

THE
ENDS
OF
TIME

NOTES ON
THE EVOLUTION AND DYNAMICS
OF
BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

By
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*Are you baffled by the meaning of scripture?
Are you mystified by its numerous prophecies? Would
you like to understand the bible as it was understood by the
bible writers? You are then invited on a journey that takes
you through prophetic history — past, present, and future.*

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INTRODUCTION

This commentary on prophecy will disappoint many readers.

It does not explain current events as would a newspaper nor does it titillate the reader with its sketch of the future. Its purpose is to outline salvation history: to reveal what might have occurred had God's people been faithful in the distant past, their duty to God today, and the faith that they will need to be ready for the perils of tomorrow. Its quest is to make known the strict meaning of the prophetic texts, modulo their symbolism.

Few will appreciate the scientific methodology.

This study does not seek to interpret prophecy so that it harmonizes with history; It does not assume that history and prophecy agree. — It does conclude however that the two are marvelously interconnected.

THE NATURE OF PROPHECY

THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

IN PREVIEW

The purpose of prophecy is primarily of a moral and salvific nature. “God warns the disobedient of coming disaster. He encourages the oppressed with glimpses of future prosperity. He informs men about their present situation and stirs them toward the right course of action.” Our conclusion is that prophecy is a divine summons from God for His people (in a time of apostasy, lethargy, or persecution) to fully enter into the covenant relationship with Him, through repentance.

IT IS NOT A SPIRITLESS STATEMENT
FOREORDAINED ABOUT PREDESTINED
EVENTS IN A FATALISTIC UNIVERSE.

The fundamental characteristics of prophecy are these:

<1> All the promises and threatenings of God are alike — conditional. <2> “God does not destroy free choice by predicting real future events, rather He enhances it by predicting possible future events. God places alternative routes before His people; Possible futures are continually forecast, and God allows man to exercise his free choice by letting him choose one.” <3> “Promises come true because men make choices. They do not come true just because they are predicted” (Roger Lucas, An unpublished manuscript).

Do you see the spiritual significance? God illustrates by means of prophecy what events would transpire if a certain course of action continues and what would transpire if that course was changed — somewhat like the classic movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Two alternatives — Blessing and Judgment — are usually presented. Which of the two comes to pass depends on whether the hearers of that prophetic word repent in response to it.

Every message of Judgment and Hope has attached to it either an implied or expressed “unless”; an “if you do [or do not] turn to me.” This conditional aspect of prophecy is well illustrated in Jonah 3 and is put into a formal principle in Jeremiah 18:7-10:

“If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and **if** it does evil in My sight and does not obey Me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.”

Zechariah summed up in one sentence the message of all the prophets who had preceded him: “The former prophets proclaimed, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds’” (Zech 1:4).

“Israel’s history through the OT exhibits an oscillatory pattern. Prosperity, apostasy, decline, repentance, restoration — this is the cycle we find in Judges, Kings, and Chronicles. The principle governing the pattern is, “If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. Truly, the mouth of the Lord has spoken” (Isaiah 1:19,20). We view Israel’s history in its various fortunes as a reflection of the truth of Deuteronomy 28. “This passage sets out the two ways that lie before the young nation. If the people will ‘hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments,’ they will be blessed richly — materially, nationally, spiritually (vss. 1-14 KJV). If, however, they are unfaithful to the covenant provisions, terrible curses will come upon them, until Israel is a byword among the nations (vss. 15-68). Over and over again the prophets speak to a sinful nation in terms of these blessings and curses” (Wm. G. Johnsson, *70 Weeks, Leviticus, Nature of Prophecy*, pp. 270-271).

In every way throughout the history of the world, God has been actively working for the salvation of the human family. The continual pleading of His Spirit, the death of His Son, and His frequent intervention in the course of human events do not exhaust the list. God is also continually warning and guiding His covenant people by prophecy. The whole Bible is an historical record of this and the divine purpose is there revealed, to bring sin and suffering to a speedy end. It also records man’s reluctance to cooperate with God. It demonstrates the tension between the divine will of God and the free will of man. It is an expression of the age long struggle between man and God. God works for the salvation of the human race but the human will resists. The free human will is continually opposed to the divine will and thus it ever impedes the plans and purposes of God. Yet no blockade can thwart every step of God. The divine purpose, as revealed in prophecy, will eventually prevail. The sovereignty of God stands supreme.

The impact of free choice on the divine purpose has been firmly illustrated in Scripture: As obstacles arise, detours are taken and the natural long term result of man’s free will (in response to the promises and threatenings of God) is that the prophetic view of the future continually develops, unfolds, and changes. In harmony with this position, this book substantiates the details of the following hypothesis taken from the SDA Bible Commentary, Vol 7 p. 729:

“At any one of various critical points in the history of this world, divine justice could have proclaimed, ‘it is done!’ and Christ might have come to inaugurate His righteous reign. Long ago He might have brought to fruition His plans for the redemption of this world. As God offered Israel the opportunity to prepare the way for His eternal kingdom upon the earth, when they settled the Promised Land and again when they returned from their exile in Babylon, so He gave the church of apostolic times the privilege of completing the gospel commission. Another such opportunity came with the great second advent awakening of the 19th century. But in each instance God’s chosen people failed to take advantage of the opportunity thus graciously accorded them.”

“Prophecy is a wonderful combination of [conditionality] and [foreknowledge].¹ Enough of God’s purpose is revealed to act powerfully upon the heart and conscience of those to whom the heavenly message is sent, but not enough to make fatalists of them, to paralyze human effort, or to coerce the

¹ Originally, “the clear and the obscure.”

human will: enough to prove the message to have been a true word from Him to whom alone the unknown future is fully known, but not enough to enable man to foresee with certainty when and how that purpose is to be realized” (*Sir Isaac Newton*, cited by Desmond Ford in *Crisis*, Vol 1, p. 25).

A study of Bible prophecy, as it functioned throughout sacred history, is an encounter with the divine mind at every age. The effect is powerful. The cumulative revelations of the divine purpose provide a greater understanding than ever before [in history] of the nearness of the advent. It enables us to grasp the significance of closing events in the struggle between good and evil. It empowers us to discern the right path to follow when faced with doubts and subtle deception. It reveals great insights into the plans and purposes of God, the future, and the importance of our place in the flow of salvation history. It gives us comfort and hope for we see Him through the written expression of His will.

We have adopted the grammatico-historical method of exegesis as our primary principle of Biblical interpretation. “The aim of the grammatico-historical method is to determine the meaning required of Scripture by the laws of grammar and the facts of history. The grammatical meaning is the simple, direct, plain, ordinary, and literal sense of the phrases, clauses, and sentences. The historical meaning is that sense which is demanded by a careful consideration of the time and circumstances in which the author wrote. It is the specific meaning which an author’s words require when the historical context and background are taken into account. Thus, the grand object of grammatical and historical interpretation is to ascertain the specific usage of words as employed by an individual writer as prevalent in a particular age.” — (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward An Exegetical Theology*, p. 88).

THE PRE-EVOLUTION AND DYNAMICS OF BIBLICAL ESCHATOLOGY

Prophecy is a divine summons for the righteous or a warning of judgment for the wicked. Because of free choice, an evolutionary process occurs. This process and its dynamics becomes clear as we progress through prophetic history. The drama begins in approximately 1920 BC when God repeatedly promised Abram (later renamed Abraham) and his descendants a great inheritance:

Gen 12:1-5, 13:14-17, 15:5-8,12-16,18-19, 17:1-8,15,16, 22:17,18, 26:3-5, 28:12-14, 35:10-12, 46:2-4.

The many promises of the Abrahamic covenant appear to be everlasting and unconditional; Only a simple rite of circumcision was demanded (Gen 17:9-14). Based on this alone, the Jews in the time of Christ firmly believed they were entitled to the blessings of God simply because they were circumcised descendants of Abraham. Jesus and John the Baptist taught however that literal descent was meaningless and guaranteed no such thing (Mt 3:7-10, Jn 8:33,39).

GOD IS CHANGELESS

“God’s ultimate purpose never changes; but when those who have been called persistently refuse to cooperate, He changes the manner in which He will eventually carry His purpose forward to success, the precise time of its culmination, and the human instruments He will use. The Bible record is replete with instances of the reversal of promised blessings and threatened judgments, involving both nations and individuals” (Raymond Cottrell).

A DRAMATIC REVISION

History demonstrates a dramatic transition from literal Israel to a spiritual Israel, the Israel of flesh to the “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16). The following self-explanatory texts prove this quite easily: Ro 2:28,29, 9:6-8, 10:12, Gal 3:7,28,29, Eph 2:11, Phil 3:3, 1 Pe 2:9,10, Rev 2:9, 3:9. The reason for this shift will be understood later. It will be clearly seen that a period of probation for the Jewish nation came to an end, and, among other things, that their rejection of Christ caused the promises and privileges God had originally given them to be transferred to the Christian church.

“THY WILL BE DONE”

“That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today.” — Prophets and Kings, p. 713.

HOW IT MIGHT HAVE WORKED OUT IN THE BEGINNING

Especially important are the promises of God enroute to the promised land: Exodus 3:1-8, 3:19-22, 6:2-8, 15:26, 19:5,6, 23:20-33, 34:10, Deuteronomy 4:5-8, 7:12-23, 11:22-25, Chapter 28. They tell of the beginnings of eschatology, more importantly, its dynamics.

CONDITIONALITY & MULTIPLICITY

The Sinai Covenant (Lev 26) given in 1450BC, together with its repeated version (Deu 28) forty years later, is rightfully called “The Constitution of Israel.” (Note: Deuteronomy means the law stated a second time). It clearly teaches that the outcome of history is conditional and gives the conditions. The terms of this covenant were frequently executed by God in the history of His people and is an ideal lesson in the principles and rules of prophecy. Perhaps the greatest principle of the covenant is that God is not limited to a single course of action. Did you notice all the ways God expressed His options in Deu 28?

A FEW HINDRANCES TO THE PLANS AND PURPOSES OF GOD

It was God’s purpose and intent to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and take them immediately to the Promised Land. God’s words to this effect seemed unconditional (Ex 3:8, 6:6-8). Yet because of continued grumblings against the Lord, that generation did not enter the land of Canaan but was “cast down” (destroyed) by God in the wilderness (Num 14:22-35 cf. Ps 106:24-27).

THE IMPACT OF GOD’S MERCY ON THE OUTCOME OF EVENTS

On more than one occasion, God wanted to destroy all the Israelites and make of Moses a great nation. We are led to believe that had not Moses pleaded with the Lord to change His mind, God would have done just that (Ex 32:7-14, Num 14:1-20, Ps 106:23). This event tells us of the great power of intercessory prayer. Often, prayer or a change of heart will change previously stated pronouncements of God (1 Ki 21:17-29, 2 Ki 20:1-3,5,6 cf. Isa 38:1-5, Jonah 3). Also study 1 Sam 2:30,31 cf. 23:10-14.

THE POWER OF FREE CHOICE

Numbers 32:1-33 well illustrates a principle: Speaking to the Reubenites and Gadites, Moses said, “If you turn away from following Him, He will again leave all this people in the desert, and you will be the cause of their destruction” (Num 32:15). A powerful statement! The action of two tribes would effect the very existence of the entire nation. Fortunately, the two tribes were willing to make a few concessions (Num 32:16-33). Unfortunately, the nation was not always in harmony with His plans. Rebellion usually dominated events and thus the free will of man often cancelled the promises of God. History therefore took a different course, all according to God’s foreknowledge. In this case (as it is in most) God only revealed the immediate future (Deu 31:16-18 cf. Joshua 23:1—24:18, Judges 2).

AN INDEX TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE ESCHATON

We now sketch the evolution of eschatology and note its major revisions as we give a rapid summary of the many ways the world might have ended throughout history. The following end-time scenarios (or eschatons) are central lines of prophecy. Each line was a possible trajectory for history and had with it, understood or implied conditions for its realization.

Plan “A”

We reserve the term “plan A” for what would have occurred had God’s special covenant people turned to HIM and been steadfast in their faith at any time in the distant past. Keep in mind the most glorious possibilities that began upon their entrance into the promised land till their brightest partial fulfillment of the divine will in the time of Solomon. The SDA.BC (Vol 4, pp. 25-38) presents a good picture of this scenario, as does the book, Christ’s Object Lessons (pp. 284-290).

God, in about 1000BC, made an incredible promise to David: From that time forward, the nation was to enjoy rest from all her enemies, never to be troubled again. A house to the Lord would be built and it and the kingdom and the throne of David were to endure forever (see 2 Sam 7:8-17,25, 1 Chr 17:7-15). These words appear unconditional but, as in all the promises of God, as David clearly understood, covenant conditions apply (1 Ki 2:1-4, 1 Chr 22:6-13). Solomon understood similarly (1 Ki 9:1-9 2 Chr 7:11-22). Also see Ps 89:3,4,22-28 & Ps 132:11-12. While the covenant was being kept, the nation Israel rapidly came to fulfill the ideal plans of God (1 Ki 10, 2 Chr 8-9) and the prayer of David (Ps 72). This came to a halt when Solomon turned from God (1 Ki 11). As time progressed, sin increased, and the possibility of returning to the originally intended fulfillment of plan “A” gradually lessened and gave way to alternative scenarios. With the failure of men to establish the kingdom, we are later told of a great Messiah that would come and fulfill the promise (Isa 9:1-7; 11:1-10, Daniel 7:13,14, Lk 1:32,33).

The Day of Yahweh

Amos 5:18 is, chronologically, the first mention of the day of Yahweh in the Bible. *“Ah you that eagerly desire the day of Yahweh! For what purpose will the day of Yahweh be to you. It will be darkness and not light.”*

John Bright comments: “It is clear from Amos’ words that he was not introducing some new concept thitherto unknown to his hearers, but was addressing people in whose minds the expectation of a day of Yahweh was already firmly entrenched. They were looking forward with eager anticipation to a day when God would once again intervene in history, smash the enemies of Israel and bring victory, deliverance, and blessing to His people.” “Amos did not in any way dispute the validity of the day of Yahweh. He neither denied that there would be such a day, nor that it would be a day of disaster for the enemies of Yahweh. Rather, he took the popular hope for that day and stood it on its head. He said in effect: There will indeed be a day of Yahweh, but it will be a black day for Israel—for God regards Israel as an enemy and not as His people!” (*Covenant and Promise*, p. 20).

The day of Yahweh was no longer a day to be hoped for but a day to be feared, as in Isaiah 2:10-22, 13:6-16, chap 24&34 and Jer 4:23-29. It occupied a central position in prophetic eschatology from the eighth century BC onward. We will study its place in a variety of eschatologies.

Isaiah's Eschatology

Isaiah, a contemporary of Amos, elaborates on the events surrounding the day of Yahweh. The basic outline may be grasped by reading 8:1—9:7 cf. 10:5—11:16. It says that the world was to end just after the destruction of Jerusalem by the then world power — Assyria. The added details are quite exciting: Micah 4:1-7 cf. Isa 2:1-4, 3:13—4:6, 19:18-25, 25:6-12, 27:6,12,13, chap 32, 33:17-24, 35:1-10. Isaiah has a mysteriously distant scenario in his book (Study Isa 13:1—14:23). Except for this, the consummation of history was ever close at hand:

“Is it not yet just a little while before Lebanon will be turned into a fertile field, and the fertile field will be considered as a forest? And on that day the deaf shall hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The afflicted also shall increase their gladness in the Lord, and the needy of mankind shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the ruthless will come to an end, and the scorner will be finished, indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off” (29:17-20).

Because the people believed in Hezekiah's claim that God would save the city, God did so and destroyed the Assyrian army (Isa 36—37, Jer 26:18,19, cf. 2 Chr 29—32, 2 Ki 18—19). This cancelled previous revelations and a new line of prophecy begins: Read Isaiah 40:3-11, 41:17-20, 42:1-13 45:14-17,25, 49:6-13,22-26, 51:3-11, 52:1-3,13—53:12, 54:3,13-17, 55:5, 56:1, 59:19-21, chap 60, 65:17-25. These promises are a divine summons that could have hastened an immediate fulfillment. The advent of a glorious future would have come just as soon as the people responded to the calling of the Holy Spirit; just as quickly as they had heard the invitation of God! Alternative scenarios were given to illustrate what would occur if the people rejected the divine summons. There is one of particular importance. Let me paraphrase it.

“When the Messiah comes for the redemption of His people and to execute vengeance on her enemies, He finds Himself all alone, without help. Seeing that His people have rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit, and being astonished that there was no one to uphold with salvation, He turns Himself to become their enemy and also fights against them (cf. Isa 63:1-6,10).

Here, on the day of vengeance, in the year for ransoming His own, (always taken together, Isa 34:8, 35:4-7, 61:2, 63:4), all nations and all peoples are trampled down in anger; Their life-blood covers the earth. Recall Isaiah 34. It is a remarkably similar description.

Jeremiah's Eschatology

Wickedness reached a new high in Jeremiah's time, so he and other contemporary prophets warned that God would soon execute the terms of His covenant and punish the nation for her sins (Hab 1, Jer 4:5-8,14-18, 5:1-19, 6:1-26, Ezk 6—8). These were not spiritless predictions. The people had a chance to repent and thus avert an otherwise certain catastrophe (Jer 7:1-7, 17:19-27, 26:1-13,19). Jer 25:1-14 records the lengthy struggle. Judgment eventually came. Mingled with their predictions of impending destruction is an excellent example of the divine summons: the heavenly calling to work with God and to establish the Messianic kingdom immediately after the Babylonian captivity:

Jeremiah 3:12-18, 23:1-8, 24:6,7, 29:10-14, 30:1—31:14, 31:23-25, 31:31-37, 32:37-42, 33:6-9, 33:14-18.

“God purposed, after seventy years of exile, to restore His people to the Land of Promise, to renew His covenant, and to carry out His original plan for them. All that had been promised might yet come to pass if they learned the lesson that bitter experience was designed to teach” (Raymond Cottrell).

“This promise of blessing should have met fulfillment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity” (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 703).

It is not as though the word of God has failed. Jeremiah repeatedly taught that the outcome of future events is not fixed but depends on the response to the promises and threatenings of God (Jer 12:15-17, 18:7-10).

“At the end of the years of humiliating exile, God graciously gave to His people Israel, through Zechariah, the assurance: ‘I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain.’ And of His people He said, ‘Behold, ... I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness’ (Zech 8:3,7,8).

“These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterized the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated...Rich were the rewards, both temporal and spiritual, promised those who should put into practice these principles of righteousness: Zech 7:9,10; 8:12,13,16.

“...Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, of Ezra, and of Nehemiah they [the returned exiles] repeatedly covenanted to keep all the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah. The seasons of prosperity that followed gave ample evidence of God's willingness to accept and forgive, and yet with fatal shortsightedness they turned again and again from their glorious destiny and selfishly appropriated to themselves that which would have brought healing and spiritual life to countless multitudes. This failure to fulfill the divine purpose was very apparent in Malachi's day” (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 704-705).

We now study what would have happened had God's people been faithful.

THE FINAL END-TIME BATTLE

Ezekiel's Version:

Read chapters 38 and 39.

Notice that there are (mingled together) two recountings of the fate of Gog's hordes (39:3,4,17-20 cf. 38:18-23, 39:8-16). According to the most up-to-date prophecy [the book of Revelation], this battle is long delayed and occurs after a distant millennium. It is against the New Jerusalem and all the nations are now being assembled (Rev 16:13,14). This modified eschaton has the same variations. One version in Rev 19:11-21, another in Rev 20:7-9. It contains three conflicting accounts of death for the wicked: Rev 19:17,18,21 & Rev 20:9 & Rev 20:11-15. This is a literary device. The different descriptions, each given in terms of exact details, clarify in picture form the certain fate of the wicked. The particular method of execution, however, is God's option.

Now study Zechariah's account of the End-time battle; chapters 12-14.

Exercise:

Study the earlier accounts of the eschatological gathering of nations (Isa 29:1-8, 66:14b-24, Joel 3:1-2, 9-21, Obad 15,16, Zeph 1:7-18 cf. 3:8). Formulate the general theory and explain its dynamics; Notice the relation to the Day of Yahweh, and memorize the historically conditioned variables.

Ezekiel's eschatology is much the same as Jeremiah's (Ezk 11:17-21, 28:25,26, 34:23-30, 36:24-36, 37:21-28, 43:5-7). Zechariah's is similar and its many details hint of an interesting conjecture (Zech 2, 8:20-23, 9:9-17): The longer time lasts, the more ineffective plan "A" becomes. The longer the delay, the less is its impact on the world. While plan A was always conceivable, its realization became less and less possible. It could have been realized in the first century (EGW, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 577) but now, in the final scenario, after the long drawn out history of sin and rebellion, its fulfillment at the end of the age is hardly recognizable (Rev 21:24-27). It is more like a flashback to the way its fulfillment was originally envisioned (Isa 60—61:9, Chap 62, 52:1, 49:6,22,23). The principle operating in the book of Revelation, it seems, is that all prophecy, in essence, reaches complete fulfillment. This may be seen in Isaiah's vision of the great end-time banquet: Isaiah 25:6-12 was to occur on the earth in the ancient historical setting of Isaiah's time. It will still take place at the end of the age according to the prophetic word but its fulfillment will now take place in heaven (Rev 19:7-10).

Daniel's Eschatology

Daniel introduces an eschatology unlike any other in the OT. There is no gathering of nations against Jerusalem for battle, no great and terrible day of the Lord. Instead, the notion of an antiChrist is introduced. One such antiChrist not only brings tribulation on Jerusalem, but on the entire world as well. Daniel, we will find, foretells of an antiChrist coming at the end of both Greek and Roman domination.

“In the Hebrew Bible the book of Daniel has been assigned to the third division of the Hebrew canon, ‘the Writings,’ rather than to the second, in which the prophetic books occur. This appears to have been the common practice in Judaism long before the supposed Council of Jamnia, and seems to have been based upon the conviction that Daniel could not be regarded as a prophet in the same sense as Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel. The Talmud indicates clearly that Daniel was never placed among such prophets (Baba Bathra 15a).” — R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 1106.

We suppose therefore that Daniel, from the beginning, was understood to be a sacred book, but that his prophecies were so out of harmony with previous revelations that they were not considered as factual but were viewed only as wisdom literature for a long time. No doubt the most distasteful and contrasting feature of this vision is that of its central message—a long delay before the coming Messianic kingdom where the nation Israel would be trampled by other empires until then, with history culminating in terrible persecution.

From the lesson of God's chastisement with the Babylonian captivity, which by the words of the prophet Jeremiah was to be for 70 years, and in accordance with the covenant, if the Jews would still be unrepentant at the end of that time, God would then punish them 7 times more for their sins (Lev 26:18,21,24,28). The 7 times 70 years of Daniel 9:24 is therefore, by itself, a message that explains the vision. God has presented before the exiles in Babylon what events might transpire if they continued to transgress His commandments. This vision then is a warning, an illustration of the out-working of continued disobedience. [Note: Nearly all agree that multiples of seven years are being referred to in Daniel 9:24-27, a week representing seven years. Actually, this Hebrew word for *week* is better translated *seven* as in the NIV].

