel 10:14)

Now I have come. God allowed this kind of delay because He had a purpose in allowing it. He certainly *could have* blasted away in a moment any demonic opposition. God's plan probably was to use the time of delay to develop Daniel as a man of persistent prayer.

What will happen to your people in the latter days. "In the latter days of these kings, God will establish his kingdom" (Daniel 2:44), and we saw that the latter days were the days when Jesus the Messiah came. The latter days are the last days of the Jewish age before the destruction of the Jerusalem.

The vision pertains to the days yet future. From Daniel's time, the vision is still future. The vision of Daniel 11 and 12 related to the latter days of the Jewish age.

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless (Daniel 10:15)

Daniel started on the ground (Daniel 10:9), then stood up (Daniel 10:11), and now was back on his **face** again.

And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me. 18 Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me (Daniel 10:16-18)

The ancient Hebrew word translated **anguish** has the thought of twisting or writhing pain. It is used in several places in the Old Testament for labor pains in childbirth. Daniel was so severely affected by this vision that he could barely breathe, much less could he deal with prophetic complexities.

He said, O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous! Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, may my lord speak, for you have strengthened me (Daniel 10:19).

This was not God, but an angel. God touched Daniel through an intermediary.

Then he said, Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come (Daniel 10:20).

I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia. Daniel was about to receive the answer to his prayer, but the battle was not over for his heavenly messenger. First he must battle the prince of Persia, then the prince of Greece. God watched out for Israel, working behind the scenes in the spiritual realm. The heavenly warfare is to be directed against first Persia and then Greece, because each of these in turn will have power over God's people. These empires (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome) have demonic princes behind their operation.

However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince (Daniel 10:21)

I will tell you what is inscribed. God's decrees are spoken of as if they were committed to writing, and registered in a book. These truths will be disclosed from Daniel 11:2 onwards.

No one who stands firmly with me against these forces. Michael is an angelic guardian of Israel, battling against the demonic representative of Persia or any other who opposed God's people. On earth, Israel seemed lowly and weak; but in the heavens, Israel had the mightiest representative of all.

In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be of assistance and a protection for him (Daniel 11:1)

I arose to be of assistance and a protection for him. I (this is the angel speaking), came forward to assist Michael. Just like Michael helped this high-ranking angel, this angel helped Michael during the first year of

Darius. Daniel 11:1 belongs to the previous chapter (Daniel 10) and this is accepted by scholars.

The Conflict Between Persia and Greece (Daniel 11:2-4)

And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will stir up the entire empire against the realm of Greece. (Daniel 11:2)

And now I will tell you the truth. The angel told Daniel in Daniel 10:21 that he will tell the truth about the latter days of Israel. Here it is. Three more kings will rise after Cyrus: They are: Cambyses (530-522 BC), Smerdis (pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata; 522 BC) and Darius I Hystaspes (522-486 BC). Then a fourth [Xerxes I (486-654 BC)] will gain far more riches than all of them.

And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases (Daniel 11:3)

The mighty king is Alexander the Great (336-323 BC).

But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, because his sovereignty will be removed and given to others besides them (Daniel 11:4)

Probably a reference to the four generals among whom the Greek empire, subsequent to Alexander, was divided. Though not to his *own* descendants [Alexander's two sons, Alexander IV and Herakles, were both murdered], hence none of his descendants ruled the kingdom, instead it was given to others.

**The Conflict Between Egypt (the South) and Syria (the North) -
Daniel 11:5-20**

Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with one of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and rule; his domain will be a great realm indeed (Daniel 11:5)

One of the four inheritors of the empire of the mighty king (Alexander) would become stronger and greater than the others. The king of the south **shall gain power and have dominion**: This was fulfilled in Ptolemy I of Egypt, who exerted his control over the Holy Land. Soon after the division of Alexander's Empire, the Ptolemies dominated this region. Ptolemy I had a prince named Seleucus, who rose to power and took dominion over the region of Syria. He became more powerful than his former Egyptian ruler. The **Seleucids** are identified with the **Kings of the North**, and the **Ptolemies** were the **Kings of the South**.

