

“The Beast Empire”

Part 5

This will be a transitional segment as the first few segments were focused on the **“Beast”** found in the book of Revelation. In part 6, I will be doing an exegesis of Daniel 2 but before delving into the text we need to establish a number of factual points concerning Daniel and what is contained in the 12 chapters of this most significant book of the Bible. It will become self-evident shortly as to why I chose to begin this study with the three most important chapters on this world **“Beast Empire”** of Revelation 13, 17, and 18.

The name “Daniel” means “God is my Judge”. Daniel was carried off as a captive of Babylon at an early age. The event occurred during the reign of Jehoiakim. This is confirmed by comparing Daniel 1:1-2 with 2nd Kings 24:10-16. We know from Daniel 1:3 he was of royal lineage. He rose to prominence as a high official in the Babylonian government empire noted in Daniel 2:48. He continued to hold high office until the beginning of the Persian kingdom as Daniel 6:1-3 tells us. Daniel is a contemporary of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Jeremiah was prophesying in Israel when Daniel was taken captive. Ezekiel was taken captive eight years after Daniel was taken to Babylon. Ezekiel continued to prophesy from Babylon. Daniel’s importance has been of great discussion and no less controversial. Daniel’s prophecies give us an overview of God’s Master Plan for Israel beginning from Daniel’s day until the Second Coming of Christ Jesus.

Daniel is one of the fundamental keys to understanding New Testament prophecies (such as Matthew 24; 2nd Thessalonians 2; and Revelation. Christ Jesus referred to Daniel in His great prophecy Matthew 24:15. In referring to Daniel in His Olivet Discourse and thus His Discourse, the Lord Jesus Christ can only be understood in context of the light of Daniel. The last book of the Bible, Revelation would still be a sealed book were it not for Daniel. Daniel is the “Key” that enables us to unlock the mystery of Revelation.

Daniel’s prophecies are the key to understanding human history over the past 2,500 years, and particularly the end times. Daniel 2 teaches us that Rome holds a central role in the events of the end times. The Roman Empire is depicted by the legs of iron, but it continues until the time of the Antichrist in the form of feet and toes part iron and part clay. The Roman Empire united Europe and created the European culture that exists today. I see many articles questioning the continued existence of Europe today the flooding of Muslim refugees into the nations of Europe, the encouragement by Germany’s President Angela Merkel and Pope Francis.

The Antichrist will rise out of Europe. He is the “Prince” of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. –(Daniel 9:26). This “Prince” will be none other than Prince William, Duke of Cambridge. I do not need to add further to this as I have provided the evidence of this in previous articles such as: *“The Season of the Rapture: God’s Three-Fold Witness”*. The reader can obtain a free copy of my E-book by emailing me at: evanteachr@aol.com. At the present time, things look bleak for the European community and culture as this is merely a short-term

view of Europe's destiny. The Bible assures a forthcoming "Superman" coming to the rescue of the European Union! This may very well be associated with the U.K.'s pressure to remain in the European Union, particularly so with the immensely popular Prince William.

God revealed to Daniel the major events of "the times of the Gentiles" –(Luke 21:24), during which Israel will be under the authority of Gentile nations. The times of the Gentiles includes from the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylon until the coming of Christ Jesus to establish His kingdom. This revelation is contained in six prophecies:

- The prophecy of the great image shown to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2
- The prophecy of the four beasts in Daniel 7
- The prophecy of the ram and goat in Daniel 8 (Greece and Persia)
- The prophecy of the 70 Weeks in Daniel 9 (Rome)
- The prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes of Greece and Syria in Daniel 11
- The prophecy of the Antichrist in Daniel 11 and 12.

Daniel's prophecies are for the latter days and the time of the end. This is emphasized by repetition – (Daniel 2:28; 8:17, 19; 10:14; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9.) This means the prophecies are chiefly NOT only for Daniel's time or any other former time, as those arguing the allegorical method of interpretation. The prophecies are for our time and our day!

This also means that the prophecies were not fully understood until the time of the end as Daniel 12:9 states. In the 19th and 20th centuries there was a movement to interpret prophecy literally. It was a revival of the type of interpretation that existed in the early centuries. The first churches were looking for a literal return of Jesus Christ to establish a literal kingdom –(1st Thessalonians 1:9-10). The literal prophecy movement of the 20th century was promoted by the Scofield Reference Bible, the Bible Institute movement, and an abundance of prophecy books. There was an intense study of Bible prophecy, and current events became clear in light of prophecy. These included the ecumenical movement (toward building a one-world "church" as described in Revelation 17); the creation of the United Nations (again toward a one-world government as described in Revelation 13); and the return of Israel to her land and the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948 (as described in Ezekiel 37).

