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 resources (see References) which I have referenced 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.
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 monarchial 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.

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 every 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 councilors, 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 councilors, 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-neg. 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-neg 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-neg. 23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-neg, 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-neg 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, Belteshazzar, 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 Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, 'Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you' Belteshazzar 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 man’s hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing (Daniel 5:5)

The fingers of a man’s 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 king’s 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.
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.
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 opposes. 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. John Calvin, among others, saw this as a reference to Christ's ascension to heaven at the first coming. See Appendix 1: Origins of Futurism, Preterism, Historicism.

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.

“The 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 judgment 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 (malkuw) ten kings (melek) 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". If the ten horns were ten nations that defeated the Roman Empire, then Daniel would have used the word malkuw (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. The early church recognized Nero as the “antichrist”. Jerome noted in his commentary on Daniel: "And so there are many of our viewpoint who think that Domitius Nero was the Antichrist because of his outstanding savagery and depravity." 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. Why? So that his dominion will be taken away. 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. With the death of Nero, the empire was thrown into a series of civil wars that left Rome burned and Italy in ruins. In the space of one year and 22 days, four emperors came to the throne: Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. The history of this time was unprecedented in world annals and clearly marked Christ’s coming in judgment against the persecutors of his church.

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. So, because the court in heaven convened for judgment, the little horn’s dominion will be taken away, but who will be bestowed the dominion instead?

*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. Who will be bestowed this dominion? 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. Martin Luther applied it to the Turks. 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 as we saw from Daniel 2.

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 (as some others have done) and declared that 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 (melek), not nations or tribes. Besides, history says over forty tribes fought with the Roman Empire, not ten.

2) SDA scholars agree will all scholars that the horn growing on the head of the Goat in Daniel 8 represents Alexander the Great. When that one large horn is later replaced by four smaller horns, SDAs likewise teach the Greek Macedonian empire was later ruled by Alexander’s four generals. It is inconsistent for SDAs to interpret the horns on the head of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 as nations that conquered that beast while at the same time teaching that the horns of Daniel 8 are kings that arose from within that nation! The Bible imagery throughout the book of Daniel (and also in the book of Revelation) consistently signifies that horns growing on the head of a beast represent the kings or leaders of that empire. To teach that those horns are actually outside powers that invade and conquer the beast is totally inconsistent with the imagery and Biblical usage of the horn symbol. While king or kingdom could be used interchangeably depending on the context, when horns are growing on the head of a beast, it represents leaders of that kingdom.

3) 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). Besides, contrary to what SDAs teach, the Vandals, Heruli and Ostrogoths were never kingdoms ruled by pagan Rome. None came “up out of this kingdom.” All three were Arian invaders from outside Western Rome.

Further, Holy Scripture says that the three horns were “plucked up by the root” (7:8). This means that they were destroyed and not merely pushed out. Again, history disagrees with the SDA version. First, the Arian Heruli were defeated in 508 by Arian Lombards who were enemies of the papacy. Instead of being destroyed (plucked up), the Heruli migrated back to Scandinavia. Second, the Vandals who had sacked Rome in 455 and had settled in north Africa were not a hindrance to papal of Christians in 538. The Vandals had
been defeated in Africa in 534 when the Eastern Roman Empire regained its territory in North Africa. The Vandals were not “plucked up by the roots” because of the papal little horn. Instead they were conquered by Eastern Emperor Justinian in 534 because he was reconquering lost territory for the Eastern Greek Church. Third, the Ostrogoths do not fit the prophecy either. Though momentarily defeated in north Italy in 538 by the Eastern Empire, they returned to besiege Rome again in 546, 549 and 550. Pope Vigilius (538-555) was powerless and never began “wearing out the saints” (7:25). Instead of being “plucked up by the roots,” the Ostrogoths were slowly absorbed by the Arian Lombards who ruled much of Italy for centuries after 568.

4) **Is papacy guilty of boastfulness.** It is true the Catholic Church has made some arrogant claims.

5) **Persecutes God's saints.** It is true that the Roman Catholic Church persecuted its enemies, although that practice ceased by the mid-nineteenth century.

6) **Rules for 1260 years.** Adventists interpret this period as beginning in 538 AD and ending in 1798 AD, but there is no historical justification for picking these dates at the exclusion of other dates. For much of the time between 538 and 1798, large parts of Europe were under the rule of non-Catholics. Southern and Eastern Europe was under the rule of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires during much of Rome's supposed "rule" or supremacy over the world. Much of the Mediterranean region, including parts of Spain, was under the control of Moslems during this period. After 1600, Protestants gained the upper hand in Northern Europe and North America. It is an exaggeration to claim that Rome "ruled" the world for 1260 years. See also the problems with [year-day principle](#).

Moreover, SDA prophetic interpretation errs because the papacy very definitely did not begin punishing non-Christians for their faith in 538. Although it was responsible for killing fellow Christians in Constantinople in 1204, murdered Albigensians in 1209, Inquisition would not begin in France and Waldensians in 1527, 666 of the 1260 years had passed before these persecutions began. If the “saints” are true Christians inside the Western Roman Catholic Church, “made war with the saints” does not make sense because, from 538 until 1146, there was no “war” against fellow Catholic Christians. The first 600 years of the prophecy would be wrong, plus many failed Crusades were against Muslim Turks.
Further, contrary to the description of the powerful little horn of Daniel 7:21-25, the pope was personally imprisoned, beaten and/or killed at least 13 times from 538-1798. This fact alone should disprove the SDA interpretation of the little horn. Imprisoned or killed: 538, 795, 872, 884, 896, 897, 898, 903, 904, 914, 939, 983, 1124. ROME, THE PAPAL STATES AND ITALY WERE OFTEN BESIEGED, OCCUPIED AND PLUNDERED. This happened at least 60 times between 538 and 1798 by at least 18 kingdoms covering every decade. Rome was difficult to protect and was easy prey to Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Lombards, Normans, Saracens and others. Also, whenever the pope disobeyed a ruler or tried to impose their authority, the result was usually a march to plunder Rome, the Papal States, or Italy itself. Again, this is not the description of the biblical little horn persecuting the saints. Lives of the Popes, by Richard McBrien, a leading Roman Catholic historian from the University of Notre Dame records the failure of Popes. McBrien is very blunt and honest about the failures of the popes. The literal historical facts should prove beyond doubt that the Roman Catholic papacy does not fulfill the prophecy of the biblical Anti-Christ little horn for (the SDAs) 1260 years from 538 to 1798.

In the issue of Endtime Issues (#86), SDA scholar Samuel Bacchicioci writes:

"The first problem is the questionable significance of 538. We noted earlier that Justinian's triumph over the Ostrogoths in 538 was short-lived, because under their new leader, Totila, the Ostrogoths quickly captured most of their lost territories. In other words, this event did not significantly boost the power of the Papacy, which still faced constant harassment from various rulers for centuries to come."

