

# 11. DANIEL

605 – 536 BC

## Introduction

God is sovereign over the history of the world. He presently tolerates evil, because his reign over the Earth is not absolute. Satan leads the whole world astray (Rev 12:9). For some reason we don't fully understand, the whole world is under the control of the evil one (1 John 4:19). Jesus came to rescue us from the present evil age (Gal 1:4), which will remain until the theocratic reign during the millennium. He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves (Col 1:13).

At creation, God said to his complex self:

Let us make mankind in our image, to be like us. Let them be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, the livestock, everything that crawls on the earth, and over the Earth itself. So God created mankind in his own image, in his own image God created them; he created them male and female. God blessed the humans by saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the Earth, and subdue it! Be masters over the fish in the ocean, the birds that fly, and every living thing that crawls on the Earth (Gen 1:26-28).

Kings (and political leaders of whatever title) are God's regents in the world. He authorizes their rule and expects them to rule well. In Genesis 3 we learn that a powerful angel, Satan, entered the scene and tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God, and so sin entered the world as mankind became selfish, greedy, and proud. Kings are not immune from these evils and sometimes God steps in to change things. God is not in total control here on Earth, because he has put the world into the hands of mankind and they have failed to submit to his ways. This allowed Satan and the mysterious spirit world to have their way. Jesus called Satan the ruler of this world (John 12:31), while Paul said we

are wrestling against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12).

But things are not out of God's control. Daniel discovered that God changes times and seasons, removes kings, and sets up kings, he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding (Dan 2:20-21). The dreams and visions found in the book of Daniel assure us that no matter how evil the leaders of our world might become, God has a plan, and at the end of this age his perfect Regent, the Messiah, will rule the world with righteousness, justice, and peace. The world's history is filled with human tyrants who are motivated by greed, pride, corruption, and a lust for power. When the Messiah rules during the final period, the millennium, he will show us what a wonderful place this world could have been.

## **Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue**

*Daniel 2:28-45*

King Nebuchadnezzar dreamt about a great statue, exceedingly bright and frightening to look at. He wanted to know his dream's meaning and he told his wise men, astrologers, and magicians that if they did not tell him the dream and interpret it for him, they would be killed. As the prophet Daniel was one of the wise men, he asked the king for time. He and his friends prayed, and God revealed to him the dream and its interpretation.

A mighty image of a man stood before Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. Its head was gold, its chest and arms silver, its stomach and thighs bronze, and its legs iron, all metals of decreasing value. Its feet were different, they were partly iron and partly clay.

While Nebuchadnezzar looked at this great statue in his dream, a stone was cut out of a mountain, but not by a human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Not only were the feet broken in pieces, but the iron, bronze, silver, and gold as well, and the pieces became like chaff that the wind blew away; not a

trace of them could be found. Then the stone that struck the image grew in size and became a great mountain that filled the Earth.

After telling the king the dream that he had, Daniel went on to give him the interpretation. The king was amazed that Daniel could tell him the dream that only he knew about, so he was all ears to hear what it meant. The vision concerned what would happen in the *latter days*. Daniel told the king that he was the head of gold. He was the king of kings, to whom God had given the privilege of possessing the kingdom, the power, and the glory, and to rule over all living things, whether man, bird, or beast. Nebuchadnezzar reigned for over forty years and his city Babylon was the largest known in the ancient world until that time.

Another kingdom, inferior to his, would arise after him; the chest and arms of silver. That would be followed by a third kingdom, to the extent that the world was known at that time. That was the stomach and thighs made of bronze. And finally, there would be a fourth kingdom; the legs made of iron. Iron, although inferior to gold, silver, and bronze, can break anything into pieces, and that kingdom would crush all the previous kingdoms and rule the world.

There would be four world kingdoms that would arise and God was revealing the fact to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel didn't know the names, but the four kingdoms were Babylonia (625 to 539 BC), Medo-Persia (539 to 331 BC), Greece (331 to 63 BC), and Rome (63 BC to 476 AD). Then Daniel interpreted the meaning of the feet and toes that were made of iron and clay. Those materials don't adhere very well, so this was an unstable phase of the fourth kingdom. The kingdom will have the strength of iron but will be plagued by division. Mixed marriages will produce a multicultural empire, which like iron and clay, will not hold together.

It is *in the days of the kings of the last unstable kingdom* mentioned, that a rock hits the statue on the feet and destroys corrupt human empire forever. God will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, and its kingship will never pass to a different people. Previous kingdoms were in the hands of different nationalities, but God's eternal kingdom will be ruled forever by his redeemed people, the saints, and their king, the Messiah. This kingdom from God will put an end to all previous kingdoms, replacing the corrupt kingdoms

of men. The rock, cut from a mountain by no human hand is the Messiah, and the mountain from which he was cut is Mount Zion, the mountain of God. Daniel assured the king that the dream was certain and its interpretation was sure.