The book of Daniel is to be understood in its contrast to the then accepted prophetic view of the future. And the expectation of that time was that the Messianic kingdom would be established shortly after the Babylonian captivity. Certainly such a scenario would have been realized if the people had faith in the promises of God. But disbelief nullifies God's promises (James 1:7). So God now warns of the outcome of continued rebellion—repeated punishment and delay of the kingdom. That our guess is correct, as we will shortly prove, demonstrates the usefulness of trying to understand the dynamics of prophecy and the uniqueness of each prophetic message in relation to its transition in the evolution of Biblical eschatology.

A FORMAL INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL'S ESCHATOLOGY

Is Daniel a conditional prophecy? Many acknowledge that classical OT eschatology was conditional and even share Daniel's amazement that a new type of eschatology is introduced in his visions. And because apocalyptic imagery is used at times, some have blindly asserted that Daniel's eschatology is universal in scope and therefore unconditional. But to argue that a prophecy must be fulfilled on the basis of a literary style is not very convincing. Conversely, it is rather easy to prove, in a very satisfactory and formal way, that Daniel is conditional because Zechariah is conditional. *Proof: If it was truly possible for any of the classical OT prophecies to be fulfilled, then Zechariah, which was written after Daniel, could have been fulfilled. If Zechariah would have come true, then Daniel would have failed. Hence Daniel is conditional.*

There exists a vast spectrum of interpretations for Daniel's prophecies. One school applies these visions to the acts and times of Antiochus Epiphanes and his defilement of the Jewish Temple, his interruption of its daily sacrifices, and his persecution of that people (165 BC). Others understand that the tyrant prince was Titus, who in 70 AD destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and slaughtered the Jews. Still others suppose that the papacy is meant, the persecution being that of N.T. saints in times past, and that the sanctuary in question is the one in heaven (Heb 8:2). Opposition to the work of Christ, our High Priest, they claim, is like that of suspending His infinite sacrifice for sin. Another slant is that the church is to be thought of as the sanctuary, defiled by the bringing in of pagan customs and relics in the early centuries. Thus the abomination that brought desolation.

One should ask immediately: Why does a spectrum of interpretations exist? The answer is incredibly simple: The visions of Daniel actually portray two possible scenarios; Neither of them ever developed perfectly yet both of them resemble history and, in a limited degree, some part of each view mentioned above. Hence, what the text really says may be understood as an "illusion", a patch-work of different historical periods blended together. There is some truth to this and it certainly explains why serious discrepancies are so often overlooked: Each interpreter rests, with confidence, on a small portion of the picture. But we want to emphasize the fact that the whole picture makes perfect sense, just as it appears, this and all the other scenarios of Scripture. This is the central purpose of this book to which we now return: Our task: To find out the strict meaning of the prophetic text, once the symbols are identified. And to accomplish this, we need a principle of interpretation that purposely ignores what might seem to be recognizable historical fulfillments and allows the book of Daniel to speak for itself. Consider first the unnecessary presuppositions in other systems of interpretation.

Preterism

The preterist school demands that prophecy as foretelling is impossible and therefore views prophecy as a commentary on the time period in which the writer was living. They hold that the prophetic sweep of history in Daniel comes to a climax in the acts and time of Antiochus Epiphanes. They therefore conclude that the book must have been written at that time. The date of composition is very important and is alleged to be 165 BC. The predicted conclusion of history which failed to occur after this time (Daniel 11:40-45) is called “true prophecy” and is explained as the expectation of the writer. The apparent discrepancies before this time are explained as exaggerations and the writer’s lack of accurate historical knowledge.

As our exposition proceeds, we will expose how extensive these discrepancies are and thus pose a simple question to critics and modern critical scholars: If Daniel did not see visions in Babylon as claimed (6th century BC) and if the book of Daniel was written after the fact, why would its writer purposely include such ridiculous history and distorted current events for a book that purports to unveil the future? And why was such a work placed in the sacred cannon? Unknowingly, the preterist argues most eloquently for Daniel’s divine inspiration.

Historicism / Futurism

Historicists and futurists share an unquestioning trust in the presupposition which asserts that Daniel’s prophecy is unconditional. The futurists demand that the fulfillment is literal and mostly in the future while the historicists favor a uniform unfolding of the prophecy in order to make it stretch to the “end time.” For the historicist, the prophecy need not be literal but it cannot be parabolic. Hence, both of these conservative schools have several problems in common:

1. They universally ignore the fact that Daniel eventually understood the vision given him. See Daniel 10:1. The reason is that such an admission would be a death blow to their unsound interpretations. Daniel could not have actually understood the vision if the unworkably vague “gap” principle of futurism was to be employed and no historicist can even hope to explain the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation without depending on the history the prophecy is supposed to unfold.

2. They refuse to accept (or even acknowledge) the most obvious meaning of prophecy because the explanation so easily comprehended in terms of context and linguistics alone demands that many prophecies have failed. They ignore all evidence that proves that God had intended to end time much earlier.

3. Their preconceived preference for the predictions of Bible prophets to be absolutely unconditional lead them directly to the following characteristic patterns of interpretation to resolve the apparent dilemma:

Futurists, by taking a literal meaning to the words of a prophecy, must ignore the context. That a prophecy appears as a unit and tells a complete story is completely disregarded in favor of a grab-bag collection of numerous and unrelated events. Their conclusion: a “gap” principle. They also see multiple meanings in prophecy. This is simply an excuse for the fact that, with futurism, not even one meaning is clear. No wonder many today hold to the false notion that prophecy is vague and ambiguous, or that the whole subject can only be understood by a select few, usually never including

the prophet who gave the original message. Unfortunately, I offer no critique of a specific futurist position. The reason is simple. I know of no well established or respected futurists that dare to answer the obvious discrepancies in their school of thought.

Historicists are guided by history. They use it often to define and interpret the prophecies. Thus, their exegesis is circular. In this system, often, and with great effort, a spiritual non-meaning must be imposed on Scripture; something mystical and far beyond the obvious reading of the text. As in futurism, there is never agreement among adherents.

In a later chapter, we will witness the extremes to which historicists wrestle with scripture. In a critique of their view on Daniel 11, it will be demonstrated that the vast majority in this school are far more concerned about history and the forcing of history into the prophetic passages than letting the Bible speak for itself. We hold that to ignore or down-play what the Bible actually suggests as its own interpretation, because it does not fit history, and to insert in its place what it must say to achieve a perfect historical fulfillment, however well intended, is a method lacking in intellectual honesty. The apostle Peter would have agreed. He implies that just as prophecy was given by God, it should be explained by God, from the Bible itself, the revealed Word. See 2 Pe 1:20,21. The often employed methodology therefore, of making history define and interpret the word of God, in place of the Word of God, is heresy!

Man's expectations imprison the Bible. It makes Scripture a product of his own ideas, a human creation. For this reason, we impose no demands on the word of God. We reject none of its mysteries. We allow Scripture to unfold its own message so that it may speak with the authority of God and not that of man.

Only from the straightforward simple sense of Scripture comes power, life, comfort, and instruction. Only then is the word of God "living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12).

CONTEXTUAL REALISM

The time-honored grammatical-historical method of exegesis is here proven to be ideally suited to determine the “authentic” meaning of the book of Daniel. The implications of Daniel 2 best illustrate why we should focus our attention on the most natural meaning of the text (but we consider all the texts that follow as fundamental in the construction of the hermeneutical principle). See if you can guess our concluding argument from the following citations.

DANIEL 2

“There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the days to come. Your dream and the vision that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these: As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind” (2:28-30 NIV).

DANIEL 8

“And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. 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’ ” (8:16). ... “Son of man, understand that...” (8:17). “And he said, ‘Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur...’ (8:19).

DANIEL 9

“While I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, ‘O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 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’ ” (9:21-23).

DANIEL 10

“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in vision” (10:1 NIV).

“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” (10:14).

There is essentially one argument. Once its idea is comprehended, the construction of the hermeneutical principle to full generalization is obvious. For specificity and clarity, I illustrate the method by narrowing the discussion to the facts supplied in Daniel 8. I reason as follows:

Since the angel Gabriel was given a divine command to make Daniel understand the vision (8:16), we expect the angel-interpreter to have faithfully executed that command. It follows immediately therefore that the vision was explained to Daniel so that he might understand it. Hence, the very words and phrases employed were comprehensible terms meaningfully arranged and are to be accepted as Daniel understood them. Thus, we are to seek an understanding of the prophecy from Daniel's perspective in history and not from a stand-point in the twentieth century. We are to assume no more than Daniel could have known.

This hermeneutic is standard among exegetes and it serves most of our purposes. Yet it is not completely satisfactory, for it suffers at times from a serious draw-back: It may be unworkably vague. Ideally, we need a hermeneutic so precise that it may be carried out almost mechanically; a procedure so rigorous that it would require virtually no insight at all. With this goal in mind, we now introduce a complementary approach to the one above, an inductive method labeled: the universal hermeneutical algorithm. It is a rewording of the historical-grammatical method. Its idea is based on a simple definition: *In the category of all possible interpretations of a prophetic vision, the best interpretation is the correct interpretation. It is the one that provides the strongest unity for all possible symbolic representations, normative word meanings, linguistic connections, and literary structures.* We apply this definition as follows:

Since conditional prophecy need not be fulfilled, we need to ascertain the intended meaning of a prophecy independently of the expected (i.e. desired) fulfillment. To accomplish this, *consider the category of all the possible ways history might have developed.* (To be objective, we do not suppose what course of events are reasonable so we include every imaginable past and future). *This collection is the set of all possible interpretations to the prophecy. Simply choose that scenario which is the best of all possible interpretations according to the definition stated above.* Let me summarize this hermeneutic by restating it in yet another useful form:

If we can reconstruct history or imagine a scenario for the prophecies of Daniel that creates a far more harmonious fulfillment than any other possible interpretation, then this imaginary course of events is what Daniel predicted. (Clearly, if our imagined scenario fits the prophecy better than history and possible future history, then the prophecy is conditional and cannot be perfectly fulfilled).

DANIEL IN PERSPECTIVE

The earlier prophetic chapters (2 & 7) set the general outline of the future in terms of four successive kingdoms that were to dominate the world. (We later identify these as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome). In Daniel 2, almost nothing is said of the second and third world-kingdoms (2:29). They are the focus of Daniel 8 (vss. 3-8,21-23). Daniel 2 and 7 stress the great strength of the fourth kingdom, how it crushes all who oppose it, how it will be divided, and how it will vainly strive to hold together by forming marriage ties (2:40-43, cf. 7:7,19,23,24). The days of the *ten kings* who jointly rule the empire is the very end of time (2:44). It is when Antichrist comes to power. He uproots three of the ten and persecutes *the holy ones* for 3 & 1/2 years. And just as Daniel's name means *God will judge*, God intervenes in the persecution and vindicates His people (7:26,27); He judges the boastful Antichrist and the terrible fourth kingdom (7:11), every individual and every nation. It is the final judgment. God then sets up His Kingdom of righteousness upon the earth. It endures forever (2:44) and His people reign forever (7:27).

Daniel 8 is a more detailed account of the future but its scope is mysteriously limited to the second and third world kingdoms. Special attention is given to the four-fold division of the third power and the climax of the vision revolves around the nefarious acts of one of its last kings. The time is that of the Christ event; the last scene of the vision is the destruction of Jerusalem. Surprisingly, the vision (vss. 2-12) ends abruptly; It reveals but a fragment of the whole picture given earlier.

This strange feature of the prophecy is completely explained by Daniel's attending angel. Daniel 9:24 is the key text. This time period, we are told, is "cut off." We will see in this remarkable verse a declaration by God for the end of sin within this definite period of time. Unfortunately the appointed time passes without the cooperation necessary from God's covenant people. The Jews fail to respond to the divine summons. Consequently, they and their city and sanctuary are destroyed. This is the essence of Daniel 8: (*The people of God as transgressors who have run their full course, their rebellion, God's indignation, and the outworking of divine wrath*). Hence, the abruptness of the vision has meaning. God would reject the Jewish nation. So they are no longer mentioned. They are given over to be trampled till the end of time, the terminus of the reign of the fourth beast.

Daniel 11-12 presents another scenario, a more hopeful possibility. Here, the world is portrayed as actually ending soon after the appointed time. The contrast, just like in the covenant promise, teaches that the future outcome of world history depends on the response of the people of God. It is the faithfulness of God's people as illustrated in this scenario (11:32,33,35; 12:2,3,10) that ushers in the Messianic kingdom. The contrast clearly shows the existence of focal points in history where time may end or fail to end. This alternative, in particular, corresponds to the fact that the world was to end, or might have ended, in the first century.

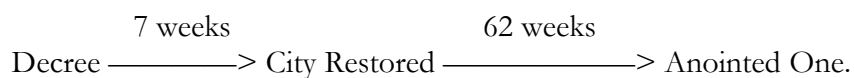
Chronological Details

Consider the implications of Daniel 9:25: *“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.”*

This verse suggests that a word was to be uttered or a decree was to be issued, to command the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. The identity of this specific decree is hotly disputed. There happens to be four edicts in history that are considered as the decree specified in the prophecy. In actual fact, none of these are a decree to “restore and rebuild Jerusalem.” The Cyrus decree concerns the building of the temple only (Ezra 1:1-4). The same is true when this same decree was issued again by Darius (Ezra 6:1-12) or when later amplified by Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:11-26). And when Nehemiah requested permission from king Artaxerxes to go to Judah and rebuild the city, permission was given but this is not a decree in any sense of the term. The king simply said: *“How long will your journey be, and when will you return”* Neh 2:6 (444 BC). And the king’s letters only granted Nehemiah passage to Judah and timber from the kings forest “to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house” to which he was going (Neh 2:7,8). A specific command “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” was never issued!

So then, with our hermeneutic in mind, we begin our program to amend history by insisting that the prophecy regarding Cyrus and his rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple (Isa 44:26-28; 45:1-5,13) was to be completely and literally fulfilled. Such a hypothesis is very attractive, for God declared 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.’ He will build my city, and will let my exiles go free, without any payment or reward, says the Lord of hosts.”*

Curiously, Cyrus, who is named more that 100 years before he was born, fulfilled every specific detail that was predicted of him except one. He never decreed that the city should be rebuilt. We amend history to what was hoped for. We imagine that Cyrus was to issue a complete decree to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel 9:25, a decree to rebuild the city along with a command to rebuild the temple. As stated, the rebuilding was to take 7 weeks of years. This completion date was a reasonable length of time (John 2:20); It was to be a key marker to the entire time prophecy (9:25-26):



Dating the limited decree of Cyrus is difficult, but the SDA Bible Commentary (Vol 3, pp 96-97) gives satisfactory evidence that it was in the year 537 BC. Based on this date, the Anointed One, who is later identified as Jesus Christ, should have appeared as the Messiah in the year 54 BC. A related matter is the identity of the enemy-prince of Daniel 8-9, that last king of the north in Daniel 11 who was to come and oppose Christ and His people. Since Christ was to come 80 years earlier than He actually did and because the Seleucid dynasty ruled from 311 to 65 BC, we therefore imagine that Antiochus Epiphanes should have come, not in the middle of that dynasty as he did, but “at the latter end of their rule” (8:23) and that he and Christ were to be contemporaries.

We hold that this is a good way to understand and illustrate much of the vision, especially Daniel 11 — if we can imagine Antiochus doing all that is claimed for him and if we can imagine amending the rest of history to meet all other demands of the text. In Daniel 8-9, it is easier to think of Titus

as the king of the north. It is as if two real historical accounts of two different periods were combined and re-written in a way to form parallel scenarios. We imagine a history right in-between Antiochus and Titus that could have gone in either of two directions. We accept the text as it reads: The 69th week was to coincide with the conclusion of the Greek period of history and the Christ event was to occur at that time. (Naturally, the Roman era was to immediately follow and continue till the end of the world).

Concerning the time of arrival of the Anointed One, we find the discrepancy of 80 years significant since multiples of 40 occur so frequently in the Bible. This number is often associated with trial and delay. Recall that the children of Israel should have gone immediately from Egypt into the Promised Land, but they spent 40 years in the wilderness because of their non-belief. Noah waited 3x40 years for a flood in a world where it never rained, and when the rains came, they lasted for 40 days and 40 nights. There was Jonah's message of doom with which Yahweh had commissioned him: "*Yet 40 days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!*" That was certainly a severe trial for those who lived in the city (Jonah 3:4-9). Jesus went into the wilderness to fast and to be tested by the devil. The entire experience lasted 40 days and 40 nights (Mt 4:1-11). And when Jesus referred to Daniel's prophecy telling the non-believing leaders of His day, "*Behold, your house is left to you desolate*" — It was destroyed 40 years later.

We understand the beginning of the 70x7 day/year prophecy as being updated in the following way: Because of problems encountered in the rebuilding program, (specifically, the failure of Zech 6:15), it was necessary for later kings to issue decrees similar to that of Cyrus. The Bible considers these as one and recognizes no others. Ezra 6:14 tells us that: "*they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.*" The last decree therefore, issued by Artaxerxes in 457 BC, became the new starting point of the seventy week prophecy.

We view the failure of Isaiah's prophecy regarding Cyrus and the Bible's expansion of the historic Cyrus decree as moving the starting point of the seventy weeks future. Thus Jesus came at the right time (Mk 1:15). However, this shift in prophetic time caused the flow of history to become out of phase with the original meaning of the prophecy thereby masking the full significance of a truly astounding prediction of the Christ event.

AN OVERVIEW OF DANIEL

VIA ITS LITERARY STRUCTURE

The format of Daniel's book presents two sections as fundamentally separate: chapters 1-7 and chapters 8-12. Consider the following distinctions:

The first section

is
in Aramaic,
the language of Babylon
written in the third person.

It contains prophecy given in terms of Babylonian imagery: Different metals in a forbidden statue and fanciful multi-headed beasts represent kingdoms.

4 kingdoms

Time is measured in terms of indefinite periods, i.e., the "seven periods of time" that passed over Nebuchadnezzar (4:16,23,25,32) or the "time, times, and a half a time" of persecution in 7:25. The 3 & 1/2 times is used in 12:7 to denote a period of world tribulation (11:40-12:1).

The first half forms a unit and was intentionally arranged in a chiasmic pattern: chapter 2 parallels 7,
3 parallels 6,
4 parallels 5.

This structure is unrelated to the format of the second section.

The revelations in the second section are far more specific in detail and are more spectacular and striking than those in the first. The revelations in the first section come through dreams; in the second, supernatural visions while awake.

The second section

is
in Hebrew,
the language of the Jews
written in the first person.

The familiar sacrificial animals of the sanctuary represent kingdoms. These beasts are kosher!

2 kingdoms

Time is expressed in days, weeks, or in terms of the evening and morning offerings (8:14; 9:21,24-27; 12:11,12).

There is greater revelation in the second section than in the first. For example: In the second section, an angel appears before Daniel and speaks directly without taking the prophet off in vision. In the first, a hand appears and writes a message on the wall of the king's palace.

Actually, the book of Daniel begins in Hebrew but soon changes with the words "in Aramaic" in 2:4.

Another exception: The first section contains some material written in the first person. These fragments seem to have been inserted as quotations. Please read 4:1-18, 34-37 and 7:1,2 ff. Do you see the editorial work? Is it possible that Daniel is not the author or compiler of the first section?

In chapter 2, God gave to Nebuchadnezzar a dream about future world empires. Daniel, in an answer to prayer, dreams the same dream so he could, by his understanding in such matters, interpret it for the king. Again in chapter 4, it is Nebuchadnezzar who is given a dream; Daniel only interprets! It concerned an unusual calamity that would fall upon the king if he continued in his cherished sin. Chapter 5 occurs many years later. Then Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, sat on the throne. During a riotous feast, a mysterious hand appeared before him as it began writing on the wall. Daniel was remembered and summoned before the king. He interpreted the inscription. The message announced God's judgment of Babylon and its fall to the Medes and Persians. That same night, Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain and his kingdom conquered.

So the first section generally deals with the history of Babylonian kings and the revelations they received. There, Daniel serves them as the interpreter of dreams. The emphasis of the second half is prophecy that deals more directly with Daniel's people. The book of Daniel has been purposely arranged to this end. This is clear from the fact that chapters 5 and 6, which concern historical events that occurred after the vision of chapter 8 and should have followed chapter 8 in the book chronologically, have instead been inserted into the first section.

All agree that Daniel 9:24-27 is a prophecy about the Jews and that this prophecy explains Daniel 8. Since Daniel 8 parallels Daniel 9:24-27 and since the explanation is all about literal Jews, then Daniel 8 is all about literal Jews.

When the angel messenger spoke to Daniel saying: "Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and your holy city" (9:24), Daniel could have only thought of his people as literal Jews. The message was about them. So when Gabriel returned later on in Daniel 10 saying: "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to *your people* in the latter days" (10:14); It means just that! In Daniel's mind, his people are literal Jews. The descendants of his people could only be literal Jews! And the prophecy of the latter days refers to them specifically:

"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" (12:1). Similarly, "the many" in 9:27 refers to 'the Jews' and there is no hint or reason to suspect that the expression means something else when repeated in 11:33,39; 12:3.

In contrast to all of these unmistakable references to the Jews in the second section, and in favor of a weighted imbalance in the choice of words used to denote the people of God, we find that the above phrases are omitted in the first section. Instead, the word "saints" (literally, "the holy ones") is employed — six times in Daniel 7. Significantly, this terminology was carried over into the early Christian Church, whose members called themselves, "hoi hagioi," the holy ones, the saints.

The world view is silent regarding a desecrated temple or interrupted sacrifices. These are of chief concern however in the “Jewish” section of Daniel.

Hypothesis

The book of Daniel is naturally divided into two parts. The perspective in each half is different. The first section (chapters 1-7) concerns by type and direct revelation the world and the Christian church. It is a world view in a gentile perspective. The second section (chapters 8-12) is Jewish in perspective. Its prophecies of the world are in terms of the Jewish nation as the people of God.

Additional Confirmation

Nearly all Daniel’s eschatology mentioned in the gospels and in the epistles is drawn from the second section of Daniel. The time-frame of nearly all of it is first century fulfillment. On the other hand, the time-frame in the book of Revelation is far beyond first century (Revelation 8-22) and it is based on the setting and prophecies of Daniel 1-7. There, no obvious appeal to any prophetic event of Daniel 8-12 is made yet much of the imagery and all of the key prophetic events in the Revelation arises almost exclusively from Daniel 1-7.

As we have just pointed out, much of Daniel’s first section concerns Babylonian kings. In the Revelation, the resemblance of the world religious system to the Babylonian kingdom is emphasized strongly. There are also parallels that have and will test the faithfulness of God’s people. The story of the golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar is similar to the prophecy of the beast and his image. In both cases, there is a command that all must worship an image, otherwise, to be put to death. Also, as many suggest, the test in Rev 13:15-17 must parallel Daniel 6:5, the focal point being the law of God. The exact relationship between the prophecies in the first section of Daniel and those of the Revelation will be noted later.

A COMMENTARY ON DANIEL TWO & SEVEN

Daniel 2

31 "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Daniel's Interpretation

36 "This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

39 And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth.

40 Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. 41 And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. 44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Daniel 7

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 related the following summary of it. 2 Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. 3 And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another.

4 The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. 5 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 thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' 6 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.

7 After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying 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. 8 While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts.

9 I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. 10 A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened.

11 Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, 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.