Bacchiocchi goes on to say: "The second problem with the traditional interpretation is its failure to account for the basic meaning of this prophetic period. The persecution and protection of the church did not begin in 538, nor did it end in 1798. These are realities that have characterized the whole history of God's church throughout the centuries. Some of the most bloody persecutions by Roman emperors occurred during the first four centuries."

He writes: "The death of Pius VI can hardly be seen as the 'abolishment' or 'the downfall of the Papacy.' It was simply a temporary humiliation of the prestige of the Papacy. In fact, Pius VI was able to give directives for the election of his successor. Few months after his
death, the Cardinals met in Venice on December 8, 1799, and elected Barnaba Chiaramonti, who took the name of Pious VII, in deference to his predecessor.

"The following years marked, not the downfall, but the resurgence of papal authority, especially under the Pontificate of Pius IX (1846-1878). In 1854, Pius IX promulgated the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

Ranko Stefanovic, Ph. D., an SDA Professor of New Testament at Andrews University agrees with Bachiochi and he writes: “I agree with you that A. D. 538 has been exaggerated; in order to get that date, the year 1798 was established first, and then the 1260 years were deducted from it” (Source: Endtimes issues)

Anyone who has studied Christian history can verify that the dates of 538 and 1798 do not accurately mark the beginning and ending dates of the period of papal supremacy. The Bishop of Rome was consolidating power centuries before 538, and the papacy continued to grow and thrive even after the temporary setback of 1798. These dates were used by Adventists because they were convenient, as some others (historicists) had used them to fit a preconceived idea. These dates fit nicely into the prophetic jigsaw puzzle they were building. The dates were picked because they fit in the puzzle, not because they actually delineated the years of papal supremacy or holds up to good exegesis.

7) 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).

Ellen White claims that the change of the Sabbath to Sunday was accomplished by the Pope with the "power of the state":

"It was on behalf of Sunday that popery first asserted its arrogant claims; and its first resort to the power of the state was to compel the observance of Sunday as 'the Lord's Day.'" (Great Controversy, page 447)

She makes another similar statement later in the book: "Royal edicts, general councils, and church ordinances sustained by secular power were the steps by which the pagan festival [day of the Sun] attained its position of honor in the Christian world." (page 574)

Before we read Bacchoicchi's assessment of these quotes, the reader should be aware that Bacchiocchi is still widely regarded as the SDA theologian who was the most knowledgeable person in the entire sect on church history pertaining to Sabbath-Sunday issues. There was simply no one in the church more qualified to assess Ellen White's statements than Bacchiocchi. Here is his assessment:
"Both statements just cited are inaccurate, because the secular power of the state did not influence or compel Christians to adopt Sunday during the second and third centuries. At that time the Roman emperors were rather hostile toward Christianity. They were more interested to suppress Christianity than to support church leaders in their promotion of Sunday worship. The bishop of Rome could not have resorted to 'the power of the state to compel the observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day.' Eventually, beginning with the fourth century, some Roman emperors actively supported the agenda of the church, but this was long after the establishment of Sunday observance.

"The problem is with the second part of the statement which speaks of the Sabbath as being 'pressed down a little lower' in almost every general council. In all my reading of the seven ecumenical councils, I have not found a reference to the Sabbath/Sunday question being debated in such councils. Presumably the reason is that Sunday observance was no longer a debated question--it had become widely accepted by Christians."

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, and his dominion was taken away. 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 in context 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 for th 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 exceedingly 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. While the word sacrifice is not in the original text, the word Tamid is correctly translated as the regular or “daily sacrifice” as it is identical with “evening-morning” (’ereb-boqer) of Daniel 8:14. 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 (Numb. 29:11). Without the tamid, nothing else could be offered. The tamid or daily or regular was called the “continual” because it never ceased, not even on the Day of Atonement.
And the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the earthly temple of the High Priest and of God. The Bible emphasizes that the little horn desolated the “daily” and the entire sanctuary -- not merely the Most Holy Place! Hence, the daily ministration of priests in the Holy Place was also completely stopped by the little horn.

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 by the little horn?

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? Expect the next verse to 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. Verse 14 is the answer to the question in verse 13. How long the entire sanctuary would be desecrated? The answer is 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 day (yom) 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-daq (for re-dedication) in Daniel 8:14 instead of ta-heer (from the 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.

After 2300 ‘ereb-boqer’ (daily sacrificial cycles) have passed, then the sanctuary will be restored. The text plainly states that the daily cycles will cease until the end of 2300 sacrificial cycles.

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. In Matthew 24:15-18 Jesus warns the Jewish Christians that the soon-coming destruction of Jerusalem will be patterned after the atrocities of Antiochus IV and they should be ready to leave with haste.

Historian Josephus, writes:

“For so it was, that the temple was made desolate by Antiochus, and so continued for three years...And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eighty years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would

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.

2300 evenings and mornings simply cannot be 2300 years, because there has never in human history been a 2300-year period where the sanctuary on earth (or in heaven) was trodden under foot by a little horn power. See also the problems with year-day principle. Taking into account that the word “day” is nowhere to be found in Dan. 8:14, where exactly is the biblical key that, in prophecy, one evening plus one morning equals one year rule? Don’t we, as creationists, insist that the presence of the words “evening and morning” in Genesis 1 implies 24-hour days? Who gave SDAs the right to use evening to morning = 1 year rule when God has not specified it? If God wanted to say 2300 years, he would have said so like he does elsewhere in Bible prophecy. The Bible prophesied that Abraham's children would be afflicted for 400 years (Gen 15:13) and that the Jews would be in captivity for 70 years (Daniel 9:1-2). Jonah prophesied Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days (Jonah 3:4), which did not equate to 40 years. In Genesis 6:3 God
prophesied there would be a period of 120 years before the flood, which did not equate to 43,200 years.

*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 (kingdom). That is during the “time of the end” or “end times” of when one of the four kingdoms were ruling. The text does not say “in the latter time of the Seleucid kingdom”. “The latter time of their rule or kingdom” refers to ONE Greek kingdom which replaced Alexander the Great. Note that “kingdom” is singular. Besides, this cannot be Rome which did not rise during the latter time of their kingdom, because Rome had existed for centuries before Alexander and did not come up into power after Alexander’s death. As far as Israel was concerned Antiochus IV did indeed come as the LAST of the Seleucid rulers over Israel. The next non-Jewish ruler over Israel would be pagan Rome in AD 64.

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. Again, when will this King arise? 1) In the latter time of their rule meaning when Greece was divided into four dominions. 2) When sins of the Jews have run their course at this time. 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 king's 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).

Some have applied the little horn of Daniel 8 to the Turks & Papacy. For Martin Luther, the popes were the “spirit” of antichrist, while the “Turks” were the flesh. In reading Daniel 8, Luther also saw Antiochus Epiphanes as the forerunner of the great antichrist. Antiochus’ importance cannot be overemphasized. Left alone, Antiochus IV would have wiped out God’s people, all traces of the law, and Jewish worship. Hence, Antiochus appears to be the better fit.