This mention of a kingdom that God will set up in the last days of this age is extremely important because it is the Kingdom of God that was the focus of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels. It is developed further in Daniel 7 where Daniel sees a vision of the same world empires. The literal meaning of the vision enlightens us about the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus. It is not about God's sovereign rule over the universe from heaven, nor is it about the church as the Kingdom of God. It is an earthly, political kingdom, just like the kingdoms it crushed and replaced. It is the Kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus Christ that God will one day establish (Dan 2:44).

When the rock struck the statue, *all* the materials were broken into pieces, from the iron and clay up through the bronze and silver to the gold. When Jesus returns and sets up his kingdom, the final world kingdom, symbolically called Rome and Babylon, will be overthrown. Babylon began as Babel, a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens in human opposition to God. When the final world empire is defeated, it will be the end of human empire, followed by a theocracy.

The Babylonian empire covered territory now known as Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The Persian Empire added Iran, Armenia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The Greek Empire added Libya, Kuwait, Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria. The Roman Empire added Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Spain, Italy, France, England, Wales, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vojvodina, and Montenegro. The final world empire will include all these countries. It is a later phase of the fourth empire that will include Europe and Arabic and Turkic-speaking countries, but Revelation 13 makes it clear that all who dwell on the Earth will follow the leader of this political beast, the Antichrist, and they will worship him. Only the elect, whose names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life since the foundation of the world will refuse to take part in this idolatry, and that will cost them their lives. Antichrist

will have authority over *every* tribe, people, language, and nation. His world empire is symbolically called Babylon six times in Revelation. In late Judaism, Rome was referred to as Babylon as also in 1 Peter 5:13. She is supported by the beast and called the great prostitute who is seated on many water (Rev 17:1, 15-18). She may represent the great cities of the world, for example, cities of the ten kings who will rule along with the beast like Beijing, Rome, Cairo, London, Moscow, Mumbai, New York, and Paris. It is the cities of the nations that collapse when God remembers Babylon the Great and gives her the cup filled with his furious wrath (Rev 16:19).

The legs of iron represent the powerful Roman Empire. The feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dream are made of iron mixed with clay, which represents a later unstable form of that world empire, at least 1500 years later, and having the same Eurasian center, but enlarged to include all the nations of the world. In Daniel's dream of four beasts, the last beast has ten horns, which like the toes of Daniel 2:41, represent ten world leaders who give their power and authority to the beast.

The empire may have a monopoly on something that enables them to control the whole world which includes the US, the EU, China, Russia, and Japan, or maybe it is the threat of nuclear power (Dan 11:38-39). However, the empire is not stable, and after a few years, rebellion occurs; first, the king of the South (Egypt) rebels, then the king of the North comes with land and sea forces, and finally a great horde (Gog) from the East (Dan 11:40-45). All these forces from around the world will surround Jerusalem for the climactic battle of Armageddon. The Antichrist will go out with great fury to defeat them but will himself be defeated not far from Jerusalem when the Messiah suddenly returns.

## **Daniel's vision of four world empires**

*Daniel 7:1-8*

In the first year of the reign of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel dreamed a dream, receiving visions in his mind while he lay on his bed, after which he recorded the dream, giving a summary of events.

He saw four winds of the skies (malevolent forces) stirring up the great sea, a symbol of chaos and rebellion, especially of aggressive nations. Four magnificent beasts (empires) rose from the sea, each different from the other. The first, Babylon, resembled a lion (fierce), and it had eagle wings (speed of conquest). As he continued to watch, its wings were plucked off (Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation – Daniel 4). It was lifted from the ground (by God) and was forced to stand on two feet like a man, and a human soul was imparted to it (restored sanity). Then a second beast, Persia, resembling a bear (fierce), followed it. It was raised on one side, with three ribs (victims) between its teeth. The third beast, Greece, resembled a leopard (fierce) with four wings on its back (speed of conquest). The beast had four heads (generals), and authority was imparted to it (by God). Then there was a fourth awe-inspiring, terrifying, and viciously strong beast (Rome). It had large, iron teeth (military power) and it devoured and crushed things (ruthless), trampling under its feet whatever remained (merciless). Different from the previous beasts, it had ten horns (leaders).

Then he saw another horn, a little one, growing up among the ten, and three of them were overthrown by it. It had eyes like those of a human being (intelligence) and a mouth that boasted with audacious claims (arrogance).