The book of Daniel is attacked by the Liberal sector of the church. Liberal scholars go to great lengths to cast doubt as to the historicity of Daniel. They claim that the book was not written during the Babylonian exile period by the historical prophet Daniel, but that it was written long afterward in the time of the Maccabees by an unknown writer who created a fiction to encourage the Jews during their battle with the Greeks.

This view is a Satanic attack upon the divine inspiration of Scripture. The Bible's prophecies provide irrefutable evidence of its divine origin, so the devil's tactic is to cast doubt on them with the liberal lie that they were written after the events described. I faced this argument in those seminaries where I did my graduate work.

The critical view is not based upon scholarship; it is largely based on unbelief. Modernists do not believe in supernatural prophecy. In their minds it could not have been written beforehand since it is obvious that the book of Daniel describes the details of events that occurred after the Jewish exile. For example, the vision of Daniel 8 claims to have been given during the reign of Belshazzar king of Babylon, and it describes the coming Medo-Persian (ram with two horns, vs. 3-4) and Greek empires (goat, vs. 5-7) in perfect detail, including the death of Alexander the Great and the division of his kingdom into four parts (vs. 8) and the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated Israel (vss. 9-12). Either this vision is of divine origin or it is a lie, because it clearly purports to be divine prophecy. Since the unbelieving critic does not believe in miracles, he rejects supernatural prophecy and invents modernistic theories to account for it.

The whole reasoning method of the Bible-Criticism camp may be reduced to the following: Prophecy is an impossibility, there is no reason such things as foretelling events to come. Therefore a book which contains predictions must have been written after the events which are predicted.

Such is what came out of Europe at the close of the 19th century which became known as the 'School of Higher Criticism' led by a German theologian Julius Wellhausen. Its students came to America at the turn of the 20th century and flooded theological seminaries with men who rejected the "Fundamentals" of the faith. The "Fundamentals" of the Christian faith became the Basic Five:

1. The Deity of Jesus Christ -(John 1:1; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:8-9)
2. The Virgin Birth -(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:27)
3. The Blood Atonement -(Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; 5:9; Ephesians 1:3-12; Hebrews 9:12-14)
4. The Bodily Resurrection -(Luke 24:36-46; 1st Corinthians 15:52)
5. The Inerrancy of Scriptures -(Psalms 12:6-7; Romans 15:4; 2nd Timothy 3:16-17; 2nd Peter 1:20)

These five doctrinal beliefs became known as the 'Biblical Fundamentals' and became the core belief of Bible-Believing "Fundamentalists" in the era of the early 1920's and the years following. They were a reactionary consequence of being confronted by the Liberal schools of Higher Criticism that was infecting and undermining Christianity in America. Today, critics using the term in a derogatory manner do not even know what it is that Bible Fundamentalists actually believe. This adoption of the basic five doctrines came as a movement in the church to resist the heresy of the Liberal schools of Higher Criticism in the church. It metastasized within mainline Protestant denominations whereby today fewer than 15% of Protestant clergy ascribe to these basic doctrines or teachings. Doctrine is a foul word today in most of the universal church including Pope Francis based upon his own statements since the present pope is a product of Jesuit Liberation Theology and those trained by descendants in Liberal theology.

The Biblical Daniel is attested to be genuine by the prophet Ezekiel –(Ezekiel 14:14; 28:3), by the Lord Jesus Christ –(Matthew 24:14-15; Mark 13:14), and by the Apostles –(Hebrews 11:13). Christ Jesus taught that Daniel was a real man who spoke of the future. No other testimony is needed, because the evidence that He rose from the dead and is therefore the Son of God as He claimed is irrefutable, in our estimation.

If Daniel is a “pious fraud”, as it has been claimed by some, then it is a lie, and no lie is of God. The liberals dismiss the truth of the Israelite crossing of the Red Sea, offering childish fables, and yet the reality has been written about nearly twenty years ago by Dr. Lennart Moller in his book *‘The Exodus Case’*. The liberals in theology control the platform of dissemination of Biblical truth but deny, and distort the evidence that validates the Biblical narrative. With the disinformation regularly released by the History Channel, Discovery Channel, National Geographic, A&E, significant Biblical evidence either gets buried or ignored.

The central theme of Daniel is God’s greatness. God is revealed as the One who is in control of history. That said, we can assert that we have no need to worry about global events unfolding in the manner they are occurring. His infinite characteristics are on display: His omniscience, His omnipotence, His foreknowledge, His determinative will.

The testimony of Daniel to God’s greatness is asserted in Daniel 2:20-23. God is eternal –(Daniel 2:20-23). God is the possessor of all wisdom –(Daniel 2:20-22).