Other considerations

- In Daniel 8, a Ram represented Medo-Persia, and Goat represented Greece. If Rome was to follow, we would expect a mention of the Roman Empire to come into the picture as an animal of some sort distinct from the goat, not some “little horn”. Its description as a
rather "little horn" clashes with the “powerful as iron” beast representations of Rome in the visions of Daniel 2 and 7.

- In Daniel 7, ten **horns** came out of the 4th beast. Then a **little horn** came up from among **the ten horns**. Then we come to chapter 8, where the goat clearly refers to the empire of Greece. Daniel 8:21 says **the large horn** represents the first individual king of the empire, Alexander the Great. In keeping with **the horn imagery** within the context, the remaining **four horns** that came forth are all connected with **the kingdom of Greece**. Then what does it say in Daniel 8:9? “Out of one of them”— that is, out of a kingdom belonging to one of the four generals of Alexander—“came forth a little **horn**.”

- We cannot build the entire case for the “little horn” being the Roman Empire only on the ambiguous second half of Daniel 8:9, “which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land,” as SDA’s and some do. The first part of the verse is at least as important as the second. Those who wish to see Rome referenced in Daniel 8:9b must also present a solid exegetical case for how the Romans better fulfill 8:9a than Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king whose campaigns in Egypt (south); Persia, Parthia and Armenia (east); and Palestine (the “Beautiful Land”), also fulfilled 8.9b. The paper, “The Stability of the Seleucid Empire under Antiochus IV”, discusses all three of these campaigns by Antiochus.

- **Can a ‘little horn’ arise from ‘winds’ in Daniel 8:8?** Just using the example of apocalyptic imagery of chapter 7 as a general guide, **would we not expect that the pronoun “them” in verse 8:8 refers to the four horns?** This is not to say that the small horns in both cases must have identical symbolism—the symbols must be contextually defined within each self-contained vision (**chazown**)—
but only that in both cases, we see that new horns arise from others that pre-existed. In each vision a group of horns gives way to a single small horn of special significance. This contextual consideration, together with the fact that the four-wind distribution is tied to the four generals of Alexander, indicates that “them” in Daniel 8:9 does not refer to the four “winds,” as some have proposed, but to the four “horns.” The imagery requires the small horn to arise from a pre-existing horn, not a wind. The four winds are the four directions in which Alexander’s four generals parceled up the Greek empire among themselves after his death. They have no direct connection with the single “little horn.”

- Antiochus did not appear at the “latter time of their kingdom” of the Seleucid kingdom (Daniel 8:23)? Some say Antiochus did not come in the latter time of the Grecian empire but in the middle. While the term “latter time” is subjective (after all, the entire period between the first and second comings of Jesus is called either the “last hour” as well as the “last days”. See Acts 2:17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pt. 1:20), the first of these four kings began to reign in the year B.C. 306 and continued till 65 B.C. And Antiochus Epiphanes reigned from 175 B.C. to 164 B.C. Therefore, he did reign in the latter times of their kingdoms, at a time when Greece had passed the peak of its power evidenced by the humiliation he suffered at the hands of the Romans while on his way to invade Egypt. Now if Antiochus is too early to rise, then so is Rome since Rome was a power during the days of Antiochus, and it is said this king will arise during the latter time of their kingdom. SDA’s will say Rome is different, but any such explanation is a convenient excuse.

- Antiochus 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). SDA bible commentary says regarding “exceedingly great” as follows: Heb. yether, basically meaning “remainder.” In a few instances it describes, as here, that which is above measure, in the sense of leaving a remainder. It is
translated “excellency” (Gen. 49:3), “plentifully” (Ps 31:23), “much more abundant” (Isa. 56:12). The word translated “very” in Dan. 8:8 is me´od, the more common word for “exceedingly.” In the OT me´od is translated “exceeding” or “exceedingly” 22 times (Gen. 13:13; 15:1; etc.) in its simple form and 9 times in its repeated form. It cannot be argued that yether (Dan. 8:9) represents a greater degree than me´od.

- The time period, the “latter time of their kingdom” referring to the smaller four kingdoms of Greece requires all four kingdoms to still exist, so it was before their assimilation into the Roman Empire—an individual king would arise from one of those four Greek kingdoms. By comparing this explanation with the vision, it is clear that the “little horn” must arise from a Grecian kingdom. There is no way to accept Gabriel’s explanation and still claim that the “little horn” could be a Roman. Whatever this power is, the text is clear enough that it happens "in the latter time of their kingdom”, not "after", therefore it cannot be Rome.

- Moreover, it says “...a king of fierce countenance...” (Daniel 8:23). While king and kingdom can be used interchangeably, this is the angelic interpretation of it, unlike the SDA interpretation, and it is referring to an individual king (not a series of Kings or Popes) that arises. That appears to be the context if you read it verse-by-verse, without enforcing preconceived ideas into the text (eisegesis).

- Antiochus is said to “understand dark sentences” and “cause craft to prosper” (Daniel 8:23,25). Antiochus was renowned for his craftiness and cunning; Rome more for her brute strength and power.

- The image above shows the four horns standing out of the head of the he-goat, Alexander. The four kingdoms were Egypt, Thrace,
Macedonia, and Syria; and out of one them comes forth a "little horn," Antiochus Epiphanes; (in the chart the rather long horn is shown with the idea of showing more plainly the direction taken in its warfare). According to the prophecy the "little horn" was to first go to the SOUTH (Egypt) (see Maccabees 1:17-19). The next direction was TOWARD THE EAST (Persia) – See Maccabees 3: 31-37. The last direction which is TOWARD THE PLEASANT LAND (see (2 Maccabees 9: 13, 28). Thus, Antiochus Epiphanes thoroughly fulfilled the prophecy. After going south, then east, we find that he did wax exceeding great toward the pleasant land.

- Now if one has concerns regarding Antiochus sphere of operations, and greatness, look no further than to the historian Josephus' final conclusion. Josephus has the following to say: "And that from them (the four horns of the goat) there should arise a certain king that should overcome our nation, and should take away our political government and should spoil the temple, and forbid the sacrifice to be offered for three years' time.... And indeed it came so to pass that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision. " —Antiquities, Book 10; chapter XI. While the book of Maccabees nor Josephus is inspired, no one will deny that Maccabees is authentic history. Josephus not only had access to the Scriptures as a priest but actually owned them at the destruction of Jerusalem. And so, Josephus is recognized as the greatest Jewish historian that ever lived. SDA's quotes from Josephus and from Maccabees often enough when it suits them.

- Now the above is the chart given by SDA's (Uriah Smith) regarding the little horn's rise. One glance at this should be quite sufficient to convince any unbiased Bible student, that the application of Rome to
this prophecy is being forced against all the principals laid down by God in the studying of the prophecies. Instead of the "little horn" coming out of one of the four horns of Alexander's Empire, SDA interpretation brings it away from the west (Italy) and when it reaches the Macedonian horn, "it" or Rome blends Macedonia in with "it." This is quite opposite the prophecy — where it says that the "little horn" was to come out of one of them, interpreted by the angel to mean during their “latter days of their kingdom”. Again, it will be noticed from SDA illustration that when the Roman horn leaves Macedonia it goes EAST toward Syria, whereas the prophecy says that it would first go SOUTH. The Roman horn then goes SOUTH to Judea, whereas the prophecy says that it would go East. And again, Rome goes further SOUTH to Egypt, whereas the prophecy says that the "little horn" would then go to the PLEASANT LAND (which is a westerly direction). Now that is not all.

