

The Prophetic Time Periods in Daniel and Revelation

JOHN CUNNINGHAM

I. INTRODUCTION

Our purpose is to discuss the several passages in Daniel and Revelation which mention time periods in connection with prophesied events. Students of Bible prophecy have long been interested in these time markers and have labored to interpret them.

Most of us are aware that there are several distinct general approaches to biblical prophecy. The Preterist view sees prophecy as having significance only for the time in which the prophecy was given and is the view most associated with liberal theology. The historicist believes that prophecy particularly in Daniel, Revelation and the Olivet discourse gives us a summary of world history from the first century up to the time of the second advent. The futurist believes that fulfillment of Bible prophecy is confined mostly to the time of the end of this age.

It goes without saying that these views cannot all be correct. Our purpose will be to examine in context the time periods mentioned in Daniel and Revelation, for we believe that these passages contain definite keys which will help us decide which of the rival schools of interpretation is correct. We will examine them in the order in which they appear in Scripture and then we will attempt to synthesize all of the material into a connected account of the events covered by the different passages.

The following is a summary of the time periods:

1. Daniel 7:25. The little horn persecutes the saints of the Most High for time, times, and half a time.
2. Daniel 8:13-14. The sanctuary will be trodden down for two thousand three hundred days.
3. Daniel 9:24-27. The seventy weeks prophecy.
4. Daniel 12:7. As in Daniel 7:25 the holy people are completely shattered during a period of time, times, and half a time.
5. Daniel 12:11. The period during which the abomination of desolation and the ending of the daily sacrifices takes place is one thousand two hundred and ninety days.
6. Daniel 12:12. One thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.
7. Revelation 11:2. Gentiles will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.
8. Revelation 11:3. The two witnesses are to prophecy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.
9. Revelation 12:6. The woman flees into the wilderness for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.
10. Revelation 12:14. The woman is nourished in the wilderness for a time, times and half a time.
11. Revelation 13:5. The beast is given authority for forty-two months.

It is immediately obvious that a number of these passages contain identical or nearly identical time markings. Time, times and half a time is mentioned three times. Forty-two months, mentioned twice, and one thousand two hundred and sixty days are the same length of time and both are very close to the two periods mentioned in Daniel 12, one thousand two hundred and ninety days, and one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. It is likely therefore that all of these passages refer to the same period of time.

We will test that assumption as we examine each period in context but before we do there is one other question that we must deal with now. Adherents of the historicist view of prophecy, already mentioned, believe in what is called the “year-day theory.” This states that a day in prophecy is equal to a year in the actual fulfillment of that prophecy. So the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of Revelation 12:6 is actually one thousand two hundred and sixty years in fulfillment. The

same assumption is made about all the other passages of Scripture we will be looking at today.

Two passages of Scripture are quoted by historicists in proof of this theory, Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5. The first is a prediction by God that Israel would have to wander in the wilderness for a total period of forty years, each year of the wandering corresponding to each day the spies searched the land of Canaan. This passage gives no support to the year-day notion, however, for the actual prediction was literally fulfilled. Forty years was the period of the prophecy and forty years was the period of the wandering. Were we to apply the day for a year principle here, Israel would have had to wander in the wilderness for fourteen thousand four hundred years. They would still be there wandering around in the Sinai peninsula.

There is a similar problem about Ezekiel 4:5. The prophet was instructed to lie on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, each day corresponding to a year of the iniquity of the house of Israel. Then he was to lie on his right side for forty days, and again a day corresponded to a year of the iniquity of the house of Judah. Once again the period was literally fulfilled. Ezekiel did not lie on one side for three hundred and ninety years and then on the other side for forty years.

The two proof text passages do not support the year-day principle. It is noteworthy that every fulfilled prophecy to which a time period is connected was fulfilled literally as stated. The “year-day” principle is completely absent. Israel was afflicted for “four hundred years,” not one hundred and forty-six thousand years (Gen. 15:13). The Lord Jesus was in the tomb for three days, not three years.¹

There is no passage of Scripture where the word “day” ever means a “year.” The year-day theory is only that — a theory which is unproved and unprovable and which, if applied to prophecies already fulfilled, would yield absurd conclusions.