13 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. 14 And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

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

A Brief Explanation:

17 *'These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth. But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'*

19 *Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet, 20 and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates.*

21 *I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them 22 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.*

The Angel Elaborates:

23 *Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 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 subdue three kings. 25 And he will speak out 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 given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 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 dominions will serve and obey Him.' 28 At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself.*

THE TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM OF GOD

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever” (Da 2:44). The interpretation of the dream is to be compared to the dream itself. *“You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (2:34,35).*

(1) The above comparison shows that the kingdoms crushed in verse 44 refer to all the kingdoms in the entire image and not, as is commonly supposed, to the divided kingdom of the ten kings.

(2) In unanimous agreement with the expectations of all the OT prophets, “the kingdom of God is presented here as an earthly kingdom, not an intangible kingdom in some elusive celestial sphere.” Recall Micah 4, Isaiah 2:1-4, 25:6-10, 49:23, Zech 14:9-21.

(3) The terrestrial kingdom of God comes in the days of the ten kings. This is exactly what Daniel 2:44 says. So immediately at the fall of the fourth beast, the last dominant world power, “the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven are given over to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and ‘all the peoples, nations, and men of every language’ and all the dominions serve and obey Him” (Daniel 7:14,27). We see in the more detailed prediction of chapter 7 (vss. 11&12) that it is only the oppressive fourth beast that comes to an immediate end. The other nations it has dominated are granted an extension of life so that they may serve the One like the son of man and His holy ones until the new kingdom, in its expansion, would completely cover the earth.

(4) The idea that God’s kingdom was to gradually expand until it eventually enveloped the entire planet is clearly taught in OT prophecy. The Messianic kingdom might have begun with the birth of the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6,7); no doubt if there was a proper response. It could have come if the chosen people yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit at any time in the distant past. See Isa 60 for an excellent example. The kingdom of God in Zech 14:12-19 expands with the gradual destruction of enemy nations after a supernatural defeat of their armies (Zech 14:1-11). Hence, excluding the many variations, the physical and spiritual kingdom were to coincide, originally, as expected by the disciples (Acts 1:4-7). Not so in Christ’s eschatology. When Jesus borrowed the imagery that once represented the growing strength and majesty of Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom (Mt 13:31,32 cf. Daniel 4:11,12,19-22), it was to illustrate how the spiritual kingdom of God would grow from a tiny seed of faith. He separated the physical and spiritual kingdom by an indefinite span of time — just as Daniel presents two advents, the first at the end of the Greek kingdom, the second at the end of the Roman.

(5) Christ updated all previous eschatons by introducing a revised eschatology that went far beyond anything else in the OT. The physical kingdom (to be established gradually on the earth) now comes instantly and immediately follows a catastrophic end of the age; *at His second coming!* But even this plan was modified slightly by Christ just a few days before His crucifixion. Jesus, then moved by a moment of deepest love for His followers, told His disciples these comforting words: *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).*

Soon after this, in a prayer to His Father, Jesus expressed this same longing: *“Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am, in order that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me; for Thou didst love me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).*

Until now, a home in heaven was never before expressed. Jesus here altered the long established prophetic view of a glorious reign forever on earth. In this section, we explore the way events were to occur before this change took place. We read several well known passages in context, notice that nothing is said of heaven, and imagine what the words originally meant without the later revision.

Speaking of assembling all the righteous, Jesus said that: “He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” (Mt 24:31). Mark recorded the extent as: “From the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven” (Mk 13:27). This is an up-date on Isa 11:11,12; 27:12,13; 43:5-7; 49:10-12; 51:11. “And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at table in the kingdom of God.” “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out” (Lk 13:29,28 Mt 8:11,12). Picture the saints being gathered to Jerusalem as all the wicked are being gathered outside for judgment: “But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, *then* He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right side, and the goats on the left.” ... “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Mt 25:31-33,46)... “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will *then* recompense every man according to His deeds” (Mt 16:27).

According to Daniel 7, a judgment involving books of record begins in heaven just before the close of time. We see here that the final act of judgment was to be at the return of Christ. Notice too that Christ was to take His seat immediately upon an earthly throne. Revelation updates this scenario and involves a 1000 year reign in heaven first. Then the New Jerusalem descends to earth. Before the resurrected wicked are judged, they attempt to attack the city. Jesus repeatedly affirmed His plan that the terrestrial kingdom of God was to be established at His second coming. The wicked were to be removed by death from this kingdom on earth and the righteous were to remain. We continue to study Christ’s words in their context to give additional proof to this thesis.

Jesus likened the end of the world to a harvest in His parable of the wheat and the tares (Mt 13:24-30,36-43). Both the wicked and the righteous grow together until that time. The angels are the reapers and at the time of the harvest Christ gives them the command: “first gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn” (vs. 30). So the wicked are ‘gathered out of His kingdom’ and cast into the furnace of fire (vss. 41-42). *Then* the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father (vs. 43).

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and *take out* the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 13:47-50). “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood *they* were eating and drinking, *they* were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and *they* did not understand until the flood came and *took them all away*, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be” (Mt 24:37-39). The parallel passage in Luke is quite illuminating: ... “*they* were eating, *they* were drinking, *they* were marrying, *they* were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and *destroyed them all*” (Lk 17:27). Clearly, those taken away are the ones who are destroyed.

“I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left” (Lk 17:33-36). The disciples ask the expected question: Taken where Lord? Jesus replies: “Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered” (Lk 17:37). Again, those taken are taken by death. (Or perhaps taken away to death. See Prov 24:11).

Jeremiah records the Lord speaking of the wicked as grapes on the vine and as figs on the fig tree. Notice what happens to them. “At the time of their punishment they shall be brought down,” declares the Lord, “I will surely *snatch them away*” (Jer 8:12,13). The wicked are also snatched away in Amos 3:12 (see NASB). We find these terms employed exclusively to describe death: either the death of men or of birds and animals — as in Jer 12:4.

THE FOUR BEASTS IDENTIFIED

The four world kingdoms symbolized as beasts (Daniel 7) are the same four symbolized by metals (Daniel 2). We now identify these kingdoms. This is easily done by comparing their descriptions with the two kingdoms specifically identified on the partial list of Daniel 8. The comparative analysis that follows confirms the summary given in the table below.

EMPIRE	DANIEL 2	DANIEL 7	DANIEL 8
<i>Babylon</i>	<i>head of gold</i>	<i>winged lion</i>	
<i>Medo-Persia</i>	<i>breast and arms of silver</i>	<i>bear raised on one side</i>	<i>two-horned ram, one horn longer than the other</i>
<i>Greece</i>	<i>belly and thighs of bronze</i>	<i>four headed, four winged leopard</i>	<i>single horned, then four horned goat</i>
<i>Rome</i>	<i>legs of iron</i>	<i>nondescript beast</i>	* * * *
<i>Rome Divided</i>	<i>feet & toes of iron/clay</i>	<i>emphasis on the ten horns</i>	***** *** *
<i>End-Time Enemy</i>		<i>little horn Roman Antichrist</i>	<i>little horn King of the North</i>

WINGED LION

“In the statement, ‘You are the head of Gold’ (2:38), Nebuchadnezzar is taken for the empire itself. This was entirely natural, as the duration of his reign was more than half that of the supremacy of the empire.” Nebuchadnezzar is compared to a lion in Jer 4:7, 49:19, 50:17, and he and his armies to an eagle with great wings in Jer 49:22, Ezk 17:3, Hab 1:8. Also the winged lion is common in Babylonian objects of art, as are many other combinations of lion and eagle, thus an appropriate symbol for Babylon.

RAISED BEAR

The bear, which is raised up on one side, corresponds perfectly with the two horned ram of chapter 8 which has one horn longer than the other. The symbolism employed clearly indicates a lopsided kingdom or a duality of powers. The ram is identified in 8:20 as the kings of Media and Persia. According to Daniel 5:28, Babylon was to be conquered by them. The symbolism also reflects the conquests of this dual empire. The ram is seen butting in three directions. The bear has three ribs in its mouth. Historically, the chief conquests of this twofold kingdom were three; Babylon (west), Lydia (north), and Egypt (south).

LEOPARD

The successor to Medo-Persia is identified as Greece in 8:21. Greece therefore is the four headed leopard beast.

There was no room for Greece to be a world power under Plan "A." Instead, the people of God, if faithful to the covenant, would have conquered Greece. Zech 9:13 clearly tells us this, as R. Lucas paraphrases it: "*The sons of Zion will be beating-up the sons of the Greeks.*"

The representation of Greece by the third metal in the visionary statue is appropriate for two reasons:

1. Greeks were known for their bronze armor, and Ezekiel mentions Javan, (the Ionian Greeks) as merchants trading "vessels of bronze" for the merchandise of Tyre (Ezk 27:13).
2. Greeks became boastful of their knowledge and culture. They, thinking themselves as gold are here said to be like brass, a cheap imitation.

Fifty years after this glimpse of Greek supremacy, Greece entered their 'Golden Age.' They could have easily continued in the glory of that era and eventually become the dominant world power. Considering the great decadence that developed in Greece, and the conditional nature of prophecy, perhaps God was compelled to appoint another nation in their place (Jer 18:7-10). It would seem fitting then that when the time finally came for Persian control to end, God chose a people whom the Greeks despised.

Historically, the successor of the Medo-Persian empire was the Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great and not Greece. Macedonia was another country just north of Greece. Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great, united the various tribes of Macedonia and later, by long bloody battles, conquered most of Greece. Greece was not a conqueror but was conquered by a people the Greeks considered barbarians.

Although not the primary intent of the vision, Alexander the Great, a Macedonian, proclaimed himself to be the king of Greece and went on to fulfill the vision. All commentators over-look the most natural meaning of the text because of the close proximity between Greece and Macedonia and the remarkable fulfillment of so many details in this portion of the vision. For example, I quote one commentary on Daniel 7:6:

"Although the leopard is itself a swift creature, its natural agility seems inadequate to describe the amazing speed of Alexander's conquest. The symbolic vision represented the animal with wings added to it, not two but four, denoting superlative speed. This symbol most fittingly describes the lightning speed with which Alexander and his Macedonians in less than a decade came into possession of the greatest empire the world had yet known. There is no other example in ancient times of such rapid movements of troops on so large and successful a scale."

Notice the agreement between this symbol and the implied swiftness of the he-goat. The goat was able to move across the surface of the whole earth, and he did so without even touching the ground.

THE LEOPARD'S FOUR HEADS

That the third empire would enter a divided phase is seen in 8:22. Four minor kingdoms represented by the four horns of the he-goat were to arise from that empire. This too obviously parallels the four heads and four wings of the leopard.

The emphasis on the number four suggests that these four smaller kingdoms would continue to exist until the little horn power came on the scene. See 8:8,9,22,23. The accuracy of this part of the prediction fails terribly. When Alexander the Great died, his empire was ultimately divided into four major kingdoms. This took twenty years, a relatively short time. But within another twenty years, these were quickly reduced to three principle kingdoms plus a group of smaller states. If we reckon the much smaller Pergamum as the fourth kingdom, as is usually done, then we must also include the other fragments as well, thus increasing the total number beyond four. The emphasis of the prophecy therefore is here seen to elude the facts of history — All agree that the four kingdoms existed for a mere seven percent of the Hellenistic era.

It is interesting to note how the Interpreter's Bible tries to explain this discrepancy. They write: *"Since there were actually more than four divisions after Ipsus in 301, the number possibly comes from a stylistic preference for fours....Only four out of the many divisions were of any importance however and these do roughly represent the four quarters."* This attempt to minimize the problem is both amusing and instructive. An examination of the history and any map of the division reveals their gross approximation to be pure illusion.

THE NONDESCRIPT BEAST

The iron strong fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 clearly corresponds to the extremely powerful, exceedingly ferocious beast of Daniel 7. This nation is not identified within the text but has an impressive fulfillment in the Roman empire — if a careful examination of the symbols and its precise explanation is ignored. We now look closer.

Four heads and four horns represented the divided phase of Greece. Similarly, the ten horns on the nondescript beast is a division of Rome. Daniel 7:24 states that "out of this kingdom ten kings will arise." In this stage, Daniel 2:41,42 refers to it as a "divided kingdom" where "some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle." Notice that the divided phase of this kingdom is always referred to in the singular. Though fragmented, these kings try to keep it from splitting (2:41-43). Daniel 2:44 gives a specific time for the setting up of the kingdom of God as "in the days of those kings." According to Daniel 7:11, time ends at the end of the reign of the terrible fourth beast.

Thus, according to the prophecy, the Roman empire was to continue until the end of time. Then God was to bring it to an end on the day of final Judgment. We hold that what really occurs historically is not to be confused with what the text actually says. For this reason, we emphasize exact Biblical exegesis and historical discrepancies, leaving all inexact historical parallels and coincidences to other writers.

The way history worked out is counter to what the prophecy foretells. Rome was not divided from within by ten kings; it was over-run by barbaric tribes that came from distant territories.

Our view of the partitioning of Rome by ten kings and a Roman Antichrist was the orthodox position in the early Christian church before Rome actually fell. Irenaeus, the honored Church father and champion for truth in those early centuries, wrote about it with great confidence in his *Against Heresies*, 185 AD. This particular position was of course abandoned when history forced a reinterpretation of the text.

THE TIME OF FINAL JUDGMENT AND GOD'S TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM

The chronological details surrounding the last events are simple. As R.E. Neall puts it: "No two verses could be clearer and less subject to controversy, it seems, than Daniel 7:21 and 22:

"I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering 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." Quite simply, the saints are overpowered by the horn until rescued by the judgment and given the kingdom. This simple theme is elaborated in more detail in three later verses:

25 ... "and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. 26 But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 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."

"We see here that it is the judgment that terminates the dominion of Antichrist and the persecution. Furthermore, there is nothing to suggest in Daniel 7 that the end of the 3 & 1/2 times would be marked merely by the wounding of the horn. Rather this period is said to end in his final demise, with no subsequent healing to follow" (Assize, Vol 1, No 1, p. 23). Neall's observations are correct. His futurist conclusions however are cancelled by the 13th chapter of the final prophetic update: The book of Revelation.

To Daniel, ten kings were to arise at the end of the world and jointly rule the fourth world empire. The final end-time enemy was to overpower three of them and persecute God's people during the last 3&1/2 years of world history. But, as we will later see in our study, (along with many other surprises), the book of Revelation has updated this prophecy magnifying the enemy to a line of blasphemous kings that reign for a much longer time, a figurative 3 & 1/2 years. There the end of this time period, without question, marks the time of a deadly wound that *is* subsequently healed. There, Daniel's ten horns still receive *a kingdom* (Rev 17:12,17) but it is not the Roman kingdom. They still have one purpose: It is to give all their power and authority to the resurrected Antichrist. It is as if unforeseen and vastly new circumstances arise that call for the progressive revelations of God to suspend, redefine, and update earlier visions.

OTHER EXPLANATIONS OF DANIEL 7

PRETERIST

While this school generally has a good understanding of what Biblical texts say, they are completely misguided in this chapter. They ignore the parallels that identify the fourth beast as the successor to Greece and they reject the emphasis of the symbolism of the ten horns as referring to ten coexisting kings. Everything is reinterpreted so that Antiochus Epiphanes turns out to be the little horn.

FUTURIST

This school rightly sees that the little horn is a single individual that comes out of the Roman empire but betrays itself when they employ the term, “revived Roman empire.” To believe that the Roman empire will be restored is to believe that which has no support from the text. It is, in fact, a denial of the context and to reject context is to reject what the text says. Their demand that future events must return to a state where some “Roman antichrist” can literally fulfill the prophecy makes no sense whatsoever. It cannot be literally fulfilled! Rome fell centuries ago. So if we remove the invisible futurist gap — the notion that, for some reason, the prophecy just skipped over the initial end and eventual restoration of the Roman empire — then their interpretation is an endorsement of our position.

HISTORICIST

Both the appeal and contradiction of traditional historicism are testified to by the ever increasing awareness of historicists who find the long established position on Daniel 7 inadequate. Neall’s struggle to reconcile context with the facts of history serves as an excellent illustration of some of the deeper problems. He writes:

“The sequence of beasts, the ten horns, and then the little horn that supplants three of the ten all converge to identify that horn as the papacy of the middle ages and beyond. The 3 & 1/2 times would therefore have to pertain to those centuries”....“Yet verses 21 and 22 state that the saints are overpowered by the horn until rescued by the judgment. Verses 25-27 say the same with one added detail: the duration of their subjection is 3 & 1/2 times. In other words, it is the judgment that terminates the 3 & 1/2 times of persecution. But the judgment of 1844 had nothing to do with the administering of the deadly wound in 1798, the end of the 1260 years of papal supremacy. Nor did the judgment of 1844 have anything to do with rescuing the saints from the papacy, which had already been rendered quiescent by its fatal wound. This is chronologically incompatible with a judgment that brings the 3 & 1/2 times to an end, an end marked by the final destruction of the horn. All told, the circumstances attending the start of this judgment differ significantly from those pertaining in 1844” (Assize, Vol 1.1 p. 23).

A COMMENTARY ON DANIEL 8

1. 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. 2 And I looked in the vision, and it came about while I was looking, that 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. 3 Then I lifted my gaze 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. The angel later explains: “The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia” (verse 20). 4. I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beast could stand before him, nor was there anyone to rescue from his power; but he did as he pleased and magnified himself. 5. 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. The angel later explains: “And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king” (verse 21). 6 And 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. 7 And 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. 8 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. The angel later explains: “And 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” (Verse 22). 9 And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. 10 And 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. 11 It even magnified itself up to the Commander of the host. The angel later explains: “And in the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue. And 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. 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” (verses 23-25).

The prophecy later says of the large horn: “And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded; for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them” (11:3,4). This horn, all agree, has been rightfully identified with Alexander the Great.

On the other hand, the identity of the little horn has led to much disagreement. The historicists see in it a symbol of pagan and papal Rome. The preterist view it as the Seleucid king, Antiochus Epiphanes. The controversy may be resolved rather easily if we first examine the original intent of the passage and then compare it with possible historical fulfillments. Our hermeneutic tells us how to do this. “We must seek an understanding of the prophecy from Daniel’s perspective in history; we must assume no more than Daniel could have known.” If we do this, we find that both schools are right in a very limited sense. And to balance the many historicist ideas already advanced, and to introduce a key thesis for this chapter, we now cite a representative list of facts that historicists tend to ignore.

First: The understanding that the little horn denotes a kingdom and its division is without precedence. In Daniel, a horn is a single entity for it always denotes an individual king or a minor kingdom, one that is but a fragment of a larger power. This makes sense. If beasts denote kingdoms then you would expect that parts of beasts, i.e. horns, must represent something that are just parts of kingdoms.

Second: When the angel Gabriel received a divine command to make Daniel understand the vision (8:16), we expect Gabriel to have responded faithfully. There is nothing within the text that suggests the angel Gabriel is not interpreting the vision in plain language. In the angelic explanation, reference is made to the little horn as “he” or “his” thirteen times. In 9:26,27 he is called the “prince” who is to come and the “one” who makes desolate. Furthermore, this “he” more naturally represents a single individual than an empire because “he” has human characteristics. “He” is shrewd and deceitful, insolent and skilled in intrigue. His vaulting ambition (which is so forcefully displayed in the imagery of Daniel 8:10-11) is to be compared with the arrogance of the king of Babylon who, like Satan, had thought to ascend to heaven and enthrone himself above the stars of God (Isa 14:13-14).

Third: The little horn is not a super military power, for its greatness is confined within certain directions (8:9). We will see later that ships from Kittim effectively oppose his second attack on the king of the south (11:30). This is quite unlike the fourth beast in chapter 7, for it devoured the whole earth by treading it down, crushing everything in its way.

Fourth: Quite naturally, horns come from animals and the horns of animals. They never originate from the wind. And it is not too surprising to find that, in the general category of all apocalyptic literature, horns are always attached to beasts. Daniel therefore saw the rather small horn come from one of the four horns of the he-goat, not from one of the four winds (The Hebrew of 8:9 is ambiguous). But Rome failed to arise from the divided Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great (SDA.BC Vol 4, p. 841). Also, the fourth beast is distinct from all other kingdoms. Even if it was to originate from one of the four fragment kingdoms of Greece, it would then be one of the four—an immediate contradiction (also of 7:19 cf. 8:22).

Fifth: Many historicists argue that Rome, the monster-like fourth beast, personified by the little horn, came out of one of the four winds rather than out of one of the four horns. “Such an interpretation, however, makes the identification of this origin void of any significance” (Wm. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, p. 54).

Conclusion: We argue that since the text itself suggests excellent reasons that the little horn stands for an individual king, and since there are no contextual reasons that he is not an individual king, then, in the intended meaning of the passage, he is to be understood as an individual king.

Thesis

That the Hebrew grammar may refer to the little horn as coming from one of the four horns or from one of the four winds may be by design. The ambiguity, if relevant, suggests a turning point and a bridge that connects the two sections of Daniel and their respective scenarios. The ambiguity reminds us of the fourth beast which follows the divided Greek kingdom from one of the four points of the compass and, at the same time, introduces the last king of the northern horn (11:21-45), that tyrant prince who suddenly appears as if by flight from the wind, the one who comes riding on the wing of abominations (9:27).

That the little horn parallels the fourth beast in many respects affirms the idea that the ambiguities were intentional. The meaning is that the little horn was to foreshadow future desolations as the forerunner of the fourth beast.² That he was also to be a type of the Roman antichrist is suggested from the rather natural expectation that the little horns of Daniel 7 & 8 should stand for the same type of thing since the same kind of symbol is being used!

² The best confirmation of this rests on Daniel 8:13,17.

Some imagery is easy to understand. When combined with symbolism, as in Daniel 8:9-11, it makes exegesis just a little bit more difficult. To illustrate what is involved in our study of these three verses, consider the meaning of the following text:

.... “the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger! He has cast from heaven to earth the glory of Israel, and has not remembered His footstool in the day of His anger. The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared all the habitations of Jacob. In His wrath He has thrown down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground” (Lam 2:1,2).

QUESTION: Jerusalem, God’s footstool, was the glory of Israel. Was it really cast down from heaven to earth? Were the strongholds of the daughter of Judah really thrown down to the ground? Does this heaven-to-earth representation of destruction make sense in Daniel 8:9-11?

9 And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. 10 And 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. 11 It even magnified itself up to the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.

The focus of verse 9 is the little horn’s conquests in the earthly plane. Verses 10-11, however, graphically portray his assault in the spiritual realm by an attack against heaven itself. He carries out his offensive against the host of heaven and moves against their Commander. He interrupts the worship made to Him and throws down the place of His sanctuary. These events, portrayed as taking place in the heavens, correspond perfectly to what the little horn would do on earth. This correspondence was beautifully crafted with special words perfectly suited to the imagery created. To see this, we must become very acquainted with all the possible meanings of the words employed.

The word *host* in 8:10-13 commonly refers to the heavenly bodies: “And beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven” (Deu 4:19). “And they forsook all the commandments of the Lord their God and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal” (2 Ki 17:16). “...those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations and to all the host of heaven” (2 Ki 23:5). “...the sun or the moon or any of the heavenly host, which I have not commanded” (Deu 17:3). Also see 2 Ki 21:3,5; 23:4; 2 Chr 18:18; 33:3,5 Neh 9:6; Ps 33:6; Isa 34:4; 40:26; 45:12; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Zep 1:5.