- Again it will be noticed that the Roman horn goes on its march to Syria, 65 B. C.; to Judea, 63 B. C.; and to Egypt 30 B. C., that is, AFTER THESE KINGDOMS OF THE FOUR HORNS HAVE COME TO THEIR END. For they came to their end in 65 B. C. when Rome came over and conquered them as a universal kingdom. Whereas the prophecy distinctly says that "IN THE LATTER TIME OF THEIR KINGDOM — IN THE LATTER TIME OF THE REIGN OF THE FOUR HORNS, would this "little horn" rise up AND NOT AFTER THEY HAD COME TO THEIR END.\textsuperscript{13}

- SDAs claim that the greatness of the “little horn” disqualifies Antiochus, because he wasn’t that great, but then states that the chapter deals mostly with the pope, who wasn’t that great either to begin with! The “little horn” started little, then he grew in certain particular directions, and then he was to be destroyed unexpectedly. In what sense does this fit the history of Rome, which, according to SDA's, started out being “exceedingly great”, then sunk into nothingness, only to be replaced by the bishop of Rome, then again lose supremacy, then who would grow great, once again, only to be destroyed at the Second Advent? Doesn’t it fit Antiochus’ history much better, since he started small, grew considerably in his attacks against Egypt and Israel, and died during a campaign to the east?
SDA’s also put forward the argument that in the Hebrew for Daniel 8:8, 9, “horns” is feminine, and “winds” is either masculine or feminine. In the phrase “out of one of them (mehem),” the pronoun “them” is masculine. This means that the antecedent noun for “them” cannot be “horns” but must be “winds.” Thus, the little horn was to appear out of one of the four winds. It was to arise from one of the four directions of the compass.

However, note this. Daniel 8:8,9 – “and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn...”. The word "one" is feminine which would link it back to the feminine "horns". Therefore, if we were to look only at linguistics, we cannot determine for certainty whether the little horn arose from the winds or the other horn.

Further, close examination of the above statement, however, reveals it to be a mixture of truth and error. Contrary to SDA claim that the pronoun mehem is masculine, it is actually gender-independent. The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT), a standard reference work, observes at entry #504 that it is a “third person plural independent nominative pronoun.” TWOT also points out, at entry #480 dealing with the third person singular pronoun hû’, that it likewise is gender-independent and can take the meaning “he,” “she,” or “it,” depending on the context. We must conclude that SDA claim that mehem must be a masculine noun requiring a masculine antecedent.

There are also problems with SDA blanket statement that “winds” can be either masculine or feminine. It is true that some grammars call it a “common gender” word that can take either a masculine or feminine verb, but we still have to let the specific context determine how ruach should be regarded in each case. In the authoritative Koehler-Baumgartner-Richardson-Stamm Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT) it states (p. 1197), “Generally רוח is fem.;
only seldom is it masc., as in Ex 1013.19 Nu 1131 Is 5716 Jr 412 Ezk 2726 Ps 5112 7839 Jb 415 82 203 418 Qoh 16 319.” The given instances are apparently the sum total of places where ruach is masculine. No Daniel passages are included. Hence, we should conclude that SDA’s are mistaken in claiming that ruach is a masculine noun as used in Daniel 8.

SDA’s similarly tries to get around the apparent sense of the text—that “them” refers to one of the four Greek “horns” of 8:8—by claiming that there is a “curious disagreement of genders in the Hebrew phrase ‘one’ (feminine) of them (masculine)” (p. 28). The -ath ending of the adjective “one” (‘echath, הָאַחַת), which modifies “them,” is feminine. Because Hebrew requires that adjectives must agree in gender with the noun they modify, it shows the independent pronoun “them” is being treated as a feminine noun. We therefore expect the pronoun “them” to be paired with a feminine antecedent. There is thus no disagreement of genders, and linking “them” with the feminine noun for “horns” is quite grammatically valid. SDA’s thus cannot rule out “horns” as the antecedent of “them” on the basis of gender.12

Isn’t it true that a literal translation of Dan. 8:8,9 would be “And came up [plural, feminine] notable [singular, feminine] four in its place [feminine] toward four winds [feminine] of the heavens [feminine]. And from one [feminine] of them [masculine; there are textual variants where ‘them’ is also feminine] came [masculine] horn [feminine] one [feminine] little [feminine]”? Isn’t it true that the best Hebrew grammars warn that sometimes Hebrew shows a somewhat erratic behaviour regarding gender agreement, like E. Kautzsch, editor, Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar, 2nd edition, 17th printing, translated by A. E. Cowley, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), §§ 110 k, 144 a, 145 p, t, u, 135 o? Hence, isn’t the notion of a horn coming out of a wind somewhat unexpected, both biologically and theologically? Is there any other occurrence of such a thing? Does the angel hint at such an understanding in the explanation to the vision? Is the
inclusion of the expression “out of one of them” informative or uninformative? If Inspiration had wanted to convey the notion that the “little horn” was geographically unrelated to the other four kings, how would readers more easily get the idea, by adding “out of one of them” or by omitting it?

• **Antiochus never "cast down the foundation of the sanctuary"?** Antiochus did kill many Jews, cast out the high priest and destroy the great altar of burnt offering by offering a pig on it (8:10-11). This stopped sanctuary usage until it was cleansed from defilement. Neither did the Roman Catholic Church literally cast down the sanctuary. SDAs teach that the Roman Catholic Church figuratively cast down the sanctuary in heaven when it introduced the confessional. Antiochus' actions are much closer to the fulfilment than the figurative confessional in the 12th century. If the SDA 2300 years began in BC 457, that should be the beginning point of the little horn's desolations. However, neither pagan Rome nor papal Rome did anything in BC 457. This is a serious SDA error.