And after some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to reach an agreement. But she will not keep her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who fathered her as well as he who supported her in those times (Daniel 11:6)

Joined by a marriage, the kings of the North (**Seleucids**) and South (**Ptolemies**) would be allies for a while, but the arrangement would not last. This was fulfilled in the marriage between Antiochus II (of the Seleucids) and Berenice (daughter of Ptolemy II). There was peace for a time because of this marriage, but it was upset when Ptolemy II died. Once Ptolemy II died, Antiochus II put away Berenice and took back his former wife, Laodice. After the murder of Antiochus II, Laodice had Berenice, her infant son, and her attendants killed.

But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against their army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and prevail (Daniel 11:7)

This was fulfilled in the person of Ptolemy III (**kings of the south**), who was the brother of Berenice (the descendants of her line). Avenging the murder of his sister, Ptolemy III invaded Syria and humbled Seleucus II (**kings of the North**).

And he will also take into captivity to Egypt their gods with their cast metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and he on his part will refrain from attacking the king of the North for some years (Daniel 11:8)

Ptolemy III (**kings of the south**) also returned with forty thousand talents of silver, precious vessels, and twenty-four hundred images, including Egyptian idols, which Cambyses (one of the four generals of Alexander) had carried from Egypt into Persia. It is a matter of fact that Ptolemy III (Kings of the south) survived Seleucus II (kings of the north), his sister's stepson, about four years by refraining for some years from attacking the king of the north.

Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his own land (Daniel 11:9).

Then the latter [**i.e., the King of the North**, Seleucus II] will enter the realm of the king of the South (Ptolemy III), but will return to his *own* land. After two years Seleucus II succeeded in re-establishing his power in Asia (242 BC); but proceeding to march against Ptolemy III, he was defeated, and obliged to retreat to his own land.

“And his sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, so that he may [o]again wage war up to his fortress (Daniel 11:10)

The sons of the kings of the North would continue the battle. One of the sons would conquer the Holy Land (overwhelm and pass through) which stood as a buffer between the kings of the South and the kings of the North. This was fulfilled in Seleucus III and Antiochus III, the two sons of Seleucus II (King of the North). Both were successful generals, but Seleucus III ruled only a short time and was succeeded by his brother. In a furious battle, Antiochus III took back the Holy Land from the dominion of the Ptolemies (kings of the south).

And the king of the South will be enraged and go out and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be handed over to the former. When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be haughty, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail (Daniel 11:11)

The angel told Daniel that the king of the South (Ptolemies) would attack and meet a great multitude of soldiers from the king of the North (Antiochus III). The king of the North would lose in battle and his multitude would be defeated. This was fulfilled when Antiochus III (king of the north) was defeated at the battle of Raphia. Because of that loss he was forced to give back dominion over the Holy Land to Ptolemy IV (king of the south).

For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment. “Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also raise themselves up to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down. 15 Then the king of the North will come, pile up an assault ramp, and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him; he will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand. (Daniel 11:13-15)

The angel told Daniel that the northern dynasty would answer back and defeat the king of the South in an extended siege. This victory would give the king of the North dominion over the Glorious Land. This was fulfilled when Antiochus III (King of the North) invaded Egypt again, gaining final control over the armies of Ptolemy V (King of the south) and over the Holy Land. **Many shall rise up against the king of the South.** This refers to Jews living in the Holy Land who helped Antiochus III defeat the king of the South. This was because the Jewish people resented the rule of the Egyptian Ptolemies.

He who comes against him shall do according to his own will... with destruction in his power. This was fulfilled when the Jewish people of the Glorious Land initially welcomed Antiochus III (King of the North) as a liberator from Egyptian rule (kings of the south). Their decision to support Antiochus III proved unwise when he turned destruction upon the Glorious Land and its people.

And he will set his mind on coming with the power of his entire kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand for him or be on his side (Daniel 11:17)

He will set his mind meaning the king of the North (Antiochus III) who ruled over the Holy Land would also attempt to dominate and destroy the king of the South (Ptolemy V). He would make one attempt by giving the king of the South the daughter of women to destroy, but this plot would not succeed.

But she will not take a stand for him. This was fulfilled when Antiochus III gave his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V of Egypt. He did this hoping to gain permanent influence and eventually control in Egypt. To the great disappointment of Antiochus III, the plan did not succeed because Cleopatra wasn't faithful to her Egyptian husband at all. This was not the most famous Cleopatra from ancient history, but this was the ancestor of the more famous Cleopatra. The more famous Egyptian woman lived some 100 years after the time of this Cleopatra.

Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his taunting against him; moreover, he will repay him for his taunting. So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and not be found (Daniel 11:18-19)

He will repay him. This means after the disappointing effort through the daughter Cleopatra, the king of the North would turn his efforts towards the coastlands – until he was stopped by one formerly under reproach, until he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

He shall stumble and fall. This was fulfilled when Antiochus III turned his attention towards the areas of Asia Minor and Greece. He was helped by Hannibal, the famous general from Carthage. But a Roman General, Lucius Cornelius Scipio, defeated Antiochus in Greece. Antiochus planned to humiliate Greece but was humiliated instead. He returned to his former regions, having lost all that he gained and died shortly after. After this defeat Antiochus III had an inglorious end. Needing money badly for his treasury, he resorted to pillaging a Babylonian temple and was killed by enraged local citizens.

Then in his place one will arise who will allow an oppressor to pass through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be broken, though not in anger nor in battle (Daniel 11:20)

After the inglorious end of the king of the North, his successor would raise taxes and meet a soon end. This was fulfilled in the brief reign of Seleucus III, the eldest son of Antiochus III. He sought to tax his dominion (including the glorious kingdom, the Holy Land) to increase revenues. His plan to pillage the Jerusalem temple was set aside when his ambassador had an angelic vision of warning.

Within a few days he shall be broken: Seleucus III was assassinated, probably by his brother Antiochus IV.

Antiochus Epiphanes IV (Daniel 11:21-35)

And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the majesty of kingship has not been conferred; but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue (Daniel 11:21)

The angel told Daniel that after the brief reign of the former king of the North, the next king would be a vile person. He would not be recognized as royalty (kingship has not been conferred), but shall take power by intrigue. This was fulfilled in the successor of Seleucis III, named Antiochus IV. He did not come to the throne legitimately because it was strongly suspected that he murdered his older brother, the previous king. The other potential heir (the son of Seleucus III) was imprisoned in Rome.

He shall come in peaceably: Apart from the murder of his older brother, Antiochus IV didn't use terror to gain power. He used flattery, smooth promises and intrigue.

And the overflowing forces will be flooded away from him and smashed, and also the prince of the covenant. After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people. In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers did not, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, spoils, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time. And he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, because schemes will be devised against him. Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table; but it will not succeed, because the end is still to come at the appointed time (Daniel 11:22-27)

He shall act deceitfully: The angel told Daniel that the new king of the North (the vile person of Daniel 11:21) would attempt a deceitful covenant

with the king of the South. This would fail, and there would be a great battle that would not change the balance of power.

He shall stir up his power: This was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes carried on the feud between the dynasties but pretended friendship and alliance to catch them off guard. Despite massive efforts and epic battles, Antiochus Epiphanes did not stand, and his army was swept away.

The defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes at his second campaign against Egypt was important, because Egypt beat Antiochus with the help of Rome. At the end of it all, Antiochus Epiphanes and his kingdom were under the dominion of Rome.

Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land. 29 At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. 30 For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will withdraw in fear and will return and curse the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and pay attention to those who abandon the holy covenant. 31 Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination [am]of desolation. 32 And by smooth words he will [an]turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will be strong and take action. 33 And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. 34 Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. 35 And some of [ap]those who have insight will fall, to refine, purge, and cleanse them until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time. (Daniel 11:28-35).

So he shall do damage and return to his own land: This was fulfilled when Antiochus Epiphanes returned from Egypt, bitter from defeat. He vented his anger against Jerusalem, which was already shaken because

Antiochus sold the office of High Priest and persecuted the Jewish people to conform to Greek culture, forsaking the faith and traditions of their fathers.

While returning to his land with great riches: Failing in his invasion of Egypt, Antiochus Epiphanes returned home with only great plunder to soothe his wounded pride.

Ships from Cyprus shall come against him: This was naval assistance from the Romans, who helped the Egyptians turn back Antiochus Epiphanes.

They shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation: Antiochus Epiphanes set up an image of Zeus at the temple altar. He demanded sacrifice to this image, and later desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig on it. “It was in truth an abomination, which brought a desolate condition to the Temple, for now no one would come to worship at all.”

Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong: When Antiochus Epiphanes turned on Jerusalem, the Jewish people were divided. Some forsook their covenant with God and embraced Greek culture. Those who knew their God made a stand for righteousness in the face of incredible persecution.

For many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering: In his attack on Jerusalem Antiochus IV is said to have killed 80,000 Jews, taken 40,000 more as prisoners, and sold another 40,000 as slaves. He also plundered the temple, robbing it of approximately \$1 billion by modern calculations.

Until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time: This terror could only last for as long as God had appointed it, and God had a purpose even for such persecution and blasphemy.

And some of those who have insight will fall, to refine, purge, and cleanse them until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time. (Daniel 11:35).

Daniel 11:21-35 are acknowledged by all to be a description of the reign of terror by Antiochus Epiphanes IV. However, from verse 36 to the end of the

chapter, the king mentioned does not fit what is known of the king of the north. So who is the king from verse 36. Note what verse 35 says:

Who have insight will fall..until the end time.. the appointed time. The reference to the “end time” in verse 35 implies a shift from Antiochus Epiphanes and the Greek Empire to Rome, the final Empire of Daniel’s Visions. This is not “the end” in an eschatological sense, but the end of the time period prophesied by Daniel, the time of the Roman Empire, “in the days of these kings” (Daniel 2:44).

So there appear to indicate that there shall be an interval between verse 35 and verse 36. There are approximately 130 years between the war with Antiochus and the rise of Rome. There is a similar 130-year interval between verse 2 and 3 which also marks another shift between empires: this time from Medo-Persia to Greece. Throughout chapter 11, Daniel describes the life of a specific king and seamlessly moves on to that of his successor usually without ever having specified that to his reader. Thus, it is not surprising that no explicit indication of a change in authority is made between verse 35 and 36. But if this king was not Antiochus Epiphanes, then who is it?

The Romans (Daniel 11:36-45)

“Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt himself and boast against every god and will speak dreadful things against the God of gods; and he will be successful until the indignation is finished, because that which is determined will be done (Daniel 11:36).

The king will do as he pleases. This may be speaking of the line of Caesars and especially the conquest of Julius and his adopted son Augustus who were proclaimed to be gods. Some others see a reference to Herod. In any case, the time of the Roman Empire is the subject of the rest of the vision.

He will exalt himself and boast. After a series of Roman civil wars, Augustus Caesar assumed the role of emperor and was considered “The Son of God” and the “Savior of the World” according to Roman inscriptions.

Successful until the indignation is finished. Indignation is the afflictions permitted to be brought upon the Jewish people. Roman Empire and its rulers will be instrumental in fulfilling the indignation on the Jews.

And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will boast against them all (Daniel 11:37)

And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers. Augustus' predecessor, Julius, the first Caesar, was formally deified after his death. He was the first ruler of Rome believed by his people to be a god. Therefore, the act of deifying, upholding Caesars as gods above other gods may infer showing "no regard for the gods of his fathers" or the gods that was loved and adored by women, and the gods his fathers did not know.

But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, precious stones, and treasures (Daniel 11:38)

The God of fortresses: The "god of fortresses" appear to be the personification of war, and the thought is this: he will regard no other god, but only war.

And he will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will make them rulers over the many, and will parcel out land for a price (Daniel 11:39)

Action against the strongest of fortresses. Power and conquest were his gods and he would worship any god that helped him conquer. After defeating Anthony and Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium, Augustus honored the god of the sea (Neptune), and the god of war (Mars) with loot taken from Anthony's fleet. This plunder no doubt also included gold, jewels and silver. Augustus also built a grand temple to Mars, the founding deity of Rome.

He will give great honor..parcel out land for a price. Most often when he conquered a king if that king would readily submit and acknowledge him as ruler and pay taxes then he might be allowed to continue ruling.

“And at the end time the king of the South will wage war with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them, and pass through (Daniel 11:40)

And at the end time. This is not “the end” in an eschatological sense, but the end of the time period prophesied by Daniel, the time of the Roman Caesars, “in the days of these kings” (Daniel 2:44).