The vision has similarities to the one Nebuchadnezzar had fifty years earlier, but this last beast is not compared with a wild animal, its military hardware makes it terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly powerful. The ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's vision are now ten horns which represent ten contemporary leaders. A later horn arises and uproots three of them. This arrogant leader will exercise authority for forty-two months (Rev 13:5-6). He is the Antichrist.

## **Daniel's vision of the Son of Man**

*Daniel 7:9-14*

The context of Daniel's vision so far has been on Earth as Daniel saw the beasts coming out of the turbulent sea, symbolic of the unruly

nations. In verses 9-10, Daniel sees the Ancient of Days take his seat. He doesn't see God himself, he sees an old man who symbolizes him, because age inspires veneration and respect. His clothes are white like snow (purity and holiness), and the hair on his head is like pure wool (age and wisdom). His throne burns with flaming fire, and its wheels burn with fire (justice). A river of fire flows out from before him (omnipotence, sovereignty, and zeal) and thousands upon thousands serve him, with millions upon millions waiting on him (angels). The court (an angelic council c.f. Ps 89:7) sits in judgment, and record books are unsealed (God's omniscience). The place is not defined; it is presumably in the heavenly realm. Daniel mentions a book again in Daniel 12:1. Books will be opened on judgment day and the dead will be judged according to what is recorded there (Rev 20:12).

Daniel kept watching because of the audacious words that the arrogant horn (the Antichrist) was speaking in opposition to God until he (representing the beast) was killed and his body destroyed in a blazing fire (Rev 19:20). With the defeat of this last beast and its leader, the dominion of the world's previous kingdoms also comes to an end. When the seventh trumpet is blown in Revelation, voices in heaven proclaim: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever" (Rev 11:15).

Then Daniel saw one "like a son of man" coming with the clouds of heaven. He was presented to the Ancient of Days and was given dominion and glory and a worldwide kingdom. The kingdom is here on Earth, the one that was ruled by Gentile powers, comprising the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, and all peoples, nations, and languages will serve him. 'A son of man' could be interpreted as a human being or humanity as a whole, but because all nations will worship him, the phrase must refer to the Messiah, who is both human and divine, Jesus, who often referred to himself in the Gospels as the Son of Man. However, in this context, he also represents redeemed humanity because, in the following verses, it is the saints of the Most High who possess the kingdom.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar's dream ends with the Kingdom of God being revealed replacing the great Gentile empires of the world, so Daniel's dream ends with a vision of the Ancient of Days and his heavenly

courtroom, sitting in judgment and condemning the Antichrist, who is the epitome of corrupt and blasphemous leadership at the climax of Gentile domination. God's climax to world history is the glorious appearance of the Messiah in the world, who together with his monarchy will subsequently rule over all nations, peoples, and languages.

Daniel's vision here is not a vision of the second coming of Christ but of his exaltation. After Jesus' resurrection, he ascended to heaven and God seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realm, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion (Eph 1:20-21). Before his ascension to heaven, he told his disciples: "All authority in heaven and Earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:18). This enthronement of the Son of Man can be compared to the parable of the minas (Luke 19:11-27) that Jesus told because they supposed that the Kingdom of God was imminent. But it wasn't. Ten events make up what we call the exaltation of Christ and there are 2000 years between his investiture and his enthronement and the beginning of his reign.

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|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Resurrection            | Matt 28:6                          |
| 2. Investiture             | Dan 7:13-14                        |
| 3. Great commission        | Matt 28:19-20                      |
| 4. Ascension               | Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:9            |
| 5. Enthronement in heaven  | Ps 110:1                           |
| 6. Waiting in heaven       | Acts 3:20-21, Heb 10:13            |
| 7. Return to Earth         | Mat 24:30, 2 Thess 1:7, Rev 1:7    |
| 8. Descent to Mt of Olives | Zech 14:4                          |
| 9. Enthronement on Earth   | Rev 11:15-17, 19:6                 |
| 10. Enthronement of saints | Dan 7:18, 22, 27                   |
| 11. Messianic reign        | Zech 14:9, 1 Cor 15:25, Rev 20:4-6 |

Jesus said a nobleman was going into a far country to have himself appointed as king and then return to exercise his authority. Jesus' appointment followed his exaltation which began with his resurrection. The kingdom wouldn't be established on Earth until the king himself returned.