• **The term “the Prince of the host”.** In Hebrew, it is sar-hatsaba’. Besides Dan. 8:11, it occurs in 1 Sam. 17:55 (applied to Abner), in 1 Kings 1:19; 11:15, 21 (applied to Joab), in 2 Kings 4:13 (applied to a commander of the army in the days of Elisha), in 2 Kings 25:19 and Jeremiah 52:25 (applied to the “chief officer in charge of conscripting the people”), in 1 Chron. 19:18 (applied to Shophach), and in 1 Chron. 27:5, applied to “Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest”. In which of these references is there a Messianic implication? Since 1 Chron. 27:5 witnesses to the possibility of a priest having the title of sar-hatsaba’, would it be legitimate to suppose that Daniel predicted that the “little horn” would interfere with the Aaronic priesthood or that he would even eliminate one of the priests? There’s another set of texts that have the slightly different Hebrew expression sar-tseba’. Besides Jos. 5:15, 16, where it is used for some supernatural envoy from God, it occurs in Judges 4:7 and 1 Sam. 12:9 for Sisera, in 2 Sam. 2:8 for Abner, in 2 Sam. 10:16 for Shobach, in 2 Sam. 19:13 and 1 Kings 2:32 for Abner and Amasa, in 1 Kings 16:16 for Omri, in 2 Kings 5:1 for Naaman, and in 1 Chron. 19:16 for Shophach. Again, how certain is the Messianic attribution of sar-tseba’?
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?
• If the Bible teaches a day-for-a-year principle to be used in prophecy, and if the one-day-a-year is a prophecy to begin in 1844, then the Day of
Atonement should have lasted from 1844 to 1845. How can one even justify saying that the prophetic Day of Atonement has already lasted 165+ years?

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.**

4) Daniel 8:9-12, the prophet saw a wicked power, the "little horn," defiling the sanctuary, treading it down, taking away the daily sacrifice. Then in Daniel 8:13, the question was asked as to how long that evil work of that evil power was to continue to give the sanctuary to be trodden under foot; and to this question comes the answer in verse 14: "**For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place [sanctuary] will be properly restored [cleansed].**"

Now note this: SDA’s will expound an answer for verse 14, but not refer to that question of verse 13 at all; and they make that answer a reply to
something wholly different from the question asked in verse 13, and wholly
different from the context of verses 9-12; for SDA’s make verse 14 reply to
such a question as this: "How long shall the sanctuary be defiled by the sins
of God’s people, which have been transferred to it by confession?" In all of
Daniel 8 the sins of God’s people, or any confessed sins, are not referred to
whatever; for what has defiled the sanctuary and made necessary its
"cleansing" is its defilement by the little horn. What hope for finding truth is
there if you divorce an answer from the question asked, and from the context
that provoked it, and instead supply a question and context of your own?
Such is the Adventist interpretation, an answer divorced from its question.

5) The Bible emphasizes that the little horn of 8:11-12 desolated the “daily”
and the entire sanctuary -- not merely the Most Holy Place! The daily
ministration of priests in the Holy Place was also completely stopped by the
little horn.

While SDA's teach that “removing the daily” in Daniel 8:11-12 caused the
entire sanctuary to be defiled, they then teach that defiling the “daily” in 8:13
only required the Most Holy Place to be cleansed in 8:14! This necessary
manipulation of the facts allows them to teach that Christ has continued daily
ministering inside the Holy Place since His ascension. Yet He could not
minister inside the Most Holy Place because it was still defiled!!!

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.

Objectively, what really happened in 1844? Did anything happen to the “little
horn” at that time? Can we find anything worthy of mention that happened
to the papacy at that time? No? How come? Would this involve just another
little bit of contortion?

The idea that confessed sins are transferred to the heavenly sanctuary and
are defiling it is not found anywhere in the Bible or the passage of Daniel 8.
Look at what various Seventh-day Adventist scholars have written regarding
this problem:
C.L. Price: "What has defiled the sanctuary and made necessary its 'cleansing' is its defilement by the little horn. Confessed sins are not referred to at all; that is an alien thought, wholly brought in by the Adventist writers themselves." Source: C. L. Price, "Should a Question be Answered? A Study of Daniel 8:14 in New Light on Old Problems (1973).

Dr. Raymond Cottrell: "Coming again to the Book of Daniel I determined to try once more to find a way to be absolutely faithful to both Daniel and the traditional Adventist interpretation of 8:14, but again found it impossible. I then formulated six questions regarding the Hebrew text of the passage and its context, which I submitted to every college teacher versed in Hebrew and every head of the religion department in all of our North American colleges---all personal friends of mine. Without exception they replied that there is no linguistic or contextual basis for the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14." (Raymond F. Cottrell, The "Sanctuary Doctrine"? Asset or Liability?)

Andre Reis, another SDA theologian writes: “The book of Hebrews explicitly negates the notion that Jesus has engaged in a two-phase ministry since his ascension, with the final phase to be commenced sometime in the future. Hebrews 6:19-20; 9:12, 25; 10:19 are full of verbal parallels drawn from the sanctuary ritual culminating with the yearly Day of Atonement to explain Jesus's sacrifice and subsequent activities as the Heavenly high Priest. For the author, Jesus went “within the veil” in the same manner that the High Priest used to go “within the veil” on Yom Kippur. The expression in Greek is the same used in Lev 16. Jesus went “within the veil,” “with his blood,” “once and for all.” This occurred when he ascended to the Father”

“The bias for interpretative tradition in regards to 1844 is illustrated by an interesting episode I witnessed not long ago. I recently visited a certain Adventist seminary and stumbled upon a class on Hebrews. The teacher was a prominent author of DARCOM and the subject was the “inauguration” of the heavenly sanctuary which the teacher used to justify the fact that, although Hebrews 6 undeniably places Jesus inside the Most Holy Place at his ascension, this entering in the Most Holy Place was merely to “inaugurate” it. In other words, Jesus entered the Most Holy Place at the ascension, inaugurated it, left it and then went in again 1844."
I was disturbed to see that he was presenting views that had been debunked by another Adventist scholar in an exchange they had in one of our printed magazines. Never did he mention his dialogue with the other scholar. I raised my hand and asked him where in the OT do we see blood going into the Most Holy Place in any of the OT inauguration passages. By his reaction, I suspected he knew that there is no such OT passage. He hesitated for a second and then appealed to the book of Hebrews. In other words, the book of Hebrews proves that in the same book Hebrews Jesus inaugurated the sanctuary with blood, even though none of the OT passages mention blood within the sanctuary, let alone the Most Holy Place. I didn’t press the issue and I doubt his students understood the implications of my question. The fallacy of the argument is disappointing, if not dishonest.

This encounter shows me that, at the end of the day, the viability of 1844 as a prophetic marker continues to depend heavily on isolated proof-texts. It seems Adventist scholars who defend 1844 as an unmovable rock are satisfied with finding tiny hooks in a few chosen verses that appear to (albeit remotely) support our position. That is no longer an acceptable way to construct theology”. (Source: https://spectrummagazine.org/article/2015/10/22/perspective-1844-pillar-faith-or-mortal-wound )
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 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 openeness 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, 21while 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 (not the 2300 evening and mornings). 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 evenings and mornings (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 evening and mornings are not years. The Hebrew for evening and mornings is ‘ereb-boger’. It is not the usual Hebrew word, yom, for day.
- Where does Daniel say that there was something in the vision of chapter 8 that he didn’t understand? That w’eyn mebiyn, at the end of Dan. 8:27, can be translated as “nobody knew”, meaning
that none of Daniel’s acquaintances knew about his distress about the vision caused by his knowledge of the future evil deeds of the “little horn”.

- 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 appears to Daniel in Daniel chapter 9.