- He owns wisdom. All wisdom comes from Him.
- He is omnipotent. He knows the deep and secretive things.
- He is the source of all wisdom –(Daniel 2:21). Man must seek wisdom from God because man is entirely dependent on God. Compare Exodus 31:3; 1st Kings 4:29; Proverbs 2:6-7; Luke 21:15; James 1:5.
- God is the possessor of might –(Daniel 2:20). He is the source of all power. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. His creatures can only partake of the wisdom and power that comes from God. They do not possess these things themselves. Compare Job 12:16-20; Psalm 62:11; 75:5-7; Proverbs 8:15-16; Jeremiah 27:5; Daniel 4:32; Matthew 6:13; John 19:11; Romans 13:1.
- God is in control of human history –(Daniel 2:20-21). Compare Psalm 75:6-7; Isaiah 40:21-25.

God is not an impersonal pantheism or “force”. He is not an absentee God who has set up “natural laws” and let them run their course as in Deism. Deism is also known by the Divine term called the watchmaker theory. He is not the God that Albert Einstein believed in, “a God who reveals in the harmony of all beings, not a God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of men” -*‘Einstein Once Kept Kosher’*, *‘Times of Israel’*, November 25, 2005.

God has an eternal plan that He is working out in human history. Sadly, most Christians cannot see this reality or choose to ignore its existence. He has given angels and men a free will,

and they make choices; but God is above all. He works out all things together toward His ultimate purposes –(Romans 8:28).

God is in control of “natural history” –(Psalm 145:15-16; 147:9). Even the birds are known to Him –(Psalm 50:11; Luke 12:6, 24).

You may not have given thought to the fact Nebuchadnezzar asserted God’s greatness – (Daniel 4:34-37) and yet the following references confirms Nebuchadnezzar’s words:

- God is eternal –(Daniel 4:34)
- God’s dominion is everlasting –(Daniel 4)
- God’s will is done in heaven and on earth and cannot be thwarted –(Daniel 4:35)
- God’s works are truth –(Daniel 4:37)
- There is no darkness or error or lies with God. Everything is truth. His word is utterly dependable. He is the God of truth. –(Isaiah 65:16)
- Truth characterizes God’s kingdom, as Zechariah exhorted Israel after the return from Babylon (Zechariah 8:16). His people are to walk according to the truth and speak the truth. See Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 3:9.
- God’s ways are judgment –(Daniel 4:37). He is a holy judge and will judge all sin, either in the sinner or in Christ. He will humble the proud. He judges righteously and equitably. He is the Author of justice and honesty –(Proverbs 16:11).

Consider the testimony of Darius to God’s greatness –(Daniel 6:25-27). The true God is the God of Daniel, meaning that He is the Jehovah God of the Jewish covenants and Scriptures. He is the living God, in contrast to dead gods. He is steadfast forever, meaning He is eternal and unchanging. God is always “*on the job*”, always dependable, always available to His people. His plans cannot change. He has an eternal kingdom that cannot be destroyed. The God of Daniel is **man’s true ruler**, King of kings and Lord of lords. Nothing can destroy His kingdom; nothing can stop His plans. Satan only has whatever limited and temporary power God has allowed him. God delivers His people. He is compassionate and caring. God intervenes in human affairs with signs and wonders. He is almighty and is above natural laws. He has performed enough signs and wonders to satisfy those who are skeptics. –(John 20:30-31)

Faith does not come through signs themselves, but through signs as recorded in God’s Word. Compare Romans 10:10. Nebuchadnezzar saw one of the greatest miracles in history, which is the preservation of the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace but he didn’t believe then. It was only through Daniel’s testimony and the Word of God Daniel preached that Nebuchadnezzar and Darius believed.

Lastly, we have the testimony of the angels to God’s greatness. Nine **9X** times the angel says the events recorded in Scripture are determined and appointed –(Daniel 8:19; 10:1; 9:24, 26, 27; 11:27, 29, 35, 36). The elect angels understand God’s sovereign power, and they submit to it.

We need to look at the individual Daniel for a bit here since he is the central figure of the book of Daniel that liberals are determined to persuade the world could not have been written with such a level of accurateness. So we begin with some background on this man. Daniel was far from home and on his own, with no parents or teachers to help him. Daniel was honored by the king of Babylon –(Daniel 1:4). He had the chance to live the life of a prince in the most glorious and wealthy kingdom of his day.

Daniel 1:6 tells us that Daniel had close spiritual friends that he chose specifically. He obviously could have many friends but was selective. This fact is one of the practical applications for young people -- choose your friends carefully. Proverbs 13:20 and 2nd Timothy 2:22 speak to the importance of who you become friend with.