II. THE LITTLE HORN AND THE SAINTS

We will now deal with each of these passages in the order in which they appear in Scripture. This is the way in which they are presented to us by the Spirit of God and we feel that a gradual unfolding of the truth

¹ For a detailed discussion of the history and refutation of the year-day interpretation see S. P. Tregelles, *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, Chelmsford, UK: Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, 8th ed., first pub. 1852, 112.

is the best way to gain an overall grasp of what is being said. Daniel had a vision of four beasts rising out of the Mediterranean Sea one after the other.² The first resembled a lion and it had eagle's wings. The second looked like a bear with three ribs between its teeth. The third was like a leopard and it had four wings on its back. The fourth beast was like nothing Daniel had ever seen before and was the most terrifying of all. It had ten horns and it trampled down the three other beasts with impunity.³

A description of the coronation of the Son of Man follows in verses 9-14 and the fourth beast is destroyed and given up to fiery destruction. The Son of Man is then given dominion over the whole earth.

An explanation of the vision is then given to Daniel. The four beasts are four kingdoms or kings which are to arise, but the saints of the Most High are to take over their kingdom and reign forever. The beasts are not identified and the vast majority regard them as the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. Several features of the narrative in this chapter, however, show that the traditional understanding of the prophecy must be suspect.

Firstly, two of these four kingdoms were already in existence. Babylon was actually about to fall to the Medo-Persian Empire which had already been in existence for some time. Secondly, nothing in the history of these kingdoms corresponds with the vision. The humanizing of Nebuchadnezzar recorded in Daniel 4 applied only to him and was certainly not repeated in the empire as a whole. The third beast is commonly held to be the Grecian Empire and the four heads the four divisions into which that empire was divided after Alexander's death, but as several writers have pointed out the third kingdom is already equipped with four heads when it appears. This was certainly not the case with the Greek Empire.⁴

² The Great Sea mentioned in Daniel 7:2 is a common biblical name for the Mediterranean as shown by the following verses: Numbers 34:6, 7; Joshua 1:4; 9:1; 15:12, 47; 23:4; Ezekiel 47:10, 15, 19, 20; 48:28. This is an indication that the prophecy is to find fulfillment in events which take place in that region. See the discussion in *The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel* by G. H. Lang, London: Paternoster, 1950, 78-80.

³ This is the most natural way of understanding the "residue" (KJV, NKJV) of Daniel 7:7. See the *Companion Bible*, 1198.

⁴ See Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, Glasgow and Edinburgh: Pickering and Inglis, n.d., 11th ed., 274; Lang, 80; C. G. Ozanne, *The Fourth Gentile Kingdom*, England: H. E. Walter Ltd., 1982, 33.

Verse 12 mentions that the first three beasts are allowed an extension of life in the judgment which takes place before the Kingdom is established. Advocates of the traditional interpretation of this chapter cannot explain this as the empires of Babylon, Persia and Greece have long since passed away whereas here they are shown to be existing at the end of the age. They cannot, therefore, be identified with the beasts in this chapter.

Finally, all four of the beasts appear as part of one composite beast in Revelation 13 in an eschatological context. Plainly all four of these beasts are contemporary with one another and play a part in the events at the end of the age.

The remainder of Daniel 7 is taken up with the explanation of the nature and activities of the fourth beast. There is an exact correspondence between Daniel's request for an explanation recorded in verses 19-22 and the explanation he is given in verses 23-27. The ten horns on the beast seen as it rises represent a confederation of ten unnamed kings. Comparison with the ten toes of the image in Daniel 2 and the references in Revelation 13:1 and 17:3 show that these horns are contemporary. There is no case at all for regarding them as successive kingdoms arising out of the Roman Empire or any other empire in history. The little horn who speaks blasphemies against the Most High and persecutes His saints rises after these ten do and proceeds to gain dominion over them, conquering three of them by force.