## **The Saints of the High Places will reign**

*Daniel 7:15-28*



Daniel was emotionally troubled, what he saw in the visions alarmed him. An angel told him that the four great beasts were four kings who would rise to power from the Earth, but the saints of the Most High would inherit the worldwide kingship and possess it forever (Dan 7:18). The saints are God's chosen people, otherwise known as the elect or the righteous, the servants of God; those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Rev 13:8). Revelation makes it clear that these latter-day saints are the faithful, not only from Israel but from every tribe, nation, people, and language. When Daniel uses the word 'saints' (Dan 7:18, 21, 22 (2), 25, 27, 8:24), he is referring to the elect within Israel; he didn't know about the church of the NT. However, what he says about the saints of the Most High can be interpreted as the Church. The Hebrew word translated "saints," is relevant for both OT and NT saints. 'Saints' and 'holy people' are synonyms, they are holy because they are God's people.

**Ps 16:3** "I say of the holy people in the land, "They are the noble ones, in whom is all my delight."

**Ps 34:9** "Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing."

**Dan 7:18** "But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever – yes, forever and ever."

**Dan 8:24b** "He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people."

**Zech 14:5b** "Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him."

The people of Israel are not called saints in Daniel, they are referred to as Daniel's people (Dan 9:15-16, 20, 24, 10:14, 11:14, 12:1). The saints of the Most High are the faithful servants who will inherit the kingdom, those against whom the Antichrist wages war (Dan 7:25, Rev 13:7) during the last 3 ½ years of this age. They are the Church, including the faithful from the OT era. After being persecuted during the Great Tribulation and martyred by the Antichrist, it is they who will possess the kingdom and reign with the Messiah for a thousand years (Rev 20:4). When the saints *receive* the kingdom and *possess* it,

we are talking about *kingship*. The saints will be the rulers. God will give them the greatness of all the kingdoms *under* the whole heaven. Israel forfeited this right

Daniel wanted to learn the significance of the fourth beast, the final world empire that was different from all the others; extremely awe-inspiring with its iron teeth and bronze claws (military hardware), that had devoured and crushed things, trampling under its feet whatever remained (ruthless and merciless). He wanted to learn the significance of the ten horns (leaders) on its head and the other horn that had arisen (Antichrist) before whom three of the leaders had fallen. The Antichrist had eyes (shrewd looking) and a mouth that uttered great (audacious) things, and who looked more imposing than his fellows. Then Daniel saw this horn waging war against the saints and prevailing against them until the Ancient of Days came and passed judgment in their favor, and the time came for them to take possession of the kingdom (c.f. Rev 3:21, 20:4).

Daniel was told that the fourth beast was a fourth worldwide kingdom, more powerful than the kingdoms before it. It would devour, without exaggeration, the entire Earth, trampling it down and crushing it (oppressive globalization). The ten horns on its head represent ten world leaders who will rule the kingdom at the same time. Then the Antichrist, who is not one of the ten, will rise to power by defeating three of them. He will speak out against the Most High and he will wage war against the saints. He will try and change times and laws (religious festivals and morality), and the saints will be under his control for forty-two months (Rev 13:5). It is only then that God's court convenes, and the Antichrist's authority is taken away, annulled and destroyed forever. This collapse of the Antichrist's kingdom is alluded to when the fifth angel pours out his bowl of wrath on the throne of the beast and his kingdom is plunged into darkness (Rev 16:10). Finally, the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven are given, not to the Messiah, but to the holy people of the Most High. Their kingdom will endure forever, and all rulers will serve him and obey them. The vision ended, but Daniel's thoughts continued to alarm him, because of the emphasis on the ruthlessness of the final world empire and the slaughter of the saints by the Antichrist.

## **The Messianic kingdom**

Two Aramaic words used in Daniel 7 thirteen times characterize this chapter. One word means *kingdom* or *kingship*, and the other *dominion* or *sovereignty*. This authority to rule is usually spoken of as being given to people or taken away from them by God.

The Kingdom of God which Jesus continually referred to is his thousand-year reign over the Earth after his return. In Daniel's vision, the Ancient of Days gives him authority, glory, and sovereign power so that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. However, we are told nothing about the Messiah's visible presence on Earth at that time. The emphasis here is on the saints' reign (Dan 7:18, 22, 27). God gives them the kingship and they possess it. All rulers will serve them (Dan 7:27), just as they serve the Messiah. "All rulers will worship and obey *him*." NIV translates 'worship' but most translations say 'serve.' Worshiping a son of man would be abrasive to Jewish ears.

Jesus said: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who have been blessed by my Father! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matt 25:34). Paul said to the Corinthian Christians: "Don't you know that the saints will judge the world?" and again, "Don't you know that we are to judge angels?" (1 Cor 6:2-3). In Revelation, Jesus said to those who conquer and keep his works until the end that he would give them authority over the nations and that they would rule them with a rod of iron (Rev 2:26-27). The Book of Revelation declares in many places that the saints will reign over the Earth during the millennium (Rev 1:6, 9, 2:26-27, 3:21, 4:4, 5:10, 20:4-6, 21:7, 22:5).