- Doesn’t Dan. 8:26 indicate that the vision was “sealed up” because it concerned “the distant future”? If so, is Gabriel in chapter 9 about to unseal a vision that was sealed up? Would that mean that “the distant future” arrived in the first year of Darius the Mede?

- 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.

- If 490 years are cut off from 2300 years, how do we know the 70-week prophecy is not cut out of the middle or the end of the 2300-year prophecy? Why should the 2,300 evenings and mornings of Dan. 8:14 start at the same time as the 70 weeks? Where does Daniel say so? The reason SDA’s cut the 70-week prophecy off of the 2300 prophecy is because they need a starting point for the ‘2300-years’ prophecy. There is no starting date given in the Bible, so SDA’s ties it to the 70-week prophecy in order to get a starting date for the 2300 years. Of course, it makes absolutely no sense to begin the 2300 prophecy in 457 BC because the sanctuary was not desolated until hundreds of years later.
The background and context for Daniel 9’s 70 weeks prophesy is the 70-year prophesy of Jeremiah, and not the 2300 of Daniel 8.

**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. Nothing is mentioned about 490 years being cut off out of 2300. 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 prophesies 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 prophesies, 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 the city and walls of 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:
  o 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).
  o 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”.
  o 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.
  o 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.
  o 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. 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.

- **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).

- Besides, if Cyrus fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah by ending the 70 years of desolations on the city of Jerusalem, then Cyrus must have been the king that decreed for the rebuilding of Jerusalem at the end of the 70 years. Therefore, Cyrus appear to be the king that gave the “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” in Daniel 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, 430 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. Some have calculated a 70 year period between 605bc and 586bc, based on a Jewish inclusive method of computing. But it may be unreasonable to assume the land is enjoying its sabbaths (70 years during this period) as people lived in this time frame. My point is that 70 years could be 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 (See Revelation commentary for an explanation of Michael).
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 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 parcelled 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 ascendency 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 Selecus 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 Selecus 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, Selecus II] will enter the realm of the king of the South (Ptolemy III), but will return to his own land. After two years Selecus 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 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.* 32 *And by smooth words he will 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 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). (Some apply verse 35 onwards to an end time antichrist before Christ’s second coming. Such an interpretation is not impossible, in line with John’s statement “that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come”. (1 John 2:18). If it is an future antichrist, the following verses would be interpreted in a different light. However, there is also strong evidence to suggest that the verses that follow had a fulfillment just after Christ’s first coming as we saw in Daniel 2 & 7, which is explained below).

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)**

“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 (If verse 35 onwards were interpreted as a future antichrist power before the second coming, then the following verses will have to be read very differently). 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 awaken 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 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.
Appendix 1: Origins of Futurism and Preterism

Is it true that 'Preterism' and 'Futurism' were Jesuit interpretations of prophecy that were contrived during the counter-reformation? SDA's and some others essentially promote that Jesuit scholarship rallied to the Roman cause by providing two plausible alternatives to the historical interpretation of the Protestants. Luis de Alcazar (1554–1630) of Seville, Spain, devised what became known as the “preterist” system of prophetic interpretation, pushing the antichrist as already come. In order to remove the Catholic Church from consideration as the antichrist power, Francisco Ribera (1537–1591) proposed that most of Revelation refers to the distant future just prior to the second coming, the “futurist” system.

So, are the above statements true? No, that is a lie perpetrated by Seventh-day Adventists and others to stifle investigation through guilt by association. While Alcazar and Ribera championed those views from the 16th and 17th century, the idea of an antichrist that had already come, and also a future coming anti-Christ was not a new idea among the early church fathers before the reformation. John himself states simultaneously that the “antichrist is coming” and that “now many antichrists have come” (1 John 2:18; cf. 1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

Preterism (moderate) sees most of the prophesises fulfilled in the first few centuries. Historicism teaches that much of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are to be fulfilled over long ages of church history. Futurism views much of the prophecies of Daniel, and Revelation to be yet future.

While the early church fathers had differing views on end times, here are a few samples of early Church views on anti-Christ:

Irenaeus (AD 189) believed in a single future antichrist who will sit in the temple of Jerusalem for 31/2 years.

“By means of the events which shall occur in the time of the Antichrist it is shown that he, being an apostate and a robber, is anxious to be adored as God, and that although a mere slave, he wishes to be proclaimed as king. For he, being endued with all the power of the devil, shall not come as a righteous king nor as a legitimate king in subjection to God, but as an impious, unjust, and lawless one . . . setting aside idols to persuade [men]
that he himself is God, raising himself up as the only idol. . . . Moreover [Paul] has also pointed out this which I have shown in many ways: that **the temple in Jerusalem** was made by the direction of the true God. For the apostle himself, speaking in his own person, distinctly called it the temple of God [2 Thess. 2:4] . . . in which **the enemy shall sit**, endeavoring to show himself as Christ” (Against Heresies 5:25:1-2 [A.D. 189]).

“But when **this Antichrist** shall have devastated all things in this world, he will **reign for three years and six months** and **will sit in the temple at Jerusalem**; and then the **Lord will come from heaven in the clouds**, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire” (ibid., 5:30:4).

**Hippolytus (AD 200)** saw a future Jewish antichrist and a rebuilt temple before the second coming.

“We find it written regarding **Antichrist** . . . ‘Dan is a lion’s whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan’ [Deut. 33:22]. But that no one may err by supposing that this is said of the Savior, let him attend carefully to the matter. Dan, he says, is a lion’s whelp. And in naming the tribe of Dan, he declared clearly the tribe from which Antichrist is destined to spring. For as Christ springs from the tribe of Judah, **so Antichrist is to spring from the tribe of Dan**” (The Antichrist 6 [A.D. 200]). 14.

“Above all, moreover, he will love the nation of the Jews. And with all these [Jews] he will work signs and terrible wonders, false wonders and not true, in order to deceive his impious equals. . . . And after that **he will build the temple in Jerusalem** and will restore it again speedily and give it over to the Jews” (Discourse on the End of the World 23-25 [A.D. 217]).

Hippolytus separated Daniel’s 70th week from the 69 weeks, and placed the **last 7 years** before the end of the world (Treatise on Christ and Antichrist 43).

**Tertullian (AD 210)** believed in a present day “antichrist” and a future coming “antichrist”.

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“The man of sin, the son of perdition, who must first be revealed before the Lord comes, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; and who is to sit in the temple of God and boast himself as being God. . . . According indeed to our view, he is Antichrist; as it is taught us in both the ancient and the new prophecies, and by the apostle John, who says that ‘already many false prophets have gone out into the world,’ the forerunners of Antichrist, who deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and do not acknowledge Jesus, meaning in God the Creator” (Against Marcion 5:16 [A.D. 210]).