The main characteristics of the little horn's career are that he speaks blasphemies against God, intends to change times and laws, and wars against the saints for a time, times, and half a time. The Chaldean word translated "times" is to be taken in a dual sense meaning "two times," the whole expression meaning three and one half times. This is certainly the meaning of the corresponding Hebrew expression in Daniel 12:7.⁵ A comparison of verse 22 and verse 25 shows that the period of three and a half times ends with the coming of the Ancient of Days and the giving over of the kingdom to the saints. Historicist interpretations of this usually place the termination of the three and a half times in 1870 when the temporal power of the papacy was brought to an end, but this simply does not fit. The three and a half times terminate at the coming of Christ

⁵ Some languages such as Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic have a dual number as well as singular and plural. The Hebrew of Daniel 12:7 uses the dual number in the word "times" hence meaning two times. Although not used in the Chaldean passage before us it is certainly to be inferred. Lang, 92.

and unless we are prepared to argue that this is going on now, we must regard the fulfillment of this whole passage as something which lies in the future.

Most Bible students are agreed that a "time" is simply a year. The Septuagint rendered the expression "seven times" in chapter 4 (vv. 16, 23, 25, 32) of Daniel as "seven years" and Josephus did the same. That it does certainly mean a year is proved by the reference in Revelation 13:5 where the same power is described and the duration of the period allotted to him is forty-two months (three and a half years).

The length of the year in question is derived from the Jewish calendar. It consists of a year of 360 days, that is a year of twelve 30-day months. A careful reading of the flood narrative shows that such a calendar was normal at that time. Revelation 12:6, 14 shows that time, times and half a time is equivalent to 1260 days.

III. THE LITTLE HORN AND THE SANCTUARY

The eighth chapter of Daniel also records the activities of a little horn, and we need to establish from the outset if this horn is the same as the little horn in Daniel 7 or some other figure. Most interpreters take them to be different. Daniel 8 is usually regarded as a prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled in 167 BC.

Several verses in this chapter show that the prophecy is about the end of the age. "The vision belongs to the time of the end" (v. 17). "I will make you know what shall be in the latter time of the indignation; for at the time appointed the end shall be" (v. 19). "And in the latter time of their Kingdom when the transgressors are come to the full" (v. 23). "Shut up the vision for it belongs to many days to come" (v. 26).

The identity of the little horn of chapter seven with the little horn of chapter eight has been recognized by a number of writers. Both horns exist at the same time, the end of the age. Both speak blasphemies against God and persecute God's people. Both overthrow divine laws, the little horn of chapter 7 "thinking to change times and laws," while the little horn of chapter 8 takes away the daily sacrifice and defiles the sanctuary by means of the "transgression of desolation." The career of both is terminated by the arrival of the Kingdom of God. One writer who advocated the identity of these two horns was S. P. Tregelles who wrote: "The non-identity of the two would involve difficulties of the greatest

magnitude — so great that the supposition may be regarded as a moral impossibility.”⁶

The geographical origin of the little horn is clearly set forth in this chapter. He comes out of one of the four divisions of the Greek Empire. Verse 23 indicates that the four kingdoms are to have a latter-day significance and it is most likely that they are the same as the four beasts in Daniel 7. The description of the little horn in this chapter and in Daniel 11 shows that he arises out of the Syrian division of the Greek Empire, Iraq today.

The following is a summary of the activities of the little horn:

1. From obscure beginnings he achieves power and expands his influence towards Palestine, Persia and Egypt.

2. He exalts himself against the people of Israel and destroys many of them.

3. He goes even further and puts himself on a level with God, here called the Prince of the Host.

4. An army commissioned by him puts a stop to the daily sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem.

5. Associated with the ending of the sacrifices will be the transgression of desolation.

6. The period of time from the ending of the sacrifices and the placing of the transgression of desolation to the cleansing of the sanctuary will be two thousand, three hundred days.

Since these events are to take place in the last days, historicist interpretations of the 2300 days are ruled out of the question. But what period is actually indicated by this expression? We have to confess that we have the greatest difficulty in reconciling this period with the other time-periods under consideration. The expression translated “days” is “evenings, mornings” and most take this to refer to days. On this view the whole period lasts for a little over six years. As we will see later, other passages seem to indicate that the period from the ending of the daily sacrifices to the cleansing of the sanctuary will actually last for three and a half years. This has led to a number of different suggestions for harmonizing these passages.