## **Antiochus IV and the Antichrist**

*Daniel 8:9-26*

In this chapter, Daniel had a vision of the coming kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece. He already had some knowledge of these future kingdoms from Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 and the

interpretation he was given. Then in Chapter 7, he had his own vision of four future kingdoms which included those of Medo-Persia and Greece. In verses 3-5, he sees a ram with two horns, one higher than the other. This is the Medo-Persian empire, with the Persians being the dominant partner over the Medes. Then in verses 5-8 a male goat (Alexander the Great) comes and defeats the ram. He made quick victories from Greece to modern-day Pakistan. When the goat's horn was broken (the death of Alexander), four horns took his place. Initially, four sons took over, but ultimately the kingdom was divided among four of his generals.

Verses 9-14 describe another horn (leader) that grew exceedingly great. This horn is generally recognized as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, an evil ruler in the Seleucid dynasty who ruled from 174-164 BC and whose territory included Judah. "Some of the host of heaven he threw down to the ground and trampled on them" (verse 10). He cut the Book of the Law in pieces and burnt them. He killed thousands of Jews, including the priests who taught the Law. He became great enough to challenge the Prince of the host (God), he took control of the temple, stopped the regular burnt offerings, and truth was thrown to the ground.

Daniel sought to understand this vision, and the angel Gabriel told him that the vision pointed to *the appointed time of the end* (8:19). That is, beyond the type, Antiochus, to the time of the antitype, the Antichrist. At the latter end of their reign, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face will arise (verse 23). He will cause fearful destruction and will succeed and do whatever he wants, destroying mighty people, the saints. He will even take a stand against the Prince of princes (the Messiah).

Both Antiochus and Antichrist try to abolish true religion and the people of God. For Antiochus it was the second-century BC Jews, for the Antichrist, it will be both Jews and Christians at the time of the end. Gabriel told Daniel the vision concerns 'the time of the end' (Dan 8:17, 19) and 'the distant future' (Dan 8:26). See also 'At the time of the end' (Dan 11:40, 12:4, 9) and 'the end of days' (Dan 12:13). Chapters 8-12 all climax with events of the distant future; the Antichrist's persecution of the saints, the Abomination that causes Desolation, the death of the Antichrist, and the resurrection.

The little horn Daniel saw “will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time” (Dan 7:25). A Greek king of bold face becomes very strong, but not by his own power, and he causes astounding devastation and destroys the saints. He causes deceit to prosper, considers himself superior, and takes his stand against the Prince of princes, the Messiah (Dan 8:24-25). In chapter 9 The same person will confirm a covenant with many for seven years and in the middle of the seven years, he will put an end to sacrifice and offering at the temple and set up the Abomination that causes Desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (Dan 9:27). Paul calls him ‘the man of lawlessness’ who “will oppose and exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thess 2:4). John calls him the beast: “The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. It was given the power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation” (Rev 13:5-7). All of this relates to the Antichrist in the last days before Christ returns.

Antiochus put an end to temple worship in 166 BC by profaning the altar and setting up an image of Jupiter in the temple. Antichrist will set up an image of himself in the temple and declare himself to be God. This is the ‘transgression that makes desolate’ that Antiochus set up, and which the Antichrist will set up, which Jesus warned us about: “So when you see standing in the Holy Place the Abomination that causes Desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel - let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:15-16).

When the Antichrist pitches his royal tents near Mount Zion, he will come to his end, and no one will help him (Dan 11:44). He is captured at the return of the Messiah and thrown directly into hell (Rev 19:20). Compare Daniel 7:11 where the beast is slain and its body destroyed and thrown into a blazing fire.

## Israel's seventy sevens

*Daniel 9:24-26*

After Israel had been in exile for seventy years, Gabriel told Daniel that a period of seventy sevens was decreed concerning *Israel and Jerusalem* to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. This prophecy is given to Daniel to give him an outline of the future history of Israel and Jerusalem. Wickedness was atoned for when the Messiah was crucified, everlasting righteousness will be brought in when the Messiah returns (the millennium), and the Most Holy Place will be anointed when the millennial temple is built. The seventy sevens are interpreted as seventy times seven years. Sixty-nine sevens finished during Jesus' last days on Earth in 30 or 33 AD, and the final seven will precede the return of the Messiah.

The seventy sevens are divided into periods of seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. Week and seven are the same word in Hebrew, so some translation speak of seventy weeks. There are three periods, 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. The first period started with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. A decree was made by Artaxerxes, king of Persia in 458 BC (Ezra 7:13, 21), allowing Ezra to go and restore Jerusalem and the temple worship. Subtracting 458 years from the 483 years (69 sevens) takes us to 25 AD, about the time when the Messiah began his ministry. There are complications in trying to work out the exact dates. Prophetic months are 30 days and prophetic years are 360 days. The year zero doesn't exist and Jesus was born in 5 BC according to the current dating system.