Ephraem of Nisibis (AD 306-373), a major theologian of the early Eastern (Byzantine) Church, writes: “All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord, in order that they may not see at any time the confusion which overwhelms the world because of our sins.” He describes the imminent rapture, followed by 3½ years of great tribulation under the rule of Antichrist, followed by the coming of Christ, the defeat of Antichrist, and the eternal state. His view includes a parenthesis between the fulfillment of Daniel’s sixty-nine weeks and his seventieth week in Daniel 9:24-27. (source: https://tms.edu/m/tmsj13e.pdf)

Brother Dolcino (AD 1307), a leader of the Apostolic Brethren in northern Italy writes: “The Antichrist was coming into this world within the bounds of the said three and a half years; and after he had come, then he [Dolcino] and his followers would be transferred into Paradise, in which are Enoch and Elijah. And in this way they will be preserved unharmed from the persecution of Antichrist” (source: https://tms.edu/m/tmsj13e.pdf)

Peter Jurieu (1637-1713) was a prominent theologian and apologist in the French Reformed Church. In his work, Approaching Deliverance of the Church (1687), he taught that “Christ would come in the air to rapture the saints and return to heaven before the battle of Armageddon. He spoke of a secret rapture prior to His coming in glory and judgement at Armageddon.” (source: https://tms.edu/m/tmsj13e.pdf)

Augustine (AD 354) alluded to Nero as a type of antichrist.

"Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the
calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal; so that in saying, 'For the mystery of iniquity doth already work,' he alluded to Nero, whose deeds already seemed to be as the deeds of Antichrist" (The City of God on II Thessalonians 2:7, XX.19.3).

Commodian (AD 260), a Christian poet, writes of the Antichrist, when Nero will return from hell:

"Then, doubtless, the world shall be finished when he shall appear. He himself shall divide the globe into three ruling powers, when, moreover, Nero shall be raised up from hell, Elias shall first come to seal the beloved ones; at which things the region of Africa and the northern nation, the whole earth on all sides, for seven years shall tremble. But Elias shall occupy the half of the time, Nero shall occupy half. Then the whore Babylon, being reduced to ashes, its embers shall thence advance to Jerusalem; and the Latin conqueror shall then say, I am Christ, whom ye always pray to; and, indeed, the original ones who were deceived combine to praise him. He does many wonders, since his is the false prophet" (Instructions, XLI).

Irenaeus (AD 189), a church father comments on the number of the Beast, warned against "making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved" (Against Heresies, V.30.3). He understood John's vision to have occurred "almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign", a tradition repeated by Eusebius (AD314) in his Ecclesiastical History (III.18.3) and by the church fathers (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, The Rich Man's Salvation, XLII; Victorinus, Commentary on the Apocalypse, X.11; Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men, IX; Sulpicius Severus, Sacred History, II.31)—which is to say, sometime before AD 96, when the emperor was assassinated and just a few years before John himself died of old age, having been banished to the island of Patmos, where Revelation was written. Source: University of Chicago/paper

Jerome (4th Century), in his Commentary on the Book of Daniel, expressed this idea: And so there are many of our viewpoint who think that Domitius Nero was the Antichrist because of his outstanding savagery and depravity.
John Calvin did not write a commentary on Revelation, but in his Commentary on Daniel, he identifies the little horn of Daniel 7 as Roman Caesar’s:

"It is sufficiently clear, therefore, that this exhibition ought to be referred to the first advent of Christ. I have no doubt that the little horn relates to Julius Caesar and the other Caesars who succeeded him, namely, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and others" (Source: https://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/daniel/7.htm)

In Calvin’s Institutes, the little horn is Antiochus:

"In another passage, the Spirit, portraying him in the person of Antiochus, says that his reign would be with great swelling words of vanity" (Dan. 7:25). Source: (Calvin’s Institutes IV:7:25)

Calvin also accused the Pope of being the Antichrist not based on Daniel 7 or 8, but because of his “tyranny,” “destruction of the truth,” “corruption of the worship of God,” “breaking of His ordinances,” and the “dispersion of the order of His Church.”

Martin Luther, who had grave reservations about Revelation as a canonical book, subscribed to historicist ideas in his later years and found resources for an anti-Catholic message in the Bible. Martin Luther was probably unaware of the previous attacks on the papacy when, in 1517, he drafted his 95 Theses. However, for Martin Luther, the popes were not only the antichrist. For him, popes were the “spirit” of antichrist, while the “Turks” (Muslims) were the flesh. In reading Daniel 8, Luther also saw Antiochus Epiphanes as the forerunner of the great antichrist.

In the first few centuries of the Church, the Roman Caesars from Nero to Diocletian became “antichrists,” and Rome was “Babylon.” Some also saw a future literal anti-Christ, and rebuilt temple (all this before the arrival of Papacy).
Yet, centuries later, with the arrival of Muhammad, the idea of antichrist took on a distinctly Muslim flavor.

**John of Damascus** (6th century) wrote in his *Against Heresies* about the “deceptive error of the Ishmaelites, the forerunner of the antichrist.”

As early as 634 A.D., in *The Doctrine of Jacob*, a Jewish merchant from Palestine who had converted to Christianity laments over the Arab invasions. He writes: “What can you tell me about the prophet who has appeared with the Saracens? He replied, groaning deeply: “He is false, for the prophets do not come armed with a sword.” Truly they are the works of anarchy being committed today and I fear the first Christ to come, whom the Christians worship, was the one sent by God and we instead are preparing to receive the Antichrist.

Another eyewitness to the initial Arab attacks was **Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem**. In 634 A.D., Bethlehem had already fallen to the Arab invaders, so he was forced to give his Nativity sermon in Jerusalem. His most detailed description of the Muslim invasion came in his Epiphany sermon, in probably 636 A.D., a dire moment, as the Arab army had surrounded Jerusalem itself. He spoke of the “God-hating Saracens, the abomination of desolation clearly foretold to us by the prophets.” Jerusalem fell in 637 A.D., and in due course they established Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount, meant to forever cement the idea that Islam had supplanted Christianity and Judaism, even in the very heart of the Judeo-Christian world.

**Peter the Venerable** (12th century), saw Muhammad as the precursor to the Antichrist (source: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad)).

During the 13th century, works by scholars such as Peter Pascual, Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, and Ramon Llull, depicted Muhammad as an Antichrist while Islam was shown to be a Christian heresy (source: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad)).

Kenneth Setton (an American historian) wrote that Muhammad was frequently calumniated and made a subject of legends taught by preachers as fact. For example, in order to show that Muhammad was the anti-Christ, it was asserted that Muhammad died not in the year 632 but in the year 666 – the number of the beast – in another variation on the theme the
number "666" was also used to represent the period of time Muslims would hold sway of the land (source: Wikipedia).

Islam undoubtedly punctuated Martin Luther’s wholehearted belief that he was living amidst the Last Days, so Martin Luther wrote, “The pope is Antichrist, so the Turk (Muslims) is the very devil ... both shall go down to hell”.

Luther was not the first to attribute antichrist characteristics to the papacy. Back in 991, Bishop Arnulf of Orleans, applies that title to papacy.