⁶ *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, 83. See also Ozanne, 37.

Some suggest that the whole period of 2300 days covers just over six years of the seven years of the final week of the seventy weeks prophecy which we will examine next. This, however, seems contrary to verses 13 and 14 which gives the ending of the sacrifices and the cleansing of the sanctuary as two termini of the period.

Others place the commencement of the 2300 days in the middle of the seventieth week and say that the cleansing of the sanctuary will take place about three years after the beginning of the Millennium. But this contradicts Daniel 9:24 which places the anointing of the Holy Place or sanctuary right at the end of the seventy weeks.

A third suggestion is that “evening, morning” is to be taken as each occasion on which a daily sacrifice was offered. Since there were two sacrifices each day, one in the morning and one in the evening, the period of time in question is 1150 days, a little over 3 years. Those who advocate this view believe that the Jews will recover the sanctuary near the end of the tribulation period and cleanse it.

No final solution to this passage is possible with our present state of knowledge. The events of the period are clear enough but we will have to wait for the meaning of the 2300 days.

IV. THE SEVENTY WEEKS

The Seventy Weeks prophecy is the most interesting and controversial passage we are discussing and we do not have time to explore all of its complexities. Our purpose will be to show the relationship between it and all of the other passages under consideration.

There is general agreement between historicists and futurists that the “weeks” of Daniel 9:24 are weeks of years, hence that the prophecy spans a period of four hundred and ninety years. The Hebrew word translated “week” is *shabua*, “a seven,” which could be a seven of weeks, days, hours or years. The context in Daniel clearly indicates that a week of years is in view. The word *shabua* occurs again in chapter 10 where it is joined with the word for “days” (Dan. 10:2).

The Seventy Weeks prophecy is divided into three distinct periods: seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. The first seven weeks — a period of forty-nine years — is undoubtedly the period covered by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The city was rebuilt during that time in the midst of many troubles. The Messiah is to appear at the conclusion of the period of the sixty-two weeks, i.e. four hundred and eighty-three years

after the command to rebuild Jerusalem. Proof that this was fulfilled exactly, probably to the very day, will be found in various books.⁷ Time will not allow us to explore this most interesting and vital fulfillment of prophecy. We will concentrate on the events of the seventieth week for it is here that the various schools of prophetic interpretation clash. Our contention is that the events of the seventieth week have never been fulfilled in history and that they relate to the time of the end. This final week provides us with essential data to link together all of the prophetic time periods.

The futurity of the seventieth week is proved by the following considerations:

1. At least one event is said to take place after the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week. The cutting off of the Messiah will occur “after the sixty-two weeks.” This fact clearly indicates a break between week sixty-nine and week seventy. Most futurists also place the destruction of Jerusalem between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks.

2. The Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy clearly places the central event of the seventieth week, the Abomination of Desolation, in his future.

3. The events connected here with the seventieth week are mentioned in other contexts which clearly belong to the end of the age. Prominent in these passages are the time periods we are discussing.

4. Daniel 9:24 mentions several predictions concerning the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem which have never been fulfilled as far as that nation is concerned. Individual Jews have, of course, entered into the blessings described here but it is not individuals which are in view. Verse 24 refers to the period of national repentance and cleansing as predicted in passages such as Zechariah 12:10-14; 13:1. The last of these blessings is the anointing of the Most Holy. The Hebrew here refers to a Most Holy place, the millennial sanctuary described in detail by Ezekiel.

The prince who shall come (v. 26) has already been mentioned by Daniel in chapters seven and eight under the title “the little horn.” Daniel’s readers are thus prepared for a further description of him. His people will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Daniel has already told us that the armies of the little horn will put a stop to the daily sacrifice and

⁷ Notably consider Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince*, 88-105.

desolate the sanctuary (Dan. 8:12) and as we will see later other passages confirm and amplify this statement. We see no reason to apply this prophecy to the events of 70 AD. It is fully consistent with other eschatological prophecies.