Gabriel said that after the 69 weeks, an anointed one (presumably the Messiah) would be *cut off* and have nothing. Jesus was crucified and left no descendants or kingdom; only a bunch of disciples who were called Christians.

The people of the prince who is to come, the little horn of Daniel 7, are the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 70 AD. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews resulted in an interlude in the seventy sevens, which is now approaching 2000 years. The final seven is a

time when “he (the Antichrist) will confirm a covenant with *many* for one seven” (Dan 9:27). In the middle of the week, he will set up the Abomination that causes Desolation, and then for the second half of the week (3 ½ years), he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.

The connection between the seven sevens, the sixty-two sevens, and the one seven is not clear, but it seems clear that the final week is the last week of this age, followed by the coming of the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. The seventy weeks concern Israel and Jerusalem, and only when a new temple is built in Jerusalem will the seventy sevens be complete. The Most Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, was the rear room of the temple, a cube that was made sacred by God’s presence. The anointing or consecration of the Most Holy Place will occur when the Lord returns and his glory fills the temple in the restored Jerusalem. Ezekiel heard a voice speaking to him from the temple saying, “Son of Man ... this is where my throne is, where I place the soles of my feet, and where I will dwell among the Israelis forever” (Ezek 43:5-7). The prophecies of Matt 24:30, the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven, Ezek 43:4-7, the return of the glory of the Lord to the temple in Jerusalem, Zech 12:10-12, the conversion and mourning of Israel, all describe the same event, the return of the Messiah to rule over his people Israel in the new world.

The last week will come like a flood (Dan 9:26) with much destruction and ruin. A new world empire, a successor of the previous Roman empire, will suddenly result from worldwide warfare and the rise of the Antichrist, who will take over by deposing three of the ten world leaders. This is the final week of this age described in Revelation 6-18. The week is divided into two halves, each variously described as a time, times, and half a time, three and a half years, 42 months, or 1260 days. He will confirm a covenant (alliance) with many (the majority) for seven years. This agreement may involve the temple mount (Mt Zion) which is at the center of the Middle Eastern dispute, and it may allow Muslims, Christians, and Jews to worship at a new multi-faith temple. But in the middle of the seven, the Antichrist will set up an idolatrous system of his own worship, putting an end to Jewish sacrifice and offering.

Revelation 13 enlightens us about this obscure passage. The False Prophet orders the inhabitants of the Earth to set up an image in honor

of the beast. He will give breath to the image of the Antichrist and enable it to speak and cause all who refuse to worship the Antichrist to be killed. They will not be allowed to buy or sell without his mark on their body. This Abomination that causes Desolation was mentioned by Jesus as a sign of the end. He linked it with a period of great tribulation, greater than any that had occurred since the beginning of the world. Paul speaks about the man of lawlessness who will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship so that he takes his seat in the temple of God (2 Thess 2:4). He warned them that the rapture and resurrection would not happen before this man of lawlessness appeared. These end-of-age prophecies given by Jesus, John, and Paul confirm that the seventieth week spoken of by Daniel belongs to the end-time, and is to be equated with the Great Tribulation events described in Revelation.

## **The great war that leads to Antichrist's death**

*Daniel 11:36-45*

Daniel 10-12 is a single vision that Daniel had concerning *a great war*. Daniel was so disturbed by the vision that he mourned and fasted for three weeks. An angel appeared to him to help him understand what would happen to his people Israel *in the latter days* (Dan 10:14). So the vision as a whole is about a great war in the latter days, Armageddon, the ultimate war in chapter 11. The enemy in vs 13, 20, is a territorial spirit who has authority over the Persian kingdom. He will support Iran in the last days in their publicly declared desire to destroy Israel. Paul tells us (Eph 6) that our struggle is against rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. Some of the angels that fell were powerful territorial spirits who are now aligned with Satan.

Daniel was given prophecies about the Ptolemaic kings and the Seleucid kings and the wars and intrigues between Syria (North) and Egypt (South) which included Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a type of the



Antichrist who set up an Abomination that causes Desolation in the Jewish temple in 167 BC (Dan 11:31).