Luther and others went on to identify the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church as the “Antichrist” and “Whore of Babylon” during the Protestant reformation. This was the central conflict of Luther and the reformers of the Protestant Reformation. Hence, Protestantism redirected and divided the views of the antichrist away from where it had been for the first centuries. After Luther, for many centuries until the middle of the 19th century, the dominant view in the church was the Historicist school of thought which was held by such people as John Knox, William Tyndale, Isaac Newton, and many others. Today, SDA’s champion the historicist view, continuing with much of the ideas held by the Protestant reformers.

Now, was John Calvin influenced by Jesuits for writing that the little horn of Daniel 7 refers to Caesars? Were the early church fathers influenced by Jesuits for holding a flavor of preterist and futurist ideas of antichrist? Far from it. As you can see, the SDAs and others who propagate that preterist and futurist ideas of antichrist (in opposition to Popes being the antichrist) were a Jesuit invention in the 16th century is utterly false. Preterist ideas were more common than futurist ideas, but they were nothing knew among several early church believers.

Preterism traces its roots back to the second century, and there have been many prominent preterists (partial or moderate) since long before the Jesuit order was born. Historicism, which also had a long history on the periphery, only gained prominence during the Reformation as Protestant leaders "discovered" the papacy on the pages of almost every evil power in Daniel and Revelation, as they believed they lived in the very last days of apostasy. Apparently contrived from an anti-Catholic mindset rather than a critical evaluation of the facts, and good exegesis, Historicism’s fortunes waned as anti-Catholic fervor died down. Its highly subjective (such arbitrarily
picking of dates to pinpoint fulfillments) and controversial nature led many
to question if it was not based more on wishful thinking rather than actual
fact. Due to its nebulous interpretation method (no two historicists agree on
what symbols go with what historical events) and the fact that John’s original
readers could not have understood the book of Revelation in a historicist
manner, the historicist view is not widely held today. As historicism came to
be viewed as unreliable because of having so many differing variations on
interpreting the same symbols, and following the very public humiliation of
the October 22, 1844, Great Disappointment, there was widespread
abandonment of historicist view among protestants. Futurism’s more
literalist approach gained favor among Christian denominations there after.
Futurism (with varying degrees) has arisen to prominence over the past two
centuries, and Preterism (partial, moderate, etc.) has also been making
inroads.

While I do not endorse any particular camp, the bottom line is, regarding
antichrists, there are many antichrist spirits that have gone out into the
world (1 John 2:18), and we will witness them through out the church age.

Interestingly, the only place in the New Testament where the word
“antichrist” appears is in the Johannine Epistles, not in Revelation. Nowhere
in Revelation is the “beast” ever called “antichrist”. In his first epistle John
emphatically states (1 John 2:18) that we may know this is the last hour
because of the existence and activity of many antichrists. He says:
“Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is
coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is
the last hour” (2:18).

Note well that the entire period between the first and second comings of
Jesus is called either the “last hour” as well as the “last days”. See Acts 2:17; 2
Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pt. 1:20 (cf. 1 Cor. 10:11). Thus the “last hour” in 1 John
2:18 is not a reference to the final days preceding Christ’s return but a
reference to the entire church age in which we now live.

For John, “antichrist” is anyone “who denies that Jesus is the Christ” (1 John
2:22), or anyone “who denies the Father and the Son” (1 John 2:22). The
term “antichrist” is a combination of anti (against or instead of) and
christos (Messiah, Christ).
I would be agreeable to say that the spirit of antichrist has revealed itself in Antiochus Epiphanes, Julius Caesar, Nero Caesar, and the papacy— and many others like Islam. This is consistent with the beliefs of the Reformers such as Calvin, and Luther, and the early church fathers, who applied the antichrist figure to more than one individual unlike what SDA’s try to portray! Besides, I believe the beast and Babylon powers of Revelation goes beyond Caesars and Popes as outlined in our Revelation commentary. See Revelation Commentary.
Appendix 2: The Year-day Principle.

1) There are many instances in Bible prophecy where a day means a day and a year means a year. The Bible prophesied that Abraham's children would be afflicted for 400 years (Gen 15:13) and that the Jews would be in captivity for 70 years (Daniel 9:1-2). Jonah prophesied Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days (Jonah 3:4), which did not equate to 40 years. In Genesis 6:3 God prophesied there would be a period of 120 years before the flood, which did not equate to 43,200 years. Here, days are days and years are years. Then to apply a year-day principle is arbitrary.

2) Adventist and others primarily build the case for the year-day principle from Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4. However, no year day prophetic principle is established in Numbers 14:34:

"In accordance with the number of days that you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall suffer the punishment for your guilt a year, that is, forty years, and you will know My opposition".

Numbers 14:34 deals with a divine sentence: just as you explored the land for 40 days and were unfaithful to me, now you will roam the desert for 40 years. There is no prophecy in this passage, or symbolic vision, or symbolic time period. Both data are literal spans of time.

3) The same is true in Ezekiel 4:4-5:

"For I have assigned you a number of days corresponding to the years of their wrongdoing, 390 days; so you shall bear the wrongdoing of the house of Israel. After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year".

Again, there is no symbolic vision involved here, no symbolic time period, no prophecy. The relationship between the 390 days of witnessing by Ezekiel and the 390 years of Israel's sin is typological/literal, not symbolic. One literal period stands as the literal type of the other: a period of sin by Israel is a type of God’s forbearance. The prophet’s lying down for 40 days is a type of Judah’s 40 years of transgression.
Don Neufeld, a theologian, and an associate editor for the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary wrote in Adventist Review:

“Some have felt that Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 establish the year-day principle as needing to be applied to all time prophecies. But a careful examination of these passages shows that the principle is applied only to specific cases and that there is no general statement in these passages suggesting that a universal principle is set forth. In fact, Seventh-day Adventists do not apply the principle consistently to all time prophecies. For example, the length of the millennium is stated in Revelation 20:3, 5, 7 as being —a thousand years. This is accepted literally. If the year-day principle were applied, the length would be 360, 000 years. (Source: This Generation Shall Not Pass, in Adventist Review, April 5, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publication Association, also quoted in Desmond Ford, Daniel 8:14: the Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment, Cassellbury, FL.: Euangelion Press, 1980, pp.85-87.)

Seventh-day Adventists do not apply the principle consistently! If they are not consistent, then they are dishonest in their approach to interpreting Scriptures.

4) The "seventy weeks" of Daniel 9 cannot prove the year-day principle either, because the expression is actually "seventy 'sevens'' (Dan. 9:24). We know that Daniel 9 is talking about "weeks of years," not "weeks of days," but this knowledge comes from the context.

5) The formula "a day for a year" was not used by the New Testament, nor by the early Christians. It was first suggested by a medieval Jewish scholar, and only later adopted by some Christian expositors. It reached its zenith of acceptability in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

6) Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, one of SDA church's most famous and ardent apologists, showed the flaws in the traditional interpretation of the 1260 time period. He wrote: "The persecution and protection of the church did not begin in 538, nor did it end in 1798. These are realities that have characterized the whole history of God's church throughout the centuries.
Some of the most bloody persecutions by Roman emperors occurred during the first four centuries." (Source: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com Newsletter # 86)
References

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