The word *host* frequently refers to armies, and is usually translated so (Ge 21:22,32; Num 2:4-30; 31:48; 2 Sa 2:8; 3:23; 8:16; 10:7,16,18; 17:25; 19:13; 20:23; etc.). The word *host* is also used for fallen or unfallen angels: “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” (Isa 24:21). “And Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left” (2 Chr 18:18). “And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God” (Lk 2:13). — In addition, stars in symbolic language may represent angels (Rev 1:20, 9:1).

The host and stars of heaven also represent the literal descendants of Israel; God said to Abram: “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ ” “Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies” (Gen 15:5; 22:17).

God said to Moses: “When Pharaoh will not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt, and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments” (Ex 7:4). “And it came about at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt” (Ex 12:41). “But David did not count those twenty years of age and under, because the Lord had said He would multiply Israel as the stars of heaven” (1 Chr 27:23).

We have stated all the possibilities; this last choice is the one employed: To cast down the host and stars, we are told, signifies the destruction of the people of God (8:24). Recall that stars are an expression of God’s O.T. covenant promise. Notice how falling stars echo the undoing of that promise: “You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God” (Deu 28:62).

The people of God are depicted as the armies of heaven. This matches the imagistic expression: “The Commander (or Captain) of the heavenly host.” There is an interesting account in the OT where Joshua met this Commander:

“Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, ‘Are you for us or for our adversaries?’ And he said, ‘No, rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, ‘What has my lord to say to his servant?’ And the Captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, ‘Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.’ And Joshua did so” (Joshua 5:13-15).

The Commander of the heavenly host is no earthly being. His representative on earth, then, is no ordinary man. He is the Prince of princes (8:25), the Prince of the covenant (11:22), the Anointed One (9:25). The vision explains itself. The assault on the Prince of Heaven signifies His death by the armies of the little horn (11:22). Paul was correct when he identified Jesus Christ as the Commander of the host in his comment on the Exodus experience. See 1 Cor 10:1-4 cf. Ps 78:10-16.

The duality between heaven and earth continues in this brilliant piece of apocalyptic imagery. Another relationship is cleverly expressed in the Hebrew word used for “place” in the 11th verse. This word (*makon*) occurs only 17 times in the Hebrew Bible. It has a specialized meaning. In every instance, it refers to the place of God — either heaven as God’s dwelling place or God’s place on earth — or to the foundation of His throne or temple (1 Ki 8:39,43,49, Ps 33:14, Isa 18:4; Ex 15:17, Isa 4:5, 1 Ki 8:13; Ps 104:5, 89:14, 97:2, Ezr 2:68). And since an understanding of this word adds considerable insight into the meaning of the vision, we take the time to think about every occurrence of it in the Hebrew Bible.

Heaven, God’s Dwelling Place

In a prayer to God, Solomon three times employs the phrase: “then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling *place*” (1 Kings 8:39,43,49, NASB, parallel to 2 Chr 6). The NIV renders it: “Then hear from heaven, your dwelling *place*.” Clearly, the “dwelling *place*” of God is heaven. Heaven is, therefore, the place of God in the next two references also. Note the Hebrew parallelism:

“The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; From His dwelling *place* He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth” (Ps 33:13,14). “For thus the Lord has told me, I will look from My dwelling *place* quietly like dazzling heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest” (Isa 18:3,4).

God’s Place on Earth

“Thou wilt bring them and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, the *place*, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thy dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established” (Ex 15:17). — We interpret this mountain to be all of the Holy Land [Ex 15:13 cf. Ps 78:54].

“Then the Lord will create over the whole *area* of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. And there will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain” (Isa 4:5,6).

The Hebrew word *makon* may also refer to the temple in Jerusalem: “I have surely built Thee a lofty house, a *place* for Thy dwelling forever” (1 Ki 8:13 parallel to 2 Chr 6:2).

The Foundations of Heaven and Earth

“He established the earth upon its *foundations*, so that it will not totter forever and ever” (Ps 104:5). “Righteousness and justice are the *foundation* of His throne” (Ps 89:14; 97:2). “And some of the heads of fathers’ households, when they arrived at the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem, offered willingly for the house of God to restore it on its *foundation*” (Ezr 2:68).

We now ask: Precisely what is meant by the phrase: “*the place of His sanctuary.*” This expression is unique where “place” is *makon*. We therefore examine every similar phrase. There are only two and these employ the common Hebrew word for place:

1. “A glorious throne on high from the beginning is *the place of our sanctuary*” (Jer 17:12). Since the city of Jerusalem is specifically identified as “the throne of the Lord” (Jer 3:17) and “the throne of Thy glory” (Jer 14:21), *the place of our sanctuary* therefore denotes the city Jerusalem.

2. The Lord said through the prophet Isaiah: “The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the box tree, and the cypress together, to beautify *the place of My sanctuary*; And I shall make the place of My feet glorious” (Isa 60:13). So *The place of My sanctuary*, in this passage, denotes all of the Holy Land or Jerusalem. It should be kept in mind that the temple was thought of as the very center of this place.

Finally we ask: Precisely what is meant by the casting down of the *place* of God’s sanctuary? Answer: If we follow the continuity already established, the casting down of the heavenly place of God’s sanctuary must represent actions against the earthly place of His sanctuary. If taking the imagery seriously, the term, *cast down*, would denote destruction. The terminology reminds us of Christ’s words: “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Mt 24:2).

To *cast down* has a range of application that is really quite singular. The Psalmist used it to denote the destruction of those who, in the wilderness experience, grumbled for forty years against the Lord (Ps 106:23-26). It was employed similarly by Jeremiah as a synonym for destruction when he described the laying waste of Jerusalem’s dwellings by the Babylonians (Jer 9:19 cf. 6:15). It was used by Isaiah to denote the impending destruction by Assyria (Isa 26:5). But the sheer genius displayed here, as in Lam 2:1-2, is that the figurative meaning of the term coincides with its more literal meaning in the vision. The vision then is perfectly clear and unambiguous: **The *place* of the sanctuary is destroyed.**

Some assert that the term “cast down” denotes profanation, but such a claim has no Biblical support. “There is no example among the 125 usages of this verb in the OT that suggests or hints either in a literal or a metaphorical sense that its meaning has anything to do with defilement, desecration, or the like. This fact can hardly be overemphasized. A ‘throwing down’ hardly communicates an act of defilement but rather an act of destruction in a concrete literal setting” (Gerhard Hasel, *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 192).

Conclusion

The symbolism points to the city Jerusalem as *the place of His sanctuary* being destroyed. This is confirmed by the interpretive section in this unit of prophecy (9:24,26). This position happens to coincide with the widely held historicist view in Reformation Protestantism.

An examination of Christ's remarks on the prophecy reveals the deepest possible meaning. He understood the **casting down** of *the place of God's sanctuary* as representing a far-reaching apocalyptic symbol of destruction — a view which is expressive of all the different meanings of the word *makon*. Christ's application encompasses the destruction of the Holy Land (Lk 21:23), the city (Lk 21:20), and the temple (Lk 13:35), down to the very foundation (Mt 24:2). Jerusalem interestingly enough means "foundations of peace."

In regard to the identity of the "place of His sanctuary" (8:11), some historicists reject the Scriptural meaning of this phrase (which points to the city of Jerusalem) and immediately suppose from the imagery alone that the temple in heaven is meant (vss. 10-12 cf. Heb 8:2). But the term "cast down" refers to the destruction of this place and this can hardly be said of the heavenly sanctuary. Such a position therefore not only ignores unique word usage but it also fails to recognize the consistent nature of the imagery: We have already shown how the events portrayed as taking place in the heavens correspond perfectly to what the little horn would do on earth. Yes, it appears that the little horn cast down the place of God's sanctuary out of heaven. But he also casts earthward, the host and stars and these are explained to be the people of God, not celestial beings. Furthermore, the angelic interpretation tells us that this vision refers to the destruction of the holy city and its people (8:24 cf. 9:24,26), and this, must I say, occurs on earth!

Wm. H. Shea, famed author of the book, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, seems to accept the validity of the argument that demands that the sanctuary was to be "cast down" in the Biblical sense for he uses this reasoning to refute the Antiochus interpretation. He accurately expresses the simplicity of the argument as follows:

"It was this 'place' of God's sanctuary that was to be cast down by the little horn, according to Daniel 8:11. One could apply this to what the Romans did to the temple in A.D. 70. But Antiochus never did anything to the temple which would qualify as 'casting down its makon,' or place. Desecrate it he did; but, as far as is known, he did not damage its architecture in any significant way. On the contrary, it would have been to his disadvantage to have done so, since he turned it over to be used for the cult of Zeus. Thus while it is fair to say that Antiochus suspended the daily or continual sacrifices/ministration of the temple, we have no indication that he cast it down from its place, or cast down its place. Consequently, this aspect of the prophecy is in opposition to the interpretation of the little horn as Antiochus IV" (pp. 38-39).

Shea later restates this same point:

"While Antiochus IV did suspend the regular sacrifices of the temple in Jerusalem (and he did introduce the worship of another cult there), he did not 'cast down' the 'place' (makon) of the temple, which is listed among the things the little horn was to do to the temple in Daniel 8" (p. 54).

That Shea never even cites examples of Biblical usage of the term “cast down” but simply expects that it is synonymous for destruction proves how intuitive and natural this meaning really is. That he repeats the objection reflects an attitude that the argument is impressive. That he takes the imagery of the vision literally and imagines that the place of God’s sanctuary stands for the literal temple in heaven and that it was, in actual fact, “cast down” by an earthly power is more difficult to understand. Curiously, and without a hint of justification, he explains just how the heavenly sanctuary was cast down. He states that this was accomplished by its profanation (p. 50).

Do we have a striking contradiction? Not at all! That Shea and Hasel really accept a position that they have so forcefully refuted (p. 43), that they only deny the Biblical meaning of the term “cast down” if convenient for them to do so, that they ignore and actually reject the logic of the very same argument they themselves use against the preterists (if employed as an objection against the popular historicist position), is really quite understandable. These outspoken critics of the preterist view are among the leading defenders of the historicist faith.

ON ACCOUNT OF TRANSGRESSION AND THE ANGER OF GOD

Many events regarding the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians have been repeated in the time of Christ. The specifics of either catastrophe fulfill the covenant curses of Deu 28:49-57. The prophet Habakkuk alludes to these judgments (Hab 1:5-11) and warns that the Babylonians will punish Judah for her sins, and thus fulfill the curse. These prophetic judgments fall as a consequence of disobedience and refer to any time the conditions would be fulfilled. So we now concern ourselves with the conditions that were repeated, the circumstances that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in the time of the Babylonians and in the first century. We note the reason for the destruction behind the common imagery:

“Because of the multitude of her transgressions the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger! He has cast from heaven to earth the glory of Israel, and has not remembered His footstool in the day of His anger. The Lord has swallowed up; He has not spared all the habitations of Jacob. In His wrath He has thrown down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; He has brought them down to the ground” (Lam 1:5, 2:1-2).

12 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.

The words translated *cast* and *fling* are the same Hebrew word. We have seen previously that *place* is the foundation of “justice and righteousness.” These are parallel to truth (Isa 59:14,15). Thus the symbolism above also embraces truth being thrown down. The 12th verse makes this connection.

Similar imagery is expressed in Amos 5:7 (NASB). It refers to “those who turn justice into wormwood and cast righteousness down to the earth.”

We ask several key questions at this time: Why does God allow the place of His sanctuary to be cast down? Why is the host given over to the little horn along with the regular sacrifice? And who gives over the sanctuary and host to be trampled in verse 13? Finally, Why does Daniel employ a Hebrew word (*indignation*, 8:19; 11:36) that is used exclusively in the OT for the wrath of God? (Ps 38:3, 69:24, 78:49, 102:10, Isa 10:5,25, 13:5, 26:20, 30:27, Jer 10:10, 15:17, 50:25, Lam 2:6, Ezk 21:31, 22:24,31, Hos 7:16, Nah 1:6, Hab 3:12, Zeph 3:8); *See our exhaustive word study at the bottom of this page.* Clearly, God is acting because He is angered over the sins of His people!

The importance of verse 12 is that it is both a commentary and a summary of the high points of the vision, vs 10-11. The key phrase here is: “*And on account of transgression*” for it tells us why these events must occur. It also explains Daniel’s usage of the word *indignation*. The Interpreter’s Bible commentary clarifies the significance. They point out that: “In the writings of the prophets this word became a technical term for the indignation of Yahweh expressed against men for their sinfulness.”

We ask: What men? Who are the transgressors that run their full course in 8:23? And who are the host given over to be trampled in 8:13? And on account of whose transgression is the little horn allowed to cause such fearful destruction? — Clearly, the indignation here is directed against the host and stars, God’s OT covenant people, as identified by the Bible itself.

EVERY OCCURRENCE OF THE HEBREW WORD INDIGNATION (DA 8:19; 11:36)

“There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine indignation; There is no health in my bones, because of my sin.” Ps 38:3.

“Pour out Thine indignation on them, and may Thy burning anger overtake them.” Ps 69:24.

“He sent upon them His burning anger, fury, and indignation, and trouble, a band of destroying angels.” Ps 78:49.

“My enemies have reproached me all day long; those who deride me have used my name as a curse. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of Thine indignation and Thy wrath; for thou hast lifted me up and cast me away. My days are like a lengthened shadow; and I wither away like grass.” Ps 102:8-11.

“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hands is My indignation, I send it against a godless nation and commission it against the people of my fury to capture booty and to seize plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets.” Isa 10:5.

“For in a very little while My indignation against you will be spent, and My anger will be directed to their destruction.” Isa 10:25.

“The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. Lift up a standard on the bare hill, raise your voice to them, wave the hand that they may enter the doors of the nobles. I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, to execute My anger. A sound of tumult on the mountains, like that of many people! A sound of the uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathered together! The Lord of hosts is mustering the army for battle. They are coming from a far country, from the farthest horizons, the Lord and His instruments of indignation, to destroy the whole land.” Isa 13:1-5.

“Come, my people, enter into your rooms, and close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while, until indignation runs its course. For behold, the Lord is about to come out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed, and will no longer cover her slain.” Isa 26:20,21.

“Behold, the name of the Lord comes from a remote place; burning is His anger, and dense is His smoke; His lips are filled with indignation, and His tongue is like a consuming fire; His breath is like an over-flowing torrent, which reaches to the neck, to shake the nations back and forth in a sieve, and to put in the jaws of the peoples the bridle which leads to ruin.” Isa 30:27,28.

“But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At his wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation.” Jer 10:10.

“Thy words were found and I ate them, and Thy words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I did not sit in the circle of merry-makers, Nor did I exult. Because of Thy hand upon me I sat alone, for Thou didst fill me with indignation.” Jer 15:16,17.

“The Lord has opened His armory and has brought forth the weapons of His indignation, for it is a work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.” Jer 50:25.

“The Lord has become like an enemy. He has swallowed up Israel; He has swallowed up all its palaces; He has destroyed its strongholds and multiplied in the daughter of Judah mourning and moaning. And He has violently treated His tabernacle like a garden booth; He has destroyed His appointed meeting place; The Lord has caused to be forgotten the appointed feast and sabbath in Zion, and He has despised king and priest in the indignation of His anger.” Lam 2:5,6.

“ ‘And I shall pour out My indignation on you; I shall blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and I shall give you into the hand of brutal men, skilled in destruction.’ ” Ezk 21:31.

“And the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; all of them are bronze and tin and iron and lead in the furnace; they are the dross of silver.’ Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Because all of you have become dross, therefore, behold, I am going to gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace to blow fire on it in order to melt it, so I shall gather you in My anger and in My wrath, and I shall lay you there and melt you. And I shall gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you will be melted in the midst of it. As silver is melted in the furnace, so you will be melted in the midst of it; and you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out My wrath on you.’ And the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, say to her, ‘You are a land that is not cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.’ ” Ezk 22:17-24.

“ ‘Thus I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; their way I have brought upon their heads,’ declares the Lord God.” Ezk 22:31.

“Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the burning of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken up by Him.” Nah 1:6.

“In indignation Thou didst march through the earth; In anger Thou didst trample the nations.” Hab 3:12.

“ ‘Therefore, wait for Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘For the day when I rise up to the prey. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal.’ ” Zeph 3:8.

There is only one exception to the rule that *indignation* refers exclusively to the wrath of God, Hos 7:16. Hosea used this word to describe the deadliness of the human tongue, an appropriate application however (Compare Isa 30:27 with Ps 64:2,3 & James 3:5-8).

The “Daily”

We have already examined several words and phrases that, if taken together, well express the anger of God over the sins of His people. The term used for the *regular sacrifice* continues this thought. It also sheds light on the people’s spiritual condition. Observe that the little horn always halts the “continual” and the word *sacrifice* does not appear in the Hebrew for 8:11,12,13, 11:31 12:11. Daniel alone, unique among all Bible writers, chose to call the continual sacrifice simply the “continual.” The very omission of the word “sacrifice” conveys the idea that this sacred ceremony would become a spiritless act of worship. The word “continual” standing alone suggests a daily “routine”. Centuries later, Jewish writers of the Talmud and Mishnah did in fact and unknowingly fulfill Daniel’s prophecy, calling the “regular sacrifice” simply the “continual”. Even Christian writers unknowingly do the very same thing (when they speak of type and Antitype) for they often refer to the “regular” sacrifices as the “typical service”. This characterization is thoroughly Biblical. In the epistle to the Hebrews, as Randolph E. Neall points out, “the old covenant, in contrast to the new, is consistently characterized as pertaining to things “*daily*”, “*repetitive*”, and “*continual*” (Hebrews 7:27, 9:6, 10:1-3,11 cf. 9:12,25-28, 10:9,10,12,14)” (Assize Vol 1.1, p. 31).

A SPIRITUALIZED VERSION OF THE ANTIOCHUS INTERPRETATION

Da 8:11-12 said: “It (the little horn) even magnified itself up to the Prince of the host; and it removed the continual from Him and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.” “And on account of transgression, the host will be given over to the horn along with the continual.” (NASB)

Some historicists maintain that the continual refers to “the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the true worship of Christ in the gospel age” (SDA.BC on 8:11).But how can an earthly power remove Christ’s heavenly high priestly ministry? Christ “holds His priesthood permanently” (Heb 7:24). And how can Christ ever give it up? “He ever liveth to make intercession” for us (Heb 7:25).

That the heavenly sanctuary was given over to be trampled in Daniel 8:13 is very confusing. Yet verse 13 implies that the sanctuary in question is “trampled,” and true, this word can mean profane as in the trampling under foot the Son of God (Heb 10:29). But if we consider the immediate context of the book of Daniel, then all difficulties vanish. There, one finds that “to trample” is a term employed exclusively to denote destruction (7:7,19; 8:7; 8:10 cf. 8:24). So when the sanctuary and host are given over to be trampled (vs. 13 cf. 8:10-12), they are then trampled together in the same physical way, just as one would expect. Again, this can hardly be said of the temple in heaven. Furthermore, since Daniel 9 is an interpretive section for this prophecy, there is no reason to suppose that the sanctuary of 8:13,14 is any different than the one in 9:26, and that sanctuary is destroyed by the armies of the very same little horn!

CONTEXTUAL REALISM

Daniel must be understood in the light of previous prophetic declarations, i.e., that the Messianic kingdom was to be established shortly after the Babylonian captivity. And if the people were faithful to God and had obeyed His covenant, it would have occurred. The focus and central theme of this vision however presents an alternative possibility. Until the end of time, **on account of transgression**, the Jews would be subject to Gentile nations and the Messianic kingdom would be delayed. And the period of rebellion is long. The vision spans the history of kingdoms: Medo-Persia, Greece, and divided Greece (8:20-22).

The phrase: “latter end of the indignation” (8:19) implies that this whole period is the outworking of divine wrath. Sacred history testifies that God’s displeasure was coincident with this period of rebellion. — When the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, the glory of God’s presence was withdrawn (see Ezk 10). It never returned when the temple was rebuilt.

This silence agrees with the nearly complete absence of God’s messengers throughout this period. God had indeed turned away from His sinful people. It had truly appeared that He had abandoned them. This is what the hiding of God’s face means (2 Chr 30:9, Job 13:24, Ps 10:11, 13:1, 22:24, 27:9, 44:24, 88:14, 102:2, Isa 54:7-8, 64:7, Ezk 39:23-24). But something more terrible was to happen at the latter end of the indignation! It is expressed within a curious feature of the vision: Unlike the dreams of chapters 2 & 7, this vision (8:2-12) ends abruptly, unexpectedly, seemingly in mid-stream. It just stops with the destruction of Jerusalem. Then the fourth kingdom, which was to follow, is omitted and a definite conclusion about the Messianic kingdom is clearly ignored in the explanatory sections of chapters 8 and 9.

The abruptness of the vision seems to act out and illustrate a scenario similar to the word of the Lord spoken to Moses (Deu 31:16-18) but under circumstances and with an outcome of even greater severity: The Jewish nation was to withdraw completely from God and from the covenant relationship with their rejection of Christ. God was then to reject that nation. The time of this separation was to be at the last scene of the vision — the casting down of Jerusalem. It was to have been the last event of Greek history.

The emphasis and focus of this revelation is “what shall be at the latter end of the indignation” (8:19). Hence, the little horn is limited to a specific moment in history. Then God’s indignation against the Jews comes to an end as they are given over to a tyrant prince who destroys them and the place of their sanctuary. Then a long period of trampling begins under the fourth kingdom. It is important to note that the trampling to follow the Greek kingdom, by the fourth beast, need not have been mentioned. It was already firmly impressed upon Daniel’s mind (7:7,19,23). And recall that the little horn foreshadowed future desolations as the forerunner of the fourth beast. That is what their parallelism suggested! ... (Recall page 39).

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to the one that spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot?" R.S.V.

The angel is simply asking: How long is the vision about the rebellion with the trampling that follows?

How long is the vision? — The vision begins with Medo-Persia and continues until Jerusalem (the place of the sanctuary) is cast down. How long is the trampling? — The trampling begins during the last scenes of the vision. It continues until God intervenes with a pre-advent judgment at the end of time (Daniel 7).

Jesus also understood that this trampling was to begin with the destruction of Jerusalem and that it was to continue for a long period:

“... But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”³ (Luke 21:20-24).

We find in the words of Christ a remarkable correspondence with Daniel’s prophecy. **First:** The holy land and Jerusalem was to be cast down and trampled. **Second:** Wrath was toward the Jews and that those days were days of vengeance. **Third:** The seventy weeks of probation for the Jewish nation were about to end and when this happened it was to be the time of the Gentiles. **Fourth:** This was the beginning of a trampling that continues for long ages. **Fifth:** So all of Daniel’s prophecy could be fulfilled.

The Separation Principle Justified

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear” (Isa 59:2).

“For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah ...”They will be filled with the dead bodies of the men I will slay in my anger and wrath. I will hide My face from this city because of all its wickedness“ (Jer 33:5).

“Then they will cry out to the Lord, but He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time, because they have practiced evil deeds” (Mic 3:4).

³ Reading Daniel, we sense that the trampling was to begin with the end of the divided Grecian empire (7:7). If the trampling was to begin with the destruction of Jerusalem, we may only suppose that, according to the strict meaning of Daniel, these two events were to coincide originally.