Daniel was tempted in Daniel 1:5, God’s Word forbade him to eat certain things like pork –(Leviticus 11:45-47). The Babylonians ate everything; they also dedicated their food to their idols –(Deuteronomy 32:37-38; Psalms 106:28).

Daniel 1:8 tells us that Daniel made choices. It was a choice from the heart with Daniel; and the choice was made from a deep conviction; it was not a shallow thing. It was a choice by faith. This is the only way to make a difficult decision that looks like a loss from a human perspective. Daniel was possibly choosing between a comfortable life in the Babylonian court or a life as a slave. It was a lonely choice. Most Jewish young men who were selected with Daniel did not follow his example. Most of the Jews settled into a comfortable life in Babylon and did not return to Israel even when they had the opportunity under the Persian king Darius. We know that fewer than 50,000 returned to Israel, out of an infinite number. The exact number is unknown for sure since any figures offered only count the men, and not women and children. The point is, they assimilated into the Babylonian culture during their seventy year captivity.

Daniel’s choice might be seen as a “non-essentials” matter. Many would consider the Old Testament dietary law as a small matter and not very important. Examples today are dress, music, television, movie, video games, modes of baptism, holiday observances and church discipline. But Daniel cared about all the Word of God. Daniel’s wisdom –(Daniel 1:8-14) is noted by the fact that he did not demand; he asked in an honorable and polite way. He didn’t want to put the eunuch in danger –(Daniel 1:10). He had compassion to others. He showed wisdom when he proposed a test –(Daniel 1:12-13).

Daniel 1:17-19 reveal Daniel’s blessings came from God. God blessed Daniel by causing Nebuchadnezzar to choose him. It appears that only Daniel and his friends while those who compromised and did not obey God’s Word were not selected. God blessed Daniel with high positions in two kingdoms. God blessed Daniel with many revelations. God further blessed him with commendation –(Daniel 9:23; 10:11, 19). Compare that with Matthew 25:21-23): **“Well done good and faithful servant”**. God blessed Daniel with greatness in the kingdom forever.

Daniel's life was one of faith. The life of a believer is a life *"from faith unto faith"* – (Romans 1:17). Daniel learned to obey God and to live by faith when he was young. He took a great step of faith in the matters of the king's food. This is the path of spiritual growth and victory. Many more tests came, but Daniel had victory each step of the way and his faith grew. His greatest step of faith came at the end of his life –(Daniel 6).

Daniel's honesty and humility is revealed in Daniel 2:26-30). Daniel had the opportunity of a lifetime to glorify himself before the world's greatest king, but he did not. He humbled himself and glorified God. Note this is the exact opposite of Arioch –(Daniel 2:24-25). He did what unsaved and carnal men do, which is to try to turn every situation into an opportunity to glorify and enrich himself. He told Nebuchadnezzar that he had found a man to give the interpretation, when he had done no such thing. Arioch had zero part in the matter, but he tried to make himself seem like a hero before the king.

Daniel's boldness is revealed in that Daniel used every occasion to glorify God and to reprove sin and idolatry and call men to repentance. He did this before Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:27 and he did it before Belshazzar in Daniel 5:17-28.

In Part 6, I will continue a verse by verse exegesis but until then I will give a small overview of the book of Daniel. Daniel is concerned with the exile of the Jews and how they survived under foreign oppression. It looks ahead not only to a return from the exile but to a restoration of the theocratic kingship under a descendant of King David.

Jeremiah had said that the Babylonian captivity would last precisely seventy years. - (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:10). This period of time had been decreed by God because for almost five centuries his people had failed to keep the Sabbath years set forth in Leviticus 25. In this way God saw to it that the land enjoyed its rest. -(2 Chronicles 36:21)

The Babylonian captivity was one of the great turning points of Israel's history. The people of God had been troubled by many nations, from Egypt to Assyria, but the divinely established dynasty of David had still continued to rule from the time of its founding around 1010 B.C. until the rise of the new Babylonian empire. In 609 B.C., the last righteous king of Judah, Josiah, was slain by Pharaoh Necho. Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, reigned a few months, but Necho replaced him with his brother, Jehoiakim, who ruled from 609-597 B.C.

In the year 605 B.C. under the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, the heir apparent (first in line of succession) of the throne of Babylon, invaded Judah and forced Jehoiakim into submission. As part of training in the service of the empire, Daniel and his three companions were among these first, noble captives from Judah -(Daniel 1:1-7).