The American Standard Version renders the next sentence as follows: “his end shall be with a flood,” referring to the coming prince. This could not possibly apply to Titus in 70 AD nor to anyone else in the intervening period. The final part of the verse predicts that there will be war to the end. The word “end” provides yet another link among the various passages we are considering. It has occurred several times in chapter eight and we will see it yet again in Daniel.

Who is the one who confirms a covenant with many for one week? Some say this refers to the Lord Jesus and they apply the ending of the daily sacrifices to his sacrificial death on the cross bringing an end to the sacrificial system of ancient Israel. But Jesus did not make a covenant with anyone for any period of time. The maker of the covenant is the coming prince, the little horn of chapters seven and eight.

The nature of the agreement between the prince and the “many” is not mentioned in Daniel but the fact that the sudden termination of the daily sacrifices and the placing of the abomination of desolation occurs halfway through the period of the treaty has led many to speculate that the agreement could have something to do with the restoration of Temple worship in Jerusalem.

Whatever the reason, three and a half years into the seven-year period the daily sacrifices are suspended (as recorded also in Dan. 8:11-12) and “on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate” (9:27). This is the second time in Daniel that the abomination of desolation has been mentioned and we encounter it again in chapters 11 and 12, and in the Olivet prophecy where the placement of it in the Temple becomes the signal for God’s people to flee to the mountains. Associated with this abomination is the destruction of the city (v. 26) and from this time forward to the end of the seventy weeks there will be a period of war and desolation (v. 26).

What is the meaning of Abomination of Desolation? The Hebrew word translated “abomination” is one which has reference to idolatry and therefore points to an idol of some kind placed as stated in verse 27 on a wing of the Temple. Such an idol would of course render the Temple “desolate” and unsuitable for divine worship until cleansed. Since this occurs in the middle of the seventieth week, there yet remains three and

a half years until the end of the period and the ushering in of the blessings described in verse 24.

V. THE KING OF THE NORTH AND THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

The three passages we have looked at so far are united in describing the activities of a king who is to arise at the end of the age and who will persecute God's people after putting a stop to Temple worship. A common vocabulary binds the passages together in such a remarkable way that it is difficult to see how anyone could fail to see that the same period and the same events are in view.

Daniel's final revelation in chapters 11 and 12 gives a detailed and continuous account of these same events placed in the context of the political relations and wars between — in modern terms — Iraq and Egypt, in what is perhaps the most remarkable prophecy of the end times to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. Most interpreters regard the account of the wars between the King of the North and the King of the South as having been fulfilled long ago in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic wars which took place between the break-up of Alexander's kingdom and the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC. If they see the end of the age here at all it begins in verse 36 and continues until Daniel 12:3.

There are, however, compelling reasons for regarding most of this chapter as a prophecy of the end of the age. The angel who revealed this matter to Daniel said that the message concerned the "latter days" (Dan. 10:14), a Scripture expression for the period of time before and during the second coming of Christ. The Lord Jesus, in his Olivet prophecy, places the events of verse 31 in the future. His reference to the abomination of desolation in Matthew and Mark is taken directly from this verse and its companion. The parallel passage in Luke reflects the fact that it is the army of the king of the north who will place the abomination in the Temple. Daniel 8 also distinctly predicts this event, as we have seen.

It does not make any sense to read this chapter as if it predicted a succession of kings of the north and south. Read as a continuous narrative, without preconceptions, the passage mentions only three kings of the north — the first in verses 5-19, the second in verse 20 and the third in verses 21 to the end of the chapter. Verse 29 provides us with information showing that verses 21-45 deal with one individual king for it mentions three distinct occasions in which the king of the north invades Egypt. The first is recorded in verse 25, the second in verse 29, and the third is at the end of the chapter in verse 40.

The key event in this chapter is undoubtedly the placing of the abomination of desolation in the Temple and the removal of the daily sacrifices, already predicted in Daniel 8 and 9. Note that it is the armies of the king of the North who carry out these events. It is important to note that the chronological indications in Daniel 12 are measured from this event. Daniel 12:7 reflects chapter 7 where the little horn wears out the saints for “time, times and half a time” — three and a half years. Daniel 12:11 shows that from the events of Daniel 11:31 to the time of the end will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. That is a period thirty days in excess of the three and a half years, further evidence that Daniel 11 must be read as a prophecy of the end-time.