However, beginning from Daniel 11:31, what is said about the type applies also to the Antichrist in the latter days. He does as he pleases, exalts and magnifies himself above every god, and speaks astonishing things against the God of gods (Dan 7:25, 2 Thess 2:4). He will prosper until the indignation, God's anger against his people, is accomplished

He pays no attention to the gods of his fathers (the Greek pantheon) or the one beloved by women (Adonis). He honors the god of fortresses; war and military power. An atheist and a humanist, he trusts in his abilities and his weapons, modern nuclear weapons. Antiochus honored the Greek pantheon and put a statue of Zeus in the temple, whereas Antichrist will take his seat in the temple making himself out to be God.

He will attack the strongest fortresses (nuclear powers) with the help of a foreign god of which his ancestors knew nothing. He will honor those who acknowledge him and make them rulers over many people, and he will distribute the land at a price. He will have authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation (Rev 13:7).

The great war that is the main focus of the vision is then described (Dan 11:40–12:1). It occurs at *the time of the end* and no longer refers to Antiochus. This great war is the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:16). The angel told Daniel, “There will be a time of distress such has not happened from the beginning of nations until then” (Dan 12:1). Jesus referred to this (Matt 24) when he said, “For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again.” Jesus also said, “When you see standing in the Holy Place the Abomination that causes Desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” Daniel 11:40-45 is a description of the greatest of all wars the world has known which occurs immediately before Jesus' return.

From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the Abomination that causes Desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days” (Dan 12:11). This reference to Daniel 11:31 indicates that Daniel 11:31-45 speaks of the Great Tribulation, the final 3 ½ years before the Messiah returns.

The king who does as he pleases is the Antichrist who exalts and magnifies himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed (Dan 11:36).

At the end of the age, the king of the South (Egypt), who has the most powerful military in the Arab world, will engage the Antichrist in battle, probably because Islam and Babylon are incompatible, and the Antichrist (al-Masih ad-Dajjal in Arabic) claiming deity will be the last straw. Then the king of the North (Gog), will storm down against the Antichrist with land and naval forces. Gog is chief prince of Meshek and Tubal and comes from the far North (Russia). Persia, Sudan, and Libya are allied with him together with many nations. He will invade many countries and sweep through them including Israel. Many countries will fall, but not Edom, Moab, and Ammon (= Jordan) which may be the wilderness to where many in Israel will find refuge (Rev 12:14, Matt 24:16). He will extend his power over many countries and Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of Egypt's gold and silver and her hidden treasures (gas and oil) with Libya and Sudan 'in his steps/train,' supporting him. Gog is disturbed by news coming from the East and the North, the Asian hordes, numbering 200 million, approaching from the Euphrates River (Rev 9:14-16, 16:12). He will set out in great rage to destroy and annihilate many.

All the nations of the world (Ezek 38:4-6, Rev 16:14, 19:19), including the West (Ezek 38:13), will be involved, and a third of mankind will be killed in the ensuing battle of Armageddon. This massive war is described after the sixth trumpet is sounded (Rev 9:13-21), and the sixth bowl of wrath is poured out (Rev 16:12-16). Jerusalem is captured but Gog's forces die near Jerusalem and are buried there (Ezek 39:3-6, Zech 14:1-4). At that time there will be a great earthquake in Israel and all the people on the face of the Earth will tremble. Mountains will overturn, cliffs will crumble, and every wall will fall to the ground. There will be torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur falling on Gog's troops.

This battle is God's judgment on the nations as described by Joel, "Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side. Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, trample the grapes, for the

winepress is full and the vats overflow – so great is their wickedness ... The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the heavens will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel” (Joel 3:12-16). Compare Revelation 14:17-20: “Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, “Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the Earth’s vine because its grapes are ripe.” The angel swung his sickle on the Earth, gathered its grapes, and threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses’ bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.” Even those who remain at home will not escape. “I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the Lord.” (Ezek 39:6).

“He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him” (Dan 11:45). This verse describes the end of Gog, not the Antichrist (Ezek 39:4-5, 11). Gog’s forces will be eaten by birds (Ezek 39:17-20, Rev 19:17-18). He will come to his end there with no one helping him (Ezek 39:4) and will be buried there in Israel (Ezek 39:11). Antichrist will be destroyed, but not by human power (Dan 8:25). “The Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming” (2 Thess 2:8, Rev 19:15, 20). Even in Islam, there is a tradition that Issa (Jesus) will return to destroy the Muslim Antichrist (al-Masih ad-Dajjal) in the last days.

## **The resurrection of the righteous following 3 1/2 years of tribulation**

*Daniel 12:1-13*

“At that time” (Dan 12:1), that is, at the end of the age (Dan 11:40) when the world ruler, the Antichrist, is putting down rebellion from

Egypt in Israel. Michael, the great archangel who is Israel's guardian, will arise and make his presence felt; he will come to deliver Israel. This is Israel's great time of trouble, and not only Israel; but the whole world, distress such as there has never been since the nations began (Mat 24:21). At this time Daniel's people (Israel) will be delivered; all whose names are written in the Book (the Lamb's Book of Life).