A RUNNING SUMMARY

Let us summarize what we have so far. Verse 13 refers to “the *giving over* of the sanctuary and host to be trampled.” Verse 12 mentions that “the host will be *given over* to the horn along with the regular sacrifice.” (This is like Daniel 7:25 where it says that “the holy ones will be *given* into his hand,” i.e., the hand of the Roman Antichrist). This thought is also present in verse 11. Dr. A. M. Rodriguez, writing for the Biblical Research Institute, made the following scholarly comments in an insert/supplement to the Adventist Review, September 1994:

The Hebrew verb *shalak*, “to throw, to cast” is used in Hebrew in a similar manner to the English equivalent. In both languages the verb “to throw/cast” very often takes a preposition. Something is cast “to the ground” (Daniel 8:7, RSV), “behind your back” (1 Kings 14:9 RSV), from somewhere (2 Kings 14:20), in some place (Amos 8:3), “on” someone (2 Sam. 11:21, NIV), “outside the gates” (Jer. 22:19, NIV), etc. The meaning of the verb is somewhat affected by the preposition it takes.

In Daniel 8:11 the verb *shalak*, “to throw, to cast,” is not accompanied by a preposition or an adverb—it stands all by itself. The text simply reads: “the place of the sanctuary was cast/thrown.” The English translation does not make sense unless an adverb is added to it. Various translations read “cast/thrown *down*.” The adverb “down” is not in the original. Daniel 8:11 is not the only passage in the Old Testament where this verb stands by itself without a preposition or an adverb. In those other passages the verb “to throw/cast” is used to express the idea of rejection, abandonment. For instance, desperate soldiers trying to escape the enemy had “thrown” (abandoned) their equipment (2 Kings 7:15, RSV); an olive tree throws (discards, rejects) its blossoms (Job 15:33); the Israelites did not throw (forsake, reject) their idols (Eze. 20:8; cf. Isa. 2:20); the slain of the nations will be thrown (abandoned), that is, they will not be buried (Isa. 34:3; cf. Jer. 36:30); the psalmist prays, “Do not cast me [reject, forsake] me ... when I am old” (Ps. 71:9, NIV). These examples show that the verb “to cast” can be a synonym of such verbs as “to reject, forsake, abandon.”

So, in Daniel 8:11, we have the stunning and superior insight that the place of His sanctuary was to be cast/thrown *down*, in the sense of being rejected, abandoned, and forsaken for destruction. This is precisely the meaning given by Jesus in Luke 13:35 — “Behold, your house **is left to you desolate.**” NASB. The word “desolate” has been added; It does not appear in the earliest manuscripts.⁴

⁴ If your Bible is the same as mine, you have a brief marginal footnote saying: “Later mss. add, *desolate.*”

A VARIANT READING OF DANIEL 8:13

For additional insight into the question asked by the angel, and to establish that the same basic conclusions on verse 13 may be reached from another direction, we consider the spirit of the N.E.B. translation:

13 *How long is the vision and the interrupted continual,
The rebellion of desolation and the giving over of the sanctuary
and host to be trampled under foot? **

The word “concerning” in the R.S.V. has been supplied; It goes beyond that which is actually given in the Hebrew text. The translators rightly understood however that the Hebrew calls for something to follow the word “vision” — to give the thought of inclusion for the next word or group of words. The Hebrew is perhaps better satisfied if the word *and* is inserted. This choice is preferred on the basis of symmetry and harmony of the context. For example: The resulting translation then yields a Hebrew parallelism:

The phrase: *the vision and the interrupted continual* is equivalent to: *The rebellion of desolation and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot.*

The vision, we have seen, describes a rebellion that brings desolation. Also, the time the sacrifices are suspended parallels the time when the sanctuary and host would be trampled. The angel’s question therefore spans all that was seen in vision and all that was to follow. The angel (in agreement with the RSV rendering) is simply asking: ‘How long is the vision about the rebellion with the trampling that follows?’ — And it fits the context perfectly: The trampling that was to continue under the omitted fourth world kingdom was certainly in the angel’s mind.

* The N.E.B. translation of verse 13: *‘For how long will the period of this vision last? How long will the regular offering be suppressed, how long will impiety cause desolation, and both the Holy Place and the fairest of all lands be given over to be trodden down?’*⁵

In order to understand the answer given to the question, we should first understand the question itself. ... The Hebrew text does not read “the vision *of/concerning* the continual *burnt offering.*” Rather, what we find is an interrogative particle followed by several nouns referring back to what Daniel saw before: How long the vision (*chazon*) the continual (*tamid*) the rebellion (*peshac*). — A. M. Rodriguez, Adventist Review, Insert p. 7, September 1994.

There is a certain strangeness attached to how the angel answered this question. See verse 14. However, all its seeming peculiarities will be justified in our comments on v. 26.

⁵ This would be a good translation if it weren’t for the colorful embellishments.

14 And he said to me, "Till evening — morning two thousand and three hundred; then shall holiness be vindicated."

That is the literal translation. Green's Interlinear Bible got it right because there is no article before "holiness." Desmond Ford also stressed the absence of the article in his commentary on Daniel.

Presumably, the reply answers the angel's question of 8:13. This requires that the 2300 days are symbolic of a much longer period of time. There is only one possible meaning: "Scripture does at times use days for years". In fact, "The following are some of the passages where translators use *years*" because the context demands it, "though the original has *yamin* (days): Ex 13:10, Num 9:22, Josh 13:1, Jud 11:40, Jud 21:19, 1 Sam 1:3, 1 Sam 2:19, (twice)" (Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14, THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT*, p. 202).

We have shown that days can mean years and that the context of 8:13-14 demands it. Notice too that days for years arise at times when God is angered over the sins of His people (Ezk 4:4-6, Num 14:32-35). Again, such is the context (8:12,19,23).⁶

Here is an alternative translation and commentary for Daniel 8:14 but only for those who insist on using the KJV:

14 And he said to me, "For 2,300 days [evenings-mornings]; then the sanctuary shall be purified/cleansed [righteous-ed]." NAB/KJV.

The Hebrew word that is usually translated cleansed or restored in this passage is *nisdaq*. The term or root from which this word was formed is the verb *sadaq*. "It occurs 22 times in the active form (qal), 5 times in the intensive (piel), 12 in the causative (hiphil), once in the reflexive (hithpael), and once in the passive (niphil). This last type is found in Daniel 8:14; hence the form *nisdaq*. This passive form of the root *sadaq* unfortunately is a *hapax legomenon* (a word which occurs only once in the Bible). This raises the question, How shall it be properly translated?" (Frank B. Holbrook, Editor, *Symposium on Daniel*, p. 479). This same source explains just how easily this is done:

"The Qal forms mean 'to be in the right, be right, have a just case, be vindicated, be just, righteous.' The intensive forms of the Piel mean 'to declare someone to be right, to make someone appear righteous, innocent, to desire oneself just.' The causative Hiphil forms mean 'to give or bring justice, to declare righteous, to justify, vindicate.' And finally, the one Hithpael form means, 'to justify oneself'" (ibid), p. 452.

On page 479:

"The causative form (hiphil) of *sadaq* will mean 'cause to be right,' 'cause to be just.' The reflexive form (hithpael) will mean 'make oneself right,' or 'justify oneself.' In the same way *nisdaq* is simply the passive of *sadaq*, and will have the meaning 'be made right,' 'be made just,' or the like." "This", they say, "would be the simplest and most straightforward translation, and is the one followed by most recent Bible translators." "They have followed the immediate, ordinary meaning of the word" (ibid), p. 479.

⁶ Daniel 8:14 is a remarkable verse in that it gives us the time of the end (8:17). The statement, by Jesus, to the effect that no man knows when the world will end — the day or hour — is no contradiction. Rather, it is reliable testimony that Daniel's prophecies are conditional and were not to be taken as exact chronological/ historical data — at least in Christ's day. This prophecy only illustrated the future based on one degree of rebellion. This factor is variable and the apostasy was worse, thus history is far more terrible than Daniel's visions indicate.

Some have in mind that “the basic meaning of *sadaq* is ‘just,’ ‘right,’ or some similar term” (p. 495). This kind of reasoning is somewhat oversimplified and misleading. “All lexicons agree in giving the meaning of the word as ‘to be just,’ ‘to be righteous.’ In 8:14 the word occurs in the Niphal form (the reflexive or passive), and would ordinarily be translated ‘be justified,’ or ‘be made righteous’ ” (*Problems in Bible Translation*, p. 175).

To convey what is happening in the Hebrew construction of the word, Raymond Cottrell renders the word as “*righteous-ed.*” We understand why some scholars prefer this translation. It stresses the uniqueness of the verb form and it agrees with the fact that all the variations of *sadaq* point to a finished act and completeness, never to an unfinished process in action.

The accuracy of these statements will be clear after a review of, say, *Young’s Analytical Concordance*, and a careful reading of every form of the word *sadaq* listed there:

Gen 38:26, 44:16, Ex 23:7, Deu 25:1, 2 Sa 15:4, 1 Ki 8:32, 2 Ch 6:23, Job 4:17, 9:2, 9:15, 9:20, 10:15, 11:2, 13:18, 15:14, 22:3, 25:4, 27:5, 32:2, 33:12, 33:32, 34:5, 35:7, 40:8, Ps 19:9, 51:4, 82:3, 143:2, Prov 17:15, Isa 5:23, 43:9, 43:26, 45:25, 50:8, 53:11, Jer 3:11, Ezk 16:51, 16:52 (twice), Da 12:3.

Notice that every form of the word applies to persons only; never to things. We therefore have a mystery. How can a sanctuary be justified or made righteous? The Interpreter’s Bible and other Bible commentaries are rightfully puzzled over the word meaning here. Many ignore the problem by giving *nisdaq* a meaning based on what they think Daniel 8:14 says. Many Hebrew dictionaries do the same. This is not honest. Words such as “restored” and “cleansed” are interpretive read-ins and do not belong in the text. The facts are clear. “The Hebrew word *sadaq* is used here, for which no variant reading is given in any Hebrew Bible” (*Problems in Bible Translation*, p. 175). The word means “be justified” or “be made righteous.”

OUR RESOLUTION OF THE MYSTERY

Two texts in the OT demonstrate that the people of God were considered as a sanctuary. [Clearly, only this symbolism satisfies the demands of the text]. We now exhibit Biblical precedence for this abstract representation, Ps 78:67,68; 114:1,2:

“He also rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.” (Recall that Ex 15:17 calls Mt Zion the sanctuary). “When Israel went forth from Egypt, The house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion.”

Therefore, if we keep within the full range of meanings for *sadaq*, and if we accept the eschatological nature of 8:13,14, then the only possible meaning is that *sadaq* here means ‘be made righteous’ and the sanctuary of these verses, as in Ps 114:2, must represent the people of God! The change of terminology therefore, from *miqdash* (sanctuary) in 8:11 to *godesh* (sanctuary) in 8:13,14 is significant. And with the stated identification, observe the harmony and smoothness of the contextual flow in verses 10-14 and notice the resulting chiasmic structure:

<i>H</i> ↔ <i>S</i>	8:10	<i>host</i>	↔	<i>stars</i>	<i>trampled</i>
<i>S</i> ↔ <i>H</i>	8:13	<i>sanctuary</i>	↔	<i>host</i>	<i>trampled</i>
<i>H</i> ↔ <i>S</i>	8:24	<i>mighty men</i>	↔	<i>holy people</i>	<i>destroyed</i>

H = *host* = *mighty men*.

S = *stars* = *sanctuary* = *holy people*.

Clearly, Daniel 8:14 is parallel to and coincident with the vindication of the saints in Daniel 7:22,27. We see here that Daniel 7 & 8 unfolds the future from two different perspectives. Daniel 7 describes Gentile believers. Daniel 8 describes the Jews.

The theme of God’s people being purified by judgment is fundamental in Scripture and is the basic idea in eschatology (Isa 3:13—4:6, Jer 30:11, Ezk 6:8-10, 20:33-38, Zeph 3:1-13, Zech 13:8,9, Mal 3:1-6, Mic 7:9-10). Eschatologies which we have classified as variations to plan A are no exception. The one most similar to the scenario presented here is the variation in Daniel 11-12:

The setting is persecution, imposed idolatrous worship, and apostasy. Scripture says, “But the people who know their God will display strength and take action. 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. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many who are not sincere will join with them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time” (11:32-35 cf. 12:10). This purification should remind us of Revelation 7:13-14, 14:1-5, 19:7-8.

THE OUTCOME

“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these (who are found written in the book) to everlasting life, but the others (the vast rebellious host) to disgrace and everlasting contempt. And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, *like the stars* forever and ever” (12:2-3).

The phrase, “everyone who is found written in the book” (12:1) is an interesting parallel. No wonder scholars such as Gaston, Feuillet, Gartner, Lacoque and others would paraphrase “Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” as “then shall the holy community be declared righteous by the judgment of God.”

THE N.T. SANCTUARY

The symbolic usage of a sanctuary to denote the people of God became common-place in the NT and was then applied to the Christian church (1 Cor 3:16,17; 6:19 2 Cor 6:16 Eph 3:19-22). Related imagery also became abundant: In contrast with God's people represented as a temple of the Holy Spirit, the book of Revelation refers to blasphemous Jews as the synagogue of the Unholy Spirit (Rev 2:9). The Revelation then goes on to develop an elaborate contrast between the wicked and the righteous. As we will later prove, God's people/church is identified with the New Jerusalem (Rev 2:9; 21:9,10); the wicked/counterfeit religious system with the ancient city Babylon. Jesus calls the people "Jerusalem" in Luke 13:34 and referred to Himself as the temple in John 2:19-21.

That Jesus understood Daniel and made repeated references to it naturally accounts for the heavy N.T. emphasis. This single explosion in abstract terminology did not develop within a vacuum. Our thesis accounts for it. We now restate this thesis precisely:

Daniel employs two different words that mean sanctuary. Whenever the word *qodesh* for sanctuary is used (8:13,14; 9:26), the text then makes far greater sense if the Jewish people are in view. Thus, according to our hermeneutic, context demands that this purer form of the word sanctuary, as in Ps 114:2, is a symbol of the people of God. Similarly, *miqdash*, the other word that means sanctuary (8:11; 9:17; 11:31), can only refer to the building.

Wm. Shea has objected violently to this thesis. He has remarked that this distinction between *miqdash* and *qodesh* is bad Hebrew because there is no linguistic basis or precedence for such a distinction in the use of these words in the Biblical Hebrew of the OT. I answer as follows:

When the NT refers to a sanctuary, whether a building or a person, it can be understood from context alone. The same is true in Daniel. In each case we can determine from the context alone if the people or literal building is meant. Coincidentally, *qodesh* always refers to people and *miqdash* always refers to the building. It's as simple as that.

The facts are that Shea himself makes a false distinction between the sanctuaries in Daniel. He claims that the sanctuary in 9:26 is the earthly one; in 8:13, the one in heaven (same word). So Shea is really objecting to the harmony of our thesis, a thesis we continue to confirm as we progress in the book.

More On Nisdaq

The OT knows four different forms of the Hebrew root word *sadaq*. *Nisdaq* is the passive form. We have seen that the entire range of meanings of all the forms is rather narrow in scope. In all 40 cases, we have found that the variations only refer to people, never things. Even the 482 nominal forms of the word (which are mostly nouns) never refer to objects but to concepts like, truth, justice, righteousness, and godliness. (See the respected Hebrew dictionaries like, Holladay or Brown, Driver and Briggs). Thus, the claim of the SDA Bible Commentary (that the uniqueness of the form of *sadaq* in Daniel 8:14 may suggest that a specialized meaning of the term is indicated and that in this case the term may refer to objects) is simply wishful thinking for something of almost infinitesimal probability.

So you might be wondering: How are words other than *nisdaq* justified by translators in Daniel 8:14? Well — they start with the statement that “will be justified” or the like “can hardly be said of the sanctuary.” They then try to find a word as close as possible to the original word, but one that applies to a building.

For example, Gerhard Hasel (*The Sanctuary And The Atonement*, p. 204) argues from Hebrew parallelism in the book of Job that ‘just’ is synonymous with ‘clean’ and thus “purified/cleansed” is the correct rendering of ‘*nisdaq*.’ [This is like saying that the word ‘lips’ is synonymous with the word ‘mouth’ because they are paired together by Hebrew parallelism in Job 15:6]. This argument is clearly false! The words ‘just’ and ‘clean’ are only synonymous in a limited range of meaning of the word ‘clean,’ — a range that is restricted to describing persons that are just!

“Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker” (4:17). “What is man, that he should be pure, or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous” (15:14). “How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?” (25:4). “Nevertheless the righteous shall hold to his way, and he who has clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger” (17:9).

Exercise: Find all the words which are paired together by Hebrew parallelism in the Psalms and in Job and note which are counterexamples to the fallacious argument just mentioned in the Sanctuary and Atonement book. Send these to the Biblical Research Institute, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600.

The Interpreter’s Bible expresses their own frustration over Daniel 8:14 in this way: “Be restored: Lit., ‘be justified.’ If we hold to the M.T., the meaning is that so long as the temple continued polluted it lay under condemnation, but when cleansed and restored, would justify itself for use again as a place where sacrifices could be offered. The Hebrew of this passage, however, is hardly tolerable, and the Greek indicates that the translators understood it to mean ‘cleansed.’”

This comment should be followed by an important question: How good of a translation is the Septuagint? That is, was this translation faithful in respecting the exact meaning of the Hebrew or did the translators, at times, interpret rather than translate the original text? The evidence forcefully suggests that the LXX has amended the Hebrew to bolster an understanding of the day: that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy.

For example: The Masoretic Text translates Da 11:30 as “ships of Kittim shall come against him” but the Septuagint (LXX) and the easy reading Today’s English Version renders the same phrase as, “the Romans will come...” (Ford, *Daniel*, p. 269). (This, we will see, has Antiochus in

mind). This strongly suggests that the word “cleansed” in 8:14 is also an interpretive translation. To prove this, I repeat an argument due to Raymond Cottrell:

It should be remembered that the LXX, the Bible of the Jews of the Diaspora, included the Book of Maccabees. And it is evident beyond question that the Book of Maccabees identifies Antiochus Epiphanes as fulfilling Daniel’s prophecy. 1 Maccabees 1 to 4 says much about the Antiochus Epiphanes desecration of the Temple (168-165 BC) and its subsequent ritual purification (i.e. cleansing), rededication, and restoration of its services. Since it is easy to see how the desecration of the sanctuary and its cleansing would be identified to Daniel 8:9-14, it is then just as easy to see why the LXX translators would have interpreted *nisdaq* as ‘cleansed.’ They had no choice. They were the historicists of the day! In other words, since the temple was “cleansed” of its defilement and since this act was thought to be a fulfillment of prophecy, then *nisdaq*, no matter what it really meant, had to be thought of as meaning “cleansed.” Since the translators have specially crafted the LXX elsewhere to make a dramatic event in the life of Antiochus Epiphanes stand out in greater clarity (Da 11:30), then to clear up the most important event (the sanctuary being made righteous), they would have certainly supplied an interpretive translation to Da 8:14 based on what really happened. And the sanctuary was ‘cleansed.’

R. Cottrell summarizes the point: “The KJV translation ‘cleansed’ has no basis, either in the Hebrew word *nisdaq* or in its usage throughout Jewish literature. The word is never used in this sense. The KJV translation ‘cleansed’ reflects the Vulgate *mundabitur* and the LXX *katharisthesetai*, on which it was evidently based. The LXX at this point interpreted rather than translated the Hebrew *nisdaq*.”

15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.”

Perhaps it was the Lord who gave this divine commission to make the prophet understand (Ps 29:3). If so, the command of God must be fulfilled.

17 So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was frightened and fell upon my face. But he said to me, “Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for [or points to] the time of the end.”

The time of the end refers to the final end of world history (Daniel 7). The audition gave us that time: the terminus of the 2300 days. The N.E.B. implies that the vision **points to** or reaches this time; the R.S.V., that the vision was to be understood then. See Daniel 12:4,9.

18 As he was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and set me on my feet. 19 He said, “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.”

Notice that the text draws a distinction between “the time of the end” and “the appointed time of the end.” Similarly, there is a marked contrast between the vision of the evenings-mornings, the audition, to which 8:26 refers, and what Daniel *saw* in the vision.

The heavenly messenger said, “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.” He then explained the vision proper (8:2-12), the climax of which is the terrible work of the little horn. This tells us that the indignation refers to a long period of time and that the latter end of it is a specific point in historical

time: It is the time of the tyrant king. This is in perfect agreement with verse 13. It told us that the entire vision is about rebellion that brings desolation.

The indignation: Whenever the nation of Israel would sin, the covenant curses would be poured out on them. “Those whom God loves, he reproves and chastens” (Rev 3:19). This has been the history of the Jewish nation. But when the Jews rejected Christ, God’s merciful discipline ended. — He gave up on that nation as the special object of His concern. He chose another people.

The time in history when the little horn would destroy the city of Jerusalem and oppose the Prince of princes is the appointed time of the end. It is further explained by the angel in Daniel 9. We will then discover that this was a time especially appointed by God for the establishment of the Messianic kingdom and the consummation of all things. And if the people had only responded favorably to Christ, God’s kingdom would have come!

26 “*And the vision of the evenings-mornings which has been told is true; but keep the vision secret, for it points to days far ahead.*” N.E.B.

This refers to the special revelation of Daniel 8:13-14. An interesting fact with powerful implications is that nothing else in Daniel is given this much secrecy. We may conclude immediately therefore that the nature of the revelation is quite unusual and the information concealed — of extreme importance. Why else would it be singled out to be kept secret? Equal status can only be given to the comparative “seven thunders” of Revelation:

“*Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars. He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke. And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, ‘Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down’*” (Rev 10:1-4).

We have shown here that the most hidden secrets of God are at times revealed exclusively for His prophets. John was told not to write down what he had heard; Daniel was told to keep his secret concealed. And for centuries, the true meaning of Daniel’s revelation was hidden, concealed by the use of rare symbols. The sanctuary standing for people occurs only once in all the OT (Ps 114:2). In addition, there is no day/year principle, nor is there a single precedent in OT prophecy for days to stand for years, but days, we have seen, can mean years. Even the unique Hebrew phrase “evening mornings” suggests the preterist interpretation of 2300 morning and evening sacrifices, i.e., 1150 literal days and that the literal temple was to be restored after this time. Thus, at first glance, Daniel 8:13-14 appears to be a reference about the sanctuary building and its restoration taking place not long after its casting down by the little horn. And it may be translated this way. However, there are many unresolvable problems with this:

First: Such a translation of the Hebrew text (like the NASB rendering) is not the best. It tries to limit ‘the vision question’ of 8:13 exclusively to an interval of desolation. This ignores the fact that a long rebellion precedes the time of desolation and that linguistics demand that the angel’s question of: *How long?* includes this period of rebellion.⁷

⁷ Some limit the question of 8:13 to the period of the vision that was seen. By reading this notion into translations like the RSV, they then argue that the little horn must represent the fourth beast. But the restoration/cleansing/or justification of the people of God is not seen in Da 8. That’s the purpose of the inquiry! Until when...? The vision was purposely left open-ended, uncertain, indefinite.