However, the real desolations to Jerusalem did not come in 605 B.C., but began after Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar some three years later. -(2 Kings 24:1). Nebuchadnezzar eventually laid siege to Jerusalem and captured it in 597 B.C. Though Jehoiakim died during this time, his son, Jehoiachin, was taken captive to Babylon after a reign

of only three months. This marked the first major deportation of the Jews. In addition to King Jehoiachin, most of the nobility and much of the treasury was removed to Babylon in 597 B.C. And, **"None remained except the poorest people of the land."** -(2 Kings 24:11)

Nebuchadnezzar then placed on the throne of David, Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, the son of godly King Josiah. In the course of time in spite of many warnings from the prophet Jeremiah, Zedekiah, too, rebelled, and the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem once again on January 10, 587 B.C. This siege produced devastating famine and pestilence within the city, which finally fell to the Babylonians on July 9, 586 B.C. They wrought terrible destruction to the city, burning down the temple several weeks later on August 1 (the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, the same day of the same month that Titus destroyed the Second Temple, six hundred, fifty-six years later, in 70 A.D.), and then destroying the walls of Jerusalem.

King Zedekiah was eventually captured by Nebuchadnezzar. The last sight he had before having his eyes put out was to see his two sons slaughtered. -(2 Kings 25:7) So the glorious reign of the sons of David came to an end.

Yet, the prophet Isaiah had foretold that out of this seemingly dead stump of Jesse (David's father), a green shoot would spring forth. -(Isaiah 11:1) This branch from David's chopped-down tree would rule all nations and cause them to submit to the God of Israel. -(Isaiah 2, 11) Then, not only Israel, but all nations, would enjoy the great Sabbath-year Jubilee - (Isaiah 61:1-4). The Levitical Jubilee was but a dim foreshadowing event. -(Leviticus 25)

The Lord Jesus began proclaiming that great gospel Jubilee in his thirtieth year in the synagogue of Nazareth. -(Luke 4:16-21) At the time of His second coming, he will bring his great work to consummation, and we will live in the new Eden -(Isaiah 11), the new heavens and new earth, in which righteousness dwell. -(2 Peter 3:13)

In the book of Daniel, the exile of the Jews in the Babylonian captivity and their return to the land of Judah under the Persians is the backdrop of drama a greater captivity and a greater deliverance. Through a series of visions, God proceeds to unfold his plan for his people. The seventy years of exile would come to an end with the fall of Babylon, but the true liberation of Israel and the restoration of the fallen house of David would take, not seventy years, but seventy times seven. -(Daniel 9). And instead of the passing of Babylon marking the time of true fulfillment, empires yet unknown to the Jews would rise and fall.

These empires are revealed to Daniel in a series of terrifying visions. History records that after Babylon's fall in 539 B.C., the Jews became subject to the empire of the Medes and Persians, under whose yoke they remained until 331 B.C., when Alexander the Great conquered the Persians, and Israel came under the influence of Greece. At Alexander's death in 323 B.C., his empire was divided among his generals, four of whom eventually won out: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. The history of Israel for the next century or so is a record of conflict between two of these generals' dynasties: the Seleucids in Syria and the Ptolemies in Egypt.

In 165 B.C. Israel won her independence from the Hellenistic kings under Judas Maccabaeus. But this independence did not last long, nor did it see the house of David restored, and a more ominous empire was menacing the Middle East. In the year 63 B.C. the Roman general, Pompey, entered the city, thus beginning the subjugation of the Jews to the fourth great empire, Rome.

These four great empires are portrayed by various means to Daniel. Early in his reign Nebuchadnezzar had a nightmare which is recorded in Daniel 2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream centered around a colossus statue with a head of gold -(Babylon, 2:32, 38), a chest and arms of silver -(Medo-Persia, 2:32, 39), a stomach and thighs of bronze -(Greece, 2:32, 39), and legs of iron with feet of iron and clay -(Rome, 2:33, 40-43). During the time of the last empire (Rome), God would begin the long awaited deliverance -(2:34, 35, 44, 45). He would strike this colossus metallic object with a stone cut without hands, and the colossus image would disintegrate: ***"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands -- a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."*** -(Daniel 2:44, 45)

In the seventh chapter of Daniel these same empires are depicted as four terrifying beasts. Babylon is a lion with eagle wings -(7:4), while Persia is a bear -(7:5). The four Hellenistic kingdoms are portrayed as a four-headed, four-winged leopard -(7:6). Rome is so terrifying it cannot be compared to any earthly creature, a ten-horned beast with iron teeth (7:7-12; 23-28). Once again, the coming of the fourth empire is the omen of doom to all man-centered attempts at world dominion, for then God intervenes to save his people: ***"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."*** -(Daniel 7:13, 14)

Two of these empires receive special attention in a vision in Chapter 8: the Medo-Persian kingdom is seen as a two-horned ram -(8:3, 4), which is defeated by a he-goat (Greece). This goat has one horn (Alexander the Great). But this great horn is broken off, and four take its place (Alexander's four generals: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy) -(Daniel 8:8). Out of one of these horns a little horn rises who persecutes God's people -(8:9-14). This little horn represents Antiochus Epiphanes, who ruled the Seleucid kingdom from 175-163 B.C. He was the last of the Greeks to rule over God's people.