All Israel is to be saved at Jesus' return (Rom 11:26), but Daniel was concerned about the multitudes of his people who had died during the time of trouble. What is their destiny? The angel reminds him about resurrection, saying that *many* who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. The resurrection is presented as one event here, but John in Revelation differentiates the times of these resurrections. According to his vision, the wicked are not to be resurrected until the thousand years of the Messianic rule are ended (Rev 20:4-6). Blessed are those who share in the first resurrection, because they will reign with the Messiah during the millennium. For Daniel, it is blessed are the wise who turn many to righteousness for they will shine like the brightness of the sky and like the stars forever and ever. They will be glorified and live eternally in their immortal resurrection bodies. Jesus spoke about the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14, 20:35), thus differentiating it from the resurrection of the wicked.

Daniel is told to roll up the scroll and seal it (for safe-keeping) because the words won't be fully understood until the time of the end when world travel will be extensive and knowledge will be greatly increased.

A glorified being clothed in linen and having the appearance of a man had been revealing these things to Daniel (10:11-2:4), and now he sees two others, one on each side of the Tigris river. One of them said to the man dressed in linen who was in the air above the waters: "How long until the fulfillment of these wonders?" He swears on oath before these two witnesses saying that the shattering of the power of the holy people (God's people) would continue for three and a half years. That is, from the time when the Antichrist sets himself up as God in the temple until the Messiah returns and kills him. The Antichrist will wear down the saints (Dan 7:25), and he will be allowed to wage war against them and conquer them. Daniel would interpret these saints as

God's people Israel, but in fact, both Israel and the Church will be the victims in those days: believers of every tribe, people, language, and nation (Rev 13:7).

We are not told what proportion of the saints will be martyred, but it sounds horrendous. Daniel heard but didn't understand. Maybe he was in shock. He was told to go his way because the words were sealed until the time of the end. Prophecy is not fully comprehensible until the time of the prophesied events draws near.

Many will purify themselves and be refined by being faithful to God during times of persecution and evildoers will continue to do evil and the filthy to be filthy (Dan 12:10, Rev 22:11). The wicked won't understand the signs of the times, but when the Antichrist arises, the righteous will understand what is happening and know that the Messiah's return is imminent. It may have been the Messiah who revealed to Daniel the details about the end of the age and the eventual victory of God's people, but the Messiah's role is not revealed to him.

The tribulation period will last for three and a half years, from the time the offerings are stopped and the abomination that makes desolate is set up. That would be 1260 days according to the prophetic year of 360 days, but the half may not be precise. 1290 days is a month more than expected. As for those who wait for and arrive at 1335 days, they are blessed. As usual, we should think about Israel here and not the Church, which will be resurrected at Jesus' return. An event that happens soon after the Messiah's return is the conversion of Israel when the Messiah pours out the Holy Spirit upon the whole nation (Ezek 39:25-29, Joel 2:27-32, Zech 12:10). These extra forty-five days may be time to give Jews in foreign lands time to return to Israel. "I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind" (Ezek 39:28).

## **Have the following details all been mentioned?**

Daniel prophesied about these things: the king who does as he wills and exalts himself above every god, and speaks astonishing things against the God of gods. This is the great rebellion, as he mobilizes the whole world against God and his people. Empowered by Satan, he will deceive all who are perishing so that they will be condemned because

they did not believe. Jesus spoke of the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (Mat 24:15). He not only opposes God, he leads the world in open rebellion against God, making them take his mark on their bodies and worshipping him. Daniel said he would speak words against the Most High and wear out the saints of the Most High (Dan 7:25) while Psalm 2:1-2 says: “Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed.” That is the world rebellion that will occur during the time of the great tribulation. The early church, with its high percentage of Jewish believers, knew about these OT prophecies. They are even more important for us as the day draws nearer.

Before the Antichrist rises to fame, there will be ten rulers and a worldwide coalition of nations. The Antichrist will defeat three of the leaders and then become the sole leader. He may enter into a seven-year agreement with Israel allowing them to build a temple, only to break the treaty halfway through (Dan 9:27). He will take his seat in God’s temple in Jerusalem and exalt himself above every god or idol. He will be empowered by Satan to execute false signs and wonders by which he will deceive unbelievers. He will cause everyone to be marked on their body in allegiance to him, and without the mark, they will not be able to buy or sell anything. In this way, he will decimate the church and any others who dare to put their religion first. The cowards of the world will follow him like sheep to the slaughter. All these things must happen before the Lord returns.