Second: According to the preterist line of thinking, all rightly compute the restoration of the temple taking place before the end of the period of tribulation. The specific contradiction is this: In the preterist mind, the sanctuary and host are given over to be trampled for 1150 days according to 8:13 but for 1260 days according to 7:25. Some commentators over-simplify the problem by claiming that Daniel only refers to round even numbers, this in spite of the fact that 1290 (12:11) is not very round and that 1335 (12:12) is hardly even! Even so, if Daniel's intent in 8:13-14 was to count the number of sacrifices suspended, why did he not approximate the 1260 by 2500 half-days?

Third: It fails to account for the secretiveness expressed and it ignores the larger contextual meaning of the prophecy: In the light of Daniel's expectation, the question: "How long till the end?" is far more appropriate than simply: "How long will the sacrifices be suspended?" That the vision declared a possible delay to the soon to be established Messianic kingdom certainly outweighs an insignificant detail about the distant future: That the temple would be profaned and the sanctuary services suspended, thus necessitating restoration and ritual purification to be conducted exactly 2300 or 1150 literal days after defilement, all this after the atoning death of the Anointed One (Daniel 9), is hardly a mystery or secret to keep hidden. It is Nonsense!

Fourth: Only our interpretation, the purification of God's people occurring at the terminus of 2300 day/years, fits the secrecy. The end of the world was always expressed by the prophets as being imminent.

The conclusion of all this is that the terminology employed in Daniel 8:13-14 conveys an intent to mask a hidden meaning with the ever popular Antiochus interpretation.

27 And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days; then I rose and went about the king's business; but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

This verse should present great difficulty for most exegetes. The problem is this: Daniel, whom God had given a mastery and skill in all learning, great wisdom, and the special ability to understand the meaning of *all* visions and dreams (1:17), understood the dreams of chapters 2 & 7 yet this vision which is explained so fully presents a mystery to the prophet. He should have understood it! Joseph had the same gift of understanding dreams and visions and look at the complexity of the dreams he could explain: Genesis 40:1—41:49. Is this an embarrassment for Daniel? Joseph didn't even need the aid of an angel interpreter.

One reason Daniel failed to understand the vision is that it seemed to conflict with his earlier revelations of the future. There appears to be an obvious discrepancy concerning the number of world kingdoms that must arise till the end of the age. The prophet was appalled by the vision. It must have been the extreme intensity of the wrath directed against his people — he had no sense of the purpose of that; but he certainly did not understand the relationship between this vision and the dreams of chapters 2 and 7. Recall Daniel 8:15,16. Our expectation that Gabriel must return to the prophet at a later time in order to complete the explanation of the vision is confirmed in the next chapter.

A COMMENTARY ON DANIEL 9

Many years later we find the prophet praying about three things: The hoped for restoration to take place after the 70 years of captivity (9:2,16), the spiritually desolate condition of the people (9:4-16), and the desolate city and sanctuary (9:12,16,17).

Notice especially that the angel, by the command of God, returns and immediately replies to Daniel's prayer interrupting him just after he says: "*O my God, do not delay, because Thy people and Thy city are called by Thy name.*" It is precisely this: Time, the people, and the city, that is the subject the angel addresses as he answers Daniel's prayer and continues the explanation of the vision. The only possible answer to Daniel's prayer must be one of hope for his disobedient people. We find just that—Christ and His infinite sacrifice.

"O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 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" (9:22,23). The heavenly messenger has now returned to complete his explanation of "the vision." Remember that, in Daniel's mind, the conflict and seeming contradiction of Da 8 was that "the appointed time of the end" comes at the end of the Greek kingdom, not the Roman. This key point is now finally clarified within the very first words of the following remarkable verse.

24 Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

The angel here explains that the vision of Daniel 8 concerns a time period of seven seventies and that this time had been decreed upon the Jews and the holy city Jerusalem. *We now ask, how was this represented in the vision so that Gabriel's words can be understood as an explanation?* The answer is obvious. A complete sweep of future history (the four kingdoms of man and the final kingdom of God) was first presented in the dreams of chapters 2 and 7. Then the vision of Daniel 8 narrowed the wide perspective by only considering two kingdoms, specifically, Medo-Persia and Greece. The focus of attention given this time period means that it was "determined" and "decreed" and "cut off" for special consideration. We may conclude immediately therefore that what was seen in the vision spans a period of 70 weeks. It also follows that the vision of Daniel 8 begins with the decree mentioned in 9:25—in harmony with our remarks on Lev 26. The rest of the 24th verse tells us what was to occur in this specifically appointed time. We have already seen that Daniel's people have been represented by the host and stars of heaven and that the place of the sanctuary is the city Jerusalem. This was the high point of the vision of Daniel 8 and is the concern here. Our analysis therefore confirms previous exegesis.

The 70 weeks is a probationary period decreed upon the Jews. Within the stated time limit, and no doubt with the cooperation of God, the Jewish nation was to accomplish an incredible task. In the words: "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy" we have God's eager desire clearly expressed for the consummation of all things within this definite period of time. Unfortunately, the disastrous outcome presented in the verses that follow clearly illustrate that the people were to fail in fulfilling the divine purpose. Evidently, time was not to end when appointed because the necessary response was to be lacking.

25a Know therefore and understand that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, a Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;

25b it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

26a Then after the sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off, but not for Himself,

26b and the people of the ruler who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end (or his end) will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

27a And He will confirm the covenant with many for one week and in the middle of the week He will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering;

27b and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed is poured out on the desolate/r.

Regarding vs. 26b, We ask: Whose end comes with a flood? There are three grammatically admissible possibilities. (We accept all three possibilities as the primary intent of the passage).

First: A flood (literally: “an overflow”) may describe the wrath of divine anger (Nah 1:8; Isa 10:22,23; 28:2,15,17,18; 30:28; 54:8 Ezk 13:11,13; 38:22), so the above text can be taken to mean: the end of the desolater comes with a flood. Thus, the little horn tyrant dies by no human hand (8:25; 11:45).

Second: The Hebrew grammar may point to the flood coming against the sanctuary, but not against the city and sanctuary. Keil struggles with the seemingly arbitrary separation of the city from the sanctuary but the meaning is clear to us. An emphasis *is* being placed directly on the rebellious Jews. And this should be expected. After all, everything pivots around their response. The people of God are identified with the sanctuary. The emphasis on the sanctuary therefore, since *qodesh* represents the people in Daniel 8, merely continues the description of the coming wrath (cf. Luke 21:23). And this representation appropriately fits the context:

A probationary period is decreed for the Jews and the city Jerusalem in 9:24, and there is no hint of repentance by the people. A failure to comply therefore must result in action *against the city and that people*. Action is taken; it is *against the city and the sanctuary*. We therefore have an equation: ‘*The sanctuary = The people*.’ This identification suggested by the context is supported further in that the result forms a nice chiasmic structure:

<i>C & P</i>	<i>Daniel 9:19</i>	<i>Thy city & Thy people</i>
<i>P & C</i>	<i>Daniel 9:24</i>	<i>your people & your city</i>
<i>C & P</i>	<i>Daniel 9:26</i>	<i>the city & the sanctuary</i>

Jesus understood similarly. He referred to this prophecy and paired the people & city together. I quote: “The king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire” (Mt 22:7).

Third: The Hebrew grammar may point to the flood coming against the Anointed One. This also fits the context. See 11:22.

Flood imagery may denote advancing armies (Daniel 11:10,22,26,40 cf. Isa 8:8; Jer 47:2). Since the word *wing* is a reference to armies (Isa 8:8; 18:1; Jer 48:40; 49:22; Hos 8:1; Hab 1:8; Ezk 17:3,7,12,17), the flood of armies/wing imagery most certainly represents the advancing armies of the enemy prince.⁸

A destruction is poured out on the *desolate/r*. We have suggested a double meaning here. The Hebrew word means either “desolater” or “that which makes desolate”. It is also translated as “desolate”⁹ or “desolation” by the KJV, ASV, MLB, NEB and others. So “that which makes desolate,” “the desolate” or “desolation” may refer to the people of Daniel 8. This makes sense. Their rebellion is referred to as the “transgression of desolation” in 8:13.

⁸ Interestingly, Jesus averted the total annihilation spoken of by Daniel by telling His followers when and how to flee the impending destruction. Thus, instead of everyone dying in the siege against Jerusalem, all who heeded the warning were saved. Jesus said He cut short those days of immediate tribulation for the sake of the elect and if He had not interposed, no life would have been saved (See Lk 21:20-22 cf. Mt 24:15-22).

⁹ Context demands that the desolate are the spiritually barren people. For people to be desolate has a wide range of meanings (2 Sa 13:20; Lam 1:13,16; 3:11; Ps 25:16; 40:15; 143:4; Isa 3:26; 49:21; 54:1; 59:10; Jer 2:12; Mich 6:13).

PARALLELISM: A KEY TO INTERPRETATION

Daniel 9:26	~	Daniel 9:27
Then after the sixty two weeks	~	
the Anointed One will be cut off,	~	And He will confirm the covenant
but not for Himself,	~	with many
	~	for one week,
<i>After the sixty two weeks</i>	~	and in the middle of the week,
<i>the Anointed One will be cut off</i>	~	He will put a stop to
	~	sacrifice and grain offering;
and the people of the ruler	~	and on the wing of abominations
who is to come will	~	will come one who
destroy the city and the sanctuary.	~	makes desolate,
And its end will come with a flood ;	~	
even to the end there will be war;	~	even until a complete destruction,
desolations are determined.	~	one that is decreed,
	~	is poured out on the desolate.
	~	

A Perfect Correlation:	~	
After the sixty two weeks	~	And in the middle of the week
The Anointed One will be cut off	~	And He will confirm the covenant
But not for Himself	~	With many
The people of the ruler	~	The wing of abominations
Who is to come will	~	Will come one who
Destroys the city and sanctuary	~	Makes desolate
And its end will come with a flood	~	Poured out on the desolate
Even to the end there will be war	~	Even until a complete destruction
Desolations are determined	~	One that is decreed

“Upon The Wing Of Abominations Shall Come One That Makes Desolate.”

The “one who makes desolate” is poetically pictured as riding swiftly upon that which he commands; perhaps in parody of God in Ps 18:10. Or does he merely come *upon* the wing of abominations, meaning, following after? The above parallelism supports both interpretations! If the word *wing* refers to armies, then, the wing of abominations is a fit expression for the idolatrous forces of the little horn which desecrate the sanctuary, do away with the “continual”, and set up the sacred symbol of their worship in Daniel 11.

“And for the *overspreading of abominations* he shall make it desolate.” This, the KJV rendering of 9:26, suggests that because of the spreading around of abominations, desolations will come, or, in order that abominations may be spread everywhere, he makes desolate. These two ideas are linked together in Daniel grammatically. We have “the transgression that makes desolate” (8:13) and “the abomination that makes desolate” (11:31).¹⁰

¹⁰ For more on double meanings see page 68.

Confirm the covenant is correct for the phrase can only be translated: “to make a covenant firm” or “he shall cause the covenant to prevail.” This cannot be said of the little horn if he was to break a covenant with the Jews in the middle of the week. Hence, it must be the prince of the covenant who confirms the covenant. All nine elements of the parallelism therefore match with remarkable precision. The implications are far reaching: It suggests the usual Messianic interpretation: that the death of the Anointed One confirms the covenant.

Jesus understood that He was the Anointed One. He applied the prophecy to Himself. At the last supper, He said of a cup of wine: “This is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of the many” (Mt 26:28). Mauro makes this comment:

“In these words we find four things which agree with the prophecy: 1st, the One who was to confirm the covenant, Christ; 2nd, “the covenant” itself; 3rd, that which confirmed the covenant, *the blood of Christ*; 4th, those who receive the benefits of the covenant, the “many.” The identification is complete; for the words correspond perfectly with those of the prophecy. “*He shall confirm the covenant with many.*” There could not be a more perfect agreement” (Ford, Daniel, p. 201).

Goodspeed translates Mt 26:28:

“You must all drink from it, for this is my blood which ratifies the agreement, and is to be poured out for many people, for the forgiveness of their sins.”

Ford comments: “This translation rightly represents the concepts implicit in Christ’s words, particularly by its use of ‘ratifies.’ The ‘blood of the covenant’ can only mean the blood which ratifies the covenant” (Ford, *Daniel*, p. 201).

WHAT DOES DANIEL 9:24 POINT TO?

The seventy weeks was the time limit for the eradication of sin, the completion of atonement, the fulfillment of every vision, the establishment of an everlasting right order, and a holy sanctuary — the Messianic community of the redeemed. To “seal up vision and prophet” suggests the end of visions and prophets at the end of the world. See 1 Cor 13:8-12.

Like the term *qodesh* (sanctuary), the phrase: *most holy* almost never refers to persons. The expression usually applies to holy things. The SDA.BC makes this point:

“The most Holy. Heb. *qodesh qodashim*, ‘something most holy,’ or, ‘someone most holy.’ The Hebrew phrase is applied to the altar (Ex. 29:37; 40:10), other vessels and furniture pertaining to the tabernacle (Ex. 30:29), the holy perfume (Ex. 30:36), specified meat offerings (Lev. 2:3,10; 6:17; 10:12), trespass offerings (Lev. 7:1,6), the shewbread (Lev. 24:5-9), devoted things (Lev. 27:28), the holy district (Num. 18:10; Eze. 43:12), and the most holy place of the sanctuary (Ex. 26:33,34). The phrase is nowhere applied to persons, unless, as some suggest, it is so applied in the text under consideration... Jewish expositors and many Christian commentators have held that the Messiah is referred to.”

This is our position. In the New Testament, Christ is called that Holy Thing (Lk 1:35).

The Sequential Unfolding of 9:24

Verse 25 says: “Know therefore and understand.” These words point to the further opening up of the contents of verse 24. This unfolding, displayed below, is linear: (i) —> (i)' i=1,2,...6. It tells us the extent to which the divine purpose would be fulfilled.

24 *“Seventy weeks have been decreed for
your people and your holy city,*

(1)
*to finish
the transgression,*

(2)
to seal sins,

(3)
*to make atonement
for iniquity,*

(4)
*to bring in
everlasting
righteousness,*

(5)
*to seal up
vision and prophet,*

(6)
*and to anoint
the most holy.*

25 *“Know therefore and understand that:*

(1)'
25a *from the issuing of a decree
to restore and rebuild Jerusalem
until the Anointed One, a Prince,
there will be seven weeks and
sixty-two weeks;*

(2)'
25b *it will be built again,
with plaza and moat, even
in times of distress.*

(3)'
26a *Then after the sixty-two
weeks the Anointed One will be
cut off, but not for Himself,*

(4)'
26b *and the people of the ruler
who is to come will destroy the
city and the sanctuary. And its end
(or his end) will come with a flood;
even to the end there will be war;
desolations are determined.*

(5)'
27a *And He will confirm the
covenant with many for one
week and in the middle of the
week He will put a stop to
sacrifice and grain offering;*

(6)'
27b *and on the wing of abomin-
ations will come one who makes
desolate, even until a complete
destruction, one that is decreed
is poured out upon the desolate/ r.*

1. Daniel was praying for the end to the desolations of Jerusalem (9:2,16-20). He was confessing his sins and the sins of his people. And it was very clear to Daniel that the great sins of the people led to the destruction of the city. The destruction of the city was very much an emblem of their rebellion (9:11-12) and the desolations ever before him were a constant reminder of their transgression. Desolation and transgression, as Daniel understood them, are linked together by the covenant. Thus God's promise to end the desolation and His command to end the transgression are one. This repeats the first step of the sequence. There was to be a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem if the people were to cooperate by repentance.

3. An atonement is to be made for iniquity. This parallels the death of the Messiah.

5. To seal up vision and prophet is to *authenticate* the message of all the prophets. See Jn 3:33, 6:27; 1 Cor 9:2. "This common metaphor is derived from the ancient custom of attaching a seal to a document to attest to its genuineness (1 Ki 21:8, Jer 32:10-11)." But instead of the complete fulfillment of all prophecy and vision, the most the Messiah would be able to do is to confirm and ratify His covenant with many. The link between (5) and (5)' is the word pair, to seal/ to confirm.¹¹

2. In (5), *to seal* runs parallel with *confirm*. Here the key words run opposite: Sin is to be bound, shut up, sealed,¹² but the building of the city prevails, "even in times of distress."

4. At the terminus of the seventy weeks, the people and the Prince of heaven *were* to bring in everlasting peace and righteousness. But the failure of Israel was to cancel the promise and bring disaster: The spiritual weakness of God's people gives way to the forces of the prince of unrighteousness. He brings a great tribulation such as never was and desolations continue "even until the consummation" (KJV cf. Mt 24:21, Lk 21:20-24). The key word is "everlasting".

6. The entire nation was to anoint Jesus and consider Him special by their faith in Him as the Messiah. And it was God's desire to anoint the entire nation (Joel 2:28,29 cf. 1 Jn 2:20,27; 2 Cor 1:21,22). The Holy Spirit was to be *poured out* like a flood (cf. Acts 2,17,18, 2:33, 10:45, Ro 5:5, Tit 3:5,6). The divine purpose would still be fulfilled — but not in the way it was originally intended. The irony is that all would be anointed: Anointed by a flood of destruction. God's wrath (and not His Spirit) was poured out.

¹¹ *Confirm the covenant* is correct. Young says: "The writer does not mean to say that he will make a covenant. The ordinary idiom to express such a thought is 'to cut a covenant' and this idiom is not used here. Now, if the writer had wished to state that a covenant would be made, why did he not employ the ordinary Hebrew idiom for expressing such a thought? Why did he use this strange phrase 'cause to prevail' which appears in only one other passage of the OT, Ps 12:4?" (Ford, *Daniel*, p. 234).

¹² Christ condemned sin in the flesh (Ro 8:3) and executed it on the cross. It still awaits burial. Sin has lost its power, but even in its death it defiles when touched! It is not yet sealed up for all time beyond our reach. The entombment of sin, like the atonement for sin, was to be finished within the seventy weeks.

A BRIEF SUMMARY

The answer to the question of 8:13 might suggest to some that the continual sacrifices would be restored at the conclusion of the 2300 prophetic days. The angel Gabriel clarifies the answer as he remarks on each component of that question:

“How much of the vision was seen?” — “70 weeks” 9:24.

“How long is the continual interrupted?” — No longer applies. “In the middle of the week He (The Anointed One) will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.” 9:27a.

History and Scripture (Heb 10:3-10) identify Jesus as the Anointed One who put a stop to the sacrifice and grain offering, “the bloody and unbloody sacrifice, the two chief parts of the service of sacrifice, the whole system of worship by sacrifice” (Keil, pp. 368). The little horn only removed the “continual” (8:11,12,13, 11:31, 12:11): the outward expression; Not the substance.

PARALLELS BETWEEN THE MESSIAH AND HIS PEOPLE

(1) The one like a son of man in Daniel 7:13,14 receives his kingdom at the end of time. In the angelic explanation, the saints are said to take possession of the kingdom (Daniel 7:22,27). The parallel is so pronounced that it suggests to many critical scholars that the heavenly being is simply a representation of the saints. They endorse our position. Jesus identified Himself as this son of man (Mt 26:64 cf. Lk 19:11,12).

(2) The promise of a king given authority over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron is a Messianic prophecy but it will be fulfilled by those who overcome trials on earth (Ps 2:7-9 cf. Rev 2:25-27, 3:21, 20:4).

(3) The Messianic work described in Daniel 9:24 is stated as if to be fulfilled by the people. Actually, Christ with the cooperation of His people was to accomplish this within the stated time limit.

(4) The Hebrew grammar surrounding the term “its end” in Daniel 9:26 is ambiguous. The term may be applied so that the flood of armies comes against the Messiah (thus fulfilling Daniel 11:22) or against the sanctuary, which stands for the people.

(5) Christ is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, yet the expression: “My servant” also represents His people (Isa 49:3, 42:19). Study Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:5-7, 52:13-15.

(6) The parallelism between the Messiah and His people appears to have been obvious to NT writers: Matthew states that the return of the Christ child from Egypt was a fulfillment of prophecy and proves it by quoting, without explanation, a comment made by Hosea that refers exclusively to the exodus experience (Mt 2:15 cf. Hos 11:1).

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Christ's teaching on the abomination of desolation comes from the book of Daniel. The accounts as recorded by Matthew and Mark are practically identical (Mt 24:15-22 cf. Mk 13:14-20) yet they seem to differ sharply from Luke's version, which we have already studied (Lk 21:20-24, quoted below). We now compare and contrast these two radically different descriptions. We conclude that the two accounts present alternate yet parallel scenarios.¹³

“But *when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies*, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. *Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains*, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. *Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people*, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*” (Luke 21:20-24).

“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*; let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But *woe to those who are with babes in those days!* But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; for **then** *there will be a great tribulation*, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be *cut short*.” (Mt 24:15-22).

Jesus said that the abomination of desolation would stand in the holy place. This unquestionably refers to the man of lawlessness who was to take his seat in the temple and proclaim himself to be God (2 Thess 2:3,4 cf. Daniel 11:36,37). Jesus is here updating Daniel's scenario given in Daniel 11-12. Instead of an idol abomination being set up in the holy place by the armies of a tyrant prince, the enemy prince himself becomes the representation of God. This event was an alternate sign to flee to the mountains. Instead of time continuing for long ages, the period of tribulation is cut short. In Daniel 11, the final tribulation is limited to the devastation caused by the tyrant prince (11:40-45) and history ends before the global dominion of the Roman kingdom even begins. Clearly this was to have a first century fulfillment.

It appears that Jesus mingled two possible scenarios for the end of the world. Luke's account follows the way history actually developed. Jerusalem was destroyed. Time will continue until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And the accounts of Matthew and Mark place an emphasis in another direction — a possible 1st century end of the world. So, in either case, “the holy place” was to be defiled, either by its destruction, as in Ps 74:7, or by its profanation (Daniel 11:31).

¹³ The SDA.BC (Vol. 4, p. 874) confirms our thesis with these astonishingly perceptive words: “In view of the fact that Dan. 9:27 is part of the angel's explanation of Dan. 8:11-13, the natural conclusion is that Dan. 8:11-13 is a blended prophecy (similar to that of Matt. 24; see DA 628) that applies both to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans and to [the parallel crisis in Dan 11].” Another Adventist commentary says: “The Greek phrasing of Mt 24:15 does not derive from 8:13 or 9:27. It more closely resembles that of Dan 11:31 [‘Theodotion’]. It is identical with Dan 12:11.” [Symposium On Daniel, p. 442].

Some hold that these scenarios are indeed parallel because they both refer to the same event. But this is clearly false. Each account would have been understood differently. Clearly, if anyone depended exclusively on Matthew's or Mark's version of the end for the signal to flee Jerusalem, they would have died in the siege against the city while waiting for the desolater to enter the temple, proclaim himself to be God etc. We now study Daniel's shorter scenario from which those versions of the end are based.

A COMMENTARY ON DANIEL 11-12

A COMPARISON WITH DANIEL 8-9

Overall, Daniel 11-12 is a milder version of what happens during the appointed time of the end. Instead of the temple being destroyed in Daniel 8-9, it is only profaned in 11-12 by the setting up of an idol in the holy place (11:31; 12:11). The "abomination of desolation" is certainly a reference to the abomination of idols since the Hebrew word for abomination has this specialized meaning (2 Ch 15:18 1 Ki 11:5,7 2 Ki 23:13,24 Isa 66:3 Jer 7:30; 32:34 Ezk 20:7,8,30 Da 11:31; 12:11 Ho 9:10 Zec 9:7).