The king of the South will wage war with him, and the king of the North will storm against him. The ruler of Egypt, Cleopatra, is the king of the south. And the king of Syria, Anthony, is the king of the north. Drawn together by love and mutual political ambition, the king of the north and south united to fight Augustus, on the seas near Actium. Anthony’s impressive army of chariots and horsemen mentioned in verse 40 stood by the shore while Augustus, drew his enemies out to sea rendering Anthony’s superior ground force largely ineffectual. “With many ships” Augustus defeated his enemies’ armada. Shortly thereafter Anthony, the king of the north, and Cleopatra, the king of the south, took their own lives consolidating Augustus’ power. With this decisive victory, Augustus became the first emperor of Rome. And upon his rise to power, Roman democracy died.

He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab, and the foremost of the sons of Ammon (Daniel 11:41)

He will also enter the Beautiful Land. After Augustus defeated Cleopatra, the king of the south, at the Battle of Actium, the young emperor seized all her kingdom. As a result, Augustus acquired full control over Israel, the Beautiful land.

Edom, Moab, and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. The ancient territories of Edom and Moab had escaped the rule of the king.

Then he will reach out with his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels (Daniel 11:42-43)

The land of Egypt will not escape. Augustus acquired Israel, Egypt and Libya from Cleopatra, the king of the south, while confiscating Greece and Syria from Anthony, the king of the north. With Cleopatra defeated, the riches of Egypt were brought to Rome.

But rumors from the East and from the North will terrify him, and he will go out with great wrath to eliminate and annihilate many (Daniel 11:44)

But rumors from the East and from the North will terrify him. Daniel seems to turn his attention away from Augustus to another Caesar and king: Nero. The reign of Caesar Nero, was dominated by tyranny and injustice. Thus, it was only a matter of time before the people revolted. Just before Nero's death, there were two major revolts: Israel in the East and Gaul in the North. Enraged, Nero attacked Israel, the Beautiful land, destroying and annihilating many.

And he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him (Daniel 11:45)

And he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion. In 67AD, Nero appointed Vespasian to put down the Jewish rebellion in Judaea. A large segment of the Roman army encamped outside the city awaiting Vespasian's arrival from Caesarea so that they could begin their assault on Jerusalem.

Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him. Declared an enemy of the state by vote of the senate, Nero, had been abandoned by everybody and preparations were made for his arrest. His subjects now his enemies, Nero committed suicide in AD68 having stabbed himself in the throat. Thus, the king had "come to his end" with no one to "help him."

Daniel 12:1-13 When Michael stood up during the great tribulation.

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued” (Daniel 12:1)

At that time: "At that time" indicates the same time as the events covered in the latter part of Daniel chapter 11 during the reign of Caesars. The time referred to here appears to be during the time of tribulation (66-70 AD) and the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus.

Michael shall stand up: The angel **Michael** is often associated with spiritual battle (Daniel 10:13, Daniel 10:21, Jude 1:9, Revelation 12:7). Since Michael is called *the archangel* (Jude 1:9), he is Satan's true opposite. Satan is not the opposite of Jesus; he is the opposite of Michael, this high-ranking angel.

The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people: In addition to his role as a spiritual warrior, Michael has a special job in protecting Israel and God's people. God appointed Michael as a spiritual guardian over His people.

There shall be a time of distress: This refers to the time of persecution for God's people. The war that followed was a massacre. The Romans left Israel a charred, desolate wasteland.

Such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. This will be a *worse* time of trouble than what the people have ever seen before.

And at that time your people shall be delivered. Despite the terrors of that time, deliverance is assured.

Everyone who is found written in the book. *“And it will come about that the one **who is left in Zion** and remains behind in Jerusalem will be called *holy*—everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem” (Isaiah 4:3).* So, perhaps no celestial bookkeeping is involved here; just an administrative, entirely human census. Seen this way, it is simply talking about the survivors of Roman depredations. Alternatively, this promise of deliverance is not for every last person of Jewish heritage, but for these who are **found written in the book of life**. This may have been fulfilled this way. It is a historical

fact that Cestius Gallus, the Roman general, for some unknown reason, suspended the siege against Jerusalem, ceased the attack and withdrew his armies for an interval of time after the Romans had occupied the Temple, thus giving every believer the opportunity to obey the Lord's instruction to flee the city. Josephus, the eyewitness, himself an unbeliever, chronicles this fact, and admitted his inability to account for the cessation of the fighting at this time after a siege had begun.