Antiochus receives special attention in Daniel -(8:9-14; 23-25; 11:21 and following) not only because he would desecrate the temple of the Lord with pig's blood in honor of the Olympian Zeus and would wreak more havoc on Israel than any ruler from the time of

Nebuchadnezzar in the sixth century B.C. until Titus the Roman in 70 A.D., but because he is the great foreshadowing of the ultimate persecutor of God's people, the man of sin. But Daniel, like Revelation, its New Testament counterpart, does not end on a negative note, but on the triumph of the Lord at the consummation of history: ***"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people -- everyone whose name is found written in the book -- will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."*** -(Daniel 12:1-3)

This overview of Daniel the "Man" and the Book of Daniel will prepare the reader's understanding as we begin to look closer at Chapter 2 in the next segment. Critics of truthfulness or voracity of Daniel incessantly take aim at Daniel's ***"seventy weeks"*** prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27. This prophecy is the backbone of the twelve short chapters of Daniel the Prophet. As such, it serves us well in providing us with the opportunity to present here perhaps the most important passage of the Bible. By previewing Daniel 9:24-27, it becomes apparent why it is the focal point of an issue that serves to divide so many over Bible prophecy. Daniel 9:24-27 became a stumbling block for much of Christendom. You either believe it or you don't. There is no middle ground.

Is Prophecy Sealed?

The famous "70 Weeks" prophecy of Daniel 9 has been called by some Bible scholars the "spine" or "backbone" of Bible prophecy because it is the one that "seals up" other prophecies. If this is true, it would seem to be rather important for those interested in the interpretation of Bible prophecy to figure it out correctly. Daniel 9:24 mentions several things that are to be accomplished in the 70 Weeks:

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

Several other events are included in the 70 weeks and they are mentioned in the following verses.

While the ***"holy city"*** is apparently Jerusalem, remember that the name ***"Jerusalem"*** is also a figure of the Church in the New Testament, as in Galatians 4:26.

Note that the 70 Weeks are what ***"seal up"*** the vision and prophecy. This is quite general, and it suggests other prophecies of scripture and visions depend, in some way, on this one.

How could the 70 Weeks prophecy seal up other prophecies? That too is a mystery. If one can solve the riddle of the 70 weeks, he should also be able to find out what these other

prophecies are, and how they can be properly interpreted. Here is a clue: the time periods mentioned in Revelation, "**time, times, and a half**," and its equivalent, three and a half years, need to be interpreted by means of the 70 weeks prophecy.

Since this phrase "**time, times, and a half**" which comes from Daniel's prophecies is found in Revelation 12:14, it forms an obvious connection or link between the two books. This period is also given as 1,260 days in Revelation 12:6; 42 months in chapters 11 and 13. The 1,260 days would be of 3.5 years, each year having 12 months of 30 days. In such a scheme, a year would have 360 days, although we know today the length of the solar year is 365.25 days. Some have postulated there is such a thing as a "prophetic year" that must be used for calculating the 70 Weeks.

An interesting interpretation of Daniel's 70 Weeks was proposed in 1895 by Sir Robert Anderson, a brilliant Biblical scholar, who made this assumption. Anderson claimed that from the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem to the appearance of the Messiah (the seven weeks and threescore and two weeks of verse 25) worked out to exactly 483 biblical years equaling 360 days, or 173,880 days. It is worthwhile to examine this idea carefully. The discussion below reviews some background information on the solar-lunar calendar that was in use in Daniel's time.

Does a "Prophetic Year" Equal 360 Days?

In the solar-lunar calendar used by the Hebrews in ancient times, the length of a month was determined by the phases of the moon. Our word "month" reflects the ancient connection with the moon's period. The precise duration of the moon's period is 29.531 days. It is close to 30 days, but not quite. Because of this, the ancient calendar which was used by the Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks, and most other nations in antiquity had years of varying length. Most years had 12 months [or 'moons'], but some years had 13 months. The priests of the various nations would determine the length of the year by observation, and there was a fair bit of confusion when bad weather interfered with observations of the moon.

About the 8th century B.C. the Babylonians discovered a 19-year cycle, in which seven years had an extra month. In a 19-year cycle there were 235 lunar months. This period was about 2 hours, 4 minutes, and 25 seconds longer than 19 solar years, which worked out rather nicely, as it allowed the calendar to get in tune with the seasons more precisely every 19-year period.