The remainder of the chapter is taken up with the activities of God’s people, made strong at that time (v. 32), and the final military exploits of the king of the North and his doom.

Since verse 32 is yet future, we cannot identify the people “who know their God” as the Maccabees. This part of the prophecy is clearly paralleled in the Olivet prophecy where Christ predicts the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all the world and the persecution of his people. An eschatological preaching of the gospel is also predicted in Isaiah 40, Isaiah 52 and Joel 2, and it forms part of the background of 2 Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians also mentions the Man of Sin, who enters the Temple and proclaims himself to be God. Paul’s prediction is taken partly from Daniel 11:35 and partly from Daniel 8, Isaiah 10, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. This manifestation in the Temple seems to come sometime after the placing of the image in the Temple.

The king of the North is finally destroyed after gaining a final victory over Egypt. His end at the battle of Armageddon is described in detail in Revelation 16-19.

The remaining period, one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days, clearly overlaps with the one thousand two hundred and ninety days, but since we are not told the terminus it is fruitless to speculate; we know only that it will be a time of blessing.

VI. THE TWO WITNESSES

We come now to the remaining time indicators which are found clustered into three chapters of Revelation. The chapters give views from different perspectives of what is happening during the same period of time. The first passage is Revelation 11, which describes the activities of

two witnesses who prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. In 11:2 we read that the Gentiles will tread down the holy city for forty-two months.

This connects us with the treading down in Daniel 8. In view of the context it is most likely that the measuring of the Temple in verse 1 is a measuring for destruction. This symbolic action can mean either measuring for preservation (as in Zechariah 2) or measuring for destruction (as in Ezekiel 9). The two witnesses are clearly latter-day counterparts of Joshua and Zerubbabel. Verse 4 explicitly links them with Zechariah 4 where Joshua and Zerubbabel are represented as two olive trees. The treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles is clearly the second three and a half year period of Daniel's seventieth week.

The ministry of the witnesses occurs during the same period of time and we can understand the wild rejoicing which takes place at the end of the three and a half year period when the beast is finally given power over them and they are killed. The rejoicing is short lived, however, for the witnesses are resurrected and caught up into the clouds in what seems to be the first resurrection (1 Thes. 4).

VII. THE SAINTS IN THE WILDERNESS

The Temple is only one of two main subjects of the activities of the little horn/king of the north, the other being the persecution of God's people mentioned prominently in Daniel 7, 8, 11 and 12. It lasts for three and a half years, the last half of Daniel's seventieth week, and is therefore concurrent with the desolation of the Temple and the blasphemous placement of the abomination of desolation.

Revelation chapter 12 deals with the woman in heaven, the birth of Christ and his ascension to heaven, and the subsequent persecution of the woman and her seed. The woman is clearly a symbol for Israel, her description taken from the symbolism of Joseph's dream recorded in Genesis 37:9. She brings forth the Man-child, opposed by the dragon whose description matches that of the Beast in the very next chapter. The dragon fails in his attempts to destroy Christ, who ascends to heaven. The woman then flees into the wilderness to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or time, times and a half (vv. 6 and 14).

The event which brings about the persecution of the woman and her flight into the wilderness is a war in heaven between Satan and his angels and the archangel Michael and his angels. Satan is defeated and cast to the earth with great fury. His time is short thereafter and he uses it to

animate the Beast power and persecute those Christians who could not flee into the wilderness.

VIII. THE BEAST

Revelation 13 opens with Satan standing on the sand of the sea. Some texts read "I stood on the sand of the sea" but it is more likely that the correct reading is "he stood," referring to Satan the dragon. It is as if he calls his chosen instrument out of the sea. The description given to the Beast in this chapter is drawn from Daniel chapter seven. He is a composite of the four beasts, with seven heads and ten horns. Daniel shows us these beasts separately but makes it clear that the fourth beast treads down the three other beasts, thus preparing us for Revelation 13. This is a description of the little horn/king of the north during the last half of the seventieth week. Here again he makes war with the saints (v. 7), thus carrying out the will of the dragon whom he closely resembles. His power is limited to forty-two months or three and a half years. His power is finally broken by the return of Christ and he will meet his ignominious end in the lake of fire (Revelation 19).