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2)

And many of those who sleep. To begin with, those awakened are just “many”, not “all”, and there is no actual indication that the people formerly sleeping in the dust had been dead. This appears to be primarily referring to a spiritual awakening like when Paul says, “***Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you***” (Ephesians 5:14). Isaiah describes the people of Israel as being under the influence of “*the spirit of deep sleep*” (Isaiah 29:10). Similarly, Psalmist describes how God will revive those (already living) from depths of the earth, which is a metaphor for those in a state of extreme trouble and depression. Psalm 71:20, “*You who have shown me many troubles and distresses will revive me again, and will bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*” Psalms 113:7 says, “*He raises the poor from the dust*”. Seen this way, this verse is simply saying the survivors of Roman depredations would experience a revival when Michael, (not to be identified with Jesus), would see to the deliverance of believers.

To everlasting life, and others to everlasting contempt. The whole nation of Israel was “awakened” out of a sleep of centuries through the ministry of John the Baptist, followed by that of the Messiah himself, and lastly by that of the apostles, who preached the gospel to them and by the prophesied “time of distress” and destruction of the holy city, and the deliverance from the ordeal. Jesus said, “*He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God*” (Joh 3:18).

The former class awoke to everlasting life (Joh 3:16), and the latter to shame and everlasting contempt (Joh 3:36).

And those who have insight will shine like the glow of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever (Daniel 12:3)

Those who have insight will shine. As Paul said, “**Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you**” (Ephesians 5:14). God has reserved glory and honor for those who are faithful during this time of trial and tribulation. There will be two kinds: those who are wise (literally, “the teachers,” those who teach others) and;

Those who lead the many to righteousness. This is those who witness, who turn many to righteousness. Because of their faithfulness God will honor them in this way: They shall shine out like the brightness of the firmament, and like the stars forever and ever. The angel then tells Daniel:

But as for you, Daniel, keep these words secret and seal up the book until the end of time; many will roam about, and knowledge will increase.” (Daniel 12:4)

Seal up the book until the end time. Daniel is to seal up the book until when? Scholars often call this provisional, contextual “end” the prophet’s own “eschatological horizon” and not the actual “end.” When the “the end time” of the Jewish indignation and age comes, then this vision would no longer be “secret” and “sealed” but would begin to be understood by the original audience, the Jews, and of course Christians.

Many will roam about, and knowledge will increase. Probably refers to an exhaustive investigation of the vision and not necessarily advancement in transportation and knowledge. Men shall investigate and carefully scrutinize the prophecies of Daniel, and the knowledge of the book shall increase as people study it through.

Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the stream and the other on that bank of the stream. And someone said to the man dressed in linen, who was

above the waters of the stream, “How long will it be until the end of these wonders?” (Daniel 12:5-6)

Two others were standing. Probably two angels.

How long. Daniel did not ask this question; he heard the two angels speaking together and one of them asked the question. They wanted to know how long will it be until the end of these wonders which are:

- The time of distress in verse 1;
- The spiritual resurrection in verse 2;
- Many being turned to righteousness in verse 3.

And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish smashing the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed (Daniel 12:7)

He raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever. The man clothed in linen, raises both hands to indicate the solemnity of his words as a guarantee. It is like saying, "Truly, truly I say to you." Here he guarantees it with upraised hands.

That it would be for a time, times, and half a time. When these things events begin, they will run for "*a time (1 year), two times (2 years), and half a time (1/2 year).*" This means three and a half years. This three-and-a-half-year interval appears to be the time in which Vespasian and Titus arrived in Israel with the Roman legions until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 which spanned exactly three and a half years.

As soon as they finish smashing the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. All what events will be completed?

- The time of distress in verse 1;
- The spiritual resurrection in verse 2;
- Many being turned to righteousness in verse 3;
- The shattering the power of the holy people in verse 7.

So, all these events will be completed when the power of the holy people is shattered. So when was it that the Israelites' power was completely

shattered? It was during that great tribulation when the Temple and the city of Jerusalem were destroyed. We know that this happened in A.D. 70 with the destruction of the Jewish Temple.