The Athenian astronomer Meton rediscovered the 19-year calendar cycle in 433 B.C., (or perhaps he learned it from the Babylonians). Therefore, it was called the "Metonic" cycle. In the 4th century A.D. the "Metonic" cycle was adopted by the Jews as an aid to calculating the calendar, and since then, the specific years in each 19-year cycle, in which an extra month was added, were established in a definite sequence: the extra month was added in the years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19. These were called leap-years, the rest are common years. Note there were 7 of these leap years in a 19 year period.

The Jews also divided the hour into 1,080 "parts" of three and one third seconds. The *'Jewish Encyclopedia'* [Funk and Wagnalls, N.Y. 1902, vol 3], article "Calendar", p. 505 states: "Nineteen lunar years with seven extra months equal nineteen solar years minus one hour, 485 parts."

So, one cannot assume, "the Jewish year had only 360 days" for interpreting Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy. The old year ended and a new one began at a new moon, not after so many days had elapsed, as in our calendars. This fact appears to undermine the interpretation of the 70 Weeks of Daniel popularized by Sir Robert Anderson, ingenious though it may be. In 130 B.C., Hipparchus determined the length of the solar year as 365.25 days.

The Three Parts of the 70 Weeks

The 70 weeks of Daniel are separated into three distinct parts, suggesting that different units are involved in the various parts. [Or else, why would the 7 weeks, and the 62 weeks, and one week be mentioned separately?] The emphasis is on "sevens," and while there may be 7-year periods involved, this may not be true of all the parts. The three parts to the 70 Weeks prophecy resemble the three sections or parts in the phrase **"time, times, and a half"** that are mentioned in Daniel.

In Daniel 12:7, the phrase **"time, times, and a half"** is given as the duration of the period encompassed by his prophecies. The completion of this period, whatever it means, marks a time when "all these things shall be finished." To help us understand and explain them, the pattern which is evident in the phrase **"time, times, and a half"** can be applied to two of Daniel's mysterious time periods, the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11, and the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12. Looking at the pattern imbedded in the phrase **"time, times and a half,"** we can insert the different units for year lengths in the three divisions, as a kind of template:

Daniel 12:7:	Time + Times + A half
Daniel 12:11:	1290 days = 390 + (2 x 360) + 360/2
Daniel 12:12:	1335 days = 360 + (2 x 390) + 390/2

In Revelation, John applies this same pattern to his variations on three and a half years:

Revelation 11:2:	42 months = 12 + (2 x 12) + 12/2
Revelation 11:3:	1260 days = 360 + (2 x 360) + 360/2
Revelation 11:9:	3.5 days = 1 + (2 x 1) + 1/2
Revelation 12:6:	1260 days = 360 + (2 x 360) + 360/2
Revelation 12:14:	Time + Times + A half
Revelation 13:5:	42 months = 12 + (2 x 12) + 12/2

A phrase quite similar to **"a time, times and a half"** is mentioned in Daniel 7:25; here it is given as **"a time, and times, and the dividing of time."** Most Bible scholars have assumed they are the same, but although the two phrases are similar, they are not identical. The pattern or structure here is similar to that of the 70 Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27, which has a period of 7 weeks, plus 62 weeks, plus a final divided week.

Daniel 7:25:	Time + Times + Dividing of time
Daniel 9:24-27:	7 weeks + 62 weeks + divided week = 70 weeks

These may well be identical; perhaps Daniel 9 interprets 7:25. The final week was divided by the crucifixion; Christ was crucified "in the midst of the week," –(Daniel 9:27) after an earthly ministry lasting three and a half [literal] years. According to the explanation of 70 Weeks suggested here, there was a final three and a half years remaining, in which he was to **"confirm the covenant with many,"** referring to the gospel being preached in the world. This final half week can [and should, in my opinion] be identified with the **"time, times and a half"** discussed above, and the various forms in which it is expressed by John, as a cypher or symbol for the remaining time of the Church, and this seems to be the sense intended in Daniel 12:7.

The writing on the wall

The "times" phrases have a three part structure somewhat similar to the message that the king Belshazzar saw being written on the wall, just before Babylon fell, which Daniel interpreted. Here we have:

Daniel 7:25	Time + Times + Dividing of time
Daniel 12:7	Time + Times + A half
Daniel 5:25	Tekel + (2 x Mene) + Upharsin
Daniel 5:26-28	Weighed + (2 x Numbered) + Divided

Perhaps there is an encoded message in the phrase **"time, times and dividing of time,"** similar to the cryptic writing on the wall that Daniel interpreted. If so, it would likely have something to do with time.