The figure of the second beast is a new element in the events of the last days. He has not appeared before in Daniel. Like the first beast, he too is a man, called the false prophet in Revelation 19, and he directs worship toward the first beast. He makes an image of the first beast and this is probably the image which is placed in the Temple as described in Daniel. In some mysterious way he is able to make the image speak and declare that those who refuse to worship the beast should be killed. He will perform amazing miracles and will force all in the kingdom of the beast to receive a mark on the forehead or the hand.

IX. SUMMARY

We will now attempt to summarize all of the chapters we have considered.

Four kingdoms will arise out of the area of the eastern Mediterranean Sea. These four kingdoms will probably occupy the same geographical area as the four divisions of the Greek Empire after the death of Alexander. They are contemporary with one another even though they arise one after the other. The fourth kingdom will be an alliance of ten kingdoms and will be characterized by extreme brutality.

Some time after the appearance of the four kingdoms another king will arise among the ten (horn/head) kingdoms comprising the fourth beast.

He will at first be an insignificant figure but by deceit and great intelligence he will establish himself as the ruler firstly of the fourth kingdom. He conquers three of the ten (horn/head) kingdoms and thereafter incorporates them with the other seven into his own kingdom. He will then conquer the other three kingdoms and incorporate them into a fearsome union, the final form of which is described in Revelation 12.

This man will be of great intelligence and understanding aided by supernatural power and will blaspheme God and set himself against God's people.

Seven years before the end of the age and the coming of Jesus Christ, he will enter into a treaty with the Jewish people. We are not told exactly what the treaty consists of but it is possible that it will sanction the conduct of Temple worship in Jerusalem.

Three and a half years after the making of the treaty dramatic changes take place, probably brought about by the casting down of Satan to the earth. The beast now assumes openly the Satanic character described in the passages we have looked at. His army invades Jerusalem and surrounds it with armies. They put a stop to the daily sacrifices in the Temple and place an image in part of the Temple.

Another figure now comes into the picture, called the false prophet. He will exercise all the authority of the beast and will himself be responsible for making the image placed in the Temple. All of this will be accompanied by amazing miracles which will cause the people of the earth to worship him. Several passages indicate that the beast will proclaim himself as deity and will at some point enter the Temple itself and claim to be God.

Then will commence a period of persecution against God's people the like of which has never occurred before and will never happen again. The bulk of the church living in Israel will obey the Lord's command to flee to the mountains and will for the remaining three and a half years of the tribulation be sustained miraculously in the wilderness. Believers living elsewhere within the reach of the beast will suffer persecution and martyrdom.

Despite the persecution God's people will receive power to witness and it is then that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world converting thousands. This is the period of the two witnesses who will themselves inflict plagues on those who worship the beast.

At the end of the three and a half year tribulation Christ will return in power from heaven and the beast and his followers will come to a violent

end as the seven last plagues are poured out on the evil empire. The resurrection of the dead will occur and the kingdom of God will finally be established on earth.

The last ten years have seen remarkable events taking place in the world and particularly in the Middle East, scene of the final drama during this period of man's misrule on earth. Israel has been established as a nation in unbelief as our forefathers foresaw a hundred and fifty years ago. Iraq has recently risen to the center of world news and precipitated a major war due to the activities of Saddam Hussein. Hussein believes himself to be a latter-day Nebuchadnezzar and has striven to imitate his famous predecessor by attempting the rebuilding of the city of Babylon.⁸ The political geography of the Middle East increasingly resembles the political geography of the ancient Near East. Many of us could live to witness the amazing events we have been surveying. It behooves us therefore to follow our Lord's command to watch and be ready for his coming.

⁸ See Charles H. Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon: Sign of the End Times*, Tyndale House Pub., 1991.