But as for me, I heard but did not understand; so I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words will be kept secret and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand (Daniel 12:8-10)

But as for me, I heard but did not understand; so I said, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these events? Daniel wants more information. He says, "Lord, I don't understand what you mean about 'the smashing of the power of the holy people.'"

And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for these words will be kept secret and sealed up until the end time. But the man clothed in linen says, "That's all right, Daniel". Daniel is told to keep secret the words and seal up the book until the time of the end. These things were not going to be understood until the end time of the Jewish age or last days of Israel. When the “the end time” of the Jewish indignation comes, then this vision would no longer be “secret” and “sealed” but would begin to be understood by the Jews, and of course Christians.

Many will be purged, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly. Many shall read it, study it, and search it through, and it will have a very interesting effect upon them. They will purify themselves by reading the cleansing word of God, but not the wicked.

None of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. Only the righteous will understand.

And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days (Daniel 12:11)

And from the time. Though the angel had said Daniel (Daniel 12:9) that his communication was closed, and that he imparted all that he was commissioned to communicate to Daniel, yet, as it would seem, in reply to the earnest request of Daniel, he volunteers an additional statement, in regard to certain important periods that were to occur during the last days of the Jewish age.

That the daily or regular sacrifice is abolished. From the time of "*taking away of the daily sacrifice*" refers, undoubtedly, to some act, or some state of things, by which it would be made to cease; by which the daily offerings at Jerusalem would be either temporarily suspended or totally abolished. Perhaps this may also refer to, in AD66, when Eleazar terminated the daily sacrifice to Caesar fulfilling regular sacrifice being abolished. According to Josephus, this act "was the true beginning of our [Jewish] war with the Romans." Thus, immediately after Eleazar put an end to the daily sacrifice to Caesar, Roman armies, the abomination that causes desolation, entered Jerusalem.

The abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Thus, the starting point of the 1,290 days is the termination of the daily sacrifice and the consequent setting up of abomination that causes desolation which occurred immediately thereafter. Abomination of desolation is a horrible sin that desecrate and devastate an area within the city of Jerusalem. Jesus refers to this in Matthew 24:15,16, "*Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place—let the reader understand*". *Let the reader understand* by Jesus is a reference to Daniel 12:11.

Luke 21:20 further defines the nature of "the abomination that causes desolation": "*And when ye shall see Jerusalem **compassed with armies**, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*" According to Luke's parallel passage, the presence of the gentile Roman armies is what made the Temple sacrifices "desolate."

There will be 1,290 days. This is roughly three-and-a-half years. This refers to the Roman-Jewish War and the Siege of Jerusalem from spring of AD 67 to the destruction of the Temple in September of 70. Vespasian entered the Land in spring of 67, then Jerusalem fell in 70.

***Blessed is the one who is patient and attains to the 1,335 days!
(Daniel 12:12)***

This is either another 45 days beyond the time of trouble of 1290 days or 1,335 days that is a separate period, where whoever patiently waits for this period to end, is called blessed. This may have been fulfilled this way. On the 15th of Nisan, of A.D. 74 the fortress of Masada fell. On the 15th of Nisan with the Roman army about to break through the fortified walls, the 960 Jewish rebels at Masada committed mass suicide. And on that day the war had finally ended. The next day, the 16th of Nisan, was the first official day of peace. The 16th of Nisan of A.D. 74 is 1335 days after the ninth day of Av in A.D. 70 when the Roman army broke into the temple, set it on fire and sacrificed a pig to the ensigns on the eastern gate “*How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the [second] 1,335 days!*”.

But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will rest and rise for your allotted portion at the end of the age.” (Daniel 12:3)

But Daniel is told now, "Go your way to the end. You shall rest (that means he will die), but then you shall rise again and stand in your allotted place at the end of the age. By age probably referring to the second coming of Christ, when He will be bodily resurrected. In the judgment of the great day, we must have our allotment according to our faith in the Messiah, and we must stand forever in that lot. It was a comfort to Daniel, and it is a comfort to all the saints, that whatever their lot is, they shall have a happy lot in the Lord.

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Credit is attributed to the following authors and websites for some of the material that has been used in the compilation of this commentary.

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