Instead of destroying the Holy Land in 8:11 cf. Lk 21:23, the little horn only parcels out the Holy Land for sale (11:39). Instead of destroying the city in the scenario of 8-9, he only moves against it in 11:39. Earlier, he had been seen growing exceedingly great toward the south and toward the east (8:9). This too has been greatly softened (11:29,30).

Most importantly, the people are illustrated to be more faithful in chapters 11-12 (11:32,33,35; 12:2,3,10) so that the Messianic kingdom and the resurrection of the righteous actually occurs with the advent of the Anointed One. In contrast, the outcome of the vision in chapters 8-9 is mysteriously silent and only the failure of the people to respond to the divine calling of 9:24 and of their rebellion is mentioned (8:12,23; 9:24-27). So instead of death and complete destruction coming as a flood in chapters 8-9, chapter 11 portrays an effort by the little horn to seduce the people by flatteries (11:30,32), where those who acknowledge him are made rulers over the Jewish people (11:39). In this version of the end, the regular sacrifices are abolished for the sole purpose of setting up and substituting in its place, the idol abomination. This is clear from 11:31 cf. 12:11. Because of the unanimous apostasy in Daniel 8-9, there was no need to impose idolatrous worship by an enemy prince.

The possibility that time could be shortened and that this was God's intent, was well expressed by the seemingly abbreviated vision of Da 8. And a closer look at the word translated "decreed" in Daniel 9:24 supports this interpretation, although not easily. The word occurs just this once in the Hebrew Bible. To ascertain its meaning, we are left to depend on post-Biblical Hebrew and early translations. If we do this, we find a perfect endorsement of our thesis. The common meanings are: "to determine," "to decree," "to cut," "to cut off." And in the range of early translations, LXX has *kerino*, "to decide," "to judge," etc. Theodotion's version has *suntemno*, "to shorten," "to abbreviate," etc. and this same meaning is reflected in the Vulgate reading *abbreviare*. (Taken from the SDA.BC on Daniel 9:24).

We conclude that the vision of Daniel 8 adds major detail to the longer scenario and, at the same time, introduces, by subtle hints, the shorter variation: Daniel 11-12. While Jesus is recorded as giving both possibilities, the N.T. writers seem to have accepted only one: "He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28 KJV).

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE AND THEMATIC HEART OF DANIEL 11

The 11th chapter of Daniel records a revelation commonly thought to be shrouded in impenetrable mystery. Many wonder at, and even doubt, Daniel's own claim that "he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision" (10:1). True, this text does not imply that Daniel understood all the details of the vision but it does demand that he did grasp the essence of the message.

Unfortunately, the meaning of the whole vision, as Daniel saw it, is often lost sight of and obscured when we focus on the mass of in-depth details expressed in each verse. We must step back and look for the larger picture, just like we do when putting together a jig-saw puzzle. If we do this, it takes only a little analysis to recognize the over-all structure of the chapter.

Daniel 11 notes the rise and fall of many kings that control the position of dominance. Witness this in verse 2,3,4,5,7,13,18,19,20,21. This rapid development seems to stop with the vile king introduced in verse 21. At this point something quite different happens. The events in the prophetic drama of Daniel 11:21-45, taken together, appear to refer to the actions of a single individual that continues in the narrative, without successor, to the end of time. This literary fact must be important and corresponds to another observation: This "power" parallels the little horn of Daniel 8.

Before we exhibit this parallel, let us recall that the little horn is referred to as a single entity. In the angelic explanation of Daniel 8, this "power" is called "he" or "his" thirteen times. In 9:26,27, he is called the "prince" who is to come and the "one" who makes desolate. In addition, this little horn is naturally represented as a single individual because he has human characteristics. He is shrewd and deceitful, insolent and skilled in intrigue. We should not be surprised therefore that Daniel 11 retains this same "man for little horn power" representation. We now outline the entire career and life story of this tyrant prince.

THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL 8

THE “LAST” KING OF THE NORTH

9:26 The prince who is to come

9:27 The one who makes desolate

8:23 *A king will arise, insolent.*

11:21 *And in his place a despicable person will arise.*

8:23 *Skilled in intrigue.*

11:21 *He will seize the kingdom by intrigue.*

8:25 *And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence.*

11:23 *After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception.*

11:24 *He will devise his schemes.*

11:25 *Schemes will be devised.*

11:27 *He will speak lies.*

11:32 *By smooth words he will...*

8:25 *He will destroy many while they are at ease.*

11:21 *He will come in at a time of tranquility.*

11:24 *In a time of tranquility he will...*

8:25 *He will even oppose the Prince of Princes.*

11:21 *The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the Prince of the covenant.*

8:11 *It removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down.*

11:31 *And forces from him will desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice.*

9:26 *The people of the prince will destroy.*

11:31 *And forces from him will desecrate.*

8:10 *The host and stars fall to the earth.*

11:33 *They will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder.*

8:11 *It even magnified itself equal with the Commander of the host.*

11:36 *He will exalt and magnify himself above every god.*

8:12 *It will perform its will and prosper.*

11:36 *Then the king will do as he pleases...and he will prosper.*

9:27 *one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the desolate.*

11:36 *He will prosper until the indignation is finished,
for that which is decreed will be done.*

8:24 *And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power.*

11:39 *And he will take action against the strongest of fortresses
with the help of a foreign god.*

9:26 *Even to the end there will be war; even until a complete
destruction.*

11: *The last great war at the end-time: 11:40-45.*

8:24 *And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree.*

11:44 *He will go forth with great wrath to destroy
and annihilate many.*

8:25 *He will be broken without human agency.*

11:45 *Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.*

Ramifications

The prophetic events in this scenario do not reach beyond the divided Grecian empire. We argue as follows: Daniel 11:4 refers to the kingdom of Greece being broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, i.e., north, west, east, and south. Clearly, these are the four fragment kingdoms of Greece mentioned in Daniel 8:22. Chapter 11 then continues the explanation and explicitly refers to the northern and southern kings in verses 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 25, 29, 40, and verse 40 refers to the end time. At that time the enemy prince, who is so clearly identified as the king of the north, brings great devastation to neighboring kingdoms. Since the prophecy appears as a continuous whole without any “gaps,” and since grammar demands that the vile prince is a single individual, then our conclusion, as stated above, follows immediately from the rationale of our hermeneutic.

All major schools of prophecy agree in their interpretation of the first 13 verses of Daniel 11. But starting with verse 14 great confusion results. We therefore examine the rest of this chapter from our perspective, labeled, *Contextual Realism*.

15 Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege mound, 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. 16 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. 17 And he will set his face to come with the power of his whole 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.

The identity of the king in verse 16: “He who comes against him” is the king of the north, the same “he” who came against the king of the south in verse 15. See the N.I.V. Verse 16 simply elaborates on the verse preceding it. After this king of the north stumbles and falls, to be found no more, a successor takes his place. He is shattered (11:20). The next king in that line (11:21) has no successor for he is the end-time enemy. He continues until the end of the chapter and is identified as the king of the north in verse 40, in perfect agreement with our interpretation of verse 16. We now return to the current king of the north.

18 Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. 19 So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.

A = Confrontation between the king and commander at the coastlands.

B = The king turns his face toward the fortresses of his own land.

C = He was to stumble and fall and be found no more.

The text implies a chronological sequence $A < B < C$.

20 Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though neither in anger nor in battle.

The Hebrew expression, “a few days” designates a very short time (Gen 27:44, 29:20). After this king is quickly taken out of the way, his successor in the next verse becomes the new king of the very same kingdom: the kingdom of the North!

21 And in his place **a despicable person will arise**, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility **and seize the kingdom by intrigue**.

This king is the little horn of Da 8. Note the parallel to 8:23: **A king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue**. And notice the small beginnings of the little horn (8:9 NIV). This despicable person, not in line to be king, comes to power from obscurity.

22 And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant.

This verse presents a picture of a powerful army being overwhelmed and defeated by the superior forces of the despicable king of verse 21. This does not happen as soon as he comes to power, as is evident upon reading vss. 21,23-25, but it corresponds perfectly with what he does later in the 40th verse. Verse 22 is simply a parenthetical remark which tells us that the individual in verse 21 is the one that “will destroy to an extraordinary degree” (8:24) in a great flood of destruction and that he is the one who “will even oppose the Prince of princes” (8:25). Evidently the great Messianic Prince was to be shattered by a flood (9:26). The despicable king of the preceding verse is therefore specifically identified as the terrible little horn of the vision of Daniel 8. Note: this only confirms our suspicion, if not exegesis, that “he” (the great antichrist) has been formally and appropriately introduced.

23 And 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. 24 In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time. 25 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, for schemes will be devised against him.

Recall Daniel 8:9 where the little horn starts out small then grows exceedingly great toward several directions, and that the southern direction is mentioned first. Now consider the parallel of this in 11:21-25 (skip 22). These verses describe more fully the beginnings of this horn; how he becomes king without lawful right to the throne; how he gains power through alliances and deception; how he takes advantage of the fact that it is a time of tranquility; how his small force of people become a

large army, how he grows in strength and courage until he is ready to fight the king of the south. And notice how verse 25 is in perfect character with the little horn: His boldness and ambition leads him to stir up all his strength and courage against a more powerful opponent. The little horn has a “large army;” the king of the south has “an extremely large and mighty army.” But through the cunning and shrewdness of the little horn, the king of the South is defeated because of schemes devised against him. The following two verses elaborate on this trickery.

26 And those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. 27 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, for the end is still to come at the appointed time.

28 Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he shall work his will and 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 be disheartened, and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

Verse 28 brings our attention to the glorious victory of the little horn just accomplished by his first attack on the king of the south. This statement of fact is repeated for emphasis: “He will return to his land with much plunder” and “he shall work his will and return to his own land.” We are also told that his heart becomes set against the holy covenant.

The little horn’s second strike against the south is unlike the first. It proves unsuccessful. A fleet of ships from Kittim come against him. It is then clearly stated that because of this defeat and unexpected intervention by a power he could not overthrow, the tyrant prince becomes infuriated, retreats and vents his anger and rage against that which his heart opposed — the holy covenant.

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 display strength 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, in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.

36 Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. 37 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 magnify himself above them all. 38 But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures. 39 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 he will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

In Daniel 8, the angel Gabriel mentions that the little horn “will destroy to an extraordinary degree” (8:24). In Daniel 9, he tells us what follows the destruction of Jerusalem: “Even to the end (of the world), there will be war; desolations are determined” (9:26). The next verse repeated this by Hebrew parallelism: “there will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction” (9:27). Since Daniel 8 and 9 focus on the seventy weeks, this great war was only alluded to. The angel now elaborates.

The Great War

40 And at the end of time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them, and pass through. 41 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. 42 Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. 43 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. 44 But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. 45 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.

The time of the end (verse 40) is said to come at the appointed time (8:19; 11:27,35). The appointed time refers to the terminus of the seventy weeks (9:24). Since the seventy weeks applies to the Jews, anything after this time should refer to the Gentiles. We see this here! The Jewish emphasis shifts to a more global view in verse 40. The tribulation now falls upon the world.

12:1 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.

“Now,” “at that time;” until “that time;” and “at that time;” is when “he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain.” (History’s last event)! The great time of distress which continues until “that time” begins with the persecution in verse 33 and quickly escalates into the great war (verses 40-45). Final events were to develop rapidly. Jesus said, “When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place,” (verse 31) then flee to the mountains “for **then** there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall” (Mt 24:15,21). So our exegesis is confirmed by paraphrase!

Jesus: There will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.

Daniel: And there will be a time of distress, such as never occurred since there was a nation, until ‘that time.’

The identity of Michael is not explicitly given. He is only said to be “one of the chief princes” (10:13), one who did not dare pronounce against Satan a railing accusation (Jude 9). True, both Christ and Michael have said to Satan, “the Lord rebuke you” (Zech 3:2, Jude 9) and Christ and the archangel are rivals to Satan (Rev 12:7) but this does not prove that Michael is Christ nor does such an equivalence follow from 1 Thess 4:16. It may be suggested. The standing up of Michael seems to be the act of God Himself. Scripture says: “The Lord arises to contend, and stands to judge the people” (Isa 3:13). “Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment to save all the humble of the earth” (Ps 76:8,9). All the humble, “everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”

2 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. 3. And those who have insight will shine brightly like brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.

Notice here that both the righteous and the wicked were to come up in one resurrection. Such a scenario was to occur at the judgment on “the last day” (John 5:25-29, 6:39,40,44,54, 11:24, cf. 12:48; Acts 17:31 cf. 24:15), but this detail has been changed because of the introduction of the millennial reign in heaven. There are now two resurrections separated by a thousand years (Rev 20:5,6).

5 Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long will it be until the end of these wonders?” 7 And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, 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 shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

What are the wonders? Daniel was impressed with the wonders of the great war (10:1 NIV). These wonders last for 3 & 1/2 periods of time (verse 7). “And as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events,” including the greater wonders of verses 1-3, “will be completed.” This period of tribulation is the most significant literary connection between Daniel 11 and the fourth beast. The trampling by the fourth beast and the 3 & 1/2 year tribulation of Daniel 7 are here compacted and made to run together — to be fulfilled by the vile prince. Still, the dominion of the wicked power lasts right up until the judgment and, in both scenarios, the saints are vindicated by an examination of the books of heaven. This expresses the thought that Daniel 11 is an abbreviated version of the longer scenario of Daniel 2 and 7.

8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, My lord, what will be the outcome of these events? 9 And he said, Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 Many will be purged, purified, and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.

The outcome is what follows the wonders of the great war and the outcome of these events are numerous: We have an investigation of the book of life (v.1); the resurrection (v.2); the deliverance and perfection of the saints (v.3,10); the running to and fro of those who lead the many to righteousness (v.33,3,4); an increase of knowledge (v.4,10); and the unsealing of Daniel’s book (v.4).

11 And from the time that the continual sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days! 12 How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1335 days! 13 But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age.

1290 literal days after the time the daily sacrifices of the temple in Jerusalem were to be suspended were to reach to the end of the wonders. 45 more days were to transpire till the blessed event which is not identified. My guess is that it refers to the blessed hope of the NT — the second coming of Christ.

☼ The conclusion that Daniel contains two different versions of the end appears inescapable. This paradox is the root of the most fundamentally disputed points among students of prophecy, i.e., Does the book of Daniel describe the world as ending during the time of the divided Grecian kingdom (preterist) or at the end of the divided Roman Empire (historicist)? If you are familiar with both of these schools of prophetic interpretation, you might have noticed that the strongest arguments in support of the preterist view depend on chapters 8 & 11, and that the strongest arguments in support of the historicist position rest upon chapters 2 & 7. It is unfortunate that both of these schools ignore the rationale of the other! The rivalry prevents them from seeing the single thesis which unifies the incontrovertible facts and explanations as correctly held by each of the established schools of prophetic interpretation: preterist, historicist, idealist, and futurist.

DANIEL 11 AND OTHER

SCHOOLS OF PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION

We now focus our attention on claims of exact historical fulfillment in Daniel 11. The absurdity of the preterist position on Daniel 7-9 has already been made evident, but we need to critique their view of Daniel 11 for it contains excellent evidence for Antiochus Epiphanes as the intended fulfillment. Secondly, we critique the most popular historicist application of the very same verses. It demonstrates the weakness of the historicist position and illustrates the bias of their method. First the preterist view. Consider the following details:

20 Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though neither in anger nor in battle.

It is understood that Seleucus Philopator must be referred to here. One problem then, as C. M. Maxwell points out, is that this king was to be “broken, neither in anger or in battle” and that according to the best available evidence, Seleucus Philopator was murdered. And Keil notes that the Hebrew expression “a few days,” (as in Gen 27:44, 29:20), designates a very short time and that this does not harmonize with the fact of his twelve years’ reign.

21 And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22 And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant.

All agree that Antiochus did not seize the kingdom by flatteries or intrigue and that his time was not a notable period of tranquility.

The most common identification of the prince of the covenant is as Keil writes: “the Jewish high priest, Onias III who at the commencement of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes was driven from his office by his brother, and afterwards, at the instigation of Menelaus, was murdered by the Syrian governor Andronicus at Daphne near Antioch, (2 Macc. 4:1 ff., 33ff.)”

Keil quickly adds:

“This interpretation is not warranted by the facts of history. This murder does not at all relate to the matter before us, not only because the Jewish high priest at Antioch did not sustain the relation of a “prince of the covenant,” but also because the murder was perpetrated without the previous knowledge of Antiochus, and when the matter was reported to him, the murderer was put to death by his command (2 Macc. 4:36-38).”

25 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, for schemes will be devised against him.

Secular sources agree that, at this time, Egypt had no “extremely large and mighty army.” In reply to this, The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary only states that the estimate of Egyptian forces was somewhat exaggerated.

According to the text, the South was to be the more powerful opponent, yet it would be defeated through the schemes of the enemy-prince. This does not fit Antiochus Epiphanes in any way. There was no trickery employed by him. It was unnecessary! He had the larger army.

28 Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he shall work his will and 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 be disheartened, and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

These verses present a glorious victory for the little horn in his first attack on the king of the south. His second strike against the south proves unsuccessful however, for a fleet of ships from Kittim come against him. It is then clearly stated that because of this defeat and unexpected intervention by a power he could not overthrow, the tyrant prince becomes infuriated, retreats and vents his anger and rage against that which his heart opposed — the holy covenant.

There is some resemblance of history here. There were two campaigns against Egypt by Antiochus. During the second, Antiochus was forced to leave Egypt. Here are the details alleged to be the fulfillment of the prophecy:

“Messengers from the Roman Senate encountered Antiochus as he besieged Alexandria. Popillius Laenas was the head of the Roman embassy. He told Antiochus that the Senate demanded his withdrawal from Egypt. As the Syrian leader vacillated in the giving of his reply, the Roman drew around Antiochus a circle on the sand of the shore with his staff. He demanded an answer before Antiochus moved from the circle. Intimidated, the Syrians withdrew from Egypt” (Desmond Ford, *Daniel*, p. 269).

This presents several problems:

First: No fleet of ships came against Antiochus. The Roman messengers made the voyage on a single vessel.

Second: Because the LXX translates the above passage as: “And the Romans will come..” and that the Dead Sea Scrolls call the Romans Kittim, only tells us that the prophecy was understood as applying to the Romans after the event took place. In actual fact, there is no connection between Rome and Cyprus. This is just another case of the historicist retro-fit (history defines prophecy) methodology.

Third: The sequence of events is ignored. Antiochus defiled the temple on his first return from Egypt, not his second! (1 Macc 1:20-25).

Fourth: The setting up of the abomination of desolation, “as recorded in 1 Maccabees 1:54, taken together with verse 59, tells of an altar built on the altar of burnt-offering, not of any statue such as the Daniel reference would suggest” (Joyce Baldwin, *Daniel*, p. 195).

36 He will exalt and magnify himself above every God, and will speak monstrous things against the God of Gods... 37 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 magnify himself above them all.

The Interpreter's Bible reluctantly comments: "The secular historians, however, do not seem to have been struck by any particular impiety in Antiochus. On the contrary, both Pliny and Polybius remark on the honor he paid the gods, and it is a matter of record that he contributed lavishly to the shrines at Athens and Delos."... "We do not know of any particular words of blasphemy uttered by Antiochus against the Jewish God."

Keil notes on page 464 of his commentary that: "Antiochus, according to Livy, xli. 20, put great honor upon Jupiter by building a splendid temple to Tages, and according to Polybius, xxvi. 10,11, he excelled all kings who preceded him in expensive sacrifices and gifts in honor of the gods."

41 But these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

The Interpreter's Bible frankly admit two problems with this verse. They write: "This is a puzzle. Charles asks why the Edomites and Ammonites, who were enemies of the Jews and who, according to 1 Macc 4:61; 5:1-8, were on the side of Antiochus, should be spoken of as being delivered out of his hand, and why the Moabites should appear here when as a people they had long since disappeared from history."

Historicism

The historicists of today generally hold the position of Reformation Protestantism. Our objection to this school is that they read history into prophecy instead of letting prophecy explain itself. Now, if our objection is valid, such a struggle with Scripture should be easy to detect — especially in Daniel 11. The prophecy is free of symbolism. It is more precise in its meaning and more specific in its details than any other prophecy of the Bible. And since inflexible sentences are hard to shape by wishful thinking, such an attempt would be self-evident. That is how we refute the most popular historicist view of Daniel 11; We simply quote it. That you may more easily grasp all the facts and self-contradictions presented, I should first say a little bit more about the historicist retro-fit (history defines prophecy) methodology as they apply it to this chapter. Not much is known about the rationale of their system you understand, all the defenders of the historicist faith are safely cloistered away at the Biblical Research Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland. And they don't like to answer difficult questions. However, I have been privileged to have a few questions answered by Wm. Shea, now the associate director of the Institute. In a long exchange of letters, these facts became clear:

Historicism rejects the grammatico-historical method of exegesis as a valid basis to interpret the book of Daniel. Shea's objection was that the grammatico-historical method is used by antichristian rationalists and anti-supernaturalist humanists. (This is like saying that the scientific method is fallacious because atheists use it to "prove" evolution).

As for Daniel 11, all historicists seem to agree on the method of interpretation. Their idea is to consider the prophecy as a time chart; a simple list of historical events. They maintain that successive verses, sentences, phrases etc. are describing events in a chronologically successive order. Exceptions to chronological exactness are tolerated.

The problems are that adjacent verses are interrelated by context and that nothing in history fits that context. More problematic is that the prophecy reads just like a historical documentary about a single individual: After a rapid survey of background material (11:2-20), there next appears, in story-book fashion, a central character, a vile megalomaniac who seizes the throne by flattery and intrigue. He (we have seen) is formally introduced as the little horn of Daniel 8. He has no successor. He is the dreaded end-time enemy — the narrative artfully tells the story. The plot is meaningful and his life story unfolds with drama and suspense. It is the perfect Hollywood script.

This certainly refutes historicist conclusions. Contrary to what historicists teach, Daniel 11 *is not* a simple collection of disjointed events! So now that we understand the historicist hermeneutic, it is time to exhibit how the prevailing historicist view denies with contradictions at every step, the rational communication of thought at every verse of Daniel 11:16-31.

16 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. 17 And he will set his face to come with the power of his whole 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. 18 Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. 19 So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.

Historicists try to insert Rome as the little horn power in verses 16. We ask: If the Roman power is referred to here, who then is the commander in verse 18 that accomplishes the truly remarkable feat of successfully putting a halt to Roman conquests? Before you listen to their answer, please examine the structure of verses 18-19.

- A = Confrontation between the king and commander at the coastlands.
- B = The defeated king moves toward the fortresses of his own land.
- C = He was to stumble and fall and be found no more.

The text implies a chronological sequence $A < B < C$.

This is far removed from the historicists understanding of this verse. This king, they say, is Julius Caesar and the commander that came against him, M. Junius Brutus. The very history they cite refutes their own position. R. Wieland, a historicist, and noted author of the book, *Daniel and our Times*, writes:

“While enjoying the luxury of the court of Egypt, Caesar received word that there was trouble in Asia Minor. He confronted the army of the enemy near Zela, and utterly defeated them. Boasting of his success, he sent the famous message in Latin to the Roman government, ‘Veni, vidi, vici’ (I came, I saw, I conquered).