A period of 7,000 days can be used as the unit for 'sevens' in the first part, giving 49,000 days, about 133 years or 7 periods of 19 years, for the first 7 weeks. The 19-year period is a kind of "week", because there are 7 extra months every 19 years.

It seems that the beginning of the 70 Weeks was the decree of Cyrus, about 538 B.C., when the original commandment to rebuild Jerusalem was made. This decree is mentioned in Ezra 1:3. Cyrus was foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah 44:28 the one to order the building of Jerusalem, and the foundation of the temple. This prophecy was fulfilled around the same time Daniel received the vision of the 70 Weeks prophecy and the information recorded in Daniel chapter 9.

Counting from Christ

The appearance of Jesus Christ, and his anointing, when he was baptized by John the Baptist, was a focal point of the 70 Weeks prophecy, and it occurred at the end of the 62 weeks. Daniel 9:25 says:

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks...”

There were two periods, then, to the Messiah; the seven weeks, followed by the 62 weeks. One way to figure this prophecy out would be to count back from the beginning of Christ's ministry, the date of his appearance to Israel, which was upon his baptism. This can be determined from information given in the gospel of Luke.

Luke 3:23 says Jesus Christ was about 30 years old at his baptism, which occurred during the ministry of John the Baptist, probably a few months after John began preaching. This ministry is dated as being the 15th year of the Roman Emperor Tiberius -(Luke 3:1). The reign of Tiberius is reckoned from the year in which Augustus died, which was 19 August, 14 A.D. This suggests the baptism of Christ was 28 A.D. Or, if Luke used the Syrian calendar which began the year in the fall, it could have occurred late in 27 A.D.

Ben Zion Wacholder has proposed that the ministry of John coincided with one of the sabbatical years of the sabbatical cycles which were part of the Mosaic Law, mentioned in Leviticus 25:4. This makes sense, as the people would likely have had more free time during a year when the land was allowed to rest, and debts were cancelled. The year 27-28 A.D., according to Wacholder, was one of these sabbatical years.

Wacholder says the ***'heptads'*** or "sevens" of Daniel's prophecy were understood by the Jews in ancient times as referring to these sabbatical cycles. Perhaps at least part of the prophecy does. The 70 weeks are divided into distinct periods, which allows for different units in the various parts. If we count back 62 sabbatical cycles from the sabbatical year 27-28 A.D., we come to the year 408-407 B.C., which turns out to be a Jubilee year. This would be another focal point in Daniel's prophecy.

What about the first part of the prophecy, consisting of 7 "weeks?" If the above dates are correct, these might be periods of 7,000 days, or about 19 years; 7 of these periods would be 49,000 days, or about 133 years. Counting back from the year 407 B.C., takes us to 540 B.C. In the sabbatical cycle which began in this year, Daniel received the vision of the 70 weeks, and Cyrus made the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, from which the 70 weeks are counted. The date of this decree is usually given as 538 B.C.

Here is some interesting evidence for this identification of the "sevens" in the first part of the prophecy with 7,000 days or 19 year periods. Divide 7,000 days by 19, to obtain the number of days in a "year." Multiply this number by 3.5, to obtain the number of days in three and a half years. The result is very nearly 1,290 days, which is one of the ways Daniel refers to the sign of three and a half years, in Daniel 12:11.

The Final Week

Now, what about this final, or 70th week? This final week is a figurative period of seven years, and it is during this "week" that Christ **"confirms the covenant with many,"** as stated in Daniel 9:27. This period began when Christ began his ministry. His ministry lasted three and a half years. The prophecy said he would be **"cut off,"** a reference to the crucifixion, after 62 weeks – (Daniel 9:26).

In the final, 70th week, Christ Jesus is to **"confirm the covenant with many."** This final week is still in effect, because Christ Jesus still **"confirms the covenant"** with believers. The first half of this week was the ministry of Christ Jesus on the earth. The last half is symbolic of the entire time of the Church.

James Burton Coffman of Abilene Christian University has also recognized this. [Coffman, J.B., 1989. Commentary on Daniel, ACU Press, pg. 189] He identifies the **"time, times, and a half"** with the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days, and says all these refer to the entire period between the First and Second Advents of Jesus Christ, the "whole Christian dispensation." Other Bible scholars and commentators have reached the same conclusion.

The sacrifice and oblation was to cease **"in the midst of the week"** -(Daniel 9:27). The sacrifices of the Jewish ritual system ended at the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., and were made obsolete when Christ was crucified.

The interpretation of the mysterious three and a half years, or the "time, times, and a half" of Daniel and Revelation, then, is this: it is a symbolic period which represents the time of the Church, and the time remaining in which the gospel is preached in the world, when Christ is **"confirming the covenant with many."** The phrase is also used to refer to a portion of this period.

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