“In 47 BC Caesar entered Rome in triumph, where he was showered with every kind of reward and honor, including the title of ‘dictator for life.’ Rome had up to this time been a republic. Caesar’s enemies now feared he would become a king or emperor, and change the age-old form of Roman government. Thus it was that in March, 44 BC, when Caesar was least expecting it, He ‘stumbled and fell,’ begin murdered in the senate house by his former friends.”

This has nothing to do with the context yet the works of other historicists such as Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and the Revelation* and the SDA Bible Commentary agree with this interpretation. This is the common thread in historicism. The history they cite usually has nothing to do with the text under consideration.

You might have noticed several additional problems: There is no hint that the phrase “stumble and fall” refers to anything but an accidental or foolish act that leads to death. There is no hint of an assassination or murder! And history is silent regarding Julius Caesar stumbling when struck by the dagger of M. Junius Brutus. Furthermore, Brutus was only an assassin — not a commander.

20 Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though neither in anger nor in battle.

After the king in verse 19 stumbles and falls, to be found no more, this successor takes his place. The historicists identify him as Caesar Augustus, the successor to Julius Caesar. The oppressor is thought to be a taxgatherer. For a historical reference point, they quote Luke 2:1. “It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.” Once again, historicists ignore the specificity of the text — they never discuss (or even remark on) the question as to the identity of the specific taxgatherer that traversed the entire region of the nation Israel.

The king of the North was to die “neither in anger nor in battle” and this is true of Caesar Augustus; he died in bed. We ask, was he also quickly shattered? Consider the facts: He died at the age of 76 after a reign of 59 years. In his long career, he ruled over the Roman Empire as a member of the triumvirate for 17 years, and when the other two members died, he then became the supreme ruler and reigned for another 42 years. This is explained as “seeming but a ‘few days’ to the distant gaze of the prophet.”

21 And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22 And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant.

The historicists argue that this king is Tiberius Caesar because it was during his reign that Jesus Christ was shattered. We hold that this argument is unreliable because it is based on the error that assumes the unconditionality of Daniel's prophecy. It is true however that the Prince of the covenant is Christ. But the best understanding of the prophecy given here, as in Isa 7 & 9, is that the very words present a scenario that did not develop historically — as it well might have. A more direct argument is as follows:

There is nothing in this prophecy that points directly to Tiberius. Consider the description of this king: The word *despicable* means, deserving to be despised; contemptible. To this the SDA Bible Commentary has no references to show this to be historically true of Tiberius in any notable degree. Again, what they do cite refutes their own position:

“Certain historians maintain that there was a deliberate attempt by Suetonius, Seneca, and Tacitus to blacken the character of Tiberius. Doubtless, the picture [once thought correct] was overdrawn. Nevertheless sufficient factual evidence remains to show that Tiberius was an eccentric, misunderstood, and unloved person.”

We add these remarks: First: If Tiberius was an eccentric, misunderstood, and unloved person, this does not prove him to be despicable. Second: This shows that the references cited by Smith and Wieland, to prove that Tiberius was indeed a man of despicable character, to be unreliable, for they only quote Tacitus and Seneca. For example: To support the traditional historicist position Wieland only supplies a single quote: “Seneca says Tiberius was drunk only once in his life — he maintained one continual drunken spell from the time he began to drink until he died.” The SDA Bible Dictionary refutes this directly. It says, under Tiberius Caesar, that “his (Tiberius) morose retirement to the island of Capri gave rise to gossip about his supposed debaucheries, but he was actually austere.”

The word *confer* means, to bestow upon as a gift, favor, honor, etc. So we ask: Was the honor of kingship conferred upon Tiberius Caesar or did he come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue? The facts are, as Smith admits, that Caesar Augustus conferred upon Tiberius the status of successor. The claim that “his accession to the imperial dignity was to a considerable extent due to the maneuverings of his mother” does not satisfy the precise wording of the prophecy. The word *intrigue* means, to accomplish or force by crafty plotting or deceitful stratagems. This is certainly not true of Livia, the wife of Augustus. She simply besought her husband to nominate her son Tiberius as successor. This was simply an appeal of a mother for her son. Furthermore, the larger context of the book says that it is the little horn king that is skilled in intrigue (8:23), not his mother.

23 And 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. 24 In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time. 25 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, for schemes will be devised against him. 26 And those who eat his choice food will destroy him.

Recall our remarks on verses 21-27. This “he” clearly refers to the king in the previous verse, but this in no way fits the description of Tiberius Caesar. The historicists therefore must deny the simple grammar involved and the chronological continuity of the prophetic narrative. Instead, and without any contextual justification, the school of Uriah Smith understands verse 23 as returning to the time when the Jews made a covenant with the Romans in 161 BC. He claims, and others do not question, that “at this time the Romans were a small people, and began to work deceitfully, or with cunning, as the word signifies. But from this time they rose steadily and rapidly to the height of power.” Nothing could be further from the truth. That the Romans were a small people in 161 BC and that they then began to move against other nations is not historically true. The SDA Bible Commentary, on Daniel 8:9, says: “Egypt was long an unofficial protectorate of Rome. Her fate was already in Rome’s hands in 168 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes, who was seeking to make war on the Ptolemies, was ordered out of the country. Egypt, still under the administration of its Ptolemaic rulers, was a pawn of Roman Eastern policy for many years before it became, in 30 BC, a Roman province.” Furthermore, “the Seleucid Empire lost its westernmost lands to Rome as early as 190 BC.” We must add that the text says, “he” will gain power with a small force of people. The Romans did not come to power with a small army.

Let us examine verse 25: The little horn must stir up his strength and courage against the king of the south, no doubt because he is still growing great. The little horn has “a large army;” the king of the South has “an extremely large and mighty army.” The next line of this verse is in perfect character with the little horn: for “he (the king of the South) will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. And those who eat his choice food will destroy him.”

Curiously, Smith, Wieland, and other historicists, place this verse nearly at the height of Roman power. According to their exposition, this verse refers to the struggle between Augustus Caesar and Mark Antony, which culminated in the Battle of Actium, 31 BC. — The problem is that Cleopatra was the ruler of Egypt; there was no king of Egypt at this time. And if we accept Smith’s interpretation of history, that Antony stood at the head of Egyptian affairs, then the interpretation still fails. No schemes were devised against Antony; those who ate his choice food did not destroy him, he took his own life. Incidentally, the death of Cleopatra was also by suicide. Smith recounts that “she had artfully caused herself to be bitten fatally by an asp.”

The conflicts that occurred between Rome and Egypt in no way resemble any part of the prophecy that concerns the little horn and the king of the South. Another example: Daniel stipulates that the little horn would initiate a successful military campaign against the king of the South (8:9 cf. 11:24-28), but note, it is not said that “he” had conquered Egypt. Rather, it is only stated that the little horn returns home with his seized plunder (11:28). That “he” failed to conquer Egypt is especially evident from 11:29. This verse clearly refers to a return to the South and an unsuccessful second attack.

28 Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he shall work his will and 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 be disheartened, and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

These verses present a glorious victory for the little horn in his first attack on the king of the South. His second strike against the South proves unsuccessful however, for a fleet of ships from Kittim come against him. It is then clearly stated that because of this defeat and unexpected intervention by

a power he could not overthrow, the tyrant prince becomes infuriated, retreats and vents his anger and rage against that which his heart opposed — the holy covenant. The historicist denies this! Generally speaking, the bottom line of their explanation is as follows:

Up to this point, the South meant Egypt, but now, the South means East, specifically, Constantinople. And to come into the South refers to the moving of the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople. Previously, the move to the South (Egypt) resulted in conquest and glory. This return to the South (which now means going east to Constantinople) in 330 AD *resulted in* demoralization and ruin because the naval warfare based at Carthage came against the Roman empire (albeit, one hundred years later) (AD 428-477); therefore “he” (pagan Rome) became disheartened (came to an end) and returned (the capital to Rome and established it as the seat of the holy Roman empire) and (thus?) “he” (the papacy) became enraged at the holy covenant (the gospel in all of its purity), took action, and induced others to forsake it. Then forces (from the apostate Christian church at Rome) arose, desecrated the (heavenly) sanctuary fortress and removed (diverted men’s attention away from) the continual (priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary); And they set up the papacy to take His place.

The full explanation, as given by historicists, obscures their interpretation. This or any other summary exposes the hidden problems: Continuity in cause and effect is denied! Preconceived ideas are inserted! Words must be added or edited or redefined! Perhaps the most obvious examples of this are the questions that are never asked: How can the South mean East? How can you return to a place without going there? And our most hated inquiry: Why suspend with contextual unity, grammar, and continuity of thought in the narrative just to make the interpretation fit history?

To “do away with” means to abolish, yet the historicist interprets “abolish” to mean “eclipse.” A power does away with the “daily” or “continual” (11:31, 12:11). The term “continual” is taken to mean the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and the true worship of Christ in the gospel age (Read SDA.BC on Daniel 8:11). This view, with the only correct and sensible understanding of the term “abolish” and “take away,” contradicts scripture. There were men still faithful to God after the removal of the “continual” in verse 31. See verse 32! Furthermore, Christ “ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). It cannot be taken away! Scripture says: Christ “holds His priesthood permanently” (Heb 7:24). Quite simply then, God’s sanctuary in heaven cannot be profaned! The antichrist may utter blasphemies against it, but even this attack is not clearly alluded to in prophecy, not even in Rev 13:6. See the NASB.

To be complete, I will now state some objections to an older, but still contending, detail in the view of historicism as understood by U. Smith and as parroted by a host of others.

31 And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

The thinking is that this refers to the sanctuary of the little horn, the city of Rome. Wieland holds that this refers to the dishonor brought on the city by the barbarian hordes in their sack of Rome. Smith also suggests that it may refer to the moving of the seat of the Roman government from Rome to Constantinople. — This is not the desecration of anything. Furthermore, the transfer of the capital and the sack of Rome has already occurred in the narrative and there is no hint or reason that the prophecy has returned, in reflection, to such an insignificant event. Thus we again have another instance where the simple chronological order of the narrative is destroyed. Ignoring this, Wieland accepts Smith’s first proposal, that “the sanctuary of strength” refers to the city of Rome in its pagan phase. To prove this, he boldly asserts, without justification, that “the sanctuary of

strength” in the Hebrew means, a dedicated place of military might. He places great emphasis on the fact that the Hebrew word employed here for sanctuary is *miqdash* and that it is not used exclusively for God’s sanctuary, it being used once for Moab’s sanctuary (Isa 16:12) and once for Satan’s (Ezk 28:18). We have many objections:

This word for sanctuary is used 67 times for God’s sanctuary, and in the two exceptions mentioned above, the meaning is explicitly stated. — Nothing military is implied there.

Daniel could not have understood or even have imagined that the phrase “sanctuary of strength” means anything other than God’s temple in Jerusalem:

The Hebrew word here translated “strength” most often refers to God as the source of strength (2 Sa 22:33 Neh 8:10 Ps 27:1, 28:8, 37:39, 52:7) and God is found in His sanctuary. Hence the sanctuary of strength is the sanctuary of God.

The sanctuary in 11:31 is profaned. This word is only used to describe the desecration of something holy. A pagan sanctuary is not holy! Hence the sanctuary of 11:31 is not a pagan sanctuary!

Not only does the traditional view deny the Biblical meanings of words but it denies simple grammar: The “him” in 11:31 refers to the person in 11:30 who is, in fact, the little horn. Hence, the little horn defiles God’s sanctuary and not his own.

The claim that the city of Rome was a dedicated place of military strength is only assumed to be true without any supporting evidence or argument. No such description of Rome exists nor is it even remotely possible that the city was ever dedicated as a military fortress.

This sect of historicists understand that the word “continual” refers to paganism. They claim that it was taken away when the papacy was established. However, history testifies to the contrary. Wieland argues that paganism was only “taken away politically and militarily,” whatever that means. Unknowingly, he refutes the standard view mentioned above and casts doubt on his own peculiar position — He quotes historical references that say paganism was exalted and established by the Church, not done away with. We find these remarks on page 163 of his book:

“The more Christianity supplanted the heathen worship, the more did it absorb the elements of paganism.” “The work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.”

In this critique of historicist understanding of Daniel 11:16-31, many problems have been raised at virtually every verse. Unfortunately, all historicists seem to be unaware of these problems. The reason for this is not clear. Perhaps they just don’t talk about them because an open discussion may draw attention to fatal flaws in what have become personal views. Perhaps the answer is political: It would upset the long held traditional position of their church. It is easy to see how anything that challenges preconceived ideas regarding the nature of inspiration may be viewed as an attack. So they may all be too busy “defending the faith” or in launching counterattacks to refute or suppress opposing perspectives. (They certainly suppress the grammatico-historical method). Their unquestioning trust that ‘Daniel’s prophecy is unconditional’ and therefore has an exact historical fulfillment suggests a more probable answer:

It is simply due to their ignorance of what the Bible really says coupled with the false confidence that their greater awareness of history can act as a substitute for sound Biblical exegesis.

Supplement 1.

Historicists generally perceive preterists and futurists to be a great threat. That's absurd. Historicists are their own worst enemies. Historicists often declare a text to mean whatever they want it to mean. There are many examples where the history they cite to explain a passage has nothing to do with the text under consideration. Nothing at all! Sometimes the meaning is directly opposite. A good example of this has recently been brought to my attention by Bill Shea. I'll share it with you.

37 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 magnify himself above them all.

“Among historicist SDA circles, the historical nominee for the figure identified in Daniel 11:36-39 has had two main proposals; either the papacy or revolutionary France. In early days of Adventism the opinion was largely in favor of the papacy. ... “At the present time probably most of the strong historicist interpreters of Daniel 11 in the SDA church suggest that this scene in Daniel 11:36-39 has been fulfilled by the papacy, and vv. 40-45 are as yet unfulfilled. That was essentially the position announced by the committee formed to study this problem in the early 1950s. ... The characterization of this power as a power which is opposed to all previous gods and introduces a new god which has never been worshipped before, etc. etc. indicates the atheistic character of revolutionary France, or at least fits well with it, while this kind of statement does not fit the papacy well at all. On the contrary, that was the genius of the papacy, worshipping the god or gods that had been worshipped before, but bringing their worship under its control and guidance. The papacy did just the opposite of what is stated here about this power.” — Dr. Wm. H. Shea, an unpublished manuscript: his most recent thoughts on Daniel 11 (pp. 47-48).

Isn't it amazing that a good refutation is always grammatical-historical!

Supplement 2.

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

What year was it that the “daily” was taken away? The time must exist: it's specific: it's the basis for a time calculation!

It's unreasonable to believe that there was an event in history at a specific time in history where a power removed the faith of saints and “abolished” at an instant their trust in the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. This fact forcefully refutes the standard Adventist interpretation.

FACTORS WHICH DETERMINED THE OUTCOME OF DANIEL'S TWO SCENARIO SCHEME AND SALVATION HISTORY AS WE KNOW IT

Peter once asked Jesus the question: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus replied: "I do not say to you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Mt 18:21,22). The meaning of this verse has been firmly illustrated in history, in prophecy, and in parable.

Recall God's "everlasting" covenant with the nation Israel. With it, God had given His people an invitation to cooperate with Him in the setting up of a kingdom of righteousness on the earth. Yet there was an obstacle. They continually resisted Heaven's grace. They persistently abused special privileges. They refused time after time to heed the message of the prophets (2 Chr 36:15,16). Their opportunities to return to God in order to fulfill the divine plan were always slighted. So they were punished — carried away to be slaves in Babylon for 70 years. Near the end of that time, the probationary period of 70x7 years was given them (Daniel 9:24). This had no effect. The long and protracted record of backsliding and rebellion did not change its course. We now study the parables of Christ that present the conclusion to this never-ending rebellion.

AT THE CROSSROADS

"A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer; and if it bears fruit next year, fine; but if not, cut it down.'" Luke 13:6-9.

This parable is unique. It is the only one with a missing conclusion. We are not told whether the fig tree, a symbol of the nation Israel, eventually bore fruit or not. The people were yet to decide their future destiny. It was still an open question. Later, Jesus supplied an answer to this question by means of an acted prophecy (Mt 21:18,19 cf. Mk 11:13,14) just as other prophets, who, on occasion, acted out prophecies of doom (Ezk 4, Jer 19).

We quote Matthew's account:

"Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry. And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, 'No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.' And at once the fig tree withered." That this refers to a symbolic act seems evident from the fact that, as Mark recounts, "it was not the season for figs."

We now study three later parables of Christ that elaborate on this one. Each lesson expresses the same thought: The Messianic kingdom could have come in the first century, but the Jewish leaders had rejected it. Isa 5:1-7 provides background for the following:

THE PARABLE OF THE VINE GROWERS:

*“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey. And when **the harvest time approached**, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. And the vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and seize his inheritance.’ And they took him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers? They said to him, “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers, who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.” Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’ “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.” And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them. And when they sought to seize Him, they became afraid of the multitudes, because they held Him to be a prophet”. Mt 21:33-46, Mk 12:1-12, Lk 20:9-18.*

THE LATTER END OF THE INDIGNATION

THE APPOINTED TIME OF THE END

THE PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST:

*And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. Again he sent out other slaves saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited, **“Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.”**’ “ But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire. Then he said to his slaves, **“The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.”** And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” Mt 22:1-14.*

THE PARABLE OF THE DINNER:

*But He said to him, “A certain man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; and at **the dinner hour** he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for **everything is ready now.**’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ And another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ And another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’ And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.’ Lk 14:16-24.*

COMMENTARY

Notice that everything was prepared and ready for the feast. It was the dinner hour, the appointed time to establish the Messianic kingdom. Similarly, in the parable of the vine growers, the time is represented as harvest time. Harvest time represents the end of the age (Mt 13:39). Jesus Christ was to have this feast and harvest in the first century. But the invitation to the kingdom was ignored, the message of all the prophets rejected, and the Son of God murdered. The outcome of these parables was therefore realized: “The king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.”

With the rejection of the Jews, others had been invited to the wedding feast. Unfortunately, the marriage supper of Christ had been delayed. If it was to occur as scheduled, there would be some who accepted the invitation who were not yet fitted with the proper wedding clothes. We must be wearing garments of salvation; We must be covered with robes of righteousness (Isa 61:10, 52:1, Zech 3:4). We are to put on the Lord Jesus and clothe ourselves with Him (Ro 13:14, Gal 3:27). And when the church has made herself ready for the great banquet of Christ, and His soon return to earth, then that great and glorious day will come (Rev 19:7-9).

But notice: that day could have come in the first century. It could have been summoned by God’s specially chosen covenant people. Clearly, the outcome of history, as reflected in Daniel’s prophecy and as explained in Christ’s parables and teachings, is emphasized to be the result of the people’s decision, their blindness, and their impenitence:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!” “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.” Lk 13:34 cf. Mt 23:37,38 Lk 19:42-44.

From these impassioned words, we see that Jesus did not believe in the fatalistic view of prophecy. He did not shed false tears. The bitter agony was that, if the people only responded, He could have averted the catastrophe of the 70 weeks. He could have fitted His people with beautiful wedding clothes and sat down with them at a great feast. No doubt He believed it was possible; He held it out as a real possibility.

So God is not responsible for the imagined failure of any prophecy; His people are. Everything was “determined upon” them (9:24 KJV).

The New Testament expectation that the end of the world was to be in the lifetime of the Apostles

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mt 3:2; 4:17 cf. Mk 1:15.

And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. Mt 4:23.

And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mt 10:7.

And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand... And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. Romans 13:11,12; 16:20.

Even so you too, when you [the disciples] see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Mt 24:33,34 cf. Mk 13:29,30; Lk 21:31,32.

You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ... behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. James 5:8,9.

The end of all things is at hand. 1 Peter 4:7.

But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you shall not finish going through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes. Matthew 10:23.

For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds. Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom. Mt 16:27,28 cf. Mk 8:38, 9:1; Lk 9:26,27.

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know it is the last hour. 1 John 2:18.

But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. ...keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place and to stand before the Son of Man. Lk 21:28,36.

... The appointed time has grown very short. 1 Cor 7:29.

... The ends of the ages have come. 1 Cor 10:11.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son. Heb 1:1,2.

Now ... at the consummation of the ages. Heb 9:26.

... a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Pe 1:5.

For He ... appeared in these last times for the sake of you. 1 Pe 1:20.

For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. Heb 10:37.

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall... 1 Thess 4:15.

... which must shortly take place... for the time is near. Rev 1:1,3.

Hold fast until I come. Rev 2:25.

Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world. Rev 3:10.

I am coming soon. Rev 3:11.

... what must soon take place... I am coming soon... Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ... Behold, I am coming soon ... Surely I am coming soon. Rev 22:6,7,10,12,20.

But they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 1 Pe 4:5.

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God,... Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless. 2 Pe 3:11-14.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil 3:20.

And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. 1 John 2:28.

... so that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus. 1 Thess 3:13.

... awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Tit 2:13.

... as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor 1:7,8.

You turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. 1 Thess 1:9,10.

Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and ... keep the commandment without stain or reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time. 1 Tim 6:12-15.

When Jesus used the expression, “this generation” He always meant the generation of His contemporaries

To what then shall I compare the men of **this generation**, and what are they like? (Luke 7:31).

But to what shall I compare **this generation**? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children (Matthew 11:16).

The men of Nineveh will stand up with **this generation** at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here (Matthew 12:41).

The Queen of the South will rise up with **this generation** at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here (Matthew 12:42).

Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, “Why does **this generation** seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to **this generation**” (Mark 8:12).

As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, “**This generation** is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah” (Luke 11:29).

For just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so will the Son of Man be to **this generation** (Luke 11:30).

The Queen of the South will rise up with the men of **this generation** at the judgment and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here (Luke 11:31).

The men of Nineveh will stand up with **this generation** at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here (Luke 11:32).

so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against **this generation** (Luke 11:50).

from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against **this generation** (Luke 11:51).

Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon **this generation** (Matthew 23:36).

But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by **this generation** (Luke 17:25).

Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all things take place (Luke 21:32).

Truly I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things take place (Matthew 24:34).

IT ALMOST HAPPENED!

I now want to present evidence that suggests that the conditions for Christ's immediate eschatological return, to have occurred shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, must have been nearly perfectly fulfilled by the Apostolic church. The following facts were gleaned from a beautiful book on the life of Christ: *The Desire of Ages*, by E.G. White. — See the chapter on Mt 24.

Turning to the disciples, Christ said, *"Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many."* Christ's words were fulfilled. Between His death and the siege of Jerusalem many false messiahs appeared. Claiming to work miracles, they declared that the time of deliverance of the Jewish nation had come. False prophets did rise, deceiving the people, and leading great numbers into the desert. Magicians and sorcerers, claiming miraculous power, drew the people after them into the mountain solitudes.

"And ye shall bear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, men wrestled for the supremacy. Emperors were murdered, those supposed to be standing next to the throne were slain. There were wars and rumors of wars.

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." All this the Christians suffered. Fathers and mothers betrayed their children. Children betrayed their parents. Friends delivered their friends up to the Sanhedrin. The persecutors wrought out their purpose by killing Stephen, James, and other Christians.

Christ said, *"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."* There was abounding iniquity in that day. Before the fall of Jerusalem, Paul declared that the gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven (Col 1:23). Then the end came.

In that same chapter the notion of multiple fulfillments is expressed and this comment is given: "By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return. We are not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the day of God." See 2 Peter 3:12. "Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world (before this) would have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory."