

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

by Russell H. Collins

PREFACE

The Book of Daniel contains prophetic visions that were recorded long in advance of the events predicted. It is accepted from the outset in these notes that the Book of Daniel is a book inspired by God, that Daniel really lived and occupied the positions and offices described in his book, and that the predictions recorded are true prophecies written centuries before their fulfillment, and completely beyond the possibility of being foreseen even in a general way by any human being.

Suffice it to say that the Book of Daniel was from early times received into the canon of the inspired Scriptures and has always been regarded by Jews and Christians as entitled to its place there. But, what is most important, there is the expressed testimony of the Lord Jesus to Daniel and his prophetic writing in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14.

In recent years a number of scholarly translations of the Scriptures and detailed study notes have been published bringing to light further information, and making it desirable to examine again the prophecies of Daniel, especially those that relate to *"the latter days"* (Daniel 10:14) and *"the time of the end."* (Daniel 12:9).

Many of the interpretations and applications of Daniel's prophecies offered are not original with me. I acknowledge my debt to a number of learned expositors and study notes, in particular to two books, "Daniel the Prophet" by E.C. and R.B. Henningses, and "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah" by R.E. Streeter and others who assisted in completing and publishing this latter book after R.E. Streeter had died before the work was complete. The notes present my understanding of Daniel's prophecies, and are published with the wish and prayer that they will be of assistance to brethren who believe and reverence the Scriptures and seek, as we all do, to improve their understanding and knowledge of God's Holy Word.

It is not expected that all readers will be in full agreement with all the comments offered in these notes, but that brethren will be moved to consider and meditate on God's Word as it was given to Daniel. The Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonian brethren applies to us all, *"but test everything; hold fast what is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21; RSV).

Russell Collins

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NOTES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Daniel consists of TWO MAIN DIVISIONS:

1. CHAPTERS 1 TO 6 - Important events and prophecies during the Babylonian captivity.
2. CHAPTERS 7 TO 12 - Prophecies and revelations future from Daniel's lifetime.

The main subject matter of the individual chapters may be stated as follows:

1. Daniel and the king's meat;
2. The dream of the image and the stone;
3. The three Hebrews in the fiery furnace;
4. The dream of the tree hewn down;
5. Belshazzar's feast and the handwriting on the wall;
6. Daniel in the den of lions;
7. The vision of the four beasts and the ancient of days;
8. The vision of the ram, the he goat, and the king of fierce countenance;
9. The seventy weeks;
10. Daniel's vision of Messiah's glory;
11. History unfolded;
12. The time of the end.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Book of Daniel was written in two languages: HEBREW and CHALDEE. The two languages feature as follows:

- Hebrew - Chapter 1:1 to Chapter 2:4 (first clause);
- Chaldee - Chapter 2:4 (second clause) to Chapter 7:28;
- Hebrew - Chapter 8:1 to Chapter 12:13.

Whether Daniel wrote or dictated the Hebrew and Chaldee portions is immaterial. The inspiration came from the Holy Spirit, for Daniel was one of the holy prophets, acknowledged by the Lord Jesus, who *"spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:21).

CHAPTER 1

DANIEL AND THE KING'S MEAT

The prophet Daniel is a noble and inspiring character, "*greatly beloved*" by the Lord (Daniel 9:23; 10: 11 and 19). He is mentioned with Noah and Job in Ezekiel 14:14 as a truly righteous man. All three of these righteous men are referred to in the New Testament as having actually lived and experienced the events and occurrences written concerning them in the Old Testament (Matthew 24:15, 37,38; Mark 13:14; Luke 17:26,27; 1 Peter 3:20; James 5:11).

Of the greatest significance is the reference by the Lord Jesus to Daniel as a true prophet of God. Jesus recommended the reading and understanding of Daniel's prophecies when He said, "*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand)* (Matthew 24:15), and "*But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand)* (Mark 13:14).

Daniel's experiences occurred and his prophecy was written while he was a captive in Babylon. It would be helpful to gain an understanding of the circumstances which led this righteous man, greatly beloved by the Lord, and other righteous men with him, to be taken captive, along with the Jewish nation as a whole, by a heathen king.

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god." (Daniel 1:1,2).

Nebuchadnezzar (630 - 562 BC.) captured Jerusalem on 16 March, 597 BC. His success against the Lord's people was due to their unfaithful and disobedient conduct, as a direct result of which the Lord delivered them into Nebuchadnezzar's hand to punish them for their sins.

The certainty of their punishment and the manner of it had been foretold by Moses (Leviticus 26:14-46, Isaiah (1:1-4), and Jeremiah (25:1-11). The people, however, refused to heed the warnings, and continued their idolatries and alliances with Gentile people round about them. The Jewish people persistently ignored and even despised Jehovah and preferred other gods.

Seventy years of servitude to the king of Babylon were foretold as the full measure of punishment. Nebuchadnezzar, however, in his first onslaught, was not permitted to accomplish more than a partial plundering of the temple and desolation of the land.

From 2 Kings 23: 36 and 37 we learn that Jehoiakim reigned eleven years at Jerusalem, and that he did evil in the sight of the Lord *"according to all that his fathers had done."* In Jehoiakim's third year Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem (Daniel 1:1), and 2 Kings 24:1 informs us that thereupon Jehoiakim *"became his servant three years"*. This would mean that Jehoiakim paid tribute as required by Nebuchadnezzar.

Among the tribute and spoil taken by Nebuchadnezzar were *"part of the vessels of the house of God"* (Daniel 1:2). As these vessels were holy and precious to the people of Israel, their loss was a severe punishment. Yet the people did not repent of their evil ways, and Jehoiakim even rebelled after three years of servitude; whereupon the Lord sent bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites *"against Judah to destroy it"* (2 Kings 24:1-4).

Jehoiakim was succeeded by Jehoiachin, who also *"did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done"* (2 Kings 24:8,9). Jehoiachin reigned only three months, for Nebuchadnezzar the king *"came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged"*. This expedition took place in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2 Kings 24:12). The full account of Nebuchadnezzar's successful expedition is found in 2 Kings 24:10-16, and 2 Chronicles 36: 9 and 10.

Besides Jehoiachin the king, many princes were carried away captive as well as thousands of craftsmen and smiths and mighty men of valour. Nebuchadnezzar then placed Mattaniah on the throne of Judah, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah unfortunately failed to learn by the experiences of his predecessors. He also *"did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done"* (2 Kings 24:19). He refused to pay the tribute required by Nebuchadnezzar the king, and thus brought Nebuchadnezzar's armies once more against Jerusalem. From the ninth to the eleventh year of Zedekiah the city was besieged. *"Famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up"* (2 Kings 25:3,4).

Zedekiah and his sons were captured and carried away to Riblah. There his sons were killed *"before his eyes"*, and he himself had his eyes *"put out"*; a sad ending for a king who had been honoured by rulership over the chosen people of God (2 Kings 24:17-20; 25:1-7; 2 Chronicles 36:11-13).

Seventy years of captivity had been predicted. Thus far only a portion of the people had been carried away to Babylon. It was not until the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar that the destruction of the temple was accomplished, and desolation of the land began. This desolation was to last until the return of the Jews under the decree of king Cyrus (2 Kings 25:8-22). A few poor persons, vinedressers, and husbandmen, were left behind, but by the seventh month even these had fled to Egypt *"for they were afraid of the Chaldees"* (2 Kings 25:22-26).

In giving a review of events, 2 Chronicles 36:14-21 declares the object of these afflictions upon the people of Judah: *"To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years."*

Thus the entire period of seventy years was a time of servitude, of which nineteen years were served while the Jewish rulers were permitted to remain at Jerusalem. The desolation to fulfil the full seventy-year period consisted of a further fifty-one years following the burning of the temple and the city.

Taking advantage of the disturbed conditions, the surrounding tribes, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and Philistines, took possession of parts of the land as early as the twelfth year of captivity; and later, tribes from further north and east, Asshur, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom and all the Zidonians, ravaged the land. God in turn subsequently punished them for their presumption (Ezekiel 25:1-17; 32:26-30; 33:24-28).

The taking captive and carrying away of princes had also been predicted. Isaiah prophesied, speaking *"the word of the Lord"* to king Hezekiah, *"And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon"* (2 Kings 20:16,18).

It was a custom of the times to make slaves of prisoners taken in war. Members of royal families and the nobility were usually treated with considerable respect, and, under their new masters, given such offices and duties as their talents justified. It was also the custom, if members of royalty and nobility were rebellious and unmanageable, to execute them.

Thus it was that Nebuchadnezzar, in connection with his first levy of tribute on Jerusalem, instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs: *"That he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans."* (Daniel 1:3,4).

Of the captives taken at this time, the names of four are recorded: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

To these four *"the prince of the eunuchs"* gave names in honour of heathen deities. Daniel was re-named Belteshazzar, Hananiah was called Shadrach, Mishael was re-named Meshach, and Azariah was called Abed-nego (Daniel 1:6,7).

We are not told of Daniel's parentage, so do not know whether he was *"of the king's seed"* (Daniel 1:3), of noble birth or simply of good family, but to be chosen for special training of three years duration at Nebuchadnezzar's court, he must surely have been in one of the three categories mentioned (Daniel 1:3).

We are also not told that Daniel and the young men selected with him were made physically *"eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon"* (2 Kings 20:18), or whether they were kept in isolation as a condition of their training, and not permitted to associate with womenfolk or to marry.

The arrangement was that, besides being taught the Chaldean language and otherwise instructed, the Hebrew captives would partake of *"the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king"* (Daniel 1:5). *"The king's meat"* signified all food set before the king, and not necessarily flesh only.

But Daniel, being a Jew and holding firmly to the Law Covenant, could not conscientiously accept food prepared by Gentiles, because the animals were not slain in accordance with the Jewish requirements, and because it was a Gentile custom to offer food to idols before the food was eaten. For Daniel to eat *"the king's meat"* would therefore have meant defilement (Daniel 1:5,8; Leviticus 11:1-42, 47; 17 10-14; 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:23, 24; 5:6-9).

Thus early in his captivity did Daniel reveal and make clear his genuine devotion to God and His law. Daniel regarded his relationship to the LORD more highly than the king's pleasure and his own welfare. But he was careful not to cause offence in refusing to eat the king's food and drink the king's wine.

Moreover he did not wish to make trouble for Melzar, who was appointed by Ashpenaz, the prince of the eunuchs, and set over Daniel and his three companions.

Daniel proposed a ten-day trial to prove whether or not he and his three companions could be nourished adequately on a diet of pulse and water instead of the food and wine of the king's table. The Hebrew words translated "pulse" occur in the plural only, and refer to anything sown or planted, such as grains and vegetables. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew as "seeds".

Melzar agreed to Daniel's request, and the result fully justified Daniel's stand. At the end of the ten-day trial period, Daniel and his three companions were found to be *"fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat"* (Daniel 1:8-16).

While Daniel's favourable status with Ashpenaz, the prince of the eunuchs, and with Melzar, the supervisor, was no doubt due in some measure to Daniel's reasonable and amenable disposition and behaviour, it was due mainly to the fact that God was with him.

"Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs" (Daniel 1:9). In addition, it is written "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17). In the King James Version margin, the last clause reads, "and He made Daniel understand all visions and dreams."

The humiliation of the Babylonian captivity was not visited on Daniel because of any sins of his own. Daniel and his three companions, as well as other faithful Jews such as Jeremiah the prophet, suffered simply because they belonged to the nation. Because they feared God, and had heeded the voice of the Lord through Moses, Isaiah and Jeremiah, they accepted the captivity in the right spirit as God's provision for preserving the identity of the Jews as a nation while their land lay desolate.

This attitude of mind, continued in their captivity in Babylon, made Daniel and his three companions agreeable and amenable in relationships with their captors and associates, and enabled them to profit from instruction by their Chaldean teachers. However, we must not forget that above and beyond earthly learning and culture, God had bestowed superhuman knowledge and wisdom on these four Hebrews, and particularly upon Daniel.

So it came to pass that, at the end of their three years training, Daniel and his three companions, along with others, were brought before Nebuchadnezzar: *"And the king communed with them: and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."* (Daniel 1:18-20).

Daniel 1:21 then tells us that Daniel remained in Babylon *"even unto the first year of king Cyrus"*. The verse indicates a very wonderful provision on God's part for the welfare of His people in their captivity in Babylon, because of the prominence gained by Daniel in Babylon, and the influence he was able to exercise with the king on behalf of the captive Jewish people.

Daniel was taken captive in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign at the first attack upon Jerusalem. Daniel was prepared for and given a high position at court, rising even to the highest place in the kingdom, second only to the king. Therefore during the whole seventy-year captivity he was able to use his powerful influence on behalf of his people, the people of God.

This man, "*greatly beloved*", did not, as far as is known, return with his people at the end of the captivity. But the Lord has made the promise to Daniel, saying that, at the appointed time, "*thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days*". We are assured that Daniel will receive the promised reward for his faithfulness. He will be one of the "*princes in all the earth*" (Psalm 45:16; Daniel 12:13).

CHAPTER 2

THE DREAM OF THE IMAGE AND THE STONE

THE DREAM AND ITS MEANING

In Daniel 1:18 we read that: "*At the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar*". The "*days that the king had said*" were three years (Daniel 1:5), that is, Daniel and his companions were given three years training to absorb "*the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans*" to enable them to "*stand before the king*" (Daniel 1:4,5).

But we learn in Daniel 2:1 that "*in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams*". This seeming conflict is seized upon by higher critics and unbelievers in an endeavour to discredit the inspiration and authority of the book of Daniel.

Response to this criticism can be made in two ways. The first is that Daniel was brought in haste to the king to interpret the king's dream before Daniel's three-year training had finished. However, in view of the very favourable impression that Daniel and his companions made on the king after their three-year training period, this understanding lacks Scriptural support (Daniel 1:19,20).

The second response has the support of Scripture and the known facts of secular history. Daniel was taken prisoner in the third year of Jehoiakim, the same year in which Nebuchadnezzar began his rulership over the Jewish nation. But although Nebuchadnezzar is called "*king of Babylon*" in Daniel 1: 1 - 3, it is in anticipation of his accession to the throne, because at this time Nebuchadnezzar was reigning conjointly with his father, Nabopolassar. It was not until two years later that Nabopolassar died and Nebuchadnezzar became sole monarch. The timing is therefore as detailed below.

When Nabopolassar died, Daniel had served two years of his three-year training period. The "*second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar*" (Daniel 2:1) is to be understood as the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's sole regency, when Daniel would have completed his three years of training, and the year would be the

fourth from the beginning of Daniel's training. Daniel was fully prepared and ready to appear again before the king and advise him.

It was therefore, in this fourth year of Daniel's captivity that *"Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him"*(Daniel 2:1). As a consequence of his dream, Nebuchadnezzar *"commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king"* (Daniel 2:2).

Nebuchadnezzar demanded the interpretation of his dream. He wanted more than guess-work, and was clever enough to thwart the usual lies and corrupt words of his wise men, magicians and sorcerers. He made it a condition that his wise men should tell him the dream as well as the interpretation, reasoning that any Chaldean or wise man able to interpret dreams correctly would also be able to describe the dream itself.

When Nebuchadnezzar said *"the thing is gone from me"* (Daniel 2:8), he did not mean that he had forgotten the dream, but that the decree or command had gone forth from him. The Revised Standard Version has the *"word"* instead of the *"thing"* and the New International Version has *"this is what I have firmly decided"*. The **decree** or **command** or **word** was that the wise men must tell the dream.

The hesitation and protestations of the wise men served only to convince Nebuchadnezzar that they were ready as usual with lying and corrupt words, and therefore Nebuchadnezzar was all the more determined to put to death all the wise men unless they could tell him the dream.

But Nebuchadnezzar's decree brought Daniel into difficulty, for he was also one of the wise men. The captain of the king's guard sought Daniel and his companions to kill them (Daniel 2:13). Daniel, seeing that his life and the lives of many others were in danger, appealed to the king for time, which was readily granted (Daniel 2:14-16). Then Daniel and his companions sought the Lord: *"That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon"* (Daniel 2:18).

Since God had sent Nebuchadnezzar the dream, He was willing and ready, in response to the captive Hebrews' prayers, to give to Daniel both the dream itself and the interpretation. It would appear from Daniel 2:19 that Daniel was given a vision of an image exactly like the one seen by the king.

Then Daniel pleaded for the lives of the condemned wise men, and informed the king that the God of heaven had given him the dream and its interpretation, disclaiming any credit for himself (Daniel 2:24-30). This is what the king saw in his dream:

*"Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.
This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,
His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.
Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces.
Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Daniel 2:31-35).*

The interpretation of the dream is clear and concise in Daniel 2:37-40:

*"Thou, O King, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.
And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.
And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.
And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."*

THE FOUR KINGDOMS OF DANIEL'S VISION

VISION	IDENTIFICATION	DATE
HEAD of GOLD Vision in Daniel Ch. 2	BABYLON Vision in Ch. 8	BABYLONIA 626 B.C. 539 B.C.
LION Vision in Ch. 7	MEDO-PERSIA Vision in Ch. 8	MEDO-PERSIA 330 B.C.
BEAR Vision in Ch. 7	GOAT Vision in Ch. 8	GREECE 168 B.C.
DREADFUL and TERRIBLE BEAST Vision in Daniel Ch. 7	ROME Vision in Ch. 8	ROME 63 B.C. A.D. 70 Fall of Jerusalem

THE IMAGE OF FOUR WORLD POWERS

The image shows God's purpose that in the time between the Babylonian captivity which involved the overturning of the Kingdom of Israel and the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth, four great world powers would rise and fall in succession, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

THE HEAD OF GOLD

Nebuchadnezzar was represented in the vision by the head of gold. He was an autocrat, a despot, as Daniel 5:18 and 19 states: *"The most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar ... a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down."*

It was mainly in this quality of autocracy or despotism that the superiority of the head of gold consisted, compared with the empires which followed the Babylonian empire. The value and fineness of the metals represented the degree of absoluteness of the four world governments, as well as their relative richness.

Gold signifies the highest degree of absolutism, including riches and splendour, while the head of the image signifies will-power, direction and intelligence. History reveals Nebuchadnezzar as a great and rich king, and also in many respects a wise and able ruler.

THE BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER AND THE BELLY AND THIGHS OF COPPER

The word translated *"brass"* in the King James Version should be *"copper"*. Brass, an alloy of copper and zinc, was unknown in the ancient world of Daniel.

In Daniel 2:39 the second and third world powers are mentioned and passed over briefly. The names of these two world empires, Medo-Persia and Greece, are not given in the account of this vision, but are identified in another of Daniel's visions in chapter 8, verses 20 and 21.

Both of these kingdoms were inferior to Babylon. In Medo-Persia the king was dependent on his counsellors and subservient to the law, whereas Nebuchadnezzar was above the law and above everyone else. Religious differences in Medo-Persia caused lack of unity in the empire. In Greece, devotion to their many gods and philosophies put the people more in subjection to the priests and philosophers than to the rulers, and served also to divide the empire.

THE LEGS OF IRON

"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." (Daniel 2:40).

Strength and destructiveness were the chief characteristics of the fourth world empire as shown by the use of iron as a symbol in the visions of Daniel 2 and in the visions of Daniel chapters 2 and 7. The same symbol for the same world power was also used by Moses when he prophesied in Deuteronomy 28:48 that *"a yoke of iron"* would be placed on the nation of Israel because of Israel's disobedience and idolatry.

The Roman empire was the fourth kingdom which broke in pieces all that opposed its progress. It was like an iron hammer to *"break in pieces and bruise"* (Daniel 2:40). Rome's chief interest in the countries she conquered was to exact tribute. Roman generals left no stone unturned in order to return to Rome in triumph with rich plunder.

The governors of the provinces were often cruel men such as Pontius Pilate who did not hesitate to torture and crucify any who opposed him. As iron is a stronger metal than gold, silver and copper, so Rome was the mightiest of the empires and endured the longest.

THE FEET AND TOES OF THE IMAGE

The feet and toes of the image were composed largely of iron, indicating that they are a continuation of the Roman empire which was represented by the iron legs: *"And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed*

with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly brittle." [Marginal reading] (Daniel 2:41,42).

The ten toes of the image correspond to the ten horns which Daniel saw on the fourth beast in chapter 7: "... *And it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.*" (Daniel 7:7,8).

A "horn" may be understood as a symbol of power. The ten toes of Daniel 2:42 and the ten horns of Daniel 7:7 represent the **ten kingdoms or divisions** into which the Roman empire was broken in the reign of the emperor Theodosius The Great (347 - 395 AD).

According to **Sir Isaac Newton** these kingdoms were:

- 1st the kingdoms of the Vandals and Alans, in Spain and Africa;
- 2nd of the Suevians, in Spain;
- 3rd of the Visigoths;
- 4th of the Alans in Gaul;
- 5th of the Burgundians;
- 6th of the Franks;
- 7th of the Britons;
- 8th of the Huns;
- 9th of the Lombards;
- 10th of Ravenna.

As given by **Bishop Newton**, the ten kingdoms were :

- 1. the Ostrogoths in Moesia;
- 2. the Visigoths in Pannonia;
- 3. the Suevis and Alans in Gascoign and Spain;
- 4. the Vandals in Africa;
- 5. the Franks in France;
- 6. the Burgundians in Burgundy;
- 7. the Herruli and Turingi in Italy;
- 8. the Saxons and Angles in Britain;
- 9. the Huns in Hungary;
- 10. the Lombards, at first upon the Danube, afterwards in Italy.

The meaning of three horns "*plucked up*" by the "*little horn*" of Daniel 7:8 will be considered in chapter 7.

The feet and toes of the image were "*part of iron and part of clay*" (Daniel 2:42). This signifies that whatever is represented by clay was in existence before the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms. Iron is a hard metal; clay is of the earth, soft and pliable when wet, hard and brittle when dry.

The world empires represented in the image deteriorated from gold to silver, then to copper and then to iron. The last of the empires deteriorates still further in having an admixture of clay with the iron.

As mentioned earlier, iron represents strength and destructiveness to "*break in pieces and bruise*" (Daniel 2:40). What characteristic or feature of the Roman empire corresponds to the clay?

Daniel 2:43 helps us to identify it: "*And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.*"

Iron and clay do not cleave together or cohere. From secular history we learn that in pagan Rome the governing class from the emperor downward did "*minge themselves with the seed of men*" (Daniel 2:43). Roman emperors were at times worshipped as gods, but they could not ignore the powerful Roman Senate, and rulers held office with the consent of the Senate. In Rome it was possible for the most humble of subjects to rise to high office, and it is a fact that the Senate, powerful as it was, feared the people, who are represented by "*the seed of men*" (Daniel 2:43).

This sharing of government by the ruling class and the people is **democracy**, the mingling together of the aristocracy, whether of title, wealth or learning, and the common people. These are **mingled together** but they do not **cleave together**. Their interests are always diverse, and each sympathises most with its own class.

To this day in prominent democracies such as the U.S.A. and Australia, there are still attitudes of social class and prejudice in evidence, in spite of efforts to bring about equality and the so-called 'level playing field'. The U.S.A. and Australia along with many other countries were not discovered until long after pagan Rome had disintegrated, yet many of their laws are based on the Roman code, and their ideals and methods are much the same: a mixture of iron and clay, of strength and brittleness, of rulers despising the governed and of the people being disrespectful towards the rulers.

The present nations of the western world are in many respects relics of ancient Rome, and they continue to introduce and maintain more and more the element of clay in the form of democratic procedures and policies.

World governments are spoken of in Scripture in the following ways. The *"powers that be are ordained of God"*. They are *"God's ministers ... to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil"* (Romans 13:1,4,6). Therefore, for as long as God permits, governors in the democratic countries hold their office with the consent of the governed. It follows, therefore, that the whole image of world power seen by Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel rests upon a very brittle and unstable foundation, and will continue for only as long as God permits.

THE MEANING OF WORLD EMPIRES

By "world" empires is meant empires which in some ways affected and involved God's people. Ancient Babylon obliterated all distinction between the people of God and the Gentile nations. She did this by making Judah a Babylonian colony, and carrying the people of Judah captive to Babylon.

When Daniel interpreted the dream to Nebuchadnezzar, he said *"wheresoever the children of men dwell,"* God *"hath made thee ruler over them all"* (Daniel 2:38). No exception was made in this statement for Judah and the people of God. This is why Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar *"thou art this head of gold"* (Daniel 2:38). Nebuchadnezzar was given world dominion because he was the instrument of Judah's subjugation, captivity and overturning, as well as uniting under one head a number of previously independent kingdoms.

Several centuries later the Lord Jesus recognised Judah as the focal point of world dominion when He said: *"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"* (Luke 21:24).

None of the world empires in Nebuchadnezzar's dream took any account of such countries and peoples as China and Japan, North and South America, and Australia; for the Lord did not have any dealings with these countries and peoples until the Gospel Age, the age in which the *"gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations"* (Matthew 24:14). As was said earlier, by "world" empires is meant empires which in various ways affected and involved God's people, whether in Law Covenant or New Covenant times.

THE STONE CUT OUT

In his dream Nebuchadnezzar saw that *"a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces"* (Daniel 2:34).

Daniel 2:44 and 45 explains what this means: *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."*

In the dream the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. In verse 44 the mountain which developed from the stone is identified as the kingdom of God. The stone must therefore represent the kingdom of God before the image is struck and broken to pieces. The stone did not come from the image, it was *"cut out of the mountain without hands"* (Daniel 2:45).

What this *"mountain"* is, Daniel does not tell us, but the New Testament helps us. In the Scriptures a mountain frequently symbolises a kingdom, so it seems in order to understand that the *"stone"* representing the kingdom of God, is *"cut out"* of another kingdom. What is this kingdom from which the kingdom of God is *"cut out"*?

There is one kingdom that answers this requirement better than any other, and that is the kingdom or dominion of Satan, the *"god of this world", "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience"* (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2).

The Lord Jesus delivered people from Satanic spirit possession, and indicated that His power to do this signified some restraint placed upon Satan. The apostle Paul said he was sent to turn people *"from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God"*, and also that believers in Jesus are *"delivered from the power of darkness"* and *"translated into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13).

The Lord Jesus Himself was made victorious over Satan by the power and might of the Heavenly Father when He (God) raised Jesus from the dead. The Lord Jesus' death on the cross seemed at first sight to be a triumph for Satan and the powers of darkness, but this very fact became the means of victory over Satan and over death itself; *"that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"* (Hebrews 2:14).

The power *"without hands"* is surely the *"gospel of the kingdom"* which God began to use in apostolic days, and has been using ever since to *"take out a people for His name"* to be *"joint-heirs with Christ"* in His kingdom (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Acts 15:14; Romans 8:17).

The destruction of the nations, symbolised by the stone striking the feet of the image and breaking it to pieces, is deferred until all *"joint-heirs"* are *"called, and chosen and faithful"* (Revelation 17:14), expressed by the words *"cut out"* in the prophecy, that is, *"cut out"* or taken out of Satan's kingdom. When this process of selection is complete, the *"joint-heirs"* will have the honour and privilege of dashing the nations to pieces like a potter's vessel, as Revelation 2:26 and 27 informs us.

But a still higher honour awaits the saints, for destruction of nations and their peoples would place them on a level with the four previous world kingdoms, especially the fourth. The work of the saints is to be a constructive work of blessing all nations and all the families of the earth under earth's rightful and righteous king with *"all power in heaven and earth"* (Ezekiel 21:27; Matthew 28:18).

At this stage, the prophecy in Daniel 2 gives us no indication of the length of time the selection or cutting out process is to take, or what changes will occur in the course of time to the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. Further details will be given to us in chapters 7, 8, 11 and 12 of Daniel.

What we are considering, and will continue in subsequent chapters to consider, is the destruction of the **whole system of world power**; the **whole idea** which was voiced by the Israelites so long ago that they did not want God for their king, but wanted a king like the kings of the Gentiles; the **whole idea** that people know better than God does what is good for them.

People do not yet realise, after centuries of bad and oppressive governments, that what they need is the fifth world government, the *"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"* (2 Peter 3:13), ruled over by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But that new world order will come when at the last the stone will smite the image on its feet, and the image, symbolising the whole system of world power, will be broken in pieces and blown away *"like the chaff of the summer threshing floors"* (Daniel 2:35).

Daniel 2:44 tells us of this new world order, the Kingdom of God. We are told that this kingdom will never be destroyed, not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and stand for ever. Other Scriptures in the Old Testament, besides those in Daniel, and in the New Testament, give us more information about this new world order, which is the only hope for the world.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESPONSE

On concluding the interpretation of the dream, Daniel assured the king that *"the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure"* (Daniel 2:45).

So impressed was Nebuchadnezzar that he *"fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him"* (Daniel 2:46). No doubt Daniel accepted these attentions in the spirit they were given, for verse 47 indicates that Nebuchadnezzar was honouring God through His representative Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar then *"made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon"* (Daniel 2:48).

Daniel showed his generosity and thoughtfulness in his request that the king *"set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king"* (Daniel 2:49).

The *"gate of the king"* stood for the administration of justice, the highest position in the land under the king.

In this way God provided for the captive Israelites to enjoy the ability to exercise their religion and conduct their business and everyday affairs, and be preserved as a people to return, at the appointed time, to their own land.

CHAPTER 3

THE THREE HEBREWS IN THE FIERY FURNACE

TRIALS OF FAITH

The service of God involves trials more or less severe, and sometimes tests of faithfulness. Faithfulness needs to be maintained by true believers, and from time to time needs to be developed under stress. *"Be thou faithful unto death"* (Revelation 2:10), *"he that endureth to the end shall be saved"* (Matthew 10:22) and similar exhortations and statements indicate that trials and tests must be endured throughout life, the final one being in connection with the last moments of life.

In Daniel's case his position of honour and influence at Nebuchadnezzar's court did not shield him from persecution and intrigue. His life was in jeopardy when Nebuchadnezzar demanded the telling as well as the interpretation of his dream (Daniel 2), and also when the governors and captains conspired against him (Daniel 6).

THE THREE HEBREWS

The three young men who were taken captive with Daniel were very severely tried. They joined Daniel in refusing to eat the king's *"meat"* so as not to defile themselves under the Law Covenant. But God was with them, and their fair appearance and intelligence commended them to Nebuchadnezzar, and they were given positions of honour and responsibility (Daniel 1).

They also stood by Daniel when Daniel was threatened with death by the king's ultimatum to relate his dream and interpret it or be killed. They prayed with Daniel that the God of heaven would reveal the dream and the interpretation to Daniel, and thus save the lives of Daniel and the other *"wise men"*. True faith in God and nobility of character were demonstrated by these four Hebrew men in joining together in prayer to God when they were faced with death by command of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:17,18).

At that time it was not clear to Daniel and his three companions that God had sent Nebuchadnezzar the dream to show the king what would come to pass in later times, and in addition enlighten all God's people concerning the relationship between the Jewish kingdom, Gentile dominion, and the kingdom of God.

The Lord God revealed the dream and its interpretation to Daniel, and as a result of the relating of both to Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was exalted by Nebuchadnezzar to the highest position in the land, *"the gate of the king"* (Daniel 2:49). Daniel then demonstrated his nobility of character, his unselfishness and concern for his loyal companions by asking and obtaining royal favour for them. As a result, Nebuchadnezzar *"set Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon"* (Daniel 2:49).

THE GOLDEN IMAGE SET UP

Nebuchadnezzar honoured Daniel and his three companions, and he honoured their God who had been a revealer of secrets. The king, however, did not seem to think that the God of the Hebrews was the only true god, but was simply one of many gods whom he and the nation could worship as they chose. Nebuchadnezzar was a true oriental despot. He viewed his empire as his property, and the lives of his subjects were in his hands to order as he chose. Although he had made Daniel chief of the wise men, he did not consider it necessary to consult Daniel as to the wisdom or propriety of many of his acts.

Nebuchadnezzar saw no wrong in enslaving thousands of workers to labour on the great works which he undertook to improve his realm and beautify the city of Babylon (Daniel 4:30). And it was only a short step from enslavement of his subjects' bodies to the enslavement of their minds.

In Daniel 3 we have the account of at least one attempt by Nebuchadnezzar to make all his people conform to his will. Nebuchadnezzar set up *"an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits"* (Daniel 3:1). In our measurements today the golden image would have been approximately twenty-seven metres (ninety feet) high and three metres (nine feet) wide. The image, covered in gold, must have been an imposing sight, and represented great wealth and despotic power.

After the image was set up, *"then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces"* to come and do as the king commanded them (Daniel 3:2).

The penalty for refusal to obey the king's command is stated as follows. *"And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."* (Daniel 3:6).

THE KING'S ORDER DEFIED

The concourse of *"the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces"* that *"stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up"* (Daniel 3:3) must have been great, gathered as they were from all parts of an extensive empire.

The absence of a few of the king's subjects might easily have escaped notice, but *"certain Chaldeans"* (Daniel 3:8) were determined to bring to the king's notice the defiance of the faithful Jews. The Chaldeans identified Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego as culpable offenders, seeing that Nebuchadnezzar had set them *"over the affairs of the province of Babylon"* (Daniel 3:12). The Chaldeans reminded Nebuchadnezzar that the three Hebrews *"have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up"* (Daniel 3:12). The defiance of the three Hebrews was made to appear a personal slight to the king, who had elevated them to their influential positions in the realm.

Naturally Nebuchadnezzar was furious, and *"in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king"* (Daniel 3:13).

Immediately before this took place *"all the people, the nations, and the languages"* had fallen *"down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up"* (Daniel 3:7). The stage was set to make an example of these three disobedient Hebrews.

THE GOD OF ISRAEL DEFIED BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR

But although the king was angry, he was prepared to give the three Hebrews an opportunity to obey him and all would be well. The whole performance of the herald's cry and *"the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick"* would be repeated for their special benefit. *"But,"* said Nebuchadnezzar, *"if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"* (Daniel 3:15).

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS MENTIONED IN DANIEL 3

Instrument (KJV)	Original Word	Description and Comment
Cornet	Keren (Hebrew and Chaldee)	A primitive trumpet formed of a ram's horn.
Flute	Mashrokitha (Chaldee)	Possibly an instrument like pan pipes.
Harp (Lyre)	Kaithros (Chaldee)	Not strictly a harp, but a kind of lyre with four strings.
Sackbut (Harp)	Sabbecca (Chaldee)	A kind of harp, probably a large instrument with many strings and a full, rich tone. Wrongly translated, a sackbut is a medieval trombone.
Psaltery (Dulcimer: A psaltery is a harp)	Psanterin (Chaldee)	A dulcimer, that is, an instrument formed of strings tightly stretched by fixed pins and turning screws over a rectangular box, played by hammers struck by the hand against the strings.
Dulcimer (Bagpipe)	Sumphonyah (Chaldee)	A kind of bagpipe. (A dulcimer is a stringed instrument.)

To this threat the three Hebrews replied with great bravery: *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need (RSV) to answer thee (we do not need to defend ourselves before you) (NIV) in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."*(Daniel 3:16-18).

When the three Hebrews had declared their position and made their stand, we read that Nebuchadnezzar was *"full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated"* (Daniel 3:19).

Moreover, Nebuchadnezzar *"commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace"* (Daniel 3:20).

But the King's fury and haste rebounded on him in this way: *"Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego"* (Daniel 3:22) This, however, did not release the prisoners, who *"fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace"* (Daniel 3:23).

MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE

So great was Nebuchadnezzar's satisfaction in seeing his autocratic will prevail that he remained to watch the incineration of his helpless victims who had been *"bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace"* (Daniel 3:21).

But suddenly Nebuchadnezzar rose up in haste and astonishment as he saw four men unharmed walking in the midst of the fire. *"Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"* asked the king. He then said, *"Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God"* (Daniel 3:24,25).

"The Son of God" should be *"a son of the gods"* as rendered in both the Revised Standard and New International Versions. Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan believer in many gods, and understood the fourth person in the furnace to be a lesser heavenly being, an *"angel"* (Daniel 3:28) sent by the God of the Hebrews to deliver His three supremely brave servants.

Nebuchadnezzar did not lose his self-possession, nor forget that his word was law and that he exacted obedience from everyone, high or low. He *"came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither"* (Daniel 3:26).

Perhaps it was Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment of *"the most high God"* that brought about obedience to his command to *"come forth"*. Had Nebuchadnezzar not acknowledged the Lord God in this miraculous deliverance, it may be that another course of action might have been taken by the Lord.

And so we read: *"And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."* (Daniel 3:27).

The deliverance of the three Hebrews was not something that happened in a corner or in secret, but in the public gaze, in the presence of numerous high dignitaries of the realm gathered together by command of the king. They saw the Hebrews bound and cast into the fire, they heard the king's exclamation and command, and they saw the three men come forth unharmed, without so much as the smell of fire about their garments; their hair was not singed, nor was their clothing scorched. The three were fully vindicated for the stand they had taken.

There is testimony also in the New Testament. In the list of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, mention is made of those who by faith *"quenched the violence of fire"* (Hebrews 11:34), an unmistakable reference to the miraculous deliverance of the three Hebrews.

SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

God permitted the Jewish people to be subjugated in Babylon for seventy years. The Hebrews were told to be law-abiding and give no occasion for the authorities to persecute or molest them, and in general they followed this advice.

By God's providence Daniel and his three companions occupied high office, and were therefore able to influence favourably the interests and lives of their people. It was not God's purpose to exterminate the Jews in Babylon, but to bring them back, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian, to their own land.

It can, therefore, be seen that God had a deeper reason for delivering the three Hebrews from the furnace than their personal safety and preservation only. Had the three Hebrews perished in the fire, Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury might well have instituted a program which the Chaldeans, jealous of the favour shown to the Hebrews, would have taken pleasure in carrying out. Such action could have resulted in the virtual extermination of the Israelites.

When the seventy years of captivity came to an end, there remained a large number of people ready to return to Judea in accordance with the promise and plan of God (Ezra 1:1-6; 2:1-67).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR

One of Nebuchadnezzar's good traits was his willingness to acknowledge the God of heaven when unmistakable miracles were worked before him. In his acknowledgement, he lived up to his despotic prerogative by making a decree: *"That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."* (Daniel 3:29).

Then Nebuchadnezzar made amends to Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego by promoting them to still higher offices in the province of Babylon than they had occupied before (Daniel 3:30).

CHAPTER 4

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND DREAM: THE DREAM OF THE TREE HEWN DOWN

THE RECORD OF DANIEL VINDICATED

For many centuries after its destruction following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, Babylon lay a mound of sand in the desert plain of Mesopotamia. Sceptics and unbelievers have been only too ready to say that ancient Babylon never existed, and have also claimed that the kings of Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt named in the Old Testament were inventions of Hebrew prophets and historians. They have further claimed that the great battles recorded in Scripture were mythical, intended to glorify the Hebrew God Jehovah by showing His superiority over imaginary foes.

Moreover, sceptics and unbelievers have also maintained that the dreams and acts ascribed to Nebuchadnezzar by Daniel were fictitious, invented by some later Greek writer who was able by his knowledge of history to invent dreams for Nebuchadnezzar, and invent interpretations by a mythical Daniel, which would then appear to have come true, and thus the Hebrew God and His servants would be glorified by both Jew and Gentile.

But since the beginning of the nineteenth century, archaeological discoveries supported by scientific research have brought to light a wealth of information bearing testimony to the accuracy and truth of the Hebrew historians and prophets.

It was fortunate that many of the ancient writers, particularly the Babylonians, used stone or clay tablets or cylinders on which to record their messages and historical information, because these tablets and cylinders are virtually imperishable, and remain to be read and studied to this day.

The **main interests of the Christian** in archaeological discoveries and research are **threefold**:

1. Their confirmation of Biblical names, dates, and incidents or events;
2. Their evidence that a high state of civilisation and culture existed in remote times, thus confirming the Bible teaching that man was created an intelligent being;
3. Their testimony that God has preserved through the ages material evidence and objects suitable to inform and enlighten His people and thus confirm and establish His people's faith.

It was the custom for the kings of Assyria and Babylonia to celebrate their deeds and their gifts in writing. Discoveries in recent times have brought to light inscriptions written by, or at the direction of, King Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel's prophecy.

Until the ruins of ancient Babylon were unearthed, the most interesting and touching account of Nebuchadnezzar's prosperity and humiliation, written by Nebuchadnezzar (or a scribe at his direction) as recorded in Daniel 4, was the only known inscription by Nebuchadnezzar himself. Sceptics and unbelievers were only too ready to cast doubt on it. But now in our time there is indisputable evidence that Nebuchadnezzar inscribed many documents and letters of both a religious and historical nature, and it is recognised as acceptable and natural that Nebuchadnezzar would record his dream and experience as found in Daniel 4.

But here it may be observed that no matter how strong the evidence or how complete the corroboration of archaeological discoveries may be, there will be some who will not believe. The Lord Jesus said of the Jews: *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead"* (Luke 16:31).

The Apostle John has recorded that even under the blessings and enlightenment of the Kingdom of God, there will still be unbelievers who as incorrigibles will have to be destroyed in the *"second death"* (Revelation 20:9; 21:8). A sceptic or an unbeliever does not necessarily deny indisputable facts. He or she may admit the facts. The unbelief consists in denying the relationship between the undeniable facts and God.

When Lazarus was raised from the dead after having lain in the tomb for four days, the Jewish leaders could not deny the fact of Lazarus's resurrection, but they denied that the Lord Jesus' power to raise Lazarus from death was **God-given**. Thus they continued in unbelief by their failure to acknowledge the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and the Son of God in the face of indisputable evidence (John 11:30-57).

Nebuchadnezzar begins the record of his second dream vision and its meaning with an acknowledgment of *"the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me"* (Daniel 4:2): *"Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation."* (Daniel 4:1-3).

THE WISE MEN CONSULTED

Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in his house, and flourishing in his palace. He had caused great feats of building and construction to be carried out. He had armies of slaves to do his bidding, and he had the best talent of the Jewish and Gentile nations, as well as of his own, for governors, overseers, captains and rulers. The favour of the gods seemed to rest upon him, and his fame extended throughout the known world.

Daniel then records that Nebuchadnezzar said *"I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me"* (Daniel 4:5).

On a previous occasion when Nebuchadnezzar had a remarkable dream, he insisted that his wise men should relate his dream as well as interpret it. Only Daniel, by God's grace and favour in revealing to him the dream and its meaning, was able to relate and interpret the king's dream. It was by that means that Daniel was brought into prominence as a servant of the true God Who is a revealer of secrets. Daniel was consequently made *"ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon"* (Daniel 2:48).

But now the king did not place such a test upon his magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers. He told them the dream and evidently gave them time to consider it. But they were unable to make known the interpretation (Daniel 4:4-7).

At the last, Daniel came in before the king. The king addressed Daniel by his Chaldean name, Belteshazzar, and said: *"O Belteshazzar master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof."* (Daniel 4:9).

No doubt Nebuchadnezzar remembered Daniel's former success in interpreting the dream of the great image, and was confident that Daniel would be able to interpret this dream also (Daniel 4:18).

THE DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION THROUGH DANIEL

"Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." (Daniel 4:10-17).

On hearing this dream, Daniel *"was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him."* Nebuchadnezzar spoke kindly, and said, *"Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee"* (Daniel 4:19).

But Daniel was ready with the interpretation. It seems that Daniel must have loved the king, or at least held him in high regard, and wished that the dream applied to someone else, for he said, *"My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies"* (Daniel 4:19). But Daniel could not alter the dream or its application to the king before whom he stood:

"The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule." (Daniel 4:20-26).

The application of the dream was to Nebuchadnezzar personally, and the fate awaiting Nebuchadnezzar was one from which Daniel would gladly have saved him. Hence his concluding appeal: *"Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness ("doing what is right" -- NIV; "almsgiving" -- Septuagint) and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."*

The New International Version makes Daniel 4:27 clearer: *"Therefore, O King, be pleased to accept my advice. Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."*

These words must have sounded strange to Nebuchadnezzar. He was a tyrant, and believed he had the right to act as he pleased and to treat his servants and slaves in any way he wished. The warning given by Daniel does not seem to have had its desired effect. The king evidently did not show more consideration for the poor, or materially alter his mode of life. Therefore the dream was fulfilled upon him. We may take it that Daniel records the incidents related in Daniel 4:28-38.

THE DREAM FULFILLED

Twelve months after the giving of the warning by Daniel, the king walked in the palace, and said: *"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30).*

These words express the height of vanity and self-praise. They contain no acknowledgment of God, no recognition of the toil and labour of armies of slaves and servants, and no appreciation of the faithful service of Daniel and other counsellors and wise men who assisted Nebuchadnezzar in the administration of his kingdom.

No sooner were these words of pride and self-congratulation spoken than God's judgement came upon Nebuchadnezzar: *"While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."* (Daniel 4:31,32).

The application of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar personally is thus stated by the *"voice from heaven."* Then follows the plain statement that the fulfilment of the dream was likewise accomplished in the experience of King Nebuchadnezzar personally: *"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."* (Daniel 4:33).

What happened to Nebuchadnezzar? In Daniel 4:34 to 36 Nebuchadnezzar explains that his affliction was the loss of his understanding or reason. Nowadays this would be called insanity, and the particular form of insanity experienced by Nebuchadnezzar, in which the sufferer imagines himself a beast and insists on living the life of a beast, is called lycanthropy.

"He was driven from men" (Daniel 4:33) as unfit for the society of people. It seems that Nebuchadnezzar, while the malady was upon him, did not fully realise the extent of his degradation. At least the account does not say so. It was only after his recovery that he realised how deeply he had been humiliated. But he was still the king, and, no doubt, would have been cared for by officers and servants of the court while the manifestations of his mental illness were evident. Though he did *"eat grass as oxen"* (Daniel 4:32), he would not have been allowed to live on grass exclusively. He would have been given adequate food and drink to sustain him for the *"seven times"* that would pass over him (Daniel 4:16,23,25,32).

How were the affairs of the empire managed while Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted?

No doubt his trusted officers, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, and others would continue as usual, Daniel being set over all the wise men of the kingdom.

Herodotus, the Greek Historian (485 - 425 BC), tells us of another person, not mentioned in Scripture, who evidently played a very important part. This person was Nitocris, Nebuchadnezzar's wife. Smith's Bible Dictionary has the following comment: "It has often been remarked that Herodotus ascribes to a queen, Nitocris, several of the important works which other writers (Berosus, Abydenus) assign to Nebuchadnezzar. The conjecture naturally arises that Nitocris was Nebuchadnezzar's queen, and that, as she carried on his constructions during his incapacity, they were by some considered to be hers."

After seven times (years) of insanity the king recovered his reason, and his prosperity returned, as the dream had foretold in Daniel 4:15: *"Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field"*.

The tree in the dream is represented as being bound with a band of iron and brass so that it would be marked as a tree not to be uprooted or damaged. The indication was that, on the removal of the band, the tree would sprout again. So Nebuchadnezzar, when the prescribed term of seven years was over, sprouted again, that is, resumed his former life and activities.

The "roots" of Nebuchadnezzar were his family lineage and his title to the throne, and these remained with him, as Daniel had foreshown: *"and whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."* (Daniel 4:26).

Nebuchadnezzar celebrated the recovery of his reason and prosperity by publishing his experience and acknowledging publicly the God Whom Daniel worshipped, and Who alone of all the gods was able to predict such an eventuality and bring it to pass in the allotted time:

"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Daniel 4:34-37).

SEVEN TIMES

The word used for "*times*" in the "*seven times*" of Daniel 4:16, 23, 25 and 32, is the Chaldee word "*iddan*" which means, according to Strong's Concordance, "a set time, technically a year".

Hence the prophecy was that Nebuchadnezzar would experience seven years of insanity, and that at the end of the seven years his reason would return and his prosperity would be restored. All this was literally fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar.

Some students of prophecy take this experience of Nebuchadnezzar to be a type of Gentile dominion, and extend the period of seven literal years to seven prophetic years amounting to 2,520 years (7 prophetic years each of 360 days = 2,520 prophetic days = 2,520 years).

This is to take an unwarranted liberty with the passage, as the angel and Daniel apply it specifically and exclusively to Nebuchadnezzar. The object of the dream and Nebuchadnezzar's experience was not to give an indication of the length of Gentile dominion, but to teach a lesson of humility and reliance on God.

In any case the *"times of the Gentiles"* mentioned by the Lord Jesus in Luke 21:24 cover a longer period than 2,520 years, and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar is never mentioned by any of the New Testament writers.

A clear reason why the great tree of this dream cannot refer to Gentile dominion is that the tree of the dream was only temporarily cut down, and subsequently regained its former strength and prosperity. **This prophecy was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar's experience**, and is not true of Gentile dominion taken by and large, for Scripture shows that **Gentile dominion, when once cut down, will never rise again.**

The Kingdom of God will succeed and replace Gentile dominion, and will rule over all the earth, and all its people, millions of whom will be raised to life again to experience God's new order under Jesus Christ the King of Kings, and gain eternal life, if they will, as the Scriptures declare. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great tree cannot be applied even figuratively to Gentile times and dominion.

CHAPTER 5

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST AND THE WRITING ON THE WALL

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand." (Daniel 5:1).

For many years there was difficulty in defining the exact relationship between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar. The name Belshazzar occurs in Scripture only in the book of Daniel, whereas Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned in the books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The name of Nebuchadnezzar's successor is never clearly stated in Scripture, but **2 Kings 25:27** seems to indicate that Evil-merodach was that successor: *"And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that **Evil-merodach king of Babylon** in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison."*

Historical research shows that Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 BC and was succeeded by Evil-merodach. Evil-merodach, after a reign of three years, was murdered by Neriglissar in 559 BC. The following is a list of kings who reigned in Babylon during the seventy years captivity of Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar	reigned	43 years
Evil-Merodach	reigned	3 years
Neriglissar	reigned	5 years
Nabonidus, last king of Babylon, (latterly with his son, Belshazzar)	reigned	17 years
Darius the Mede to Cyrus the Persian	reigned	2 years
TOTAL		<u>70 years</u>

Nabonidus was the last King of Babylon. Where then does Belshazzar come in?

This question was fortunately answered by a discovery made in 1854 at Um Qeer, by Sir Henry Rawlinson (1810 - 95), of an inscription giving the name of the eldest son of Nabonidus as Belshazzar, admitted by his father (Nabonidus) to a share in the government. Further archaeological discoveries have confirmed that Nabonidus paid little attention to the affairs of his realm, being content to pursue his antiquarian and scientific inclinations at his palace in Tema. He placed his son, Belshazzar, in command of the army and of the affairs of the Babylonian empire.

There is also an apparent difficulty concerning the relationship between Belshazzar and Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 5:11, 13 and 18, where Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of as Belshazzar's father. But this is not really a difficulty, because in Biblical times any ancestor was called "father."

For example, the angel Gabriel said to Mary concerning her promised Son, Jesus, *"the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David"* (Luke 1:32), though David was many generations before Him. Mary also said, *"As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever"* (Luke 1:55). Zacharias, *"filled with the Holy Spirit,"* also spoke of *"the oath which he swore to our father Abraham"* (Luke 1:67,73). Abraham in his turn was many generations before David, yet still is referred to as *"father"*. In 2 Samuel 9:7 both Jonathan and his father Saul are called the *"father"* of Mephibosheth, who was in fact Jonathan's son. In 2 Chronicles 15:16 Maachah, the grandmother of Asa, is referred to as his *"mother"*.

So Nebuchadnezzar could be correctly spoken of as the "father" of Belshazzar, meaning his ancestor.

Sir Henry Rawlinson thinks it probable that Nabonidus, Belshazzar's father, had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. This would mean that Nebuchadnezzar would be Belshazzar's maternal grandfather. The Variorum editor is of the opinion that Nabonidus' mother was a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, as in the Biblical sense it would be acceptable to speak of Nebuchadnezzar as the "father", that is, forefather of Belshazzar.

As we have already seen, Belshazzar *"made a great feast to a thousand of his lords"* (Daniel 5:1). The occasion or reason for this feast is not known, but it seems clear from what is now known of Belshazzar, that he was dissolute and pleasure-loving,

and given to great self-indulgence in pleasures of the flesh, particularly eating and drinking.

The Scriptural record shows that the feast became an occasion of general licence and over-indulgence on the part of Belshazzar and his lords. It was not the custom of kings to eat and drink before their subjects, but at this feast all restraints were cast aside. It was also not the custom for women in eastern countries to be present and engage in these feasts, but in this case the usual customs were disregarded.

It would seem that, under the influence of wine, Belshazzar commanded to bring in to the feast the gold and silver vessels which his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem: *"that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein."* (Daniel 5:2).

It seems quite evident that these vessels had always been considered by Nebuchadnezzar as sacred, and that they had never been used for any purpose since the capture of Jerusalem. Perhaps Belshazzar in his sober periods would have respected the sacred vessels, and probably had no intention of making use of them when he instituted the feast. But whatever Belshazzar's thoughts or intentions might have been, under the influence of wine, he decided to bring the sacred vessels into the banquet hall and actually drink from them, as also did the princes, wives and concubines (Daniel 5:3).

The words of Daniel in 5:23 imply that Belshazzar intended this particular act to be an expression of his contempt for the God of Israel. It is expressly stated that the sacred vessels were to be brought into the pagan feast so that the king, his lords and his wives and his concubines might drink out of them; and they *"praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the god in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified"*. These vessels had all been consecrated to Jehovah to be used only in connection with His worship.

From Daniel 5:22 we have good reason to believe that Belshazzar knew of his grandfather's respect for the God of the Hebrews, and of his having held the temple vessels to be sacred and to be used only in connection with the worship of Jehovah. But, under the influence of wine, Belshazzar showed neither

respect nor reverence for his grandfather, nor for the vessels consecrated for use in worship of the God of Israel.

The Greek historian, Xenophon (435 - 354 BC), informs us that Gobryas, one of Cyrus's generals, said at the time the command was given for the assault on the city, **"I should not be surprised if the doors of the palace are now open, for the whole city seems tonight to be given up to revelry."**

It seems evident that Cyrus had been informed concerning the feast and had anticipated that the night in the city would be spent in revelling and drunkenness.

Rarely has the Lord God intervened in human misconduct and licentiousness, but in this case an exception was made. As the revellers drank from the sacred temple vessels and praised heathen idols and gods: *"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw part of the hand that wrote."* (Daniel 5:5).

The sudden interruption of the revelry struck Belshazzar with fear and terror, as we read: *"Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."* (Daniel 5:6).

After the initial shock of the hand writing on the wall, Belshazzar recovered his self-possession sufficiently to call for *"the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers"* (Daniel 5:7). The highest honours were to be given to the man who could interpret the mysterious writing. He was to be clothed in scarlet (literally purple), have a chain of gold about his neck, and become the third ruler in the kingdom. *"Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof."* (Daniel 5:8).

This situation must have increased the alarm and bewilderment of Belshazzar and his lords. At this stage there entered the banquet hall the *"queen"* or more correctly, *"the queen mother"*. She was the wife of Nabonidus, Belshazzar's father, and the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. She seems to be the only one who remembered how Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's visions of the image of the great tree, and

how her father had honoured him, and how he had always been a trusted, faithful, and most capable servant of the king.

We next read: *"Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation."* (Daniel 5:10-12).

It seems from the Scripture that Daniel had been virtually forgotten and overlooked after Nebuchadnezzar's death. It seems clear also that this occasion was Daniel's first appearance before Belshazzar:

"Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing: And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom." (Daniel 5:13-16).

This was a very significant time in the world's history. Babylon was about to be overthrown, and the seventy years captivity of the Jewish nation would soon be completed. Daniel at this time must have been about eighty-five years of age.

Daniel's reply to the king is characteristic of this noble man of God. He states that he does not seek gifts or material rewards for himself, and will *"read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation"* (Daniel 5:17).

Daniel then addresses the king, delivers a brief sermon to him before his lords and everyone present, and interprets the writing on the wall:

"O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him.

And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and his writing was written.

And this is the writing that was written, ME-NE, ME-NE, TE-KEL, U-PHAR-SIN.

This is the interpretation of the thing: ME-NE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

TE-KEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

PE-RES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." (Daniel:5:18-28).

It would seem that neither Belshazzar, nor any present at his feast, realised how near was the time of judgement on Babylon. True to his promise Belshazzar gave command: *"And they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom"* (Daniel 5:29).

But even while Daniel was pronouncing Belshazzar's and Babylon's doom, the armies of the Medes and Persians were taking possession of the city. The Medes under Darius and the Persians under Cyrus had besieged the city, but had found it apparently impregnable, defying attack and even blockade.

But the Scriptures had foretold that Babylon would fall suddenly: *"The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwelling places; her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted."* (Jeremiah 51:30-32).

Isaiah had prophesied of Israel's deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, and even named Cyrus the Persian as the deliverer:

"Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isaiah 44:24-28).

"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will

loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." (Isaiah 45:1-4).

How was the conquest of Babylon accomplished? The Greek historian, Herodotus (485 - 425 BC) informs us. He states that Cyrus, after defeating Nabonidus in battle, took the city of Babylon by drawing off for a time the water of the Euphrates River, which ran through Babylon under the city walls, and marching in with his whole army along the river bed during a Babylonian festival.

The diversion of the River Euphrates, by which the overthrow of ancient Babylon was facilitated, is used symbolically in Revelation 16:12 concerning great mystic Babylon. The meaning and significance of the symbolism in Revelation, chapters 16, 17 and 18 are discussed in our book on the Revelation, "The Few and the Many".

There are many important lessons to be drawn from a comparison between the fall of ancient Babylon and that of mystic Babylon.

DANIEL AGAIN COMES INTO PROMINENCE

When Daniel had interpreted the miraculous writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, Belshazzar kept his word and made Daniel *"the third ruler in the kingdom"* (Daniel 5:29). Nabonidus the king was the first ruler in the kingdom, Belshazzar his son was the second ruler in charge of the general administration of the kingdom and the army, so Daniel as the *"third ruler"* must have been next in authority to the two royal rulers.

The promotion and exaltation of Daniel at this important point in history, the overthrow of ancient Babylon and the Babylonian empire, seem to indicate God's special provision for His chosen people who were soon to come out of Babylon and return to their own land.

Daniel would be in a position to represent the Jewish people in the king's court, and would also be well placed to negotiate with Darius the Conqueror concerning the fate of the empire and the captive Jews. In Daniel 6 we learn that Darius recognised Daniel's integrity and capabilities and continued to keep him in high office.

PROPHECIES OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

The history of warring nations and how these nations affected the people of God in Old Testament times, as recorded in Scripture, are not records to be skimmed over and cast aside. The records are valuable for study and reflection because of:

1. the information they give us of God's methods of dealings with people and nations; and
2. the lessons we may learn from these records.

The records also demonstrate God's power to foretell events in a manner which heathen astrologers and false prophets in Israel and Judah were unable to duplicate (Isaiah 47:12-15; 44:25). When God threatened Judah with captivity in Babylon for neglecting His service, the false prophets predicted the contrary. When in Babylon, God's true prophets foretold the return of the Jews to their own land at the end of seventy years captivity, the false prophets declared they would never go back. Every false prophet was in time discredited, yet the perverse among the people still preferred the false messengers to the true prophets of God (Jeremiah 1:13; 5:30,31; 14:14-16; 27:13-18).

The captivity in Babylon had been foretold as far back as the time of Moses. (Leviticus 26:33-45). At the same time God promised that He would not forget His people or utterly destroy them, but would remember His covenant with them (Leviticus 26:43-45). Centuries passed, but God did not forget His threat of punishment nor His promise that He would not forsake them or destroy them.

Prophets sent to the twelve tribes were continually warning them of the consequences of disobedience and idolatry. When the ten tribes revolted, the prophets spoke forcefully and clearly. Finally, when the two-tribe kingdom, Judah, became incorrigible, both Isaiah and Jeremiah by the Holy Spirit recorded threats,

pleadings and promises. Two prophets even mentioned the names of the invaders who would come against Jerusalem, and the horrifying loss of life and damage to their beloved city which would result from the invasions. But all such warnings and pleadings were in vain (Jeremiah 25:3-11; 27:19-22; 26:8-15).

Isaiah and Jeremiah were also used to declare God's attitude towards Chaldea or Babylon, by whom the last and severest of the punishments mentioned in Leviticus 26 would be inflicted. The Chaldean kings were petty or small-time rulers always in conflict with Assyria and other neighbouring tribes. First God used the Assyrians against Israel, then He gave prosperity to the Chaldeans; and finally, under Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldeans were used against Judah, and the great and powerful Babylonian empire came into being.

This great and powerful empire, however, was destined to last only seventy years. Years before it came into being, God caused the prophet Isaiah to write of the glory it would attain, and also of the suddenness and completeness of its fall.

The pride and exaltation of the King of Babylon are described in Isaiah 14:4, 12-18, where he is addressed "*O Lucifer, son (or day star) of the morning,*" indicating his rise in the east and his brilliance. In Isaiah 13:1-22 and 14:4-23, the punishment of Babylon is described, and the Medes are named as the instrument by which the punishment would be inflicted. Isaiah 46 describes how the Babylonian gods, Bel and Nebo, would be discredited because of their impotence, verse 11 referring to the swift, birdlike flight of the Medes and Persians to accomplish their defeat. Isaiah 21:1-10 also foretells the fall of Babylon.

Isaiah 47 is a striking prediction of the suddenness with which Babylon would be overthrown. Under the symbolism of a woman, Babylon is prophetically pictured as rich, proud and self-confident, saying, "*I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.*" (Isaiah 47:8).

Then the prophet exclaims: "*But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood*" (Isaiah 47:9). Verse 11 again emphasises the suddenness of Babylon's overthrow: "*Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and*

mischievous shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know."

Cyrus, too, as aforementioned, is referred to by name as the deliverer of Judah from Babylon, and their restorer to their own land (Isaiah 44:26-28; 45:1-13).

These prophecies were literally fulfilled on ancient Babylon, as were also the striking denunciations of Jeremiah who prophesied at length on the severity of her punishment and the completeness of her desolation (Jeremiah 50 and 51). Babylon has become a heap, and, according to the prophecy, will never be rebuilt (Jeremiah 25:12,13).

MYSTIC BABYLON

The prophecies against ancient Babylon were fulfilled literally in its overthrow by the Medes and the Persians. Why then do we read in Revelation 18 of the downfall of Babylon the great, called in Revelation 17:5 *"the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth"*?

We are given to understand that the Book of Revelation is a prophecy of events and developments that would occur following the Lord Jesus' ascension (Revelation 1:1;3; 22:7,10,18,19). Revelation is a book full of figurative language and symbols, where ancient Babylon is used as a symbol of a system of government or rulership which would arise and flourish in the Gospel Age.

Do the prophecies against ancient Babylon have another or secondary application to mystic Babylon? Generally speaking, each prophecy has its one particular application and no other. When that fulfilment has taken place, no other fulfilment is to be sought. The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning literal Babylon are separate and distinct from the prophecies concerning mystic Babylon in Revelation.

It is, however, in order to notice **similarities** between the two passages of prophecy, and draw what **lessons** we can from such comparisons.

In the prophecies in Revelation concerning mystic Babylon, certain accusations are made which are **very similar** to those made against literal Babylon, and certain punishment is predicted on mystic Babylon **similar in some respects** to that which was fulfilled on the ancient city; similar in some respects, but not in all respects.

Mystic Babylon is not dependent on a literal river, as ancient Babylon was, so mystic Babylon cannot be overthrown by diversion of the literal Euphrates River in the manner in which the ancient city was overthrown.

The "*waters*" on which mystic Babylon sits are explained in Revelation 17:15 as symbolic of "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*". The manner of ancient Babylon's collapse is featured in one of John's visions in Revelation (16:12), so we are justified in considering it as helpful in reaching an understanding of what to expect concerning mystic Babylon.

Where the New Testament quotes or makes reference to incidents or passages in the Old Testament as typical, illustrative or similar in this way or that, we will profit by considering such passages carefully.

The Old Testament contains many prophecies which were not fulfilled in Old Testament times. Some examples are those which point to our Lord as the Lamb slain for sin, those which refer to the calling of the church, and those which foretell the kingdom set up in power in the age to come.

But to lift Old Testament prophecies from their contexts, and make them apply to our own or future times, can be a harmful practice, and lead to error and confusion. Old Testament prophecies should be supported and applied in the New Testament before being given applicability in our own times or future times.

There are a number of **dissimilarities** between ancient Babylon and mystic Babylon. The former was a literal city and nation, while the latter is a great system of religion and government whose influence extends throughout the world. The ancient city was a walled, well-fortified city situated on the Euphrates River; the later symbolic city is pictured as seated on a beast having seven heads and ten horns; and as established on seven mountains (Revelation 17:3,7,9-18).

The **similarities** between ancient and mystic Babylon may be summarised as follows:

1. An extensive dominion;
2. Great wealth and influence;
3. God's people held in bondage;
4. Intrigues with earthly rulers;
5. The whole world profited by their trade;
6. Pride and self-satisfaction: "*I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*" (Revelation 18:7);
7. Sudden, unexpected overthrow;
8. Complete disappearance, never to rise again.

The overthrow of ancient Babylon was facilitated by the Medes and Persians drawing off for a time the waters of the Euphrates River, then marching in with their armies along the river bed while Belshazzar the Babylonian king feasted and the whole city was engaged in revelry.

The diversion of the literal Euphrates River, by which the overthrow of the ancient city of Babylon was facilitated, is used in Revelation 16:12 to suggest the means by which great mystic Babylon will be overthrown: "*And the sixth angel poured out his vial (literally "bowl") upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*"

These events occur under the pouring out of the sixth vial (bowl), meaning the sixth plague or manifestation of the wrath of God on the "*earth*", that is, the social order (Revelation 15:1 7,8; 16:1-21). What do the symbols mean?

From a study of Daniel and the Revelation, it seems reasonable to conclude that the pouring out of the seven vials (bowls) of the wrath of God on the social order began at the time of the French Revolution (1789 and onwards), and that the sixth plague was in evidence about 1870, when the last vestige of temporal power was taken from the Papacy.

The great river Euphrates stands for the "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (Revelation 17:15) who support symbolic Babylon. The basis of the symbolism is the Papacy, but Protestant denominational churches are also included because they continue to maintain serious errors of doctrine and practice which they inherited from the Papacy and have never renounced.

When the sixth angel poured out his vial (bowl) upon the symbolic Euphrates, the *"drying up"* of the symbolic *"water"* began, that is, the influence and support of the *"peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"* (Revelation 17:15) became diverted in other directions. Some of the *"peoples"* in mystic Babylon have been and are being diverted to modernism, higher criticism, agnosticism, atheism (especially belief in the theory of evolution), socialism, and general material and worldly pursuits; while others have been and are being diverted to social service and other activities which make good works a religion to the exclusion or neglect of Scripture study and divine worship.

As time passes the waters are being dried up more and more. The literal Euphrates was diverted in a single night; the diversion of the symbolic *"waters"* takes longer: *"the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters"* (Revelation 17:1).

Another very important but little known diversion is that of the Lord's true people who hear the call, *"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"* (Revelation 18:4).

The diversion of the literal river Euphrates did not of itself accomplish the overthrow of Babylon. The diversion was a means to that end, the creating of access to an otherwise impregnable city for the attacking forces. So the diversion of support of people from mystic Babylon does not accomplish its downfall. The object of the diversion is to prepare the way for the *"kings of the east"* (Revelation 16:12), that is, the Lord Jesus and His church, by whom the complete overthrow of Babylon will be accomplished.

Further plagues on Babylon are represented in Revelation 16:17-21 under the figures of thunders, lightnings, an earthquake, and great hail; while in Revelation 18:21 the final end of mystic Babylon is likened to a great millstone cast into the sea, to *"be found no more at all"*.

Then the liberated peoples will rejoice, although at first they lament and mourn over the destruction of that great system in which their interests were centred. Their rejoicing will be similar to the rejoicing of the Jews at their liberation under Cyrus the Persian, and similar to the probable rejoicing of the ancient Babylonians when they found their new rulers to be fair and just (Isaiah 41:2,17-20; Revelation 18:10-21).

Eventually the whole human race will rejoice when Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will heal all wounds and afflictions, establish peace, justice and righteousness in the earth, uplift the poor and needy, and do whatever else is required to make the new reconstituted earth a place of happiness and righteousness for all peoples for all time (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 22:3-5, 17).

CHAPTER 6

DANIEL IN THE DEN OF LIONS

DANIEL HONOURED BY DARIUS THE CONQUEROR

From early in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel told and interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's remarkable dream and was set over the whole province of Babylon, to the fateful night of Belshazzar's feast and the writing on the wall, Daniel had been a trusted counsellor at the royal court (Daniel 1:1-6, 19-21; 2:48,49).

Had Daniel been one of the Chaldean royal family instead of a Jew, he might have been put to death by Darius the conqueror of Babylon, for in those days it was customary for the victor to execute all members of the royal family, as well as other persons of rank and influence, to prevent any possible reactionary movements or plots of rebellion (2 Kings 11:1; 25:7, 18-21).

The fact that Daniel was not imprisoned or executed by Darius may have been due to Daniel's reputation having reached Darius before Darius' conquest of Babylon. The remarkable and amazing interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's two dreams, and subsequently the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, would have caused Daniel's fame to become widely known in those far-off days. Darius must have been impressed by Daniel, for we read in Daniel 6:1-3: *"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."*

Darius must have perceived the nobility of Daniel's character, and realised that Daniel acted entirely in the king's interest. This would mean that Daniel would neither give nor accept bribes, nor tolerate dishonesty in his subordinates.

The "excellent spirit" that was in Daniel would indicate that he was also gracious, obliging, considerate and helpful. He knew how to conduct himself in his dealings with the king, and would never be indiscreet or presumptuous.

There must have been some good qualities in Darius' character also, in that he was able to appreciate a man like Daniel; and as the account proceeds we see he had a personal regard for Daniel and a respect for Daniel's God.

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST DANIEL

As often happens when a good person occupies a high position, envy and jealousy arose in Daniel's associates, *"the presidents and princes"*. And when they became aware that Darius *"thought to set him (Daniel) over the whole realm"* (Daniel 6:3) their envy and jealousy led them to devise a murderous plan to get rid of him. They watched him for flaws or failures in his management of the king's business, or for weaknesses in his character and personal life, *"but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him"* (Daniel 6:4).

The presidents and princes then agreed that the only way to bring a charge against Daniel would be in connection with his God and his regular worship as a Jew. Like the Scribes, Pharisees and Jewish leaders in the days of the Lord Jesus' earthly ministry, they did not hesitate to trump up a charge. But they had to do more. They had to use subtlety to induce Darius to agree to and sign a decree for Daniel's undoing. They conspired to ruin Daniel, the most upright man in the realm, a man against whom no charge of guilt could be substantiated, who had done nothing against the conspirators, and who was in no way vulnerable personally or administratively.

A conspiracy is a combination of persons working together for evil purposes; an agreement between two or more persons to commit some crime jointly, frequently treason or insurrection against a government or state.

But in Daniel's case it was a plot against him which grew wholly out of envy and jealousy, a concerted agreement to ruin a good man who had done no wrong and against whom no wrong could be substantiated.

The **essential aspects of a conspiracy** are two:

1. that the purpose is evil; and
2. that the purpose is to be accomplished by the combined influence of two or any greater number of persons.

The bases on which the conspirators relied for success of their plot were as follows:

1. They could rely on Daniel's unwavering integrity, on his firm and faithful adherence to the principles of his religion under all kinds of temptation and trial and under all circumstances;
2. They could induce the king to *"make a firm decree" ... "according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not"* (Daniel 6:7,8), such decree becoming law when signed by Darius the king. This law could not be repealed or set aside, and would be one which Daniel would be certain to violate because of his faithfulness to Jehovah, and thus incur the prescribed penalty.

The penalty for violation of the decree was for the offender to be *"cast into the den of lions"* (Daniel 6:7). The Medes and the Persians had one law which differed from any law adopted by any other nation before or since. This law stated that any decree promulgated and sealed with the king's seal was unalterable. No matter how contradictory it might be of some other law, or what injustice or hardship it might inflict, a decree once signed could not be amended in any way. It stood as signed, and must be so executed.

The conspiring and intriguing *"presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains"* (Daniel 6:7) took advantage of this unalterable law of the Medes and Persians to ensnare the king, impressing on him the fact that he would not later be able to change his mind (Daniel 6:8). The decree stated: *"That whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions."* (Daniel 6:7).

To understand how such a body of men could possibly expect Darius to sign such a decree, it is necessary to know something of heathen customs, particularly those of the Persians, and something of the superstitious reverence that was often accorded to kings in ancient times.

It was not uncommon for kings to be accorded divine honours, that is, people regarded kings as gods.

This notion persisted at least until the early centuries of the Christian era, when Roman emperors were regarded as gods, and many Christians suffered martyrdom because they would not sacrifice to the Roman emperor.

The ancient Persians looked upon their kings as representatives of **Ormuzd**, their supreme deity, and as such paid their kings the same honour that they paid to their heathen god. And it was only a short step further to require prayers and petitions to be addressed to their kings as representatives of their gods.

But Darius was a Mede, and the Medes were the lesser of the partners in the Medo-Persian alliance. The Persians were the superior partners, and Darius was on the throne owing allegiance to Persia. Hence Darius would be eager to give public proof of his willingness to conform to Persian religious customs.

Accordingly, when the deputation of the *"presidents and princes assembled together to the king"* (Daniel 6:6), there was nothing to make him suspicious or surprised in the measure they proposed that he should enact. Daniel's name was seemingly (and on purpose) left out entirely from their proceedings.

The Biblical expositor, Dr. Barnes, has given a number of reasons to explain why the king readily yielded to the proposal of the crafty, scheming counsellors, and *"signed the writing and the decree"* (Daniel 6:9):

"The law proposed was in a high degree flattering to the king, and he may have been ready at once to sign a decree which for the time gave him a supremacy over gods and men. If Alexander the Great desired to be adored as a god, then it is not improbable that a proud and weak Persian monarch would be willing to receive a similar tribute.

"It may have occurred to him, or may have been suggested, that this was an effectual way to test the readiness of his subjects to obey and honour him. Some such test, it may have been urged, was not improper, and this would determine what was the spirit of obedience as well as any other.

"More probably, however, it may have been represented that there was some danger of insubordination, or some conspiracy among the people, and that it was necessary that the sovereign should issue some mandate, which would at once and effectually quell it .

"The haste and earnestness with which they urged their request would rather seem to imply that there was a representation that some *sudden* occasion had arisen which made the enactment of such a statute proper. Or the king may have been in the habit of signing the decrees proposed by his counsellors with little hesitation, and lost in ease and sensuality, and perceiving only that this proposed law was flattering to himself, and not deliberating on what might be its possible result, he may have signed it at once."

If anyone should think that the acceptance of homage (normally paid to a god) by an earthly monarch is unreasonable or unbelievable, we have only to call to mind that as recently as 1870 a council of professed Christian dignitaries, in a church that claims to be the only true Church of God, were unanimous in solemnly declaring to the whole world that a man residing in Rome possessed the attribute of divine infallibility. This man, a sinner like the rest of us, was, of course, the Pope, and he solemnly received the honour as declared. This doctrine of Papal infallibility has never been renounced.

DANIEL CAST INTO THE DEN OF LIONS

As a faithful Jew, Daniel prayed three times each day with the windows of his room open toward Jerusalem, where the temple and the ark of the covenant had stood. What did Daniel do when he learned that Darius had "*signed the writing and the decree*" (Daniel 6:9)? The next verse, Daniel 6:10, tells us: "*Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*"

So, in full realisation of the consequences, Daniel continued his daily prayers with the windows of his room open, and prayed aloud as was customary with the Jews.

The conspirators *"assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God"* (Daniel 6:11), as they had expected. They then hastened to inform Darius of this breach of his decree. But before they accused Daniel they cleverly reminded the king that he had *"signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions"*. They also drew this avowal from Darius, when he *"answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not"* (Daniel 6:12).

It was then that the conspirators revealed the true and hitherto hidden intent of their scheme: to get rid of Daniel: *"Then answered they and said before the king, that Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day"* (Daniel 6:13).

The king realised he had been trapped, and *"was sore displeased with himself"* for having unwittingly condemned Daniel to death. He must have loved Daniel, for he *"set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him"* (Daniel 6:14). But the conspirators were stubborn, and insisted that the king's decree was unalterable.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but to cast Daniel into the den of lions. The king endeavoured to comfort and reassure Daniel, saying *"Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee"* (Daniel 6:16).

So that no one, not even the king, might release the prisoner, a stone was placed against the mouth of the den and sealed with the king's own signet and with the signet of his lords. *"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him"* (Daniel 6:18).

Humanly speaking there was no hope, but Darius must have had some belief in Daniel's God, for he *"arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions"*. There *"he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel ... O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"* (Daniel 6:19,20).

DANIEL'S DELIVERANCE

Daniel, answering from within the den, addressed the king in the manner customary when addressing royalty, *"O king, live for ever"*. He then explained his deliverance to Darius: *"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."* (Daniel 6:21,22).

Darius was *"exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den, ... and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God"* (Daniel 6:23). Darius had fulfilled his decree when he cast Daniel into the den of lions. Nothing had been said as to what should be done if Daniel should be found alive and uninjured.

Darius restored Daniel to his former greatness, and may well have carried out his thought, expressed in Daniel 6:3, to set Daniel over all the realm. We are told simply that *"Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian"* (Daniel 6:28).

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE CONSPIRATORS

As concerning the conspiring princes, counsellors, and captains, Darius was not bound by any decree. He commanded that they should be punished by the very same means they had planned for Daniel, and this time the lions' mouths were not shut by the angel of the Lord (Daniel 6:24).

The slaughter of the wives and children of the conspirators was an unnecessary cruelty, but it was common practice in those days. Extermination of the families of criminals was considered right and proper in order to eradicate infection. The law-breaker's family members were treated as though they shared his guilt.

Nowadays a more humane view is taken in western society, and some measures are taken to provide for a law-breakers' family during his or her imprisonment, and to assist a law-breaker's children to a better way of life.

DARIUS HONOURS THE GOD OF DANIEL

Darius then acknowledged the wonderful miracle that had been performed, and made a decree honouring the God of Daniel: *"Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."* (Daniel 6:25-27).

NEW TESTAMENT CORROBORATION

Daniel's miraculous deliverance is surely referred to in Hebrews 11:33: *"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions."*

Any aspersions cast on the book of Daniel, or attempts made to discredit the truth of the record, fail because of the Lord Jesus' reference to Daniel as a genuine prophet of God, exhorting His disciples to heed Daniel's prophecies concerning the great abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).

LESSONS FOR US

We may learn some helpful lessons from the account of Daniel's steadfast faith and miraculous deliverance.

1. Godliness, uprightness and virtue do not exempt believers from earthly adversities and ills. Suffering for righteousness' sake and for truth's sake is helpful in building a character fitted for eternity, and in assisting us as believers to a closer knowledge of the true God in this evil world.

2. There is great value in a stand, early in life, for God and truth such as we see in Daniel. Such a conviction gives direction and purpose to life, and leads to continuing development of a character of righteousness, tolerance of others, and patient endurance to cope with the storms of life.

3. As Daniel did, *"we ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). If necessary we should dare, as Daniel did, to obey God whenever the laws or decrees of men conflict with His word and its precepts.

4. The Scriptures declare that the true children of God may look for divine help and even intervention and over-ruling in times of need (Psalm 37:23-40; 55:22; Psalm 91:7-9; Matthew 6:25-34; 10:25-31; Peter 5:7).

To what extent and in what forms may the Lord's people in these days look for divine help when in trouble, trial or danger?

It is not wise, nor is it really possible to be specific in answer to this question. We have the promise that the Lord is with His children and will never leave them nor forsake them (Joshua 1:5; Hebrews 13:5), and *"we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose"* (Romans 8:28). We also know that *"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

These are precious promises that will sustain us in all situations, whether of prosperity or adversity, safety or danger, even of being in prison or out of prison for the Lord's sake. We must leave it to the Lord in His infinite wisdom to leave the believer to cope with the situation, or deliver him or her by whatever means He may see fit.

In this Gospel Age in which many Christian martyrs have been tortured and put to death for their faith, we must conclude that God's children ought not generally to expect miracles. The three Hebrew worthies and Daniel did not know beforehand whether God would deliver them or permit them to die. And so it should be with us.

But it must be acknowledged that there have been cases throughout the Gospel Age where it seems that God has interposed directly on behalf of the righteous in answer to prayer in times of sickness, poverty, adversity and even danger. There are cases which cannot be well accounted for on any other supposition than that God has directly interposed on their behalf, and shown them mercy because they are His children in Jesus Christ.

There is an inner peace and comfort, which the world cannot know, that is possessed by believing Christians because of their understanding of the divine plan, and because of their realisation that they are now in the school of trial, a school presided over by the Lord, Who will not suffer His pupils to be tried beyond their strength to endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).

CONCLUSION

For our part we gratefully acknowledge the God of heaven and earth, Who through the Lord Jesus Christ controls the destinies of nations, and Whose kingdom, with Jesus Christ as King, will stand for ever. We rejoice to think that the day is coming when we, as joint-heirs with Christ, will assist in ensuring that the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth "*as the waters cover the sea*" (Isaiah 11:9).

Daniel will be there as one of the "*princes in all the earth*" (Psalm 45:16) in that kingdom, to assist and enlighten Darius, and Cyrus, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar too, and encourage them to rejoice in the final and everlasting triumphs of the God of Daniel.

CHAPTER 7

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS, THE LITTLE HORN AND THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

Before we consider the next remarkable vision given to Daniel, let us review Daniel's writings so far in a brief summary.

OUTLINE OF THE FIRST SIX CHAPTERS OF DANIEL

Chapter One contains an account of the circumstances under which Daniel and his three companions are taken captive into Babylon, and of their training at the court of Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter Two contains the account of a remarkable dream sent by God to Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted by Daniel after God had revealed both the dream and its meaning to the prophet. This dream of a great image foretold the successive rise of four great world powers beginning with Babylon, and a fifth world power which would supersede them all and last forever.

Chapter Three is an account of the severe test to which Daniel's three companions were put, and their miraculous deliverance from the fiery furnace by the intervention of the Lord.

Chapter Four contains a second dream sent by God to Nebuchadnezzar. This dream of a great tree, also interpreted by Daniel when God revealed the meaning to him, applied to Nebuchadnezzar personally. The dream foretold punishment of Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride.

Chapter Five relates the miraculous handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, and the end of the first great world empire. Similarities can be seen between the destruction of the literal city of Babylon and the destruction of symbolic Babylon recorded in the book of Revelation.

Chapter Six contains the account of Daniel's severe testing when cast into the den of lions, and his miraculous deliverance by God.

CHAPTERS SEVEN TO TWELVE OF DANIEL

The remaining six chapters of the book of Daniel are almost exclusively descriptions of visions and dreams given to Daniel, with interpretations of some of them or at least important parts of them. Chapters seven to twelve of Daniel constitute a most remarkable series of prophecies, second in scope and details only to the prophecies contained in the book of Revelation.

Although many of the prophecies in chapters seven to twelve of Daniel are intricate and complex, the Lord has made known their interpretation partly through Daniel and partly through the New Testament writers, making it clear that He wishes His people to understand. As sincere truth-seeking believers, we should do our best by prayer and careful study to understand what the inspired writers have written for our learning.

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

This vision was given to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon. This vision came to Daniel in a dream while he was in bed at night: *"Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed"* (Daniel 7:1).

Belshazzar was called King of Babylon because his father, Nabonidus, arranged for Belshazzar to reign jointly with him. Nabonidus was king of Babylon for seventeen years, but it is not known when in his reign he appointed his son, Belshazzar, to reign jointly with him. Hence the exact date of *"the first year of Belshazzar"* is not known, but must have been between the years 554 and 537 BC, the years when Nabonidus was King of Babylon.

The wonderful vision Daniel saw was given to him before Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, and therefore before he was sorely tried by being cast into the den of lions. Some fifty years or more must have passed between Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the Great Image and his vision of the Four Beasts, the Little Horn and the Ancient of Days. During this time Daniel would have continued faithfully in all the duties of his high office and in all that concerned his people, the captive children of Israel.

He must surely have thought much about the prophecy of the four world empires revealed to him by God, and must have hoped for further information about them.

As recorded in chapter eight, Daniel understood from the prophet Jeremiah that the period of the captivity of his people would be seventy years, and must have realised when the vision of the Four Beasts, the Little Horn, and the Ancient of Days was given to him that his people's captivity was about three quarters past. Daniel must have been about seventy years of age when he was given this wonderful vision.

Daniel evidently did not delay after the vision was given to him, for we read in Daniel 7:1 that *"he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters"*. So it is that the prophecy was preserved for the Lord's people of future generations to study and observe the progressive fulfilment as the years and centuries have passed. *"The sum of the matters"* would mean the main or chief points of the vision. The Chaldee word translated *"sum"* means, according to Dr. Strong, "head" or "chief," and would properly denote a written record consisting of a summary of the main points of the vision.

THE FOUR BEASTS

"Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." (Daniel 7:2-7).

Some details are given in this vision that were not given in the vision of the Image seen by Nebuchadnezzar as recorded in chapter two.

The vision of the Image shows how these four great world empires developed each out of the one preceding it, the whole constituting a more or less unified depiction of world dominion while this present evil order of things is permitted to endure. The vision of the Beasts, on the other hand, portrays the fierce conflict and warfare waged by each empire before it gained the ascendancy over its predecessor.

The vision of the Image shows the brightness and degree of excellence of the four world powers as seen by earthly potentates such as Nebuchadnezzar, while the vision of the Beasts shows their ferocity and bestial qualities as seen by a child of God, such as Daniel.

Further, the Image shows deterioration in the constitution of the world powers, while the Beasts reveal their increasing ferocity in conquest and in plunder and subjugation of the conquered peoples.

In the vision of the Image, the head of gold was seen in its full splendour, a symbol of Nebuchadnezzar at the height of Babylonian greatness. The vision of the Beasts begins before the period of Babylonian greatness, showing the Babylonian power, the first of the four beasts, rising out of the "sea" (Daniel 7:3). The Chaldean word translated "sea" has a basic meaning of "roar," according to Dr. Strong, and seems to be a symbolic representation of the restless and agitating masses of earth's peoples.

In Daniel 7:17 it is said that *"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth"*. The "sea" and the "earth" are symbols of the recognisable reality, not the literal, physical sea and earth, but human society or the social order.

Sometimes the order of things in human society is stable, as the sea and earth are at times calm and tranquil, but sometimes the order of things is in a condition of restlessness and instability, as when storms and earthquakes lash and shake the literal earth (or parts of it) from time to time.

THE FIRST BEAST: BABYLON

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." (Daniel 7:4).

The lion and eagle are foremost among predatory creatures, and seek their prey with vigour. A lion with eagle's wings would fittingly symbolise a swift and sure conqueror, as Nebuchadnezzar was. But its wings *"were plucked,"* surely a representation of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against Egypt, which country he was unable to conquer. Nebuchadnezzar rapidly conquered Assyria and other adjacent provinces, but was unable to do more than inflict injury on Egypt. After his conquest of Palestine and captivity of Israel, Nebuchadnezzar achieved no further extension of his empire.

The prediction in Daniel 7:4 that the first beast stood *"upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it"* was fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar. A lion standing on two legs like a man and with a man's heart would not be a predatory, destructive creature, but rather a planning, reasoning and constructive creature. And so it was with Nebuchadnezzar. He was a conqueror, but was for the most part, humane in his treatment of the conquered peoples.

In Nebuchadnezzar's long reign of forty-three years he "built or rebuilt cities, repaired temples, constructed quays, reservoirs, canals and aqueducts on a scale of grandeur and magnificence surpassing everything of the kind recorded in history." (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

He beautified Babylon with hanging gardens, one of the wonders of the ancient world. He colonised and developed conquered lands instead of devastating them after the manner of other nations. His reasonableness was shown by his acknowledgment on various occasions of the God of heaven (Daniel 2:47; 3:28,29; 4:37).

THE SECOND BEAST: MEDO - PERSIA

"And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." (Daniel 7:5).

The second beast was like a bear, and *"raised up itself on one side"*. This prophecy accurately fits the rise of the Medo-Persian empire. The Medes were the first to rebel against Babylon, and subsequently the Persians entered into a league with them, and became the predominant power. In Daniel chapter eight the Persian predominance is indicated in the vision recorded there by the larger of the two horns of the ram.

The second beast was not constructive, rather its destructiveness and savagery are symbolised by the *"three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh"*. According to Sir Isaac Newton, these three ribs represented LYDIA, BABYLON AND EGYPT.

The policy of devouring *"much flesh"* led a later leader, Darius III, to attempt conquest of the West, and in making this attempt, bring upon himself defeat on European soil. Reprisals by the Greeks led to the punishment and subsequently the conquest of Medo-Persia, the **second** world empire. Daniel chapter eight gives further details of the conquest by Greece.

THE THIRD BEAST: GREECE

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it." (Daniel 7:6).

The leopard, *"which had upon ... it four wings of a fowl,"* represents the energy and swiftness with which Alexander the Great (356 - 323 BC) swooped upon the Medo-Persian realm and flew through the provinces. The first encounters were furious, but the remaining conquests were comparatively easy. The same characteristic is represented in Daniel chapter eight by the he-goat which moved so swiftly that it appeared not to touch the ground.

But Alexander had no sooner conquered the known world, and sighed because there were no more worlds to conquer, than he fell ill and died. He did not survive to rule his dominions, as did Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. Alexander was cut off in the vigour of early manhood, and left no inheritor of his power and dominion. His vast dominion broke into fragments soon after his death, and the four generals who had fought under him contended fiercely for twenty years for the fragments.

In the year 301 BC a decisive action took place at Ipsus in Phrygia, the result of which gave Syria and the East to Seleucus, Egypt to Ptolemy, Thrace to Lysimachus, and Macedonia to Cassander. Thus was the prophetic vision of the *"four heads"* of the leopard-like beast fulfilled.

It should be noted that the prophecy makes no mention of the culture and art of the Greeks. Further details of the third world empire are given in chapters eight and eleven of Daniel.

THE FOURTH BEAST: ROME

"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." (Daniel 7:7).

No beast in nature sufficed to picture the ferocity and destructiveness of the fourth world empire. Beasts of prey will devour and break in pieces, then leave what they cannot eat or do not want of their kill, but this beast *"stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it,"* indicating the ferocity and ruthless destructiveness of the Roman Empire.

We should bear in mind that when this vision was given to Daniel, Italy was the home of only a few feeble and constantly warring tribes. Rome was so little known at that time that the Greek historian, Herodotus, does not even mention it in his description of the then known world with all its towns and cities.

It is a fact of history that the Romans steadily but surely united and expanded their influence and power and established a Republic. They were nearly brought to destruction by the Punic Wars (264 - 146 BC), a series of three fierce and destructive wars between the Roman Republic and the Carthaginian or Punic Empire. The final result was the destruction of Carthage, the enslavement of its population and Roman domination over the Western Mediterranean.

Following the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC, the Macedonian kingdom (symbolised by one of the four heads of the leopard) was overthrown by Rome, and the last king of Macedonia,

Perseus, was taken captive by the victorious Roman general. From this time onward Rome was sufficiently free from domestic enemies to enter on its career of conquest.

The last of the four divisions of Alexander the Great's former empire, Egypt (symbolised by one of the four heads of the leopard), was conquered by Rome in 31 BC when Octavius Caesar defeated the forces of Cleopatra and Mark Antony, both of whom committed suicide after their defeat.

Octavius then became the sole master of the great dominion which the mighty Julius Caesar had conquered and prepared for him. Octavius became the first Emperor of the Roman world. We may consider the Roman Empire as beginning in the year 27 BC, when Octavius was honoured with the new and imposing title of Augustus. He remained emperor until after the birth of Christ, being the "Caesar Augustus" mentioned in Luke 2:1.

It was soon after the birth of Christ that all nations (but not all people and tribes) had become mere vassals to the Roman government. The famous historian, Edward Gibbon, wrote of the vast extent of the Roman Empire at this time:

"The empire was about two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to Mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer. It extended, in length, more than three thousand miles from the Western Ocean to the Euphrates. It was supposed to contain about sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and well cultivated land.

"The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome."

"Beyond the frontiers," Gibbon states, there lay "nothing except the ocean, inhospitable deserts, and hostile tribes of barbarians of fierce manner and unknown language, or dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the emperor's favour by the sacrifice of an obnoxious fugitive."

THE TEN HORNS OF THE FOURTH BEAST

But what of the *"ten horns"* of the beast? These correspond with the ten toes of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in the vision given to him by God some fifty years earlier. Horns are symbols of power, and signify ten powers or governments. The *"ten horns"* and ten toes represent kingdoms or divisions into which the Roman Empire was divided in the reign of the Emperor, Theodosius the Great (c346 - 325 AD).

According to Sir Isaac Newton (1642 - 1727) these kingdoms were:

- 1st the Vandals and Alans, in Spain and in Africa;
- 2nd the Suevians, in Spain;
- 3rd the Visigoths;
- 4th the Alans in Gaul;
- 5th the Burgundians;
- 6th the Franks;
- 7th the Britons;
- 8th the Huns;
- 9th the Lombards;
- 10th Ravenna.

Alternatively, as given by Bishop Newton, the ten kingdoms were:

- 1st the Ostrogoths in Moesia;
- 2nd the Visigoths in Pannonia;
- 3rd the Suevis and Alans in Gascoign and Spain;
- 4th the Vandals in Africa;
- 5th the Franks in France;
- 6th the Burgundians in Burgundy;
- 7th the Keruli and Turingi in Italy;
- 8th the Saxons and Angles in Britain;
- 9th the Huns in Hungary;
- 10th the Lombards, at first upon the Danube, afterwards in Italy.

The beasts represent the same empires that were pictured in the vision of the Image. These *"four kings"* (Daniel 7:17) are symbols of world kingdoms or empires. However, in the vision of the Image, no conflict between the ten kingdoms was mentioned, and nothing was indicated to stir Daniel's curiosity.

In the vision of the beasts, on the other hand, the existence of ten horns on the fourth beast was an unnatural phenomenon. It seems reasonable, therefore, that God gave the vision of the beasts to provide more information and bring forward certain additional features of world history. In the vision of the Image there was no hint that a long period of time would elapse between the division of the Roman Empire into ten kingdoms and the smiting of the Image on its feet, symbolising the final destruction of this order of things.

Moreover, in the vision of the beasts there is a clear indication that a new power, symbolised by a *"little horn"* (Daniel 7:8), would arise and inflict many hardships on God's people in an age long future from Daniel's day.

The Lord showed Daniel a little at a time. If we continue to study the book of Daniel in the same manner, we too will be led from one point of understanding to another and gain a clearer understanding than was possible for Daniel in his day, since some of the prophecies have been fulfilled, and we can see other of Daniel's prophecies in the course of fulfilment.

THE LITTLE HORN

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were the eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Daniel 7:8).

From the way the vision proceeds, it seems evident that the Lord's desire was to draw Daniel's attention to this little horn, for in the vision it is recorded that Daniel *"came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this."* Then we read, *"so he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things"* (Daniel 7:16).

Daniel chapter two stated plainly that the head of gold in the Image was Nebuchadnezzar, and that he was to be succeeded by *"the kings of Media and Persia"* and *"the king of Greece"* and a fourth kingdom which was not named. Chapter seven, on the other hand, does not identify any of the beasts or the *"little horn"* whose career Daniel observed with great interest.

The fourth world empire, represented by the legs and feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, as well as the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, is never once named. Neither is it named in the New Testament passages which prophesy the rise and subsequent dominion of the Papacy after the pagan form of the Roman power had been succeeded and superseded by the Papal form.

There are three main reasons why Rome is not named in the Scriptures:

1. In Daniel's lifetime Persia, Media and Greece were known in Babylon, but Rome had not yet risen to power, Italy being the home of only a few feeble and constantly warring tribes. Hence, to have named the fourth world empire to Daniel would not have conveyed anything to him.
2. After the Roman power had arisen, it was not necessary to name it, because its position as the fourth world empire was so obvious to God's people, the Jews, either from the time that Rome established a protectorate over Palestine about 161 BC, or at the latest from the time Judea became a tributary Roman province in 63 BC.
3. During the Christian era there has been no other power to rival or contest the position of Papal Rome in its predominance and influence in world affairs.

IDENTIFYING THE LITTLE HORN

Some searching and investigating are necessary to identify the *"little horn," "whose look was more stout than his fellows," "before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots,"* who had *"eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things,"* and who *"made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;"* (Daniel 7:8, 20 and 21).

This *"little horn"* was not one of the ten, but an intruder which gradually increased in size and power until it occupied all the space previously held by its three predecessors.

Daniel 7:24 informs us that this *"little horn"* *"shall subdue three kings"*, indicating its growth was a conscious and purposeful displacement of the three horns which symbolise three kingdoms.

It is generally agreed by Biblical expositors that the "*man of sin*," "*the mystery of iniquity*" of 2 Thessalonians 2: 3 and 7, and the "*antichrist*" of 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7 refer to the same ecclesiastical system as the "*little horn*," namely, the Papacy.

When did this "*little horn*" make its appearance? Which three "*horns*" did it "*subdue*"? Daniel's prophecy gives no indication of time or identity, so we must look to the New Testament and to secular history to help us to interpret the various symbols recorded by Daniel and determine when they might have appeared.

The Apostle Paul, who foretold the revealing of the "*man of sin*", assists us by writing in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 of a hindrance to its manifestation: "*only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way*". The verb "*let*" is translated from the Greek word "*katecho*" which means basically "to hold down (fast)" (Strong 2722). The meaning seems to be that of a hindrance to the revealing of the "*man of sin*" until such time as that hindrance is "*taken out of the way*".

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the hindrance was the continued existence of the Roman Empire in the West. That Empire came to its end in 476 AD with the dethronement of the last Emperor, Romulus Augustulus.

Some historians contend that modern history, in a comprehensive sense, began with the downfall of the Roman Empire in the West, and also, that with that event, the volume of ancient history was closed.

It is not until after the ten kingdoms, symbolically represented by the ten horns of the fourth beast, had all appeared in the territory of the Roman Empire in the West, that the power symbolised by the "*little horn*" should be seen as arising amongst them.

It is important to be aware of the two divisions of the Roman Empire into the Eastern and Western sections. When the Roman Emperor Constantine chose Byzantium as his capital in 330 AD, he inaugurated it under the name Constantinople, meaning "City of Constantine".

This historical fact has led to the impression that at this time the Roman Empire was divided and became two empires, East and West. But this was not the case. Constantine was sole Emperor of the entire Roman Empire, and only one Empire existed down to the dethronement of Romulus Augustulus in 476 AD.

The fact of the matter is that the one single Empire consisted of two administrative divisions, which should correctly be referred to as the Roman Empire in the West and the Roman Empire in the East. It was not until the ninth century AD, after the rise and development of the *"little horn,"* that it can be maintained that there were two distinct empires.

It would seem that the time in history to locate the rise of Papal Rome, symbolised by the *"little horn,"* is the time when the Bishop of Rome was made head of all the churches in Christendom. This event occurred in the years 529 to 539 AD by an official decree of the Emperor Justinian, whose seat of government was in Constantinople, the city of Constantine.

Thorough expositions of the important events of this time are found in two books written by Ernest Henningses, "Peace or War" and "Daniel the Prophet", and in the book "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah" by R. E. Streeter. It will be sufficient here to summarise the main points of the explanations given by these two writers.

It was not until after the ten kingdoms (symbolised by the ten horns) had all made their appearance in the territory of the Roman Empire in the West, that the power symbolised by the *"little horn"* was seen as coming up amongst them. This implies that when Daniel first saw the vision of the beast with its ten horns, the *"little horn"* was not in evidence, but that it appeared some time after Daniel first saw the Beast with its ten horns.

The appearance of the *"little horn"* on the head of the Beast after the ten horns (symbolising the ten divisions of the Roman Empire in the West) were seen fully developed, indicates that the appearance of the *"little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots"* (Daniel 7:8), was a further development of the history of the Roman Empire.

The historical development belongs to the territory of the Roman Empire in the West and not in the East. This is most important to enable a correct interpretation of the identity of the *"little horn"* to be made, for it is at this point in history (529 - 539 AD) that the New Testament prophecy of the Antichrist (1 John 2:18; 4:3; 2 John 7) begins to be fulfilled.

There are many passages of Scripture and many volumes of secular history that make identification of the *"little horn"* clear and unmistakable. The prophetic visions in Daniel, some New Testament passages and some chapters of Revelation contain singular and striking features which provide evidence that they were divinely chosen, so that the true Christian would not mistake the identity of the great religious system which more than any other has perverted and distorted the truth, and become the most bitter enemy and persecutor of the true church.

The predictions in Revelation 12, 13, 14, 17 and 18, and 2 Thessalonians 2 could not possibly refer to any other system or organisation than the Papal system. It is clearly indicated in these predictions that this persecuting power, represented in Daniel by the *"little horn,"* would be small in its beginnings, but would gradually develop and become even stronger in influence and power than all the ten kingdoms combined.

The Apostle Paul states that the *"mystery of iniquity"* (2 Thessalonians 2:7), a reference to the same system as the *"little horn,"* had already begun to work in his day. This expression used by Paul surely refers to the beginning and development of a desire, an unholy ambition for honour, exaltation and lordship within the Church. The *"little horn"* when it first appeared was small in comparison to the ten existing horns, but continued to grow and develop until its *"look was more stout than his fellows"* (Daniel 7:20).

The gradual rise of the Papacy to influence and power has been noted by all historians, whether Roman Catholic, Protestant or secular. As shown in Daniel's vision, there have been a number of stages in the rise and development of the Papacy.

The **first stage** covered the period in which the Bishop of Rome was seeking to become head over all bishops and the supreme head over all the Christian church. These endeavours began at some time in the fourth century AD, and culminated in the Emperor Justinian's code in 529 AD, in which the Bishop of Rome, by this time known as the Pope, was declared to be the supreme priest of the Christian church.

In the year 533 AD Justinian took a further step in establishing the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. Justinian wrote to Pope John II, the fifty-fifth Bishop of Rome, stating that he was subjecting all bishops and priests in both the East and West to the Roman Bishop. The Bishop of Constantinople then submitted to Justinian's decree, and the supremacy of the Pope over the whole Christian church was established. The dates 529 and 533 AD mark two very important points in the setting up of the Papacy. The decree of Justinian, however, did not confer on the Pope territorial possessions and jurisdiction, that is, temporal power.

Ernest Henninges, in his book "Daniel the Prophet" writes that the rise of the Papal power was represented in Daniel's vision by the coming up of *"another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots"* (Daniel 7:8, 20, 24). The three *"horns"* or powers that were *"plucked up"* in order that Papal domination in Rome and ultimately in all Italy and Western Europe might be assured were, according to Ernest Henninges, the following:

- "(1) The Western Roman Empire, with its seat at Ravenna, where the western emperors ruled for a time in conjunction with the eastern emperors, who resided at Constantinople;
- "(2) The Heruli, who overthrew the western empire in the year 476;
- "(3) The Ostrogothic power, which 'plucked up' the Heruli in 489;

"The Ostrogothic 'horn' was 'plucked up' by Justinian himself in the year 539, which we take to be the time when the Papal 'horn' was 'set up' as the 'abomination of desolation' mentioned in Daniel 12:7, 11, the power which would make war against the saints of the Most High, and would be allowed to prevail against them for 1260 years.

"From the time of the plucking up of the Ostrogothic 'horn' the supremacy of the Popes in the city of Rome was acknowledged, although for a while the emperors ruled the remainder of Italy, being represented by the Exarchs at Ravenna, the imperial rule being later rebelled against by the plucked up Goths, who, though they sacked the city of Rome, never re-established their rule there. The imperial rule in Italy was

overthrown by the Lombards, but these recognised the rule of the church in Rome and environs, making no great attempt at overturning it until near the end of the eighth century, their attempt then made being unsuccessful, the Papacy being sustained by the arms of France, under Pepin and Charlemagne."

The Western Emperors, each of whom represented the supreme Eastern Emperor, were known as Exarchs. The supreme Emperor resided in the East, in Constantinople. His representative in the West, the Exarch, did not live in Rome, but in Ravenna. The province of which Ravenna was the capital was known as the **Exarchate of Ravenna**. Ravenna was the administrative centre of the Empire in the West, and continued as an important city and port for centuries under both the pagan and Papal forms of the Roman power.

The **Heruli** were a Germanic people originally from Scandinavia. Their fortunes varied until they vanished from history in the middle of the sixth century AD.

The **Ostrogoths** were a division of the Goths, a Germanic people, who like the Heruli, originated in Scandinavia, and harassed the Roman empire for centuries. They established the Gothic Kingdom of Italy in the late fifth century AD after building up a huge empire, but were finally defeated by the forces of Emperor Justinian in 539 AD. After this warfare and defeat the Ostrogoths had no national existence.

The **Lombards** were one of the many Germanic tribes, their home being in north-western Germany. They migrated southward in the fourth century AD, and from 568 to 774 ruled a kingdom in Italy.

The **second stage** in connection with the development of the Papacy covers the period in which the Roman Bishop aspired to and sought to acquire temporal power. Temporal power, it is almost universally agreed, is the possession of territory with authority to control civil affairs such as making laws, imposing taxes, and all else that may be needed in the administration of a civil government.

R. E. Streeter, in his book "Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah" puts forward a different interpretation of the "three horns". He contends that the prophecy of the uprooting of the three horns was not fulfilled until the Papacy gained and exercised temporal as well as spiritual control of three separate and distinct peoples and territories of the Old Roman Empire. Such comprehensive control did not take place until the eighth century AD, when the kings of France - Pepin and subsequently his son Charlemagne - granted the Pope temporal dominion, or at least intervened to secure temporal dominion for the Pope over the following three areas:

"1. The Exarchate of Ravenna, which comprised, according to Sigonius, the following cities: Ravenna, Bologna, Imola, Fienza, Forlimpoli, Forli, Cesena, Bobbio, Ferrara, Commachio, Adria, Servia and Secchia.

"2. The Pentapolis, comprehending Rimini, Pesaro, Concha, Fano, Sinigalia, Ancono, Osimo, Umona, Jesi, Fossombrone, Montefereto, Urbino, Cagli, Lucoli, and Eugubio.

"3. The city and dukedom of Rome, containing several cities of note, which had withdrawn themselves from all subjection to the emperor, had submitted to St. Peter ever since the time of Pope Gregory II."

The arguments and explanations for this interpretation cover nine pages of R. E. Streeter's book.

Ernest Hennings in "Daniel the Prophet" maintained that the time prophecy of *"a time and times and the dividing of time"* (Daniel 7:25) began in 539 AD, when the Emperor Justinian conquered the Ostrogoths and cleared the way for the Papacy to grow and develop.

R. E. Streeter agrees that the time prophecy mentioned above began in 539 AD, but makes the point that Justinian's victory meant that the Bishop of Rome began officially to exercise spiritual dominion in 539 AD, and that the *"plucking up"* of the three horns does not necessarily coincide with the Papacy's control over spiritual matters. The length of the time prophecy, 1260 years, has reference particularly to the period of the Roman Bishops' spiritual authority over the saints. After the spiritual authority was officially established in 539 AD, the addition of temporal authority followed later, some three centuries later.

A TIME AND TIMES AND THE DIVIDING OF TIME

"And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."
(Daniel 7:24,25).

In this quotation, the period, during which the stout little horn should *"wear out the saints of the most High,"* is explained to be 1260 years in length. How is this figure arrived at? First, by consideration of the fact that each of the empires covered a long period of years, and that the expression *"wear out"* indicates more than a passing persecution. To be *"given into his hand"* indicates something more than a trifling subjection. The fulfilment of this prediction, as seen in history, has been on a large scale. The Papacy has worn out the saints for centuries.

The value of the *"time"* is found by comparison of Scripture passages in which the same period is described in different terms, as *"forty and two months," "a thousand two hundred and three score days," "a time, and times and half a time"* (Revelation 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5). In fulfilment of these symbolic prophecies each *"day"* has the value of an ordinary calendar year, according to the principle laid down in Ezekiel 4:5,6 (*"I have appointed thee each day for a year"*); so that the 1260 *"days"* of the prophecy stand for 1260 calendar years of history.

A *"time"* therefore would consist of 12 of these symbolic *"months"* of 30 *"days"* each, or 360 *"days"* in each *"time."* A time (1) and times (2) and the dividing of time ($\frac{1}{2}$) would be $3\frac{1}{2} \times 360$, or 1260 *"days"*, equal to 1260 years.

We are also helped in determining the length of this period by the fact that in the French Revolution, which began in 1789, the Papacy received a great blow, followed a few years later by Napoleon's campaigns in Italy and the Papal states. So great a movement against the Papacy coming at that time, exactly 1260 years after the Papacy rose to permanent power in 529 - 539, seems to justify the interpretation of *"time and times and the dividing of time"* as 1260 years.

The dates 529, 533 and 539 are important dates in the setting up of the Papacy, and it is most significant that each of these dates, marking points in the rise of the Papacy, has its corresponding date in the fall of the system.

The year 529 witnessed the publication of the Justinian code, in which the primacy of the Bishop of Rome was decreed. The year 1789 (1260 years later) marked the beginning of the French Revolution, which aimed at the overthrow of religion as well as of the aristocracy.

In the year 533, the Pope was formally recognised in his position of supremacy over the affairs of the church by the Emperor and by the Archbishop of Constantinople. In the year 1793 (1260 years later), the French Revolution was completed, and the career of Napoleon began.

In the year 538 - 539 the Emperor Justinian "*plucked up*" the Ostrogothic "*horn*" in order that the Papal "*horn*" might have room to grow. In the year 1798 - 1799 (1260 years later) Napoleon "*plucked up*" the Pope and carried him across the Alps as a prisoner to France.

Since then the Papal power has been declining. In 1870 the last vestige of temporal power was shorn from the Papacy, never more to be recovered, we believe; and the determined consumption is going on and shall continue until at last the system shall be utterly destroyed by the manifestation (epiphaneia) of the Lord's presence (parousia).

What greatly impressed Daniel, and which is certainly one of the most striking features of Papal history, is found in verse 11 of chapter 7: "*I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake.*" That is, while the judgement is sitting, and while being consumed, the Papacy's words are louder and more boastful than ever.

After 1260 years of almost unlimited power over the minds and consciences of men, as well as over their political institutions, the Papacy as a world power is being gradually consumed. Since the first great blow was struck in 1789 - 1799, she has been disestablished in many lands which acknowledged her sovereignty.

The spread of education is largely responsible for this, but education and general enlightenment will not suffice to destroy a system which adapts itself readily to changed conditions. The gradual and continuous loss of power and prestige testify that the Lord Himself is working against the Papacy.

The rise and dominion of the fourth Beast are referred to again in chapters 8 and 9, with further interesting details, which will be examined in their place. In the book of Revelation still more details are given, such as the seven heads, and the eighth - which was, and is not, and yet is (Revelation 17:10,11) which will be referred to later.

GREAT WORDS AGAINST THE MOST HIGH

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." (Daniel 7:8).

"I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." (Daniel 7:11).

"And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." (Daniel 7:20).

"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Daniel 7:25).

In the space available in a book such as this it is impossible to give a full and detailed list of the "great words which the horn spake" "against the most High." Its extraordinary claims are almost beyond belief, but Daniel was permitted to hear them in the vision, and the Apostles Paul and John foretold the Papacy's rise and assumption of power over the nations and the Church of God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; Revelation 13:1-18; 17:1-6; 18:1-24).

Since the Papal system came into existence, its sayings and doings have been fully recorded by both sympathiser and opponent. How it used the Inquisition as a persecuting organisation to "*wear out the saints of the most High*" is a matter of well known and documented history.

The Papacy has presumptuously applied certain titles to its head, the Pope, which properly and only belong to the Lord God. Papal assumptions and claims to infallibility are well documented in Ernest Henningses' book "Daniel the Prophet," pages 121 to 138.

The "*times and laws*" which the Papacy would "*think to change*" would not be the laws and regulations made by mankind, but "*times and laws*" associated with God's truth and plan, to the effect that the saints would be "*given into his hand*," that is, subjected to the power of the Papacy. This changing of times and laws will be further considered, in comments on Daniel chapter eleven.

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS (Daniel 7)

"8. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. ...

10. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgement was set, and the books were opened. ...

12. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

13. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. ...

18. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. ...

21. *I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

22. *Until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

23. *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. ...*

26. *But the judgement shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

27. *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

28. *Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."*

We must keep in mind that this vision is symbolic. The Lord God is represented as a venerable white-haired man in white clothing seated on a glorious throne. The white hair represents age, wisdom and purity, the white clothing represents righteousness of character and action, while the throne represents rulership and sovereignty such as pertain to *"the glory of the Lord"* as also seen in Ezekiel 1:28.

The statement in Daniel 7:22 *"until the Ancient of Days came"* means simply that God intervened. According to Daniel 7:25 the saints were to suffer at the hands of the *"stout"* little horn *"until a time and times and the dividing of time"* or 1260 years. At the end of that period God would control events in such a way as to bring about the restraint and finally the destruction of the power symbolised by the *"little horn"*.

This section of the vision involving the Lord God shows how great was the power of the fourth Beast. No power on earth could cope with the Beast. It was necessary for God Himself to exert the power of His mighty judgement seat before the Beast could be overcome. The effectiveness of God's judgement is pictured in verses 11 and 26.

The vision indicates how God will bring about the destruction of the Beast. The process will be a gradual consumption in three stages, as Daniel 7:11 and 26 tell us: *"I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame". "They shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end."*

This prophecy is in harmony with the later prophecy recorded by Paul when speaking of the same power, namely the Papacy, in 2 Thessalonians 2:8: *"whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the manifestation (epiphaneia) of His presence"* (parousia).

(The King James Version renders this passage as *"whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming"*. The Greek words "epiphaneia" and "parousia" require a more accurate translation than is given in the King James Version.)

THE REST OF THE BEASTS

"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." (Daniel 7:12).

This verse foretells what in fact happened, as history has recorded for us. Babylon was superseded by Medo-Persia, Medo-Persia by Greece, and Greece by Rome, but each was not immediately obliterated. Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece lost their world-wide dominion, but they continued as important states.

At the present time Babylon is buried under the sands of Mesopotamia, Medo-Persia is now Iran under Islamic rule, while Greece is largely a poor country with many political and economic problems. The lives of these former empires have been *"prolonged for a season and time,"* but only for a limited period.

When the fourth beast, symbolising Roman dominion, is finally dealt with, all powers and peoples will be taken over by the fifth World Empire. The vision of the Image in Daniel 2:35 and 45 shows us that eventually the whole structure of world power will collapse simultaneously, as represented symbolically by the stone striking the Image on its feet, causing the whole structure of worldly government to collapse.

A SON OF MAN AND THE SAINTS

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13,14).

Now, at this late stage in the Gospel Age, the fifth World Empire is being prepared to take over world-wide authority and power. The two verses quoted above express the taking over of world dominion by the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the new King, on Whose shoulders the new government will rest (Isaiah 9:6,7; Revelation 19:16). We may well think that *"the son of Man"* is a reference to the Lord Jesus personally, especially as He often called Himself *"the Son of Man"* during His earthly ministry, as for example in Matthew 20:18 and 26:24.

This may be so in Daniel 7:13 but it is not indisputably so. In the original Hebrew the reading is *"a Son of man"* and the expression may be understood as symbolising the new, righteous and humane Kingdom of world government which will come into power, in contrast to the bestial and oppressive governments which preceded it.

It is written in Daniel 7:18 *"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever."*

The *"saints"* who were worn out by the persecutions of the Papacy (the stout *"little horn"*), will take possession. With these will be included those *"saints"* who finished their course before the development of the stout *"little horn"* in the earlier days of the pagan Roman Empire. All saints together make up the *"little flock"* who are being selected during this Gospel Age, to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom as joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 12:32).

The Lord Jesus Christ is God's King, Whose right to reign is by reason of His human birth of David's line, His sacrifice on the cross, and His elevation to be granted *"all power ... in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18) after His resurrection. The Lord Jesus is certainly the chief of the *"saints"* represented in Daniel's vision as being brought near before the Ancient of Days to receive the dominion.

The receiving of the dominion does not mean that the Lord Jesus' kingship is postponed until the destruction of the symbolic fourth Beast which exercises dominion in this present order of things. The Scriptures show that the Lord Jesus was King of the Jews while on earth, and that He received the entitlement to be King of the whole world when He was raised from the dead (Luke 1:32,33; Matthew 27:37;28:18; Psalm 2:6-9; 110:1,2; Acts 13:33,34).

A most significant passage is Romans 14:9: *"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."*

The Lord Jesus has been King for nearly two thousand years, and has been acknowledged as such by His *"saints"* whom God has *"delivered ... from the power of darkness"* and *"translated into the kingdom of His dear Son"* (Colossians 1:13). The vision recorded in Daniel 7, therefore, is not intended to emphasise the personal exaltation of the Lord Jesus, but the arrival of the time for dealing with the fourth Beast and taking over world dominion.

The *"clouds of heaven"* in Daniel 7:13 symbolise trouble and obscurity among the world's political and religious leaders. Other Scripture symbols that depict world political and religious leaders themselves, particularly in the Book of Daniel, in Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, and in the Revelation, are the sun, moon and stars..

The power and influence of earthly leaders are diminished by trouble and obscurity, and thus their authority is weakened. The world's leaders are unable to understand the fundamental reason for their problems and waning power, namely, the coming into power of God's rightful King, and His chosen joint-heirs, and the ancient worthies, the *"princes in all the earth,"* (Psalm 45:16) to establish God's *"everlasting kingdom"* in which *"all dominions shall serve and obey Him."* (Daniel 7:27).

CHAPTER 8

PART 1

THE VISION OF THE RAM, THE HE GOAT AND THE KING OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE

A SECOND VISION GIVEN TO DANIEL

The vision of the Four Beasts, the Little Horn and the Ancient of Days was given to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, and recorded in Daniel chapter seven. In the third year of Belshazzar the Lord sent Daniel another vision which gives further information concerning matters raised in previous visions. This subsequent vision and its interpretation occupy the whole of chapter eight. The vision came to Daniel when he was at Shushan (or Susa), the palace or fortress situated on the River Ulai in the Province of Elam (Daniel 8:1,2).

The vision begins with the prophecy of the immediate future in which Medo-Persia would take over world dominion from Babylon, and then, under new symbols, deals with the rise of the second, third and fourth world empires with greatest emphasis on the fourth and most destructive: ROME.

THE RAM WITH TWO HORNS

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great." (Daniel 8:3,4).

Whether Daniel was actually on the banks of the Ulai River when he saw the vision is not really important. It may have been that Daniel was transported in the vision to the river. The Ulai River flows into the Tigris, and rises in the mountains in northern Elam. North of Elam is Media, and south of Elam is Persia. The important point is that it was in this area that the Medo-Persian

power arose. The Medo-Persians pushed "west-ward, and northward, and southward;" and developed an extensive empire under the vigorous leadership of Cyrus and Darius. There was no need to push eastward, because the territory eastward already belonged to Media and Persia.

The meaning of the vision is not in question because the angel explains it. "*The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.*" (Daniel 8:20).

The two horns indicate the double leadership, the union of two powers into one empire. One of the ram's horns "*was higher than the other, and the higher came up last,*" indicating that the Persian power was the stronger of the two in the alliance. The same prophecy is seen in Daniel 7:5, in which the bear "*raised up itself on one side,*" indicating symbolically that one power, the Persian, was the stronger of the two.

THE HE GOAT WITH ONE NOTABLE HORN

"And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand." (Daniel 8:5-7).

The angel's explanation of this is: "*And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.*" (Daniel 8:21).

The he goat corresponds to the leopard of Daniel 7. The "*notable horn between his eyes*" was fulfilled in Alexander the Great, the first king of the third world empire. The speed of Alexander's conquests was symbolised by the fact that the goat "*touched not the ground,*" that is, it moved so swiftly that it appeared not to touch the ground.

Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire began in 334 BC, and his career ended in 323 BC. He crossed the Hellespont (now the Dardanelles, a narrow strait between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara) in the spring of 334 BC and conquered Asia Minor (now Turkey) at the battle of Granicus. In the short span of eleven years, Alexander overthrew the second world empire of Medo-Persia, penetrated into India, established himself as head of the third world empire of Greece, and sighed for more worlds to conquer.

Only God could have foreseen and foretold the rise of Alexander, centuries before the great conqueror was born. It was God who sent this vision to Daniel, as well as all other visions given to him. Such prophesying is beyond human power, and the remainder of the vision beyond Alexander's conquests is just as remarkable as an accurate foretelling of world events in the centuries to come after Daniel had gone to his "rest" (Daniel 12:13).

THE RISE OF THE FOUR HORNS

"Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and from it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven."
(Daniel 8:8).

These four horns (*notable ones*) correspond to the four heads of the leopard in the vision recorded in chapter seven. They symbolise the four kingdoms or territories into which the Grecian Empire was divided after Alexander's death. The Empire was divided among four of Alexander's generals in this way:

Macedonia and Greece under **Cassander**
Asia Minor under **Lysimachus**
Syria and all the East under **Seleucus**
Egypt and Cyrene under **Ptolemy**

This division of rulership weakened the Empire and made it inferior to the preceding world empire of Medo-Persia, which in its turn, being an alliance of two powers, was inferior to the first world empire of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, even as foretold in the image of Daniel chapter two.

As the angel explains:

"Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power." (Daniel 8:22).

A LITTLE HORN OUT OF ONE OF THE FOUR

"And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." (Daniel 8:9).

This is the angel's explanation: *"And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." (Daniel 8:23).*

The previous visions of Nebuchadnezzar's image (chapter two) and the four beasts (chapter seven) did not give any information about how, when and where the fourth world empire, symbolised by the *"dreadful and terrible"* fourth beast, would arise and gain world dominion. The vision of chapter eight gives that information.

The fourth world empire rises to power by gaining control of one of the four kingdoms into which Alexander's dominion was divided.

Verse 8 mentions the rise of the four horns.

Verse 22 provides the explanation that the four horns are four kingdoms arising from *"the nation."*

Verses 9 to 14 are devoted to the description of the new *"little horn."*

Verses 23 to 25 give a partial explanation of the *"king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences."*

The vision of chapter eight describes features of the fourth world empire not covered in the previous vision. The previous vision recorded in chapter seven concentrated mainly on the stout little horn that appeared after the ten horns were seen on the fourth beast which symbolised the Roman Empire. The

vision of chapter eight pictures the rise of the Roman Empire from its beginning as a world power, long before the ten horns and the stout little horn made their appearance.

Some commentators regard the "*little horn*" of chapter eight to be the Saracen or Mohammedan Empire, but this empire does not meet the features of the prophecy for two main reasons:

1. The Saracen or Mohammedan movement began in Arabia and extended mainly north and west, that is, in Syria, Asia Minor (now Turkey), North Africa, Spain and south eastern Europe. Rome's dominion extended, as the vision predicts, "*toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land*". Rome was situated in the west of the known world, and first conquered the kingdom that lay nearest to it, the kingdom of Macedonia and Greece.

2. The Saracen or Mohammedan Empire did not arise from one of the four kingdoms into which the Greek Empire was divided. The rise of the Mohammedan power is more appropriately described in Revelation chapter nine as issuing from a bottomless pit or an abyss. An abyss is a fitting symbol for the remoteness of the Arabian desert from which Mohammedanism arose. Arabia was never subject to Alexander.

Moreover, the Saracen movement did not begin until the years 609 to 612 AD, in the seventh century of the Christian era, long after Rome had subjugated all four of Alexander's kingdoms and made "*the pleasant land*," that is, Palestine, a Roman colony. The rise of Rome as a world power answers all the specifications contained in the vision, the geographical ones as well as the characteristic ones mentioned in Daniel 8:10 to 14 and 23 to 25.

THE KING OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE

As mentioned earlier, the four divisions into which Alexander's empire was divided were as follows:

1. **Macedonia and Greece** under **Cassander**;
2. **Asia Minor** under **Lysimachus**;
3. **Syria and all the East** under **Seleucus**;
4. **Egypt and Cyrene** under **Ptolemy**.

These divisions occurred after Alexander's death in 323 BC. In 301 BC the division of Asia Minor was absorbed by Syria under Seleucus, leaving the three broad divisions of the Greek Empire as Macedonia, Syria and Egypt.

By 220 BC Rome had become a power to rival the Greek Empire. Rome was still engaged at this time in wars with Carthage, the Punic Wars of 264 to 146 BC, but was sufficiently powerful to cause Greece to divide itself into two factions, some states looking to Rome for protection, others to Macedonia.

In BC 217 - 215 Philip V of Macedonia prepared a fleet to invade Italy, and in BC 215 made a treaty with Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general. In consequence of this treaty Rome declared war on Macedonia. This war between Philip and Rome covered the years 215 - 205 BC, and was in the main inconclusive. A second war between Rome and Philip V took place from 200 to 195 BC, during which time the Roman conquest of Greece continued until Macedonia was made a Roman Province in 148 BC.

While the Roman conquest of Greece was proceeding, the Greeks called for assistance from Antiochus the Great of Syria, who had become a powerful king of an empire almost as large as Medo-Persia. King Philip V of Macedonia was opposed to the possibility of Antiochus becoming the ruler of Greece, and became the friend and ally of Rome.

Rome made war on Antiochus, established their authority in Greece in 191 BC, and in 190 BC drove Antiochus from Asia Minor (now Turkey), and compelled him to surrender all dominions west of Mount Taurus. The Romans then deposed Perseus, the son of Philip V, in BC 168. Macedonia was made a Roman Province in 148 BC.

From the foregoing historical facts it seems clear that the *"king of fierce countenance"* was the Roman power. Rome began as a small state, steadily grew in size and power, gradually pushed its way into Greece and Macedonia, established a protectorate over Egypt, put an end to the conquests of Antiochus the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes, until Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and finally Egypt - all the dominions of Alexander except the extreme east - became Roman provinces, administered by either the military or the civil arm.

Some expositors, including the writers of the study notes in the New International Version, consider the "*king of fierce countenance*" to be Antiochus Epiphanes, because he plundered the temple at Jerusalem, placed an altar to an idol in the Jewish temple, and sacrificed on that altar to a pagan god, Jupiter Olympus.

Certainly that was a deplorable and profane act, but profaning the Jewish temple and oppressing the Jews for a time does not seem a sufficiently large or significant fulfillment, because the period of treading down the "*sanctuary*" is "*two thousand and three hundred days*" (Daniel 8:14). This period of time, in accordance with prophetic usage and the principle laid down in Ezekiel 4:5 and 6, must be considered to represent 2,300 years.

Moreover, Antiochus Epiphanes did not extend his borders to the south and east, as Daniel 8:9 predicts. These points of the compass must originate from the locality in which the "*king of fierce countenance*" was to arise. Antiochus extended his dominion to the north and east, but neither he nor Antiochus the Great before him was successful in conquering Egypt.

Rome, however, did most decidedly develop "*toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land,*" this "*pleasant*" (RSV "glorious," NIV "beautiful") *land*" being Palestine.

THE HOST OF HEAVEN

"And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them." (Daniel 8:10).

This sounds mysterious, but the angel's explanation makes it clear that the "*host of heaven*" means rulers and other persons of influence. This interpretation by the angel gives a key to the correct interpretation in the Scriptures of "*host of heaven,*" "*the heavens,*" "*sun,*" "*moon*" and "*stars*" when used symbolically. Heathen nations worshipped the sun, moon and stars, and the people of Israel frequently fell into the same wrong practice. The heavenly bodies were considered to be gods and worshipped, and even earthly kings and princes were themselves considered as gods and worshipped as such. The heavenly bodies give light to the earth, and the stars serve as guides to location and

navigation. For these reasons the "*host of heaven*" becomes an apt symbol to represent political and religious powers, rulers and teachers.

The angel explains in Daniel 8:24 that the "*king of fierce countenance*" would destroy the mighty and also the holy people, thus making it evident that political and religious leaders are represented by the "*host of heaven*". In the vision the "*host of heaven*" refers to the rulers, leaders and teachers who were in power at the time of the rise of pagan Rome, namely, those in power in the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire had been divided, and those associated with their philosophies and religious institutions.

THE PRINCE OF THE HOST

"Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down." (Daniel 8:11)

A more accurate rendering of this verse is found by consultation of the King James Version margin, the Revised Version, the Amplified Bible, the Modern Language Version, the New International and the Revised Standard Versions. The verse should read: "*Yea, he magnified himself even **against** the prince of the host, and **from** him the **continual** was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.*"

Who is the "*prince of the host*"? In Daniel 8:25 the angel calls him the "*prince of princes*". This title can belong only to the Lord Jesus Christ. Although He was "*despised and rejected of men*," (Isaiah 53:3), He was in truth the Anointed, the King of the Jews, the Heir to David's throne, which was "*the throne of the Lord*" (1 Chronicles 29:23), and therefore, the greatest of all thrones. Our Lord in prophecy was called "*the Messiah the Prince*" (Daniel 9:25), the word "Messiah" meaning "Anointed."

The title of "*prince*" in the book of Daniel does not always refer to the Lord Jesus, however. In Daniel 11:22, the context makes it clear that "*the prince of the covenant*" does not refer to the Lord Jesus, but to the Jewish high priest. As the "*prince of princes*" (Daniel 8:25), the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, was set over these priestly princes as well as being "*King of kings, and Lord of lords*" (Revelation 19:16; Psalm 2:6-8; 1 Chronicles 29:23; Daniel 9:25).

The Lord Jesus Christ, with *"all power in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18), is King over all earthly and religious rulers and leaders, and this is made perfectly clear in New Testament passages such as John 8:12; 11:25; 14:6; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16. The Lord Jesus' sovereignty was also prophesied in Psalm 45:6,7.

Rome in both its pagan and Papal forms set itself against this Great Prince, as was foretold in Psalm 2:1-3: *"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."*

In Acts 4:25 to 28 we read that the apostles applied this Psalm to pagan Rome in its opposition to the preaching of the gospel, and its unwillingness to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Prince of princes. And as the apostles mention both Herod and Pilate by name, who as Roman governors were responsible for the Lord Jesus' crucifixion, there can be no doubt that the Psalm refers primarily to the taking of counsel and the setting against our Lord by pagan Rome: *"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."* (Acts 4:27).

Opposition and persecution by pagan Rome continued to be more or less severe until the days of Constantine (314 AD onwards). From that time, when Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, opposition to true Christianity took a more insidious form, that of flattery and popularity (Daniel 8:24,25).

Still later in the Gospel Age, Papal Rome used both forms of opposition to *"wear out"* (Daniel 7:25) the saints of the most high. The Papacy, in common with secular rulers, rebels against the *"bonds"* and *"cords"*, that is, the restraints of the King of kings.

The extent to which Papal Rome would magnify itself against *"the prince of the host"* (Daniel 8:11) was also foretold by the apostle Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth*

himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4).

TRANSGRESSORS COME TO THE FULL

"Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up." (Daniel 8:22,23).

Four kingdoms were to stand up in place of Alexander, *"but not in his power,"* that is, not possessing the power of swift conquest such as Alexander possessed, and not holding their thrones by virtue of Alexander's decision and command, and needing always to maintain their own positions. This was true of the four divisions of the Grecian empire, each of which was more or less in conflict with the other three.

Daniel 8:23 shows that *"the king of fierce countenance"* was not one of these four divisions, but originally an outsider, because all four are allowed to go on until their transgressions *"are come to the full."* This would mean that the pride and wickedness of the four rulers of the Grecian empire had become so great that the Lord used *"the king of fierce countenance"* to punish all four.

"The king of fierce countenance" could not therefore be Antiochus Epiphanes, as some expositors contend, because Antiochus was punished as well as the other rulers in the four divisions of the Greek Empire identified on pages 91 and 93. It was Rome that inflicted this punishment on all four Greek rulers, and it was Rome that fulfilled this prophecy as *"the king of fierce countenance"*.

The fourth beast is described as *"dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; ... it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it:"* (Daniel 7:7), and *"it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"* (Revelation 13:7). The fourth beast is Rome, first in its pagan form, then later in its Papal form.

But ferocity and warfare, though characteristic of the fourth world empire, were set aside when it was thought expedient, in favour of flattery and popularity, as the prophecy declares:

"And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and holy people.

And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

(Daniel 8:24,25).

This language is too definite, and describes an influence too far-reaching, to find fulfilment in Antiochus Epiphanes.

UNDERSTANDING DARK SENTENCES

Some Bible expositors consider the *"king of fierce countenance"* to be Mohammed, and believe the words *"understanding dark sentences"* (Daniel 8:23) refer to sentences in the Koran, which were written by Mohammed and not always intelligible to his followers.

This understanding does not seem appropriate, because Mohammed did not arise until some centuries after the Christian era began. Mohammed was born in 570 AD, and died in 632 AD. The religion he founded, Mohammedanism, became a scourge on the Roman empire in its Papal form, not of the earlier Greek Empire as required by the prophecy in Daniel 8.

The expression *"understanding dark sentences"* seems rather to refer to such matters as the language of diplomacy, entering into treaties with ulterior motives which are not apparent from the statements recorded in the treaties, the use in diplomatic agreements of ambiguous expressions and expressions that can be understood and interpreted in two or more ways.

Pagan Rome did this with rulers such as Philip V of Macedonia and others. The chief fulfilment of the prophecy, however, is found in the intrigues of Rome as a professedly Christian power from the days of Constantine (314 AD onwards), as indicated in the words of Daniel 8:25: *"Through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand"*.

The history of professedly Christian Rome, including both the eastern and western divisions, testifies that the words of Daniel, and later the words recorded by John in the Revelation, constitute a true portrait. The doctrines that the end justifies the means, including the telling of lies and professed denial of faith if such actions create advantages over an antagonist, the granting of indulgences to sin, and absolution from sin granted by the priesthood, are doctrines that have been accepted and practised, and to this day have neither been denied nor renounced.

The intensive training given to Jesuits and priests in the area of diplomacy fills in the portrait. *"Through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand;"* and *"cast down the truth to the ground."* (Daniel 8:12,25).

The Papacy prospered and gained influence over a vast host of political, religious, commercial and social rulers, leaders and devotees. Prosperity and influence are further indicated in Daniel 11:39, where it is stated that the Papacy *"shall divide the land for gain,"* and also in the Revelation where more information is given:

"Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb." (Revelation 13:7,8);

"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Revelation 17:2);

"And the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Revelation 18:3);

"What city is like unto this great city! Wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! Thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." (Revelation 18:18,19,23).

The prosperity of Papal Rome as a political power was prophesied to last 1,260 years (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5). The Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century greatly curtailed the activities of the Papacy, until finally all temporal power was taken from the Papacy in

1870, some seventy years after the 1,260 years of prophecy had been fulfilled. But as a religious system, the Papacy's influence is still considerable, though now waning as never before.

The end of the Papacy is foretold by Daniel in the words *"but he shall be broken without hand"* (Daniel 8:25). Paul in Thessalonians and John in the Revelation also foretell the final judgement of the Papacy (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 18:5,9,20,21).

THE CONTINUAL (DAILY SACRIFICE) TAKEN AWAY

In Daniel 8:11 we have seen that *"the prince of the host"* is the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the verse, accurately translated, should read: *"Yea, he magnified himself even against the prince of the host, and from him the continual was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down."* (See the King James Version margin, the Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version, and Young's Literal Translation of the Bible.)

In the King James Version and many other versions, the word *"sacrifice"* is supplied, and is not in the original text. The word translated *"daily"* should be *"continual"*. The term *"continual"* has its origin in the offerings made by the priests of Israel in the course of their service at the temple. Many offerings or sacrifices were made under the Law Covenant, but the one which has most interest for us is the one that was offered daily, morning and evening, every day of the year, as long as the Jewish mode of worship remained in force.

The requirement of the daily burnt offering is stated in Exodus 29:38-43: *"Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: ... This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel."*

This daily offering was called *"the continual burnt offering"*, and the fire on this altar was never to be allowed to go out (Numbers 28:3-8; Leviticus 6:9-13). On Sabbath days two lambs were to be offered in the morning, and two in the evening. On the first day of each month, during Passover week, and on other

special occasions, seven lambs were to be offered morning and evening, besides other animals (Numbers 28:11-31; 29:1-39).

Every subsequent sacrifice of each day was offered on the fire which was caused to flare up by the continual offering in the morning; and the offerings for the day were concluded by the offering of the "*continual*" in the evening.

Special sacrifices for sin were made on the Day of Atonement once each year for the nation as a whole, on which occasion formal confession of sin was made by the high priest, and formal forgiveness and blessing bestowed upon the people. The Lord Jesus was the antitype of all these sacrifices (Leviticus 16; Hebrews 7:27; 9:11-14; 10:1-18; 1 Peter 2:24).

God manifested His presence to the high priest by the "*cloud*" (Leviticus 16:2) between the cherubim in the most holy. There God indicated acceptance of the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat; and there He gave answer when the high priest made inquiries of the Lord by the Urim and Thummim.

But, according to Exodus 29:42 and 43, **God met with the people, and they were considered as meeting with Him**, their worship being accepted at the door of the tabernacle where the "*continual*" was burning.

The favourite times of prayer among the Israelites were evening and morning, when they could see the smoke of the "*continual*" rising heavenward, and when their prayers could be thought to rise with the mingled fragrance of the burning lamb, the cakes made with flour and oil, and the wine, all of which God was pleased to accept as a sweet savour to Himself (Exodus 29:40,41).

Prayers offered at these times in sincerity would indicate that the worshipper recognised God as the One to Whom obedience, praise and thanksgiving were due, and also acknowledged the slain lamb as the only way by which God was willing to receive praise and thanksgiving.

It was about the time of the evening offering that Daniel was at prayer, and it was then that he received the message concerning the seventy weeks and the Messiah, Who, by offering a better sacrifice, would cause the sacrifices and oblations of the Jewish Law to cease (Daniel 9:21,27).

The promised Messiah was Jesus Christ, and His death on the cross is a *"continual,"* as were the lambs offered twice daily at Jerusalem. The sweet odour of Christ's sacrifice still arises to God, and will continue to do so forever, because it will never be repeated or need to be repeated. 1 John 2:2 tells us explicitly that the Lord Jesus Christ is *"the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* Hebrews 7:27 also tells us explicitly *"for this He did once for all (Greek: ephapax), when He offered up Himself."*

The Lord Jesus Christ has been set forth by the Father as the only meeting-place with Him, or the only means by which men and women can approach their Heavenly Father:

"No man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Hebrews 13:15).

We must, therefore, by faith see figuratively the smoke of His perfect, once for all, sacrificial offering ascending to God. If we do this, our prayers will be heard as we personally acknowledge the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus as efficacious for ever. We know God hears us if we approach Him through Jesus Christ, and ask according to His will: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:"* (1 John 5:14).

In Daniel 9:27 we are shown how the *"continual,"* which had been instituted under the Law Covenant, was to be taken away by the Messiah.

The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of His sinless sacrifice on the cross and the shedding of His blood, became the new *"continual"* which superseded and replaced the former daily sacrifice or continual under the Law Covenant. The Lord Jesus' *"continual"* is the true and only *"continual"* recognised by God and acknowledged by God's people from Pentecost onward.

The "*continual*", the correct translation of "*daily sacrifice*", is found in Daniel 8:11,12,13; 11:31 and 12:11. The word "*sacrifice*" is supplied in every case in the King James Version translation. What is meant by the "*continual*" in these verses? Is the meaning that of the typical daily sacrifices which were offered at Jerusalem, or that of the true antitypical "*continual*" offered once for all by the Lord Jesus Christ?

The prophecies in the verses mentioned in the previous paragraph make it clear that the true antitypical "*continual*" is meant. The prophecies foretold the rise of the Roman empire, out of which the Papacy would develop, and the taking away by the Papacy of the efficacy of the "*continual*" offering made by Jesus Christ on Calvary, and the substitution for that "*once for all*" sacrifice by the so-called "sacrifice" of the mass.

It is true, of course, that the "*once for all*" efficacious sacrifice could not be taken away from Christ by any human power, however great. But from Christ has been taken the credit of being the one and only "*continual*" (in the minds and consciences of people), because the mass is considered to be of itself a sacrifice, that is, every time a mass is conducted, Christ is said to be sacrificed anew.

Thus in Roman Catholic churches throughout the world for many centuries, the truth of the "*once for all*," efficacious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus has been obscured and lost.

The Hebrew word rendered "*daily*" in the passages referred to in Daniel chapters 8, 11 and 12 is the same word as that rendered "*continual*" in such passages as Exodus 29:42 and Numbers 28:3. Taking away the "*daily*" or "*continual*" would mean taking away the proper and true worship of the Lord God Almighty.

However, when the Lord Jesus took away the worship represented in the Jewish religion, that action was not spoken of as a calamity, but as a **blessing**, because the Lord Jesus confirmed to Judah and Israel a **New Covenant** with better promises, a covenant able to make reconciliation with God for all sinners who come under it, and able to bring in everlasting righteousness.

In Daniel 9:27 it is prophesied that the Lord Jesus would confirm the covenant for one week, that is, seven prophetic days amounting to seven years (Ezekiel 4:6). The seven years of prophecy consist of three and a half years of the Lord Jesus' ministry on earth, and three and a half years of exclusive proclamation of the gospel to the Jewish nation. Hebrews 10:9 tells us that *"He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second"*. In Hebrews 10:16 and 17 the apostle reinforces the clear statements made in chapter 8:7 to 13 showing that the New Covenant has superseded and replaced the former Law Covenant.

This taking away of the Law Covenant and establishing the New Covenant was accomplished by the Lord Jesus when He figuratively nailed the Law to His cross (Colossians 2:14) and cleared the way for the establishment of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6,12; 10:9-18; 7:12,13,24,25; 9:8-15; Colossians 2:14).

However, in the visions and explanations of Daniel 8:11-13, 11:31 and 12:11, the taking away of the *"daily"* or *"continual"* is spoken of as a calamity, a triumph of evil over good, a casting down of truth to the ground (Daniel 8:12) producing a serious and long-continued desolation. Moreover, this taking away of the *"continual"* is linked to the rise of *"the abomination that maketh desolate"* (Daniel 11:31; 12:11), the system that has the power to *"scatter the power of the holy people"* (Daniel 12:7), and has been permitted to exercise that power for the long period of 1,260 years (Daniel 12:7,11; 7:25).

THE PLACE OF HIS SANCTUARY CAST DOWN

After stating that the *"continual"* was taken away, Daniel 8:11 continues *"and the place of his sanctuary was cast down"*. What does this mean? The meaning is simply that the taking away of the true *"continual"* that is, the credit due to the Lord Jesus as the true and only *"continual,"* would result in the degradation of everything associated with the true worship of God as written in the Scriptures.

In the Jewish offering of the *"daily"* or *"continual"* morning and evening lambs, the sanctuary or the place sanctified by those offerings was the **altar of burnt offerings** and the **court of the tabernacle or temple** in which the altar stood.

But the prophecy of Daniel 8:11 concerns the taking away of the "*continual*" offering of Jesus Christ. How then is "*the place of his sanctuary*" to be understood, and how is it "*cast down*"?

The worship of God through the Lord Jesus Christ is not localised in any one place, as was the Jewish altar (and the tabernacle or temple), but is a **spiritual fact**. The apostle writes, "*we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle*" (Hebrews 13:10). Then he continues, after referring in verses 11 to 14 to the offering of Christ for sin, in Hebrews 13:15, "*by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*"

This is "*the place of his sanctuary,*" namely, **the arrangement God has made for the acceptance of worship through the Lord Jesus Christ**. This arrangement under the New Covenant is the "*place,*" that is, the foundation or basis of the true and acceptable worship of God. True believers come to God by means of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary, acknowledging that sacrifice to be as effective today as it was on the day it was offered. Our prayers rise to God and are heard by virtue of that one and only offering which is recognised by God as the true "*continual*". For this offering there can be no substitute, and to it there can be no addition or supplement.

The doctrine of the mass "*casts down*" this true worship by claiming that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is not truly available unless it is **supplemented** by offerings made by the priest. Hence the worshipper, instead of approaching God directly in the name of Christ and Him crucified, is induced to attempt to approach God through the sacrifice made by the priest at the celebration of the mass.

The mass was unknown in the days of the apostles, and did not become a doctrine and practice until about 220 AD. The doctrine came into being in spite of the clear message of Hebrews 10:18-22: "*Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*"

The **sacrifice of the mass** completely takes away the true "*continual*" and exalts a counterfeit continual in its place. This fact is readily seen by an examination of Roman Catholic writings. The Papacy's claim is that when the priest pronounces over the bread and wine on the altar the words "*this is my body; this is my blood*" he utters them as an earthly representative of Christ, and thereupon the bread becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes the blood of Christ. Then Christ is sacrificed anew either for sins or for some other intention of the priest. This alleged change from bread and wine to body and blood is termed "**transubstantiation**".

Roman Catholic teaching attempts to justify the claim of transubstantiation at the words spoken by the priest by claiming that the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper produced a similar change in the substance of the bread and wine when He said, "*do this in remembrance of me*". Therefore, it is further claimed that He can now, as Lord in heaven, continue to bring about such a change of substance in the bread and wine wherever and whenever masses are conducted.

Bible students and Protestants generally reject any such interpretation of our Lord's words when He instituted the **memorial** of eating the bread and drinking the wine as a **remembrance** of Him. The roast lamb eaten at the Passover supper represented the lamb of God who was to come, and the disciples would have understood this. They would also have understood that the unleavened bread and the Passover wine **represented** the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Himself, the true and holy lamb of God, after He had been offered on the cross. They may not have reached these understandings fully until after Pentecost, but they certainly would have understood fully after receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's Supper was instituted as a **memorial** of His death and the shedding of His blood. The apostle Paul was given a special revelation concerning the Last Supper, and recorded the Lord's words, "*This do in remembrance of me*" in 1 Corinthians 11:24 and 25.

Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church regards the mass as more than a sacrament (a religious rite such as baptism and marriage). The mass is in fact regarded as a **sacrifice**, and Christ is considered to be sacrificed anew at every mass celebrated by Catholic clerics, under the prescribed conditions, all over the world.

The mass is set forth as a sacrifice for the sins of the dead (when offered with that intent by the priest), as well as for the sins of the living. It is therefore claimed to be an expiatory sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice able to make atonement for sins, and thus propitiate the Lord God (cause Him to be favourably inclined to sinners).

The mass, it is claimed, is a "*continual*" in that each mass is part of a whole reaching back to the Lord's last supper. It is further claimed that the mass is a "*continual*" in that the bread and wine, having been once transubstantiated into the actual body and blood of Christ, have perpetual value for sacrificial or propitiatory purposes. Thus God is represented as continually receiving the sacrifice of His Son offered on thousands of altars all over the world.

Roman Catholicism completely misses the teaching of Scripture concerning the once for all offering of Jesus Christ on the cross as **THE** "*continual*" prefigured or typified by the daily sacrifices or "*continual*" of the Jewish system of worship. Roman Catholics fail to see that, while the Jewish lambs were offered daily, the sacrifice of Christ, once offered, was and is never to be repeated (Hebrews 9:25-28; 7:27). By making the transubstantiated bread and wine objects of worship and honour, the Roman Catholic church has invented a counterfeit offering unauthorised and unacceptable to God. The transubstantiated bread and wine constitute idols, and their worship constitutes idolatry.

In Old Testament times all idol worship and idolatrous rites were called "*abominations*," as also were the heathen deities to whom idolatrous rites were performed (1 Kings 11:4-8; Deuteronomy 7:25,26; Malachi 2:12).

In New Testament times those who worship the "**host**" or "**little god**" as Pastor Chiniquy says the transubstantiated bread was called when elevated after its "**creation**" by the priests, however ignorant they may be of what they are doing, are committing an abomination by worshipping an idol, and giving to it the worship and honour which belong to the Lord Jesus alone in His glorious position at God's right hand in heaven.

Our Lord's sacrifice on the cross is further discounted by the claim that eternal salvation depends on participation by individuals in the alleged sacrifice of the mass. In the Catholic Encyclopaedia, Volume 10, Page 23, it is said that the mass is an impetratory (requesting urgently, entreating), propitiatory, and satisfactory sacrifice, the fruits of which apply only to those fitted to participate. Therefore mass may not be said for the damned in hell or the blessed in heaven, and children who die unbaptised are excluded from the benefits of the mass. Thus it is plainly set forth that unbaptised infants are forever lost, because they cannot have the benefits of the mass applied to them by the priest.

These claims are contrary to Scripture and engender fear in the hearts and minds of Roman Catholic adherents. Isaiah the prophet wrote, "... *their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men*" (Isaiah 29:13). Isaiah's words were applied by the Lord Jesus to the Jewish leaders of his own day (Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:6,7,) but the words apply equally to much Roman Catholic doctrine and indeed to any doctrine contrary to Scripture. God has an interest in every infant that dies, whether baptised or unbaptised. Christ died for them all, and they are His.

IT PRACTISED AND PROSPERED

"And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered." (Daniel 8:12).

The "*daily sacrifice*" or "*continual*" is the once for all offering of the Lord Jesus on the cross. The "*host*" is the same as that of verse 10, that is, the rulers, princes, teachers, both political and ecclesiastical, both Christian and pagan, of various countries and nations which came under the influence of the Papal system. Some leaders and peoples at first opposed Rome, and were "*cast down*" by being defeated in war or subjected to persecutions of various kinds. Others of the "*host*" became friends and co-adjutors of Rome, and joined Rome in opposition to the "*continual*," the once for all offering of the Lord Jesus.

The study of history reveals that while at first there were dissentients among both clergy and laity, as well as rulers and servants, when the teachings of the mass and transubstantiation were first advanced, it was not long before a "*host*" of supporters

of all kinds gathered around the Roman bishops in support of these false doctrines and in opposition to the true *"continual"*.

With the assistance of this *"host"* of supporters, truth was *"cast down to the ground"* and the Roman Catholic system *"practised and prospered"*. The vast number of princes, potentates, merchants and others who support Rome and are in turn supported by her, are mentioned in Daniel 11:39 and outlined in Revelation, chapter 18.

THE TRANSGRESSION OF DESOLATION AND CLEANSING THE SANCTUARY

"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." (Daniel 8:13,14).

These verses record a question and its answer.

The **question** is divided into three parts. How long shall be the vision:

- (1) concerning the daily sacrifice (continual); and
- (2) concerning the transgression of desolation;
- (3) to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

The **answer** is two thousand three hundred days. At the end of this time period the sanctuary will be cleansed.

Some Bible Students apply this prophecy to **Antiochus Epiphanes** (215 - 164 BC), and interpret the period given as two thousand three hundred literal days, which amount to six years, three months and twenty days. If this interpretation is accepted, then the one thousand two hundred and sixty days (the time, times and a half) of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 would be three and one half years.

History, however, gives no such periods in connection with Antiochus's conquest of Jerusalem. Certainly Antiochus

Epiphanes desecrated the Jewish temple by conducting within its walls pagan rites, ceremonies and sacrificial offerings; but such desecration was short-lived, as Jewish forces under Judas Maccabaeus captured the greater part of Jerusalem and re-consecrated the temple in 164 AD. Moreover, some historians hold that Antiochus does not merit singling out as a desolator because he was less brutal in his treatment of conquered peoples than were most of his contemporaries.

Many Bible Students reject Antiochus Epiphanes as being the **transgression** or **abomination of desolation** on the ground that the Lord Jesus, prophesying some two hundred years after the death of Antiochus, spoke of the **abomination of desolation** as still future from His day:

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)" (Matthew 24:15).

"But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand) ..." (Mark 13:14).

Some Bible Students, however, on the basis of Luke 21:20 and 24, see the prophecy of the abomination of desolation mentioned by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 as having had its fulfilment when the Roman army under Titus besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the temple:

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." ...

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:20,24).

Certainly the city and the land were made desolate, and the Jewish people were scattered throughout the world, but such a fulfilment does not seem sufficiently large or comprehensive to meet all the requirements of Daniel's prophecy. The main reasons for this understanding are as follows.

The Roman power is surely the desolator, but in destroying the city and the temple, the Roman power merely began to fulfil

the prophecies of the abomination of desolation. The Lord Jesus called the Roman power **"the abomination of desolation,"** not only because of what it would do to bring about God's judgement on disobedient Israel, but also **because of what it would become** several centuries later.

Our Lord's words are in harmony with later prophecies recorded by the apostles Paul and John, and with Daniel's recorded predictions which describe Rome as one great system of power from its conquest of Greece, the third world empire, to its final overthrow by the Lord Jesus, God's rightful King. Rome is regarded as one great power irrespective of the changes from Pagan to professed Christian and from professed Christian to Papal. The reason for regarding Rome as one great power is that these changes related more to religious matters than to the form of government, the latter throughout its duration being symbolised by iron or a mixture of iron and clay (Daniel 2:40-42; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8; Revelation 17:3-5).

The desolation wrought by the Roman army in 71 AD certainly resulted in the abolition of the daily sacrifices offered by the Jewish priests in the temple. The temple was completely destroyed, and the people, including priests and Levites, were scattered abroad. But this desolation was of a temple or sanctuary which the Lord God had already rendered obsolete and which He no longer recognised. Jewish worship was destroyed *"in the midst of the week"* (Daniel 9:27) when Christ nailed the Law to His cross (Colossians 2:14). The end of the Law Covenant and of all Jewish worship under that covenant was made public by the rending in two of the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, thereby exposing the holy of holies to public view.

Sacrifices continued to be offered at the temple for another thirty to forty years after Calvary, but they were no longer recognised by God nor were they acceptable to Him. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 71 AD finally put an end to temple services and sacrifices, and scattered the Jewish population. The destruction wrought by Rome, however, was too localised and restricted to fulfil all the requirements of Daniel's prophecy concerning the taking away of the *"continual"* and the treading down of the sanctuary and the host.

The effect of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple had no effect on the true *"continual."* Rather, the true *"continual"*

could now be understood and believed by all who were familiar with our Lord's words to the woman of Samaria: *"Ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:21-24).

The removal of the animal sacrifices and the scattering abroad of the priests and Levites would help, rather than hinder, Gentiles as well as Jews to realise that now God desired all to accept His Son Jesus as the one and only true sacrifice for their sins. The once for all offering of the spotless lamb of God superseded and abolished for ever all sacrifices under the old Law Covenant, whether of meat, drink, cake or wine. The New Covenant does not require any sacrifices or offerings of meat, cakes, bread or wine, rather *"the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name"* (Hebrews 13:15).

HOW LONG SHALL THE VISION BE?

The doctrine of the mass is one of the most serious of all errors proclaimed and practised by the Papacy and certain other churches of Christendom. The doctrine as proclaimed and practised claims to sacrifice afresh, each time a mass is celebrated anywhere in the world, the actual body and blood of the Saviour of the human race. This doctrine, and the ecclesiastical system which proclaims it, are spoken of as the *"transgression of desolation"* (Daniel 8:13), *"the abomination that maketh desolate"* (Daniel 11:31; 12:11), and the *"abomination of desolation"* (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).

The seriousness of the error is further emphasised in the language used by the two angels in Daniel 8:13, who according to the footnote in the Variorum speak of the *"transgression"* as *"horrible"*. The Variorum has the same footnote for Daniel 11:31, in which the same *"abomination"* is also spoken of as *"horrible"*.

This desolating abomination was not only horrible, but was also to endure for a long time as the angel said, *"And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."* (Daniel 8:14).

As a prophetic *"day"* is to be interpreted as a year, (Ezekiel 4:6) the duration of the prophecy is two thousand three

hundred years, a very long period of time, reaching far beyond Daniel's day. The angel said, "... *at the time of the end shall be the vision*" or as better rendered by other versions: "... *the vision is for the time of the end*" (Revised Standard Version and Variorum renderings); "... *the vision concerns the time of the end*" [New International Version] (Daniel 8:17).

When did this time period of 2,300 years begin? Bible Students are divided on this question. From the angel's words it seems that the period should be dated

either

- (1) from the time the sacrifice of the mass became a recognised institution, as distinct from the celebration of the Eucharist or Holy Communion as a sacrament only;

or

- (2) from the date the Bishop of Rome became supreme Bishop or Pope, and the consequent, authoritative establishment of the sacrifice of the mass under his patronage with power given to him to desolate or punish the people of God who desired to worship God in spirit and in truth, and who refused to bow to the dictates of the Roman pontiff.

To find the exact date when the Eucharist was first called a sacrifice of Christ's body and blood is difficult because of lack of evidence. All the evidence available is in the writings of the early "fathers", and ideas and sentiments are ascribed without justification to the "fathers" by Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox writers - ideas and sentiments which the authors did not possess, and which Protestants fail to find in the writings of the early "fathers".

The Roman empire, which held world dominion when Christianity was first preached in Judea, continued to rule the world as a pagan power until the Emperor, Constantine the Great, who had become converted to Christianity, made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 324 AD.

A study of history makes clear the fact that pagan Rome became Christian Rome when Constantine decreed that

Christianity was to be the official religion of the empire. Historical study also makes clear, according to Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, who died in 386 AD, that the sacrifice anew of the body and blood of Christ each time a mass is celebrated, was in vogue in the fourth century; at least two hundred years before the Pope became supreme head of the Christian Church.

However, the date or time of the introduction of the error or the practice of the *"abomination that maketh desolate"* is not mentioned in the prophecy. The inquiry was: *"how long shall be the vision ... to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?"* (Daniel 8:13)

The *"host"* mentioned in this verse does not refer to the *"host"* of verse 10, but to the *"host"* of verse 12. The *"host"* of verse 10 represents the rulers and teachers of Greece, the third world empire; while the *"host"* of verse 12 represents the emperors, governors, patriarchs, bishops and priests under whom the *"continual"* was corrupted and the false worship developed. The *"host"* of verse 10 were *"stamped upon"* by Rome, that is, the rulers and teachers of Greece, and any others of later periods and other lands, were overcome by Rome either by force or by craft and flattery. The *"host"* of verse 12 were approved and even exalted by the emperor's patronage; *"trodden under foot"* in the sense of being dominated and spiritually enslaved.

It was only after Papal Rome became established over all rivals that it became in the fullest sense the *"desolator"*. The prophecy has foretold the development of an influence so great that it would:

- (1) establish the false worship;
- (2) abase the true sanctuary; and
- (3) tread under foot the entire *"host"* mentioned in verse 10 of rulers and teachers that might stand in its way.

Among those *"trodden under foot"* may also be included subsequent Protestant rulers and teachers whom the Papacy succeeded in overcoming either by force or by craft and flattery.

The period of *"two thousand and three hundred days"* is thus to be understood as embracing the long period of 2,300

years during which the "*sanctuary*," or true worship of God, is defiled by the substitution of a false sacrifice for the true; a period during which the "*host*" as well as the "*sanctuary*" is trodden under foot. In Daniel 8:14 we are told that at the end of the 2,300 years the sanctuary should be "*cleansed*," but we are not given any further information.

The vision caused Daniel to faint and be "*sick certain days*". These reactions would probably result from the revelation to him that a power would stand against the "*prince of princes*" and defile the true worship of God for a very long time (Daniel 8:26,27). It was not until the third year of Cyrus that more details were revealed, and Daniel was given a definite starting point from which to reckon the prophetic time.

The starting point for the 2,300 year period is given in Daniel 12:11: "*and from the time that the **continual** (daily sacrifice) shall be taken away and the **abomination that maketh desolate** set up ...*".

In this verse (1) the taking away of the "***continual***" and (2) the setting up of the "***abomination that maketh desolate***" are both mentioned. From the point of time when both of these features would be first in existence together would be the starting point for the 2,300 year period.

We have seen from the comments on Daniel 7 that the Papacy was "*set up*" in the year 539 AD when the Emperor Justinian conquered the Ostrogoths, the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome was acknowledged, and the Papacy began to exert its influence firstly in religious matters and subsequently in temporal matters, and made the observance of the mass mandatory on all Papal adherents.

From the year 539 AD the 2,300 year period takes us to the year 2,839 AD. This does not necessarily mean that the establishment of God's Kingdom in power and authority on earth will be deferred to that date, but it does mean that this period of time will be required to erase from people's minds the false doctrines of the Papacy, and instruct people in the true worship of God through Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the true and only "*continual*" acceptable to God.

It is true, of course, that great masses of mankind will be resurrected without ever having heard of the Lord Jesus, or

having acknowledged any godly system of religion. These masses will need to be shown the way to life everlasting and given the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ and in God through Him, and be saved.

It may be that God's Kingdom will be established before, perhaps well before, the year 2,839 AD. But even after God's Kingdom is set up in power, a considerable period of time will be required to erase false ideas and teachings from people's minds, especially false teachings relating to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, such sacrifice being the very basis of the new world order.

The Papacy itself will be destroyed at the beginning of the millennium, as we are told in Revelation 19:20, but it seems reasonable to conclude that its teachings will endure for a considerable time in the minds of millions of resurrected people in that great time for which sincere believers long and pray.

CHAPTER 8

PART 2

AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF CLEANSING THE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

ORIGINAL PURITY

From the beginning of the Christian Era the Lord's people were exhorted to meet together for prayer and praise, for study of the Scriptures, and mutual edifying or building up in the most holy faith. In addition the simple ceremonies of the Lord's Supper and Baptism were observed when the time and circumstances were appropriate.

THE FALLING AWAY

While the apostles were alive and active the teachings and worship were kept pure, but after the passing of the apostles from this life, false teachers began to prevail, introducing various heresies, corrupting the simple Christian observances, and generally departing from *"the simplicity that is in Christ"* (2 Corinthians 11:3). Controversies arose in which bishops, doctors and learned ones showed more eagerness in justifying their own opinions than in searching the Scriptures and following the true teachings found there.

As the false teachers and leaders grew in power and worldliness they were able to make things most unpleasant for the true and faithful saints (Matthew 13:25,38,39; Acts 20:26-31; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-7).

As archbishops and bishops grew richer and more powerful, more and more formality was introduced into public worship. Various pagan temples with their idols and ungodly ceremonies were taken over and converted to allegedly Christian uses. There were two main reasons for the taking over of pagan temples and heathen religions :

- (1) To gain the allegiance and support of pagans and "convert" them to Christianity;
- (2) To gain more sources of profit and greater temporal power and influence than would be possible from simple meetings for worship and study.

THE MAN OF SIN REVEALED

There were undoubtedly voices raised in protest against the acts of corruption, convenience and worldliness outlined in the previous paragraphs, but as the apostle Paul foretold, the *"man of sin"* exalted himself in the temple of God *"above all that is called God, or that is worshipped"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4), and so the worship of God became corrupted, culminating in that Satanic masterpiece of idolatry: the mass.

The church became linked to the state, and the secular arm was used freely to silence and exterminate any who were bold enough to protest. This combination of church and state in persecuting and exterminating opponents would account for the failure of the voices of protest to come down to us. The writings of the early church "fathers" are on the whole unreliable as expositions of Biblical truth, as they conformed more and more to the false teachings and practices that developed rapidly after the death of the apostles.

The rapidity with which Christian worship was corrupted is clearly seen as early as 325 AD, when the Council of Nice confirmed and proclaimed the doctrine of the Trinity, thus obscuring the truth that *"there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all..."* (1 Timothy 2:5,6).

By about 220 AD the Lord's Supper had become an elaborate ritual, the elements of bread and wine having been changed from their original intended use as **emblems** or **remembrances** of the body and blood of Christ into **sacrificial offerings** to God, and subsequently into objects of idolatrous worship.

By the year 539 AD the Papacy was officially established and the mass was made obligatory throughout Christendom. The **abomination of desolation** was **SET UP**, and from that time that abomination stood in the Holy Place, the significance being that the Papacy with its so-called sacrifice of the mass, occupied the most prominent position in so-called Christian worship.

PROTESTS BEGIN AND GAIN STRENGTH

From time to time during the Gospel Age reforms were attempted where the number of believers was sufficient to exert an influence, or where a sincere bishop or dignitary was willing to risk his office for a return to a simpler and less ritualistic mode of life and worship.

But it was not until the arrogance of the Papacy led to political revolt, and the corruption of the priesthood and the monastic orders aroused popular disgust and opposition, that protests against Rome's doctrines and ritual were given any serious consideration, and the cleansing work was more widely undertaken. The Lord had foretold that the saints would be given into the Papacy's hands for 1,260 years, and it was not until that period was more than half gone that the time came for the cleansing movements to gain strength.

As worship under Papal control became more and more defiled, efforts were made here and there to protest against the defilements and cleanse the worship. Small groups of believers arose, some of them holding considerable truth for those times, such as the Waldensians, Albigenses and Anabaptists. Other groups unfortunately confused the great issues of spiritual truth by allowing human imagination and liberty to degenerate into licentiousness and immorality.

Both classes were sought out and persecuted by the Papacy. The Anabaptists were persecuted principally because they taught that adult baptism was scriptural, in contrast to Rome's practice of infant baptism. The name Anabaptist means re-baptised or baptised again.

The Waldensians owed their origin to Peter Waldo, a merchant of Lyons, who began preaching a free gospel in the year 1150. Some Waldensian refugees are said to have settled in Kent, England, in 1181, and to have brought immersion with them as the true form of baptism. According to J. L. Mosheim in his work "Ecclesiastical History," the Waldensians of Italy endorsed the Roman mass, while those of France and other parts rejected it.

The Albigenses were a group of believers in the south of France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Little is known of their teachings, but it is known that they protested against the Roman priesthood and corruption of the clergy.

Pope Innocent III tried to convert them peacefully, but this policy proved unsuccessful. He then, in the year 1209, ordered war, which became known as the Albigensian Crusade. This war ended with the treaty of Paris in 1229. In spite of wholesale massacres of the Albigenses, their influence was not extinguished until the Inquisition, during the whole of the thirteenth century and a great part of the fourteenth, succeeded in crushing the Albigensian believers and their teachings.

The **chief influence** which began to free believers from the tyranny of Rome and to restore simplicity and greater purity to the worship of God was the **wider diffusion of Biblical knowledge** among the people. Rome had fostered learning among the clergy and in the monasteries, but had denied it to the common people who were kept in darkest ignorance.

The first concordance of the Bible was made in the thirteenth century by Hugo De St Caro; and also in this same century Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote commentaries on the books of Scripture. John of Paris wrote strongly against the power of the Roman Pontiffs and against the mass, and supported the authority of the civil powers. These writings, however, were in Latin, and accessible only to the learned. The common people could neither read nor understand them.

From the thirteenth century onward protests arose largely because of Papal interference in civil affairs, and because doctrines which had previously been acknowledged but not firmly laid down, were set forth by Popes and councils in creeds, whose acceptance was made compulsory upon pain of persecution and death. According to J. L. Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History," the doctrine of transubstantiation was not made obligatory until the fourth Lateran Council called by Innocent III in 1215. Mosheim credits Innocent III with the invention of that term. The need for cleansing became more and more imperative.

John Wycliffe (1329 - 1384), a Professor of Divinity at Oxford, attacked the Mendicant Orders in particular, whose conduct brought upon them the contempt of all decent people, and from thence he was led gradually to a denunciation of the Pope. Finally he translated the Scriptures into English for the instruction and benefit of ordinary people. The result was a cleansing of the worship of God wherever the word was received, in spite of Papal opposition and persecution.

The writings of Wycliffe and others penetrated to Bohemia (now part of Czechoslovakia), where in the year 1408 John Huss sought to withdraw the University of Prague from the jurisdiction of Pope Gregory XVII, and openly recommended Wycliffe's writings against the Roman hierarchy.

The invention of printing by John Gutenberg of Mentz in Germany in about 1440, made possible a still wider diffusion of scriptural knowledge with its cleansing power.

One hundred years later, William Tyndale (c1490-94* - 1536) made a complete translation of the Bible into English, which was printed on the Gutenberg press, and circulated in England secretly for fear of the clergy.

At the Council of Constance in June 1415, the famous decree was passed ordering the Lord's Supper to be served to the people in one kind only, that is, the bread. This practice had been followed for a long time previously, but was not universally observed at that time.

The decree was intended to make the practice universal and compulsory. This decree made a louder protest necessary, and more intense endeavour to cleanse the worship of God from such unscriptural practices.

In the fifteenth century the followers of John Huss pleaded for the administration of the cup to the people. This request was not granted, so these believers retired to the mountains of Bohemia where they held their meetings, serving both the bread and the wine to all believers. These followers of John Huss later joined Martin Luther in the great Protestant Reformation.

THE GREAT PROTESTANT REFORMATION

In the sixteenth century the time and circumstances were such that a great cleansing movement was needed. Corruption and worldly indulgence were in evidence throughout society.

* The year of Tyndale's birth is not known for certain. Encyclopaedia Britannica has his birth date as c1490-94, that is, approximately 1490-94 [c means circa (about)].

The Papal hierarchy was despotic, keeping ordinary people in ignorance, fear and subjection; kings, nobles and the educated classes were opposed to Rome's meddling in civil affairs; sincere people of all classes were disgusted with the worldliness and corruption of the religious orders, and especially with the encouragement given to immorality and crime by the granting of indulgences.

There was a growing desire among the people to have abuses corrected and better and purer modes of worship established. The people were perplexed and could see no solutions to these problems. But God saw to it that a leader would arise and provide a rallying-ground for lovers of truth and righteousness, and bring into being forces which would overturn the political power of the Papacy.

Such a leader was **Martin Luther** (1483 - 1546), a German religious reformer and founder of the Protestant Reformation. As Professor of Biblical Exegesis at Wittenberg University, he began to preach the doctrine of salvation by faith rather than works, and in 1517 drew up a list of 95 theses on indulgences, denying that the Pope had any right to forgive sins, and nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg. This event marked the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Luther's action began as a protest against indulgences and unholy living, and soon developed into a protest against Roman doctrine. Finally, German princes who were anxious to throw off the Papal yoke, gave Luther protection against the forces of the Papacy, and thus Luther's protest became also a political movement.

So great did the popular revolt against Rome become, that in a few years Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Britain and Scandinavia had established the Protestant Religion, and the Roman system with its basic doctrine of the mass had been exposed for what it really was - **the abomination of desolation**, while the Papacy was everywhere recognised and rejected as *"the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth"* (Revelation 17:5).

To Luther's name must be added the names of other leading protesters: Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin and Knox. The whole protest movement was a *"deadly wound"* (Revelation 13:12) to the Papacy.

But as Revelation 13:12 continues, the *"deadly wound was healed"*. What does this mean?

The healing of the deadly wound was due mainly to the craft and activities of the Order of Jesuits and other emissaries of Rome, who set up the Counter Reformation. These servants of Rome did not hesitate to profess Protestantism so that they might by craft becloud the issues, set one reformer against another, and in general confuse ordinary people.

The Society of Jesus, whose members are known as **Jesuits**, was founded in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola, and approved by the Pope in 1540. The **Office of the Inquisition** was also instituted in the same century by Pope Paul III. These organisations sought out, persecuted and destroyed Protestants of all shades of opinion, but did not succeed in stamping them out or blocking the gradual cleansing of the worship, which the Lord had ordained would come to pass.

Other smaller reform groups followed the Great Reformation, such as the Puritans, the Independents, the Wesleyans and the Baptists. Such groups and churches as these have established forms of worship which reject much of the meaningless ritual and ceremonial of Rome.

The Roman doctrine of the mass is repudiated as an abomination in the sight of God, and the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are regarded in their true light as emblems or representations of Christ's body and blood.

Justification by faith, and not by works such as Rome prescribes, is recognised and upheld as **one of the greatest truths of Scripture**, and the very basis of the Protestant Reformation.

But many important errors still remain to be corrected. The doctrine that *"there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all"* (1 Timothy 2:5,6) is contradicted and nullified by the errors in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. These Creeds, however, are accepted by many Protestants as though all their contents and assertions are to be found in the Scriptures.

The Bible teaching of Jesus as the "*once for all*" sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 7:27), is not clearly understood by many Protestants because of the unscriptural Papal teaching that Jesus was at the same time both God and man. The Lord's Supper, while not regarded in the same way as the Roman mass, is often combined with a mysticism which the Lord never intended or commanded.

Other doctrines and practices of the various Protestant denominations often fall short of the true Bible teaching, or have no authorisation in the Scriptures. Worldliness and pride have crept in, and too close an association and involvement with the kingdoms of this world, and a luke-warmness in regard to spiritual truth is all too evident, as the prophecy records, "*... thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*" (Revelation 3:17). The Lord Jesus' words to the Jews in Mark 7:6 are applicable to so many Christians at this time: "*This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*"

CLEANSING BY THE WORD

The translations of the Bible into English by Wycliffe and Tyndale, the King James Translation into English in 1611, Luther's translation into German in 1530, and subsequent translations into the languages of other nations and peoples, gave a great incentive to people to learn to read.

And so it is that the word becoming known and read by ordinary people has been the greatest factor used by God in cleansing the worship of God from defilement, both in regard to the mode of worship and the attitude of worshippers. It is to the word of God that believers must continue to look for cleansing from the false doctrines, ideas and practices that have become attached to Christian worship. Christian worship, if it is to be acceptable to God, must be free from false doctrines, ideas and practices.

Throughout the Gospel Age, including our own "*perilous times*" (2 Timothy 3:1), there have been, and still are, a remnant who worship "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:23,24). Some are isolated, while others are able to gather in small assemblies.

It is likely that here and there are to be found truth-seeking people who are still in bondage to ecclesiastical systems which

do not give them true spiritual nourishment. They are *"as sheep that have not a shepherd"* (1 Kings 22:17), and their situation is well described by the poet John Milton (1608 - 1674) in his poem "Lycidas"; *"The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed"*. To such the words of Revelation 18:14 and 2 Corinthians 6:17 may be directed: *"... come out of her, my people ..."* and *"... come out from among them, and be ye separate ..."*.

Every doctrine and every mode of worship must be tested by the Scriptures. Whatever is not in accordance with the Scriptures must be rejected, whether held by many or by few. But if a doctrine or practice is sanctioned by the Word of God, let us hold fast to it, come what may, so that all our worship and assembling together may always be *"in spirit and in truth"*.

CLEANSING STILL TO COME

The prophecy of Daniel 8:14, *"unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"*, has still to be fulfilled. The greatest of all cleansing movements will be that undertaken at the command of the King of kings and Lord of lords, when the present powers and religious systems are overthrown, and His kingdom is established in power and glory over all the earth.

The false religious systems will be no more. Satanic influence will not be permitted (Revelation 20:2,3), the resurrected millions of the human race will be able to learn the truth and the reason for their opportunity to live for ever, and conform to the new order of righteousness and peace if they so will. The Scriptures assure us that God's promises will be fulfilled in Jesus Christ :

"As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11).

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10,11).

"And every creature ... heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."
(Revelation 5:13).

Thus is indicated the complete eradication of the doctrines of the mass, the Trinity, Mariolatry, and all false doctrines and practices grafted onto Christianity by an apostate church. Other religious systems of this present order of things which do not acknowledge God and the Lord Jesus Christ will also be no more in the new heavens and earth which are to come.

LESSONS FOR US IN THESE LATTER DAYS

It is indeed wonderful for us to look forward to the *"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"* (2 Peter 3:13), honouring God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and ensuring the eventual happiness of our human race. We who have been so favoured and blest at this time with the knowledge and privileges of the true worship of God, must not forget nor minimise our own responsibilities.

Our main responsibilities are to retain the pure worship of God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and to cleanse away any error that may possibly or even inadvertently defile, or even detract from, the true worship of God, so that our worship may be acceptable to Him. It is also our responsibility to help others to understand the true and pure worship of God, and help them to return to it, or begin to practise it if they have never believed before.

The visions and explanations recorded in the Book of Daniel were sent to him to give him understanding of what would come to pass in the latter days. But it is also evident that the visions and explanations were more particularly for the enlightenment and guidance of those who would be living when the various events foretold would be fulfilled. When the angel Gabriel was told to *"make this man to understand the vision"* he said, *"understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision"* (or better: *"the vision is for the time of the end"* [RSV and Variorum], or also: *"the vision concerns the time of the end"* [NIV]) (Daniel 8:16,17).

Further, when Daniel, who writes that he had been *"in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground"* was raised by the touch of Gabriel, the angel said, *"Behold I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be."* (Daniel 8:18,19). When concluding the explanation Gabriel added, *"and the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the*

vision; for it shall be for many days." (Daniel 8:26). The phrase *"the evening and the morning"* is a reference to the morning and evening sacrifices under the law, the typical *"continual"* which foreshadowed the true and once for all *"continual"*, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We now are privileged to see and understand in great detail what Daniel saw in prophetic visions centuries before the prophecies were fulfilled, and are even now still being fulfilled. To Daniel it was revealed that a great iniquitous power would arise and flourish for more than one thousand years, and finally be overthrown *"and given to the burning flame"* (Daniel 7:11). But the instruction, the warnings and the encouragements given in Daniel's visions, and recorded by him, were especially for those who would be living in the latter days.

While we rejoice in the light given to us in our day, we may also feel most sympathetic to Daniel who *"fainted, and was sick certain days"*, but afterward *"rose up, and did the King's business"*. He *"was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."* (Daniel 8:27).

No doubt Daniel's astonishment did not diminish, and so it came to pass that the Lord, in the first year of Darius the King, gave Daniel a more hopeful message.

HOW THE SANCTUARY IS CLEANSED

The chosen apostles of Jesus Christ were divinely inspired to interpret correctly Old Testament types and shadows, and their writings will help us to understand what is meant by cleansing the *"sanctuary"*.

Two Hebrew words are used for "sanctuary" in Daniel:

Kodesh (Strong's concordance 6944): A sacred place or thing, sanctity (in abstract usage);

Mikkedawsh (Strong's concordance 4720): a consecrated thing or place, especially a palace.

The two Hebrew words are related in terms of language.

One New Testament passage in particular will help us to understand what is meant by Daniel's recorded words, *"then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"*. (Daniel 8:14). The passage is Hebrews 9:15-24:

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:"

Under the **Law Covenant** there was only one sanctuary for the true worship of God: **The Holy of Holies** first in the tabernacle, then afterward in the temple at Jerusalem. Under the **New Covenant** the worship of God is not limited to any one place or building, but can be rendered anywhere, provided that the worship is offered through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 4:21-24; 14:6; Acts 4:12). The meaning of the "sanctuary" as it is used prophetically in Daniel would therefore be the worship of God, that is, worship that is true and acceptable to the Heavenly Father.

From the reference in Hebrews 9:15-24 we see that the spiritual "*sanctuary*" or worship of God has two distinct parts:

- (1) as it relates to the instruments or means of worship;
- (2) as it relates to the persons engaged in worship.

Under the **Law Covenant** the prescribed worship was also of two parts:

- (1) **Material instruments** - the tabernacle with its furnishings and implements, and afterward the temple and its contents;
- (2) **Imperfect and sinful men** (Moses the Mediator, Aaron the High Priest, Aaron's sons, his assistants and successors).

The temporary tabernacle and the more permanent temples were not of themselves sanctuaries or holy places, for the materials used were not intrinsically sacred, and the people who worked to build and furnish them, though given wisdom and skills of craftsmanship by the Holy Spirit, were themselves sinners and unclean before God.

CLEANSING UNDER THE LAW COVENANT

Therefore both the tabernacle and temple and all the **instruments**, including the officiating priests and Levites, had to be cleansed and dedicated to God, according to God's instructions, to be acceptable to Him in their various duties and offices (Exodus chapters 24 to 40; 40:34-38; 29:1-35).

The ceremony of dedication involved anointing with a specially prepared oil and sprinkling with the blood of animals specially slain for the purpose (Exodus 29:36,37,44; Leviticus 8:10-17; 1 Kings 8:63). We see then that the apostle was stating a fact when he said: "*He (Moses) sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry*" (Hebrews 9:21).

Similarly, when the Jewish **people** were set apart or sanctified to be God's people, they also required purifying or cleansing. This was done by Moses when he had written the Book of the Law, and all the people who were gathered together said, "*All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.*" (Exodus 24:3,7).

The people were sprinkled with the blood of the covenant victims (the animals slain to provide the blood of sprinkling). This blood made the covenant binding, and ceremonially cleansed, purified and sanctified the people. As the apostle has written, *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22).

Thus in the first instance the literal, physical sanctuary was cleansed and dedicated, and the Children of Israel were cleansed and sanctified. They were ready (at least by outward preparedness) to worship by bringing offerings, by prayer, and by recognition of the offerings made by the priests in accordance with the ritual and ceremony required by God.

Some of the offerings were voluntary offerings or thanksgiving offerings, but the majority were compulsory, for the transgressions, iniquities, sins and uncleanness of the people. These offerings were in fact continual reminders to God, and should also have been reminders to the people, that God was dealing with a sinful and rebellious nation; and because the tabernacle was situated in the midst of such a nation, it was said to be defiled by their sins.

And so it was that on the Day of Atonement Aaron offered a bullock and a goat for a sin offering to make atonement for the sins of the priesthood and the people. He took the blood of both bullock and goat, and with the blood of both animals he cleansed the Holy Place, the tabernacle and the altar (Leviticus 16:18-20). Then followed the confession by Aaron of all the iniquities of the children of Israel upon the head of the scapegoat, which bore them away out of the camp, and figuratively outside the sight and remembrance of God. Thus were both the tabernacle and people cleansed, and prepared for another year of life and service.

In addition to the yearly ceremonies of cleansing, God was ever ready and willing to forgive any Israelite at any time who would make proper confession and restoration: *"Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"* (Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18).

But the children of Israel did not avail themselves of the advantages which were theirs. They neglected their worship and indulged in the sinful practices of their heathen neighbours. Sometimes for years on end no proper sacrifices were offered.

In the course of time the people became so corrupt that God completely dispersed the ten-tribe Kingdom of Israel and subsequently the two-tribe Kingdom of Judah. Speaking to Judah through Isaiah the prophet, the Lord said: *"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness."* (Isaiah 59:2,3). [See also all verses 1 to 15.]

In these words the sins of the children of Israel are represented as having accumulated to such an extent as to hide the Lord's face from them. The sanctuary was moreover polluted by sodden shew-bread and torn, lame, and sick animal offerings (Malachi 1:12-14). The Lord describes Himself as utterly wearied with the gainsaying nation (Malachi 2:17).

But in His mercy and grace, the Lord would arrange an offering and a cleansing which would be acceptable, and would establish and ratify a covenant which all who choose to come under it could keep, and under whose terms and conditions they could be blessed. This new or second **blood covenant** would be made between the Lord God and each individual believer, and no longer be a covenant applying exclusively to one nation (Jeremiah 31:30-34; Malachi 1:11; 3:3-5).

"And he saw that there was no man; and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him ... And the redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." (Isaiah 59:16-21).

In addition, the Psalmist was inspired to write: *"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; ... burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me."* (Psalm 40:6,7).

Hosea also wrote : *"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."* (Hosea 6:6).

In Proverbs it is also written : *"To do justice and judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."* (Proverbs 21:3).

CLEANSING UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

For the purposes of the Law Covenant the blood of bulls and goats enabled sins to be forgiven; and the sins of the people of Israel were forgiven, from Day of Atonement to Day of Atonement. But, as the apostle points out, the very fact of the need for continued repetition showed that sins were not actually and forever taken away by the blood of animal sacrifices. Indeed, the animal offerings served to bring sins to God's remembrance. This was the case with unblemished sacrifices offered as required by people sanctified under the law and keeping the law to the best of their ability. But how much more unsatisfactory were the sacrifices when offered grudgingly by a perverse and disobedient people.

These considerations help us to understand not only the reproaches upon Israel and the promises of a better covenant, but also the apostle's statement that there were *"transgressions under the first covenant"* which required *"redemption"* before the people under that first covenant could be free *"to receive the promise of eternal inheritance"* (Hebrews 9:15).

In other words, that sanctuary, representing worship of God acceptable to Him, must be **cleansed**. Then and only then could the curse resting on the people under that first covenant be lifted and their hearts purified by faith.

The word *"redemption"* in Hebrews 9:15 is a translation of the Greek word **"apolutrosis,"** which means, according to Strong's Concordance, either the act of ransom or the **riddance** accomplished. Therefore, if we read **riddance** in Hebrews 9:15 (*"the riddance of the transgressions that were under the first covenant"*), the idea of the cleansing away of the sins of the Jewish people and the cleansing of the sanctuary or worship of God from the defilement of the sins of the Jewish people is made even clearer.

The sacrifices and other requirements of the law benefited the Jew as to *"the purifying of the flesh"* (Hebrews 9:13), that is, the Jew was helped morally, physically and socially by observing the law. But the law failed in that its offerings and requirements did not cleanse the conscience. There was always, or should have been, a consciousness of sin, a realisation that sin was, and is, a barrier between the worshipper and God.

What was needed, therefore, was an offering and an arrangement that would:

- (1) cleanse the sanctuary, or worship of God; and
- (2) cleanse the conscience of the worshipper.

The accomplishment of both of these was achieved by the Lord Jesus on behalf of the children of Israel who were *"kept under the law"* and unable to escape from its bondage (Galatians 3:23; Zechariah 9:11,12).

The apostle writes in Hebrews 9:14 and 15: *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption [riddance] of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."*

Deliverance from the curse of the Law Covenant, and the establishment of the New Covenant, were necessary before the high calling promise of eternal inheritance could be received. The death of Christ on the cross, by which He was made a curse for the children of Israel, was the antitype of the slaying of the typical Atonement Day offerings of the bullock and the goat for the sins of the whole nation; and the antitype also of the carrying away of sins by the scapegoat. Christ's shed blood sufficed to make acceptable the worship of the Jews who believed in Him and who worshipped God through Him.

And so it came to pass that the worship of Peter and John and Paul, and other converted Jews was sweet incense to God; and their offering was *"a pure offering"* (Malachi 1:11), being their acknowledgment of the blood of Jesus offered on their behalf, together with praise and thanksgiving in His name.

This wonderful privilege was in due course extended to Gentiles, and we read with joy the exhortation with which the passage in Hebrews 10:19 to 22 concludes: *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."*

This then is the fulfilment of Malachi 1:11: *"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."* (See also Malachi 2:1-4; Matthew 11:10; and 1 Peter 1:7.)

The purifying of *"the heavenly things themselves"* mentioned in Hebrews 9:23 is supposed by some Christians to refer to some objects or articles in heaven which are thought to need cleansing. Such an understanding seems an inappropriate and earthly one, and not really consistent with the context and the apostle's argument.

It would be more consistent and in keeping with the context and the apostle's argument to apply the words to **the initial ceremony of dedication and ratification of God's new spiritual arrangements accomplished by the Lord Jesus' death and shed blood.** His death and shed blood constitute the antitype of the dedication of the Jewish tabernacle in former times and also the formal ratification of the Law Covenant referred to in Hebrews 9:18-21.

So when Christ accomplished the *"nailing"* of the law *"to his cross"* (Colossians 2:14), He ratified the New Covenant and shed His blood for the dedication of a new sanctuary or mode of worship. Verses 24 to 26 of Hebrews 9 refer to Christ as the antitype of the Day of Atonement offerings.

In accordance with this New Covenant and new mode of worship, He entered not into the holy of holies of the Jewish temple, but into heaven itself (Hebrews 9:24; 1:3, 10:12), that is, into the actual presence of God the Father in heaven, and not into that one place on earth which was a figure or symbol of God's presence, namely the holy of holies in the Jewish temple.

Thus the new mode of worship was formally ratified, the new and fully efficacious offering for sin presented, and the antitypical mercy seat figuratively sprinkled with the sinless blood of the risen Lord as high priest after the order of Melchisedek. Then followed the promises of mercy, forgiveness and eternal inheritance offered on the basis of Christ's sacrifice and shed blood by Christ's apostles and evangelists.

From Pentecost onward all who believe into Jesus Christ have their sins forgiven, and come by *"a new and living way"* to the throne of grace, obtaining mercy and grace to help in time of need.

If the *"heavenly things"* of Hebrews 9:23 have been purified and dedicated by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, how is this related to the apostle's exposition in Hebrews and the cleansing of the sanctuary foretold by Daniel?

The connection is not difficult to see. Although the spotless offering for sin was made, the dedication of the true sanctuary or worship of God accomplished, the way opened for sincerely repentant sinners to approach God individually and receive complete forgiveness of sins past or present, this worship is being offered by imperfect, fallen people living in an evil world.

There have crept into association and fellowship with true and sincere people of God and the true worship of God many mere professors who defile the true worship by false pretences, hypocritical and perverse actions, and the exaltation of idols instead of spiritual realities. These, according to Jude, are *"spots on your feasts of charity"*; they mislead God's people for personal gain and cause the true worship of God through Jesus Christ to be concealed by erroneous doctrines and practices.

The greatest offence of all has been, and remains, the substitution of the Papal offering of the mass for the true offering for sin and the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ *"once for all"* at Calvary.

CLEANSING THE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

The Christian sanctuary or worship of God is cleansed by **the application of the blood of Jesus Christ**. As the New Covenant is an individual matter between God and the believer, so the cleansing of Christian worship is an individual matter.

The cleansing is accomplished when the worshipper is first enlightened, realises his mistakes and sinful condition, and alters his attitude and conduct accordingly, asking forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
(1 John 1:9).

"... And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:1,2).

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:24-26).

For centuries the Lord has tolerated great religious systems that claim to bear His name, for the sake of the few true worshippers who were, and are, as wheat among a mass of tares (Matthew 13:29,30). The important work of this Gospel Age is the development and ripening of the true "wheat," the purifying of the true worshippers, as Daniel 12:10 foretells: *"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."*

The "wise" are those, not by worldly standards of wealth or influence or power, nor by nature or intuition, but those who are of faith. The "wise" are those who have become true believers in God through Jesus Christ, the only way, and who have applied themselves to know and do the will of God. For such the Lord undertakes to enlighten them further and guide them, as it is written, *"the wise shall understand"*.

The Lord Jesus Himself said: *"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."* (John 7:16,17).

The Lord's guidance and instruction, with its cleansing effect on the worship, whether of individuals or assemblies of worshippers, is given in the Scriptures; as it is written:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
(2 Timothy 3:16,17).

*"... as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water **by the word**, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*
(Ephesians 5:25-27)

When we realise that the cleansing of the Christian worship is an individual matter, and that each individual is separately dealt with by Jesus, the faithful and merciful high priest, then 2,300 years does not seem such a long period of time.

We must take into account that the true worshippers are not confined to members of the Gospel Age church, but include the multitudes of the human race who are to be enlightened in the Kingdom Age when God's Kingdom is set up in power and authority on earth (1 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:6; 7:9-17). We must remember also that from God's standpoint the time is not long, for with Him a thousand years are as one day, or as a watch in the night (Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8).

CHAPTER 9

THE SEVENTY WEEKS

DANIEL'S EARNEST PRAYER

The vision of the four beasts in Daniel, chapter 7 and the vision of the ram, the he goat and the king of fierce countenance recorded in Daniel chapter 8, were given to Daniel in the reign of Belshazzar, before Daniel's trial and ordeal in the den of lions.

When the ancient city of Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians in 539 BC, Darius became king. Darius must have recognised Daniel's upright character and his great ability as he preferred Daniel *"above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm"* (Daniel 6:3).

It was in this first year of Darius the king that the remarkable prophecy recorded in chapter 9 was given to Daniel. It was also in Darius' first year that the presidents and princes plotted subtly against Daniel and caused him to be cast into the den of lions. But God delivered Daniel because of his faith, and sent the angel Gabriel to him with a new revelation of the divine purpose concerning Israel and the forgiveness of sins.

Daniel realised from Jeremiah's prophecy in chapters 25 and 29 that the seventy years captivity in Babylon was about to end, and he prayed earnestly for the forgiveness of himself and his fellow captives.

In the deeply moving prayer recorded in chapter 9, verses 4 to 19, Daniel pleaded for the restoration of Jerusalem and the sanctuary, reminding the Lord God that their continued desolation was a reproach to Him, as He had set His name there, and called Israel His people. It would be to the glory of God to forgive His people and fulfil His promise to return them as a nation to their own land, particularly as the time foretold had now arrived.

DANIEL'S PRAYER ANSWERED

"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God;

Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." (Daniel 9:20-23).

The subject of Daniel's prayer was the forgiveness of sins, and it was on this subject that Gabriel had come to give Daniel *"skill and understanding"* (Daniel 9:22). Daniel's concern was for Jerusalem and the sanctuary where God had set His name. He prayed that they might be restored so that God's reproach might be taken away from before the Gentile nations. Daniel also prayed that the sacrifices for sin provided under the Law might be re-established and continue to be offered, so that the people might have assurance that their transgressions were forgiven.

It must be remembered that Daniel understood and fervently believed that the only way for sins to be forgiven under the law was the offering of animal sacrifices, and these sacrifices were only acceptable to God when they were offered on the altar of the temple at Jerusalem.

He also understood and believed that before the Jewish high priest on the Day of Atonement could give the people his blessing, indicating that their sins were forgiven, the blood of the animal sacrifices had to be sprinkled on the Mercy Seat and on the altars which were considered as being defiled, along with the entire temple, because the temple, with all that it contained, was set in the midst of a sinful people.

Daniel as a sincere, devout and faithful man, felt the burden of sin resting upon his people, and his great desire was to have assurance of forgiveness and re-instatement as a cleansed

people acceptable to God. It was concerning the forgiveness of sins in particular that the angel came to give Daniel understanding. The angel came to show Daniel that the city of Jerusalem and the temple there would in the future be no longer necessary for, or even applicable to, the forgiveness of sins.

God had in view a *"once for all"* sacrifice and arrangement which would enable all sins everywhere to be forgiven, and this sacrifice and arrangement would stand forever. But this *"once for all"* sacrifice and God's new arrangement for forgiveness and reconciliation to Him were more than five hundred years in the future from the time of the message to Daniel.

In the meantime, in accordance with His promises, God would see to it that His people Israel would return to their land, and re-build the temple at Jerusalem. However, the return of the Israelites to their land and the re-building of the temple would not ensure their repentance or their forgiveness, as we shall see in the angel's message.

THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

"And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." (Daniel 9:22,23).

The *"commandment"* that *"came forth"* is rendered as *"word"* in the RSV and the Variorum footnote, and as *"an answer was given"* in the NIV. The *"matter"* is again rendered by *"word"* in the RSV and by *"message"* in the NIV.

Daniel was being invited to consider a new word or message, and understand a new vision that was about to be given to him. The new *"vision"* was not one of images of beasts or objects, but a mental picture consisting of time periods and leading up to the greatest event in all history: the sacrifice and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, by means of which all people will be raised from the dead and will have the opportunity to live forever, and because of which the earth will be restored and become an everlasting paradise.

The "*vision*" that Daniel was invited to consider was that of Jerusalem rebuilt, then destroyed again; of the sanctuary restored and then desolated again. There is also in Daniel 9:26 an indication of the development of an abomination even more widespread and desolating than any that had occurred before in the history of God's people.

But closely linked with this depressing news was the all-important announcement of "*the Messiah the Prince*" (Daniel 9:25) and of "*a Most Holy*" which He would anoint. It was not yet time in Daniel's day for a clear understanding of the Lord Jesus' coming to earth, His earthly ministry and His completely and eternally satisfactory ransom and sin offering. But Daniel was told enough to enable him to understand that God would continue to care for His people, as His plans extended many generations beyond Daniel's day.

We are so privileged as to live long after "*Messiah the Prince*" has come, and we have the assistance of the New Covenant writings of the apostles and evangelists, as well as a measure of the Holy Spirit, which the Lord is pleased to give to all believers. Therefore, the "*vision*" given to Daniel is much more understandable to us than it was to Daniel, and brings to us a great blessing.

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and 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." (Daniel 9:24).

The Hebrew word for "*week*" (or "*weeks*") in verses 24, 25, 26 and 27 means literally "seven", and may be translated either as "*seven*" or "*week*". On the principle of "*a day for a year*" (Ezekiel 4:5,6), a "*week*" of prophecy is seven years.

Daniel had lived until the seventy years of captivity was about to end, and now the Lord gave him a prophecy concerning seventy weeks, that is, 490 prophetic days (70 weeks x 7 = 490 years). This period of time was fixed by divine decree, and nothing could interfere with it or change it. This seventy times seven of Daniel was arranged to reach to the Messiah, and seven years beyond the commencement of His ministry.

Daniel was an old man when this prophecy was given to him, so we may reasonably conclude that its message is also for God's people who would live after Daniel's day, who, like Daniel, would have an earnest desire to understand God's plan and the prophecies He has caused to be written. Daniel was a man *"greatly beloved"* (Daniel 9:23), and this gives us the encouraging thought that those, like Daniel, who are humble and sincere truth seekers, are also greatly beloved by the Lord.

The prophecy was a blessing to Daniel, and must have been a comfort to him, because the 490 years had to do with Daniel's people and the city of Jerusalem, guaranteeing that after the return from the Babylonian captivity, the city would stand for at least another 490 years. The period of 490 years is divided into three sections :

1.	Seven weeks	=	49 years
2.	Sixty-two weeks	=	434 years
3.	One week	=	7 years
Total:	Seventy Weeks	=	490 years

"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times ...

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Daniel 9:25,27).

When did this period of 490 years begin? It did not begin immediately at the end of the seventy years captivity, nor from the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel in the first year of Cyrus (Ezra 1:5-2:2), nor even from the return of the second large company of the Jews under Ezra (Ezra 7:6,7).

Daniel 9:25 tells us the period of 490 years is to date *"from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem"*. This commandment was given by the Persian king, Artaxerxes 1, in the twentieth year of his reign, to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1).

Before trying to fix the year which was the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes 1, we will trace developments associated with the return of the Jews, firstly under Zerubbabel and secondly under Ezra.

Zerubbabel was a Babylonian name meaning *"offspring of Babylon"*, referring to his birth during the exile. He was the son of Shealtiel and the grandson of Jehoiachin, the second last king of Judah. He was therefore of the line of David and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. Zerubbabel was a governor of Judea, and was the last of the line of David to be entrusted with political authority by the occupying powers.

In the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, some fifty thousand Jews returned to their homeland and settled in their various cities about the year 538 BC (Ezra 1:5-11 and all of chapter 2).

In the seventh month of the Jewish year, Jeshua and Zerubbabel with their brethren and priests *"builted the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God"* (Ezra 3:2). In that same seventh month the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles were duly observed, along with the daily or continual burnt offerings morning and evening (Ezra 3:3,4).

In the same seventh month, arrangements were also made with officials from Tyre and Sidon *"to bring cedar trees from Lebanon"* for the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3:7). It is noteworthy that the restoration of the sacrifices preceded the rebuilding of the temple itself.

In the following year the foundation of the temple was laid, amid shoutings and rejoicings of the people, and the *"ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy"* (Ezra 3:8-13).

The angel had said in Daniel 9:25 that *"the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times"*. The same was true of the re-building of the temple itself, the Syrian princes objecting to the continuance of the work. Hence the Jews' purpose was frustrated all the days of Cyrus *"even until the reign of Darius king of Persia"* (Ezra 4:1-5).

When Ahasuerus began his reign in 529 BC, he seems to have paid no attention to accusations against the Jews sent by *"the people of the land"* (Ezra 4:4,6), but neither did he issue a decree or take any action in favour of the Jews. The succeeding monarch, Artaxerxes, however, was influenced to issue a decree forbidding the erection of the walls of the city, and consequently the work on the walls ceased until the reign of Darius (Ezra 4:7,24, chapters 5 and 6).

In the second year of Darius, 520 BC, the re-building of the temple began, and it was finished *"on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king"* (Ezra 6:13-15). This would have been the year 515 BC. The children of Israel, filled with joy, then dedicated the house, and kept their first recorded Passover after the return (Ezra 6:16-22).

Re-building the temple necessitated re-building its walls, and as the temple was situated at one end of the city, part of the walls of the city of Jerusalem had to be re-constructed. This re-building, however, did not commence to fulfil the prophecy of the seventy weeks (490 years), because the commencement of the prophecy was the *"going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem"* (Daniel 9:25). This commandment had not yet been given in 515 BC.

This was the time of Esther, the Jewish maiden who became queen to Ahaseurus, who in turn began his reign over the Medo-Persian empire in 486 BC. The Jewish people still in captivity prospered during the reign of Ahaseurus, except when Haman plotted their destruction, but the tables were turned and the Jewish people were authorised to destroy their persecutors (Esther 8:9,10).

Although the Jews in Palestine prospered in temporal things, they still manifested their old weakness of association with the heathen, idolatrous peoples among whom they lived. News of their disobedience and idolatry must have reached Ezra the scribe, a direct descendant of Aaron, who had *"prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."* (Ezra 7:10).

Knowledge of the fact that the temple had been re-built, but not adequately furnished nor staffed with regular rotation of priests and Levites, must have stirred up in Ezra the desire to visit Jerusalem.

In order to do this, Ezra petitioned Artaxerxes the king, for a grant and letters of recommendation to the king's representatives in Babylon. These were readily given *"according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him"* (Ezra 7:6). In addition, the king made Ezra a *"judge"* over the Israelites, with power to punish by death, banishment, imprisonment or confiscation of goods, any Jew who would not be subject to his authority. Ezra praised God for having put it into the king's heart *"to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem"* (Ezra 7:27).

Ezra was a man of faith and evidently careful not to jeopardise the good relationship he had with King Artaxerxes by asking too much. We read that Ezra *"was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from the enemies on the road, because we had told the king, 'The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to Him'."* (Ezra 8:22). Hence all the band fasted and prayed for God's protection while travelling, and they received it.

Ezra began his journey from the River Ahava on the first day of Nisan (8 April 458 BC), and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of Ab (4 August 458 BC) (Ezra 7:7-9; 8:31). The journey took four months, and was undertaken in the northern hemisphere spring, the best time for such journeys. The actual distance between Babylon and Jerusalem is about 800 kilometres (500 miles), but the travellers covered about 1440 kilometres (900 miles) because they went north-west along the Euphrates River then south (Ezra 8:21-23).

On arrival, Ezra allowed three days rest, and on the fourth day proceeded to the business on which he had come, the first item being the checking of the treasure brought from Babylon, and presenting the king's letters to the governors (Ezra 8:32-36).

The next item of business was receiving deputations of elders who declared the apostasy of the priesthood and the people. Ezra did not realise the extent of disobedience and sin that prevailed amongst the captive Israelites, and sat for a long time in astonishment and dismay (Ezra 9:1-4).

Then he did what every child of God should do, he prayed to the Lord God, confessing the iniquities of the people, and requesting that further patience and grace be shown toward them (Ezra 9:5-15).

The Lord is long-suffering and of tender mercy, and did not forsake His people in spite of their transgressions. The heavy rains recorded in Ezra 10:9 and 13 were evidently a sign of the Lord's disapproval of His people's trespasses, but He enabled Ezra to carry out the work of reform, and gave all transgressors the opportunity to forsake their evil ways and pledge themselves to obey the Law in the future (Ezra 10:1-19).

Ezra received his commission in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:1,8), and some interpreters take that date to be the commencement of the seventy-week prophetic period (490 years) referred to in Daniel 9:24-27.

This cannot be correct because Ezra was a priest concerned with the beautifying of the temple, the restoration of regular services there, and the instruction of the people in the Law. Daniel's prophecy speaks of restoring and building Jerusalem, and neither Ezra's commission nor his acts justify the idea that he was the one to restore and build Jerusalem. The Lord had arranged for another to carry out this work, as we shall see.

NEHEMIAH'S COMMISSION

Nehemiah was a Jew of noble birth who was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes. The office of cupbearer was a high office given only to those of high birth (Daniel 1:3-5).

The book of Nehemiah opens with Nehemiah at Shushan, the location of the winter residence of the kings of Persia, in the month of Chisleu which falls partly in each of the months of November and December of our calendar. The month of Chisleu marks the beginning of winter in northern hemisphere countries.

It was at the king's palace at Shushan that news came to Nehemiah that *"the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire."* (Nehemiah 1:3).

On hearing this news Nehemiah *"sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven"*, confessing the sins of Israel. Like Daniel, Nehemiah included himself as a sinner, *"both I and my father's house have sinned"*, and implores forgiveness. He reminds the Lord God

that the Jews are His people and under the Law Covenant, and concludes his petition by asking the Lord's providential aid in bringing the matter before the king (Nehemiah 1:1-11).

It required courage in those days to present a request to a king, for if it were not well received, the one making the request was liable to be punished for presumption or audacity. And so it was that, before presenting his petition, Nehemiah *"was very sore afraid"* (Nehemiah 2:2). But he had prayed for God's help, and was able to put his request clearly and firmly to the king.

God's time had come for the rebuilding of the city and wall of Jerusalem. He therefore raised up the humble-minded and devout Nehemiah, and put it into the king's heart to give Nehemiah the necessary authority with grants of time and a residence for carrying out the work. The king also provided Nehemiah with letters to the governors and military escort and Nehemiah gave thanks to God for the king's generosity (Nehemiah 2:1-8).

The remainder of the book of Nehemiah gives an account of Nehemiah's experience in carrying out the king's decree. The native governors were *"grieved"* that someone should come seeking the welfare of the Jews (Nehemiah 2:10).

Nehemiah began by secretly examining the condition of the gates and the walls, then told the people of God's hand upon him and the authority that king Artaxerxes had given him. He urged the people to rise up and build, and *"they strengthened their hands for this good work"* (Nehemiah 2:18). Repairs were systematically carried on with labourers having sections of the wall apportioned to them, while others made gates and provided them with locks and bars (Nehemiah 2:9 to 3:32).

The work was well under way before the Samaritan princes and heads of other tribes found out what was happening. First they ridiculed the work, then they *"conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it"* (Nehemiah 4:8). *"Nevertheless,"* said Nehemiah, *"we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night"* (Nehemiah 4:9). It then became necessary to arm the builders, and a signal was arranged in case of an attack so that all the workers might congregate quickly and resist the enemy. They worked and ate and slept in their clothes, with weapons always at hand (Nehemiah 4:13-23).

While the work of building was going on, the worldly-minded among the Jews took advantage of the situation to oppress the common people more and more, not sparing the wives and families of the men engaged in the re-building. Nehemiah was forced to intervene, rebuking the nobles and rulers sharply, and requiring of them an oath to restore their property to the mortgagors (Nehemiah 5:1-13).

So great was the zeal of the builders, that the walls and gates were repaired in only fifty-two days. The successful completion of the work depressed the opponents, and they were forced to acknowledge that God had over-ruled (Nehemiah 6:1-16).

Nehemiah then appointed officers in charge of the gates. He also found the genealogical records and appointed Jewish rulers where required (Nehemiah 7:1-73). He gathered the people together to hear the Law read by Ezra the scribe. This shows the distinction between Ezra's position and Nehemiah's: Ezra was a religious guide and instructor, while Nehemiah was a civil ruler.

Working together they were able to compel the people to hear the reading of the Law (Nehemiah 8:1-18). In the reform that followed they were aided by earnest Levites who exhorted the people, resulting in the signing of a covenant of faithfulness to the Lord (Nehemiah 9:1-38; chapters 10, 11 and 12).

Nehemiah was governor of Judah for twelve years (Nehemiah 5:14). Whether Nehemiah remained in Judah the entire twelve years is not known. As governor he may have paid periodical visits only, while retaining his position of favour with the king. In any case, various abuses crept in which from time to time he was obliged to correct, such as profaning the Sabbath, opening the gates at unlawful hours, and intermarriage with idolatrous heathens. The abuses were a great drain on his patience, as continued reproof and punishment failed to cure the evils.

Nehemiah's self-denying service was not appreciated, so that he was obliged again and again to call upon God to remember him for good: "*Remember me, O my God, for good.*" -- (Nehemiah 13:1-31).

THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

So far the evidence is clear that the *"commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem"* (Daniel 9:25) was issued to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign, that Nehemiah proceeded immediately to the task, and that within fifty-two days of its commencement the wall was completed (Nehemiah 6:15).

Then began a period of greatness and prosperity, and the city was no longer a reproach to the God of Israel. With the walls completed the city was found to be *"large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded"* (Nehemiah 7:4). This situation was remedied by arranging that one person in ten should live in the city, while the others would dwell on the land. Thus the activity of the city was made commensurate with its size (Nehemiah 7:4,5; 11:1,2).

The prophet Ezekiel gives a description of the temple and of the plan of the city as reconstructed by the Jews after their return from the captivity, or more specifically plans and specifications as to how the temple and the city should be rebuilt.

The evidence is also clear that the walls were re-built in troublous times, as the prophet had foretold. Some trouble was experienced during repairs to the temple, but this trouble was nothing like the opposition that was encountered during the work on the walls.

But the walls were completed in the face of assaults and attacks by enemies, and the walls were so broad and strong that when a dedication and thanksgiving service was held, two great companies of princes, priests, musicians and people gathered on the top surface of the walls on either side of the temple, while thanks were given in the house of God (Nehemiah 12:27-43). Thus was put to silence the jeering of the enemies, who said, *"Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall"* (Nehemiah 4:3).

THE TWENTIETH YEAR OF ARTAXERXES

This year should be known exactly, because the period of 490 years leads to *"Messiah the Prince"* (Daniel 9:25). Chronologists vary by a few years in their findings, but the most

acceptable explanation is given by the German theologian Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802 - 1869) in his "Christologie des Alten Testaments" ("Christology of the Old Testament"), a three-volume work translated into English by James Martin. Hengstenberg places the first year of Artaxerxes as 474 BC, and consequently his twentieth year as 455 BC.

Hengstenberg's reasons cover over eighteen pages in the third volume of his learned work (pages 222 - 239), and so are too lengthy for quotation or even summary here.

As previously mentioned, the 490 years are divided in Daniel 9 into three time periods:

1. Seven weeks (49 years);
2. Sixty-two weeks (434 years);
3. One week (7 years).

THE SEVEN WEEKS

The first period reaches from 455 BC (Artaxerxes' twentieth year) to 406 BC. In support of his contention that these are the correct dates, Hengstenberg makes reference to, or quotes from, ancient historians such as Herodotus, Pausanias, Pliny and Hecataeus Abderita. These all give clear evidence that Jerusalem in 406 BC was a large and imposing city.

Thus within *"seven weeks"* (49 years) of the *"going forth of the commandment to restore and to re-build Jerusalem"* (Daniel 9:25), the complete restoration of the city had been accomplished.

THE SIXTY-TWO WEEKS

"And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." (Daniel 9:26).

The sixty-two weeks (434 years) would commence immediately following the seven weeks (49 years). Although the sixty-two weeks began favourably, they became years of trouble upon Judah because the people persisted in disobedience.

Some details of the history of this period from 406 BC to 29 AD will be seen in comments on Daniel, chapter 11.

Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, warned and pleaded with his people in vain. But even as sin abounded, *"grace did much more abound"* (Romans 5:20), and this sixty-two week period led to a great blessing, to *"Messiah the Prince"* (Daniel 9:25).

This prophecy leading to *"Messiah the Prince"* was not fulfilled at Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, but reached to Jesus' anointing at the River Jordan at the commencement of His ministry. Other prophecies foretold Jesus' birth as a baby in the town of Bethlehem as King of the Jews, and the rightful heir to David's throne (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Psalm 89:34-36; Isaiah 11:1,2; Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5,6; John 12:34).

The prophecy of the sixty-two weeks tells us that the Messiah would undertake important work which would be impossible for a tiny baby to do. He would *"cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"* in the midst of the seventieth week when He was *"cut off, but not for himself"* (Daniel 9:26,27).

THE SEVENTIETH WEEK

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and 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.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Daniel 9:24-27).

The meaning and significance of this most wonderful prophecy would not have been understood until after its fulfilment. When the time came for the fulfilment of this prophecy, the events foretold were not done in a corner. This was the case with other prophecies also. All the prophecies concerning Israel as a nation and the great Gentile powers used by the Lord to punish her were fulfilled in an open manner, on a large scale, and sometimes with world-wide influence, so that the interested observer, whether Jew or Gentile, has been compelled to acknowledge that only the God of heaven could foretell and direct such wonders (Daniel 2:20,21; 4:2,3; 6:25-27).

All the world is witness that God prophesied the Babylonian captivity and that it came to pass; that He said He would return Judah to Jerusalem, and it was done; that He foretold He would then punish Babylon and it was accomplished (Jeremiah 32:28-44; 51:1-64).

Similarly all the world is witness to the fulfilment of the events prophesied concerning the seventieth week. Even unbelievers do not attempt to deny that Jesus Christ lived in Palestine at about the time the Scriptures say He did; that certain Jews were called to be His disciples; and that a new religion originated from His teaching.

Jesus' earthly ministry lasted for three and one half years, at the close of which He was put to death by crucifixion. This event marked the fulfilment of Messiah being "*cut off*" "*in the midst of the week*" (Daniel 9:26,27).

The causing of "*the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*" meant more than a cessation of offerings at the temple, for those offerings had often ceased when Israel became lax and rebellious. During the fifty-one years of desolation, and probably during the entire seventy years of captivity, not an offering had been made.

What Daniel had written was that the Messiah would cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease **in the midst of the week in which He confirmed a covenant with many** (Daniel 9:27). The ceasing finally and forever of the sacrifice and the oblation could be said to be accomplished only when the Lord God no longer accepted them.

THE MESSIAH AND HIS WORK

Daniel's great desire and prayer for the forgiveness of sins for himself and his people, the Jews, receives its answer from God in the announcement of the Messiah and His work. As we have already seen, the fulfilment of God's promise revealed to Daniel was still some five hundred years in the future from Daniel's day.

There are nine major accomplishments within the seventieth prophetic week in the context of Daniel 9:24-27:

1. To finish the transgression;
2. To make an end of sins;
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity;
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness;
5. To seal up the vision and prophecy;
6. To anoint the Most Holy;
7. To confirm the covenant with many for one week;
8. The Messiah to be cut off;
9. To cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

1. To Finish The Transgression

Transgression and sin could not be finished in Daniel's day, notwithstanding Daniel's great regret for sin and earnest desire for forgiveness of other sincere believing Jews. Transgression and sin were to continue far beyond the period covered by the prophecy, but as far as the Jews were concerned, their transgressions and sins depended on, and were linked to, the Law Covenant given at Mount Sinai, in addition to the Adamic condemnation which also applied to them as members of the human race. The apostle Paul makes this clear:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."
(Romans 3:10).

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." -
(Romans 3:23).

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."
(Romans 3:19,20).

"I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Romans 7:7).

"The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7:10).

The Law Covenant was considered by the Jews as an arrangement to give them life, but in reality the Law Covenant brought only death to them, because owing to the weakness of the flesh (Romans 8:3), they could not keep it. The Jews, along with all the human race were condemned in Adam and further condemned under the Law Covenant because they could not keep it.

Even after centuries of the Jewish Age and the Gospel Age the majority of Jews do not understand that the Law could not take away sin and was abolished by the *"once for all"* sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:15) and superseded by an entirely new covenant.

Hence the transgressions, sins and iniquities of all Jews under the Law were ended by the nailing of the Law to Christ's cross (Colossians 2:14), thus taking it out of the way, so that the Jews were no longer under its commands and obligations, and hence no longer under its condemnation.

2. To Make An End Of Sins

The Jews were the only people under the Law and thus condemned by it, but they were not the only sinners in the world, as we are reminded in Romans 1:18-32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

The Gentiles were continually sinning and committing abominations hateful to God. The Lord God, therefore, in His grace and mercy, provided a means and a way by which the sins, transgressions and iniquities of the Gentiles, as well as those of the Jews, might be taken away and not held against them.

The means and the way provided by God are found in the offering on the cross and the shedding of the blood of His own beloved Son as a sacrifice, once for all, for the sins of all members of the human race (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:23,24; Hebrews 7:27; 10:12). By this way and means, transgression, sin and iniquity are ended in each individual as soon as confession of sins is made and Christ's sacrifice and shed blood are accepted as having been made for every individual sinner (1 Timothy 1:15,16; Romans 10:9-12; 5:8).

3. To Make Reconciliation For Iniquity

It is one thing to make an end of sins for both Jew and Gentile, but it is another thing to bring about reconciliation between God and the sinner. The Lord God has accomplished both in the sacrifice on the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul said that he was an ambassador urging the Gentiles to become reconciled to God by faith in Jesus Christ. "*God was in Christ*" said Paul, "*reconciling the world unto Himself*". That is, God gave and set forth Christ not only as a sacrifice once for all on the cross, but also as a resurrected and ever-living Lord and Master, to Whom all who would be reconciled must come (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Any sinner can be reconciled to God in a moment of time by coming in repentance to God through Jesus Christ, but he or she must persevere in faith and in the right attitude of mind to enable reconciliation to continue and be maintained (1 Corinthians 15:1,2; Hebrews 3:14).

Daniel's prophecy, however, states merely that the basis of reconciliation was laid within the seventy weeks (Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:2-23). The manner and means of reconciliation were not revealed until Jesus and His chosen apostles and disciples revealed them in the New Testament writings.

4. To Bring In Everlasting Righteousness

The righteousness of the Jew, such as it was under the Law, could last only a year, for each recurring Atonement Day brought the sins of the nation again in remembrance before God. The sacrifices of bulls and goats had to be repeated year by year, because such sacrifices could never take sin away, as the Apostle tells us in Hebrews 10:1-4.

But of the sacrifice offered by the Lord Jesus the Apostle tells us that "*by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*" (Hebrews 10:14). This means that those who accept the sacrifice of Christ for their sins receive complete and unconditional forgiveness, "*the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God*", as the Apostle writes in Romans 3:25, that is, the sins of their life up to the time of confession; and in addition they become sanctified by the truth and the Holy Spirit, so that they are established in righteousness as the governing principle in their lives, and seek

daily to make it their practice in thought, word and deed. Righteousness becomes in a figure their master instead of the former taskmaster, sin (John 17:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:4-7; Romans 6:13).

After the first comprehensive forgiveness, believers are expected to confess their shortcomings, failures and trespasses every day to remain forgiven and remain considered as righteous by God (1 John 1:7-10; Matthew 6:12).

5. To Seal Up The Vision And Prophecy

The Hebrew word rendered "*seal*" is "chatham" and means to "close up" (Strong 2856). As applied to documents, the meaning is to authorise them and make them valid by attaching a seal. The Hebrew word rendered "*prophecy*" is "nawbee," and means, according to Dr. Strong, "a prophet or inspired man" (Strong 5030).

If the correct rendering of "*prophecy*" is "prophet", then the meaning is enlarged to encompass a "prophet" as also being "sealed". In this case the "prophet" who was "sealed" would have to be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the greatest of all prophets foretold by Moses, Who in Daniel's day had not yet arisen, but to Whose coming every Jew was told to look forward. "*A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me*" (Deuteronomy 18:18,19; Acts 3:22,23). The words of Moses are quoted by Peter and applied to the Lord Jesus.

Of Him it was true that whosoever will not hear that prophet "*shall be destroyed from among the people*" (Acts 3:23). The Greek word translated "*destroyed*" is "exolothreue" which means, according to Dr. Strong, "to extirpate," that is "remove utterly" (Strong 1842). And so it was that every Jew who did not accept and obey Jesus Christ was indeed cut off from his former position as one of God's people, and became as a Gentile without God, having no hope in the world, that is, no hope authorised by God, for only in Christ is there salvation now and forever (Romans 11:7,20; Romans 2:28,29; Galatians 6:16).

The Lord Jesus refers to Himself as having been "*sealed*" by the Father (John 6:27). God audibly expressed His approval and certification of Jesus at His baptism by John, and on other occasions also by an audible voice from heaven. Jesus'

wondrous miracles also testified that God was with Him (John 1:31-33; Matthew 17:5; John 10:36-38; 5:36).

6. To Anoint The Most Holy

Some translators and expositors evidently think that the *"Most Holy"* or *"Holy of Holies"* here refers to the inner sanctuary of the former Jewish temple in Jerusalem (the writer of the Living Bible states this specifically). Other expositors write of the *"Most Holy"* as a holy people described in 1 Peter 2:9.

The Lord God's answer to Daniel's prayer given by the angel Gabriel and the word translated as *"Most Holy"* make these two interpretations incorrect, and not in keeping with the lasting and continuing significance of the prophecy.

Under the Law Covenant the forgiveness of sins was associated in the Jewish mind with the sanctuary at Jerusalem. Thus it was that Daniel was grieved that the sanctuary at Jerusalem was desolate, and he asked the Lord to *"cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary"* once more (Daniel 9:17).

The Lord's answer was that the sanctuary and the temple would be restored, but then destroyed again because the people would continue in disobedience and transgression (Daniel 9:26). The Lord also in His answer declares He would anoint a *"Most Holy"* that would be permanent and incapable of destruction, for it would *"bring in everlasting righteousness"* as we have already seen in Daniel 9:24. The Hebrew word rendered *"Most Holy"* means "a sacred place or thing" (Strong 6944), and is the same word as is rendered *"sanctuary"* in Daniel 9:26; 8:13,14; Psalm 150:1; Numbers 18:3,5 and 16; and many other passages. A different word would be needed in the Hebrew to mean a holy people.

The RSV translates the phrase *"to anoint the most Holy"* as *"to anoint a most holy place"* while the Amplified Bible renders the same phrase *"to anoint a holy of holies"*. The use of the indefinite article "a" is preferable to the definite article "the," mainly because the translation *"the Most Holy"* or *"the Holy of Holies"* may lead to the thought that the sanctuary in the former Jewish temple is meant.

To "*anoint*" a Most Holy would seem to refer to the initial ceremony of consecration, as in the case of the tabernacle in the wilderness, when the tabernacle and its furniture were anointed with the sacred anointing oil. The priests were also anointed on this occasion (Exodus 30:22,23; 40:1-16).

The anointing referred to in Daniel's prophecy indicates God's purpose to institute a new arrangement and a new mode of worship different from that of the Jews, and associated with the advent of the Messiah Who would be the true and only High Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 5:10).

The new arrangement and mode of worship would overturn and replace the Law Covenant and the former worship centred at Jerusalem. The prophecy in Daniel 9 was a forecast of God's purpose as outlined by Jeremiah in chapter 31, verses 31 to 34, to inaugurate a **New Covenant**.

The "*anointing*" could refer to the giving by God of the Holy Spirit, first to the Lord Jesus (Matthew 3:15,16; Mark 1:9,10; Luke 3:21; John 1:32-34), then to the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and finally to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48). Peter relates "*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power*" (Acts 10:38), "*not by measure*" (John 3:34), and John tells us that believers also are anointed with the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20,27).

7. To Confirm The Covenant With Many For One Week

The week referred to is the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. The great Prophet of Whom Moses wrote was indeed the One Who introduced a New Covenant and made it operative. His blood was shed to ratify that New Covenant, and He is its Mediator, standing between God and all people for the purpose of reconciliation; to bless all who come to God by Him (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25). He is the "*High Priest after the order of Melchisedec*", consequently the former "*order of Aaron*" is superseded, as well as all the temple sacrifices and forms of worship associated with the "*order of Aaron*" (Hebrews 7:11-19; 8:4-6; 9:11-15).

Therefore, the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in 71 AD was not a calamity, but a judgement of God, Who has now provided "*a better covenant ... established on better promises*" (Hebrews 8:6).

Jesus confirmed the New Covenant with the Jews for one week (seven years) by setting before them the opportunity to become His followers and receive, on belief in Him, forgiveness of their sins which was part of the operation of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:12).

The Lord Jesus offered the New Covenant to the Jews exclusively during the three and a half years of His earthly ministry. During the succeeding three and a half years, the offer was continued to them exclusively by the Lord's chosen apostles and disciples as indicated in Matthew 10:5,6 and 15:24.

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus told His apostles and disciples to go everywhere beginning at Jerusalem, but they continued to work amongst the Jews only until the time came for the Gentiles to hear the message, as we read in Acts 10:9-35 and 13:46.

The proclaiming of the gospel to the Gentiles marked the close of the seventieth week, in which the New Covenant was confirmed to the Jews for one week (seven years) as foretold.

8. The Messiah To Be Cut Off

Daniel must surely have been puzzled when Gabriel told him that *"the Messiah the Prince"* would come and then be *"cut off"* (Daniel 9:25,26). Subsequent visions showed Daniel that the mighty Prince would stand up and accomplish a great work and perhaps these later visions gave Daniel comfort and assurance.

We in our time are privileged to understand why the Messiah was *"cut off"*. He *"died for our sins according to the Scriptures"*. We also know that He was raised from the dead and given all authority and power in heaven and earth to carry out all plans for the deliverance and blessing of the whole human race, living and dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Matthew 28:18; John 5:21-29; 1 Timothy 2:4-7).

The phrase in Daniel 9:26 *"but not for Himself"* has been variously rendered by translators. The literal Hebrew is *"shall have nought (or none)"* and the passage is so rendered in the Variorum footnote. The RSV and the NIV render the phrase *"and shall have nothing"*. The literal Hebrew leaves it open as to just what the Messiah will not have.

Dr. Robert Young, the author of an exhaustive Bible concordance and a literal translation of the Bible, goes back to the subject of Daniel's enquiry regarding the city and the sanctuary. The Messiah comes, is anointed by God with the Holy Spirit, dies for our sins and establishes a New Covenant, and will therefore have none of the old literal city and sanctuary upon which the Jews placed such value.

The King James Version rendering "*but not for Himself*" though, has much to commend it. Many New Testament passages, in keeping with Isaiah 53, show clearly that Jesus had no sin and therefore did not need to die on account of His own (non-existent) sins. He died as an innocent sacrificial offering for the sins of the world, as "*a lamb without blemish and without spot*" (1 Peter 1:19; 2:24; 3:18; 4:1; Matthew 20:28).

9. To Cause The Sacrifice And The Oblation To Cease

The Lord Jesus died at the close of His ministry of three and a half years. His death occurred in the midst of the seventieth prophetic week, and by His death He caused the sacrifice and the oblation of the Law Covenant to cease. This meant that the Jewish form of worship would no longer be acceptable to God, as we have already seen.

The Lord Jesus indicated this in the words He spoke to the woman of Samaria: "*Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.*" (John 4:22-24).

In these words Jesus shows the difference between the Jews, who had the authorised worship at the temple, and the Samaritans who worshipped according to their own ideas. Neither was satisfactory to God: "*Jesus saith unto her, Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*" (John 4:21).

Instead of requiring the worship of an entire **nation** according to specified forms, procedures and rituals, with warnings and penalties for disobedience, the Father now desires **individuals** to worship Him in spirit and in truth. And He has arranged a new way: through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy under the Law was a veiled enclosure in the temple at Jerusalem, while the Most Holy connected with the new worship is *"heaven itself"* (Hebrews 9:24), into which the Lord Jesus entered after His resurrection to make intercession for us as our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 7:17,25).

The Shekinah light in the Most Holy showed God's presence in the old temple; the radiance of God's glory fills the new heavenly scene where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

By Him, that is, by the Lord Jesus, we are invited to *"draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith"* (Hebrews 10:22). By Him we are exhorted to *"offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name."* (Hebrews 13:15).

The Lord Jesus foretold the passing away of the old and the bringing in of the new when He said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"*. John then writes, *"But he spake of the temple of his body"* (John 2:19,21). Jesus was speaking symbolically, telling His hearers that the old form of worship in the temple was to be destroyed and the new form of worship, based on His sacrifice, was to be brought in on the third day after His crucifixion.

Thus the *"sacrifice and the oblation,"* with which Daniel and other Jews were familiar, was caused to cease by Messiah the Prince, Who gave on the cross the true and ever-efficacious sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Now all who wish to come to God to receive forgiveness and favour must come through Jesus Christ, the *"new and living way"* (Hebrews 10:20).

THE OVERSPREADING OF ABOMINATIONS

"... and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Daniel 9:27).

It seems astonishing that the offering of the true and only efficacious sacrifice for sin, the inauguration of the New Covenant and of the true worship of God made no difference to the majority of the Jewish people. They persisted in their stiff-necked attitude, hardness of heart, as well as deafness and

blindness to truth and the salvation and inheritance being offered to them (Matthew 13:13-15; Acts 28:25-27).

For three and a half years after Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection, the new and better covenant was preached to them along with the opportunity to enter the High Calling, the heavenly inheritance and ruling position in the Kingdom of God (Philippians 3:13,14).

The Jews rejected these privileges and offers, and as a result their city and the sanctuary representative of the Old and unsatisfactory Covenant and worship were totally destroyed. The Jewish people had become worldly and ambitious and had come into conflict with their Roman rulers, who overwhelmed and defeated them completely.

The Kingdom of Heaven was taken from the Jews *"and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"* (Matthew 21:43). The *"nation"* or *"people"* mentioned by the Lord Jesus is the *"holy nation"* or *"people"* of Christian believers called out individually during the Gospel Age from both Jews and Gentiles (1 Peter 2:9). As far as the Jews are concerned during this age, *"wrath is come upon them to the uttermost"* (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; Matthew 8:11,12; 21:33-44; Luke 21:20-24; 13:24-35).

It may be that the closing words of Daniel 9:26 and 27 had their fulfilment in the abominations of Israel and the severe punishment inflicted upon Jerusalem by the Roman army in the years 66 - 71 AD.

It may be also that the prophet's words apply as well to the great abominations that arose in the Christian church, which ostensibly maintains the true worship of God through Jesus Christ. In any case we know from a study of history that Rome, which destroyed Jerusalem, became in its Papal manifestation the greatest abomination of all time.

The last word of Daniel 9:27 is rendered as *"desolator"* or an equivalent translation by many translations of Scripture, such as the NIV, the RSV, the Amplified Bible and Young's literal translation. If this translation is the intended meaning, then a great punishment is still to be poured out on Rome.

We read of this punishment in Revelation 17, 18 and 19 as well as in other parts of Daniel's prophecy. The great world power which desolated Jerusalem, and afterwards desolated the Christian sanctuary or mode of worship, will itself be desolated.

THE ACCURACY OF THE PROPHECY

The accuracy of the period of 483 years (69 prophetic weeks) from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince is remarkable. The period prophesied commences in the seventh month of the year 455 BC and concludes in the seventh month 29 AD.

Nehemiah first expressed his wish to the king in the month of Nisan, the first month of the year, but the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem did not "*go forth*" until some months later.

Some time was occupied in preparations for the journey, the writing of letters to the governors and to the keeper of the king's forest to obtain wooden beams for the building work, and the like. The journey itself would take some weeks (Ezra's journey took four months), and Nehemiah did not produce his papers or say why he had come until he had inspected the conditions of the city and talked with resident Jews.

The decree, therefore, did not "*go forth*" in the sense of being announced or proclaimed until about the fifth month (Ab). The building operations on the walls and gates took 52 days and were concluded in the sixth month (Elul). By the seventh month (Ethanim) the genealogies had been reviewed and the people allocated to their cities (Nehemiah 6:15; 7:1-73). When this was completed, the first seven weeks (49 years) of the prophecy began, during which time the city was re-built and became prosperous. This period reached to the seventh month of the year 406 BC.

The second stage of the prophecy, the sixty two weeks (434 years), began in the seventh month of the year 406 BC and reached to the seventh month of the year 29 AD. In the prophecy this second stage is said to reach to "*the Messiah the Prince*" (Daniel 9:25). The Messiah is the Lord Jesus Christ. The seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy reaches not to His birth, but to **the commencement of His earthly ministry.**

At His birth the Lord Jesus was the Son of God, and of Him it was prophesied: *"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."* (Luke 1:32,33).

Through His mother Mary, Jesus was of the line of David (Luke 3:31). The wise men from the east enquired *"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"* (Matthew 2:2). Of David it is said that he sat *"on the throne of the Lord"* (1 Chronicles 29:23), that throne being God's throne, and it is His to give to whomsoever He wills. Jesus was therefore entitled to the throne of David both by birth and by God's appointment (2 Samuel 7:16; Ezekiel 21:26,27; 1 Samuel 12:12).

However, at His birth Jesus was not yet the Messiah in fact and in deed; He was the Messiah only in prospect. "Messiah" means "Anointed" and Jesus was not anointed until He reached manhood *"about thirty years of age"* (Luke 3:23), at the time of His baptism by John. This anointing of the Lord Jesus was not with oil by a prophet of God, but an anointing by God Himself, for the Holy Spirit descended like a dove upon Jesus and a voice came from heaven saying, *"Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."* (Luke 3:22,23).

It was by virtue of this anointing that Jesus was recognised and acclaimed as *"King of the Jews"* when the apostles and disciples went about preaching the kingdom of heaven at hand, and an over-ruling providence caused the title to be inscribed by Pilate on His cross (John 19:19-22; Acts 10:38,39).

The accuracy of the prophecy *"unto Messiah the Prince"* (Daniel 9:25) is indicated by the fact that the Lord Jesus was anointed at the Jordan River in the seventh month of the year 29 AD, exactly 483 years from *"the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem"* in 455 BC (Daniel 9:25). The prophecy was fulfilled exactly, not only to the year and the month, but to the very day if we calculate from the Day of Atonement immediately following the completion of the wall of the city as described in Nehemiah 7:73; 8:1-18; in accordance with Leviticus 23:27-36.

Since our Lord was crucified *"in the midst"* of the seventieth week, and the Scriptures fix the date as the fifteenth day of the first month, Nisan, it follows that the Lord Jesus was baptised and anointed three and a half years previously, that is, in the seventh month of 29 AD, the year fixed by the divinely inspired prophecy.

Thus, special significance attaches to John's words *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh (margin: beareth) away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). John was used by the Lord God to point to Jesus as the Antitype of the Day of Atonement sacrifices. As the *"scapegoat"* on the day of Atonement under the Law Covenant bore away the sins of the people of Israel, so the Lord Jesus bears away the sins of all people everywhere, living and dead, out of God's sight forever. The Syriac New Testament also uses the word *"beareth"* in John 1:29.

The Apostle Peter's words in 1 Peter 2:24 further support this fact: *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body to the tree"* (marginal reading).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Nehemiah was a rich man in favour at the court of a great king. He travelled in state and was able to afford a large establishment (Nehemiah 5:14-19). Why did not the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, the King of the Jews, come with wealth and splendour?

The Jews expected their Messiah to come as a mighty conqueror who would do great exploits for their nation. They probably had in mind faithful men like Daniel, Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, and expected their Messiah to be even greater in worldly power, splendour and material possessions than these men of faith.

The difference of splendour and riches between some Old Testament worthies and the Lord Jesus is indicative of a vital difference in the Jewish and Gospel Ages.

The Law Covenant promised earthly riches and prosperity to those who walked uprightly, and the magnificence of the Jewish temple was necessary for the respect and dignity of Jehovah as Israel's God. Moreover, God's covenant with

the nation promised that obedience would bring the people ease and prosperity (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 26:3-13; Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

In this Gospel Age, God's people are not promised worldly prosperity, but spiritual benefits with glory and blessings in the age to come. The present experience for believers is one of sorrow, persecution, self-denial and obedience unto death no matter the circumstances. Our Lord Himself became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich, not in material things, but in the forgiveness of sins and in the favour of God (2 Corinthians 8:9; Colossians 2:2,3; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 1:9-11). The Jews, however, could not accept or reconcile themselves to a poor, meek and peace-loving Messiah. Therefore, they despised Him (Isaiah 53:2,3).

Similarly those who follow in Christ's footsteps are despised and usually limited in financial resources. Why is this? The answer is the same as in our Lord's case. Believers are promised the necessities of life, but they are required to be humble and meek, living lives of self-denial and even suffering for righteousness' sake.

In this age wealth flows into the coffers of great Babylon, while the Gospel is preached to a great extent by poor and humble people, but who are *"rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised"* (1 Corinthians 1:26-29; James 2:5; Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Timothy 6:7-10; 4:8).

When we consider such marvellous prophecies as the seventy weeks and their fulfilment and think on the Lord Jesus Who left His heavenly glory to become a man, to suffer and die for a race of sinners, shall we not also be willing to endure whatever may be our lot -- poverty, shame, loss of worldly goods -- to show our appreciation of all He has done for us? Shall we not also be prepared to lay down our lives for the brethren, that is, be prepared to help and assist in any and every way we can in whole-hearted, self-denying service?

CHAPTER 10

DANIEL'S FINAL VISION

INTRODUCTION

This remarkable vision with explanations by the angel occupies the final three chapters of Daniel's prophecy. Attention again concentrates on the Fourth World Empire and particularly on the development of the Papal horn, whose incredible abominations are foretold in greater detail than in previous visions.

In this great vision previous rays of hope are made clearer, the time period of 1,260 years is repeated, and other time periods are fixed, the triumph of Messiah the Prince is declared, and His deliverance of the Beast's victims, even to the raising of the dead, is emphasised.

The Lord Jesus, *"the Messiah the Prince"* of Daniel's prophecy, said to His disciples:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28).

"And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." (Luke 12:4).

The *"abomination that maketh desolate"* has had a great impact on the present life, but its inquisitions, prisons, tortures, and burnings at the stake have not been able to affect the spiritual life of the faithful. The faithful martyrs, known to God, are promised the victor's crown, the crown of life in the Kingdom of God (2 Timothy 4:8; Daniel 12:3; Matthew 13:43; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).

Daniel was an old man when the most important revelation of all was given to him, namely the revelation of the triumph of the Messiah and the deliverance of His people from the *"abomination that maketh desolate"*.

In previous visions savage and terrible beasts had been shown to Daniel as symbols of world powers, with destructive horns, vicious jaws, multiple heads, powerful feet that stamped upon and crushed all opposition, all of which must have filled him with dismay. The explanations were given only in part, because while they indicated the overthrow of these world powers and the eventual establishment of God's Kingdom, they did not give any details concerning how or when that Kingdom would triumph and God's people would be delivered.

In a former vision (Daniel 7:9,10), Daniel had seen a representation of the glory of Jehovah, "*the Ancient of Days*". In that vision God's Kingdom was represented as given to "*one like a Son of Man*" (literal rendering) in strong contrast to the four world empires represented by destructive and devouring beasts. But the glory of God's Kingdom was not described. Daniel was told only that God's Kingdom would take away the dominion of the Beast, and be established forever (Daniel 7:26). This former vision left Daniel troubled in mind.

The prophecy of the "*seventy weeks*" of Daniel 9 was given two years before the vision and prophecy of chapter 10, and left Daniel still troubled, because "*the Messiah the Prince*" was described as being "*cut off*", and the rise of a great abomination was foretold. Daniel had confidence in God's over-ruling power, as indicated in Daniel 2:20-22, and would have taken comfort in the information that the "*abomination that maketh desolate*" (Daniel 11:31; 12:11) would eventually be destroyed. But he desired more definite information.

Daniel must have felt especially depressed before the final vision was given to him. He was far away from the king's court, on the banks of the great river Hiddekel, which has been identified by the Septuagint as the Tigris, one of the four rivers mentioned in Genesis 2. Possibly business for the king had taken Daniel away from Babylon. As the king's representative, Daniel would have been accompanied by a number of attendants. They may all have been resting before continuing on their journey to conduct the business of the king.

Daniel had been in mourning for three weeks, during which time he ate no pleasant bread, neither did flesh nor wine come to him, nor did he anoint himself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled (Daniel 10:3). His studies of the prophecies, in particular Jeremiah, led him to expect some movement for the return of his

people to Jerusalem, (Daniel 9:2) and he longed to receive a favourable answer from God in response to his fervent desire for more information.

THE GLORIOUS VISION

Then came the vision:

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude."
(Daniel 10:5,6).

Daniel alone saw the vision. The attendants who were with him did not see the vision, but they probably heard the voice like thunder, for they were affrighted, and ran to hide themselves (Daniel 10:7).

As for Daniel, the sight overcame him, and he sank to the ground with his face downward (Daniel 10:9). He appears to have fainted, *"yet heard the voice of his words"*. If he understood the words spoken by the voice *"like the voice of a multitude"* he did not record them. Daniel was revived by the touch of an angel's hand. This angel was not the glorious being seen in the vision, but an angel sent to explain the vision and other matters Daniel desired to understand:

"And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, (margin: "the first of the chief princes") came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for yet the vision is for many days."
(Daniel 10:11-14).

No other vision had the effect on Daniel that this one had. The glory and brightness of the vision caused him to fall prostrate on the ground *"in a deep sleep"* with *"no strength"* remaining in him (Daniel 10:8,9).

Three times the angel spoke to reassure Daniel, three times the angel touched him to strengthen him. First he was raised to his knees and the palms of his hands, then he stood upright, trembling. When the angel explained that he had come to make Daniel *"understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days"* Daniel fell again with his face *"toward the ground, and ... became dumb"* (Daniel 10:14,15). Then the angel touched his lips and Daniel was able to speak. But Daniel could only express his lack of strength and breath to enable him to talk with the angel. Finally the angel touched him again and said, *"O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong"* (Daniel 10:19). Then Daniel was strengthened and able to listen calmly to what the angel had come to tell him.

The object and meaning of the vision are not clearly stated. But judging from the time the vision was given and the outline of world history that followed leading up to *"Michael your prince"* *"the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people"* (Daniel 10:21; 12:1), its object was to portray the glory of the Messiah. The Messiah was firstly to be *"cut off"*, then His teachings and salvation for believers were to be undone by the *"abomination that maketh desolate"* (Daniel 11:31; 12:11), but finally the Messiah would be triumphant.

What Daniel saw was a *"vision"* (Daniel 10:1,7,8), that is, a picture or representation. Daniel had previously been granted visions, namely, the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the four beasts, the ram, the he goat, the king of fierce countenance, and the Ancient of Days as recorded in chapters 2, 7 and 8.

We have seen in the previous visions of Daniel that Nebuchadnezzar's image in chapter 2 and the beasts in chapters 7 and 8 represented four world empires. We also saw that certain characteristics of each beast represented characteristics of the world empires. These representations are understandable, firstly because the angel interpreted them for Daniel, and secondly because beasts and birds were used in ancient times, as they are still in our day, as emblems of government; for example, the British lion, the American eagle and the Russian bear (Genesis 49:9,14; Isaiah 30:6; 46:11).

The vision of Daniel 10, however, is that of a man of brilliant and glorious appearance. Man is the highest form of life known to the earth, superior to the beasts, so it is reasonable to conclude that the vision represents an empire of a higher sort than previous empires, a world empire far superior to the previous world empires.

In our own day, governments are often symbolised by a human image, as well as by a bird or beast. We sometimes speak of Britain as John Bull, and America as Uncle Sam, for example. Often the king or president or leader of a country is made to stand for the country, as was the case when we spoke of the war against Hitler during the Second World War, and at the present time we speak of war and sanctions against Saddam Hussein, meaning the whole country of Iraq.

So it is that the vision of Daniel 10 can be seen as symbolising certain characteristics of the Kingdom of God and of the Messiah, Who is the Ruler, the King over all that righteous Kingdom. It seems appropriate to consider the meaning and significance of the vision in some detail.

1. The fine linen with which the man was clothed represents the righteousness and justice of God's Kingdom (Revelation 19:8; Isaiah 32:1).

2. The loins girded with a golden girdle symbolises activity on the part of the Lord for the benefit of all people. To "gird up the loins" means to fasten clothing, belts and perhaps weapons ready for action. At rest, clothing is often loosened, and weapons are laid aside. Hence girded loins may well symbolise activity. Gold is the most precious metal, and was used in the tabernacle and temple to cover the ark and other furnishings of the Most Holy where God's presence dwelt.

3. The man's body *"like the beryl"* represents transparency and purity. Smith's Bible Dictionary states that the *"beryl"* of Exodus 28:20; 39:13; Song of Solomon 5:14; Ezekiel 1:16; 10:9; 28:13 and Daniel 10:6 is not a suitable translation, as the stone in question is an ancient chrysolite described by the Latin writer Pliny as "a transparent stone with a refulgence like that of gold" and called also the "golden stone".

The modern yellow topaz seems to be intended rather than beryl, which is usually greenish in colour, because the body of the man in the vision is said to be in appearance like the stone in question, and a yellow stone would be more appropriate than green.

4. The face "*as the appearance of lightning*" represents dignity and majesty, holding observers in awe. It could also represent light to, and enlightenment of, the beholders, for only out of the face shine intelligence and goodwill.

5. The "*eyes as lamps of fire*" represent discernment, the ability to pierce through corruption and deceit and distinguish between good and evil.

6. The arms and feet "*like in colour to polished brass*" (or copper) represent power and strength, and the capacity to take over from the previous world powers, which the Kingdom of God will do.

7. The voice "*like the voice of a multitude*" represents authority to command and organise, to call attention to truth, as well as ability to deal with the Papal system, whose "*great swelling words*" have had world-wide influence for centuries (Daniel 7:8-11,25,26; Revelation 13:4-7; 2 Peter 2:18). In Revelation 19:15 the King of Kings and Lord of Lords is represented as having a two-edged sword proceeding from his mouth, that with it he should smite the nations. This is another symbol of the power of truth, proclaimed by the Lord Jesus and His representatives, to smite man-made institutions and organisations, the two edges of the sword representing religious as well as secular truth.

OTHER VISIONS OF MESSIAH'S GLORY

Two other visions of Messiah's majesty and glory are described in the Scriptures: the Transfiguration before Peter, James and John (Matthew 17:1-13) and the vision given on the island of Patmos to John alone (Revelation 1:12-18).

The Apostle Paul received "*visions and revelations of the Lord*" in which he hears "*unspeakable words which it is not lawful to utter*", but no details of these visions are recorded (2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

The two recorded New Testament visions so closely resemble Daniel's vision that it is reasonable to conclude that each is a representation of Messiah's glory and majesty.

Daniel must have been comforted by this vision, and his mind set at rest when it was revealed to him that a great One was coming in power and glory to overcome and destroy the abomination of desolation forever. The vision was, as the angel said, a message of peace to Daniel.

THE ANGELS OF THE NATIONS

Four angels, referred to as princes, are mentioned in Daniel 10. Three were associated in a particular way with nations:

- * *"Michael your prince" "the first of the chief princes" [margin] (verses 13 and 21);*
- * *the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" (verses 13 and 20);*
- * *"the prince of Grecia" (verse 20).*

The fourth angel was the one who brought the message to Daniel; probably the same one who gave him the understanding of the visions of chapters 8 and 9, and there called *"Gabriel"* (Daniel 8:16; 9:21).

The three *"princes"* mentioned are not the earthly kings or rulers of Judah, Persia and Grecia. Each of these kingdoms had many kings during the centuries they were in existence, but each kingdom seems to have had a *"prince"* or angel acting under God to assist in controlling its affairs. In the cases of Persia and Greece, as recorded, there seems to have been a *"prince"* or angel in opposition to God, and contending with God's angels for supremacy.

Whether every nation on earth has good and evil angels in conflict over control of its affairs we do not know with certainty. It would not be surprising, however, if it were so. But we do know from the Scriptures that *"the angels which kept not their first estate"* (Jude 6), while now deprived of many of their original privileges, have the freedom of earth's environs and can gain control of human minds and bodies and even of Christian minds and bodies if Christians are not on their guard (2 Timothy 2:26; Ephesians 2:2; Matthew 10:33; Mark 5:1-16).

If the *"angels that sinned"* (2 Peter 2:4) could control people in the Lord's day, as they now control mediums and others who submit to them, the fallen angels could with equal facility influence kings, rulers and others in places of authority.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the saints, writes: *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places."* (Ephesians 6:11,13; margin).

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, THE PRINCE OR ANGEL OF ISRAEL

The word *"prince"* (Hebrew: sar or nasa) is used of the head person of any rank or class, such as Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah (Ezra 1:8) and Ashpenaz the prince of the eunuchs (Daniel 1:3,7-11). The angel or prince of Israel is called in Scripture *"The Angel of His Presence"*. Moses was assured that this Angel would accompany the children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness, and would assist him in the performance of his great responsibilities as Mediator, Law-Giver and Ruler:

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (Isaiah 63:9).

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them." (Exodus 14:19).

In the latter reference the angel is shown to be in control of the pillar of cloud, moving it before or behind the camp of Israel as a sign that the Israelites should either go forward or encamp.

Moses was not this angel, as Moses was told by the Lord (in Exodus 23:20 and 23 and 32:34) that an angel would go before him. Moses guided the children of Israel, and the Angel guided Moses. Gabriel gives us the name and title of this Angel: *"Michael your Prince", "the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people"* (Daniel 10:21; 12:1).

Michael is called by Jude *"the archangel"* or chief angel, and one of his tasks is shown to have been to prevent the devil securing the body of Moses (Jude 9). The children of Israel had come out from the land of the mummy, where the custom was to embalm bodies of kings and royal persons, and worship them through temples built at the bases of the stone pyramids which were the royal tombs. No doubt the children of Israel would readily have embalmed the body of Moses and would have been tempted to worship it as they were ready to proclaim a golden calf to be their *"gods"* according to Egyptian mythology (Exodus 32:1-8). Satan, ever ready to tempt and deceive, would have striven to secure Moses' body and let it fall into the hands of the Israelites. But Michael was stronger than he and concealed Moses' body so well that no-one has ever been able to find it (Deuteronomy 34:6).

The Hebrew name "Miykael" is defined in Strong's concordance as meaning "Who like God?" or "Who is like God?" It was the name of nine Israelites as well as of Israel's Angel-Prince. In the latter case the name would signify that Israel's Angel-Prince was acting as God's representative, or that He was like God in exercising sovereign power.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 the Israelites are spoken of as having partaken of a Rock that went with them. The word *"spiritual"* which is applied to that Rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4 is the Greek word *"pneumatikos"* (Strong 4152) and has the sense of non-carnal, supernatural, or miraculously provided. The *"spiritual meat"* and *"spiritual drink"* which the Israelites received during their wilderness journey were quite literal, the word *"spiritual"* signifying *"miraculously provided"* by the Angel of the Lord.

The Angel Who acted as the Guide and Provider of the children of Israel in the wilderness is identified by the Apostle Paul as the Christ, that is, the Anointed One, promised to the children of Israel. He is surely the same Being as *"Michael your Prince"*, *"the great Prince that standeth for the children of Thy people"* (Daniel 10:21; 12:1.) The Apostle Paul therefore identifies Michael the Archangel as the *"rock"* of the wilderness, the Christ promised to the children of Israel.

Thus it is clear that the pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ is established. In His pre-human estate the Lord Jesus was Jehovah's Agent in creation (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16), by Whom He made the ages (Hebrews 1:2), and the Builder of

the Jewish house (Hebrews 3:2,3). He may well have been the chief of the three angels who visited Abraham as recorded in Genesis 18, and the "*captain of the host of the Lord*" Who appeared to Joshua (Joshua 5:14,15).

Michael, the great Prince, stood for the children of Israel and cared for them. He continued to care for them during their captivity in Babylon, and when Gabriel spoke to Daniel, Michael was actively engaged in affairs connected with their well-being under Cyrus, the Persian king.

THE PRINCE OR ANGEL OF THE KINGDOM OF PERSIA

As Michael had contended with the devil concerning the body of Moses, so Michael and Gabriel, in the third year of Cyrus, contended with the prince or angel of the kingdom of Persia. This angel must have been a powerful being, because he withstood Gabriel for twenty-one days, and was overcome only when Michael, the first of the chief princes, came to Gabriel's assistance (Daniel 10:13). Daniel's prayer was heard on the first day of his fast, but his fast was prolonged for three weeks because of the angelic contentions for mastery over Cyrus and his kingdom. We are not told the reason for this contention of angels in the third year of Cyrus. No doubt the contention concerned the Jewish people, because Michael their Prince was instrumental in securing the mastery.

PROPHECY FULFILLED BY CYRUS THE PERSIAN

We should bear in mind that Cyrus was the real ruler of conquered Babylon. The Medes and the Persians had formed an alliance to conquer Babylon and establish their empire, and the Persians were the larger and dominant partner in the alliance. Persian dominance in the alliance was represented by the symbols of :

- (1) the bear which "*raised up itself on one side.*" (Daniel 7:5);
- (2) the ram with one horn "*higher than the other.*" (Daniel 8:3).

Cyrus was the real ruler of Babylon during the two-year reign of Darius the Mede. Darius was one of Cyrus' generals, who was "*made king over the realm of the Chaldeans*" (Daniel 9:1). It must have suited Cyrus to delegate the rule of Babylon to Darius, until Cyrus took over as king after two years, and that would seem to be the reason that Daniel recorded Darius as being "*made king*" over Babylon.

This means then that the *"third year of Cyrus, King of Persia"* (Daniel 10:1) dated from the first year of Darius the Mede (Daniel 9:1), and was the first year of Cyrus' sole reign. This understanding is supported by the fact that Daniel, who was intensely interested in the welfare of his people, the Jews, does not record their return to Jerusalem under the decree which Cyrus issued in his first year (2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4).

Daniel's continued mourning and fasting seem to indicate that up to that time no steps had been taken to alter the status of his people. In addition, the contention of the angels Gabriel and Michael with the angel or prince of the kingdom of Persia seems also to indicate that Cyrus had not up to that time fallen in line with God's requirements concerning His people the Jews. Later Cyrus became Israel's ally and protector, even as the Scriptures had foretold.

In Daniel 1:21 it is recorded that Daniel *"continued even into the first year of king Cyrus"*. In all probability Daniel died in that year, the first year of Cyrus' sole reign after the two years of Darius' reign as Cyrus' delegated ruler. If Daniel's death occurred in that year, he must have been about ninety years of age when he died.

The occasion of the contention between God's angels and the angel of the kingdom of Persia was the necessity of impressing upon Cyrus the part he had to perform in fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to their own land. Cyrus is mentioned by name in Isaiah as the one who would be instrumental in returning the Jews to their homeland and in the rebuilding of the temple:

"Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;

That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."
(Isaiah 44:24-28).

*"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;
I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:
And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.
For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."* (Isaiah 45:1-4).

"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts."
(Isaiah 45:13).

These prophetic words must refer to Cyrus king of Persia because he it was who fulfilled them. By his proclamation he brought to an end the seventy years captivity foretold by Jeremiah, who also foretold the certainty of its termination (Jeremiah 15:11,12; 29:10).

When referring to Cyrus being used of God to end the seventy years captivity, and issue a permit to rebuild Jerusalem, the Scriptures say *"The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia"* (2 Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1). It would be necessary for Cyrus' mind to be *"stirred up"* in some way to consider the captive Jews and their land, and then to take steps to carry out a project to return the Jews to their land and rebuild Jerusalem. Cyrus was a Gentile ruler, with no personal interest in the Jews or their land, as that land and its people were only an insignificant province in the great Medo-Persian empire.

For twenty-one days the prince or angel of Persia resisted the efforts of Gabriel to bring to Cyrus' attention the Jews and their homeland. Then Michael came, and Gabriel was released

to take the message to Daniel (Daniel 10:13). The exact means used to impress the mind of Cyrus are not revealed to us, but would probably consist of bringing before Cyrus persons and objects associated with the Jews and their religion, as well as filling his thoughts with God's stated declaration that the time had come for the Jews to return to their land and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

We must remember that Daniel at this time was far away from the king's court (Daniel 10:4). Daniel's absence from Cyrus' court may have been brought about by the evil prince or angel of Persia, in an attempt to remove Daniel's influence with King Cyrus. But whatever the reason for Daniel's absence, there were other Jews whom God could use to influence Cyrus, such as Zerubbabel, Ezra, Sheshbazzar, Nehemiah and others whose names are recorded in the book of Ezra (Ezra 1:5).

But it was not enough to stir up the mind of Cyrus. The minds of the Jews also had to be stirred, as indeed they must have been when they realised, as did Daniel, that the seventy years of captivity were drawing to a close (Daniel 9:2). These Jewish leaders would therefore be ready to carry out Cyrus' decree as soon as it was made.

CONCLUSION

Evidently Daniel's life was drawing to a close at this time. He is not mentioned among those who returned with Zerubbabel. But since he wrote the account of his final vision, it is at least probable that he returned to Babylon and saw his brethren receiving the favours of King Cyrus, as the Lord had before determined that Israel would return to their land.

The division of the books of the Bible into chapters and verses is a modern device and is most useful for reference. The original manuscripts were not so divided. In the case of chapters 10 and 11 of Daniel, the place chosen for the division is unfortunate because verse 1 of chapter 11 really belongs to chapter 10, as it is part of Gabriel's account of the relations existing between Michael and himself. In the first year of Darius the Mede, Gabriel assisted Michael, standing by to confirm and strengthen him (Daniel 11:1), while Michael had previously assisted Gabriel (Daniel 10:13,21). They worked together for the benefit and well-being of the people of the captivity.

CHAPTER 11

PART 1

HISTORY UNFOLDED

INTRODUCTION

The vision of Messiah's glory recorded in Daniel 10 was given to Daniel for his encouragement, to give him assurance that the promised Messiah would be mighty and glorious, and fully able to cope with the *"abomination of desolation"* (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14), and all other evils that might trouble God's people. But the vision was *"for many days"* (Daniel 10:14). that is, the fulfilment of the prophetic vision was a long time in the future from Daniel's day.

But it was God's wish that Daniel and other people of faith might know in broad terms what would happen during the long interval of time between the granting of the vision to Daniel and the triumph of the Messiah. The rise and fall of various dynasties and kingdoms are foretold until the time comes for Michael, that is, the Messiah, to *"stand up"* and deliver all people of faith, *"every one that shall be found written in the book"* (Daniel 12:1). The Lord God showed His love and care for Daniel and all people of faith by sending the angel especially to explain, *"to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days"* (Daniel 10:14; 12:10; 9:23).

TWO EXPRESSIONS IN DANIEL 11 AND 12

1. Stand Up

The expression *"stand up"* is used seven times in chapter 11 and once in chapter 12. Its meaning, when used of a king, is made clear in Daniel 11:3: *"And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will"*. To *"stand up"* then, means to rule and exercise authority as a monarch.

Those who *"stand up against"* *"the king of the south"* in Daniel 11 would be other rulers in addition to *"the king of the north"* who exercise rule and authority in opposition to the king of the south.

The words *"stand up"* should also appear in Daniel 11:31, where the evident intention is to indicate the rise of a new power *"And arms shall stand up after him"* (translation by the Reverend Alexander Keith). Young's literal translation also uses the words *"stand up"* in Daniel 11:31. The KJV has *"And arms shall stand on his part"*. More will be written about this later.

2. The End

In Daniel chapters 11 and 12 there are six expressions containing the words *"the end"* and one expression which says *"his end"*. They are as follows :

The end of years (11:6);
The end at the time appointed (11:27);
The time of the end (11:35, 40; 12:9);
The end of these wonders (12:6);
The end of these things (12:8);
The end of the days (12:13);
His end (11:45).

To understand correctly what or whose end is referred to in any context, it is necessary to determine whether the *"end"* refers to years, to a particular dynasty or succession of rulers, to a period of persecution or to the *"abomination of desolation"* itself. It seems necessary also to distinguish between *"the time of the end"* and the *"end"* itself.

THE PROPHECY IN DETAIL

Persia and Greece

Chapter 11 of Daniel should properly begin at verse 2, because verse 1 really belongs to chapter 10, as it is part of Gabriel's account of the relations existing between himself and Michael.

The final vision was given to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus, which was the first year of Cyrus' sole reign, and the explanation of what will come to pass in the latter days is linked to Daniel's own day by the few words of verse 2 of chapter 11:

"And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings of Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia."

The four kings who would "*stand up*" in Persia as successors of Cyrus were:

1. Cambyses, son of Cyrus (about 529 BC);
2. Smerdis the Magian;
3. Darius the son of Hystaspes;
4. Xerxes (about 486 BC).

History confirms that Xerxes was far richer than his predecessors, and also that he used his vast wealth to "*stir up all against the realm of Grecia*", which at that time was not a unified country, but one consisting of a number of independent states, of which Macedonia was the chief.

The Greek historian, Herodotus (485 - 425 BC), names the princes of forty nations as having been "*stirred up*" by Xerxes in the space of four years, and concentrated into an army of 1,700,000 men. Xerxes' fleet consisted of 1,200 ships, most of which were purchased in Asia, Carthagina and even in Spain, Gaul and Italy. These vast forces were deployed against Greece, but without any significant achievement. The magnitude of the expedition evidently remained in the Greek memory and the subsequent campaigns of Alexander the Great against Medo-Persia (335 - 323 BC) were probably, in part at least, retaliation for the campaign of Xerxes.

Before the era of Alexander's conquests, eight other rulers followed Xerxes on the Persian throne covering a period of about 130 years, but these are not mentioned by the angel. The prophecy moves immediately from Xerxes of Persia to Alexander the Great of Greece.

A MIGHTY KING AND FOUR KINGDOMS

"And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, not according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those." (Daniel 11:3,4).

No date or time period is given for the standing up of this mighty king, but the description given corresponds with that of the he goat in Daniel 8:5-8.

This symbolic representation in Daniel 8 is identified by the angel as Grecia, and *"the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king"* namely, Alexander the Great. Alexander's father, Philip of Macedon, had united the Greeks in a defensive alliance, and had been appointed general of their army. Alexander succeeded his father in 336 BC and in 334 BC defeated the Persian king Darius at Granicus.

So determined was Alexander's will, and so impetuous were his attacks, that nothing could stand before him. Soon he broke the power of Persia, and Greece became the third world empire, even as Daniel had recorded in chapter 2:39; chapter 7:6 and chapter 8:5-7.

Alexander's ambition is said to have been to rule his great empire from Babylon, which he proposed to restore to its ancient glory. But God had decreed the everlasting over-throw of Babylon, and it was therefore not in the power of Alexander or anyone else to restore it (Jeremiah 5:7-9; 25:9-12; 50:9-15).

Alexander died at the early age of thirty-three, a victim of debauchery. Alexander, therefore, did not live to rule over the vast dominion gained by him at great cost. As the prophecy states so succinctly, *"When he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken"* (Daniel 11:4).

No sooner had Alexander established himself as world sovereign, with all enemies in subjection, than his kingdom was *"broken"* and *"divided toward the four winds of heaven"*. His kingdom went *"not to his posterity"* because all his heirs were murdered. Nor was his kingdom *"according to his dominion which he ruled"* because no successor was able to emulate his extensive rulership. His kingdom was *"plucked up, even for others beside those"*; that is, for others beside his heirs.

History records the division of Alexander's empire among his four generals, whom he had made governors of the four main divisions of his empire, and who held virtual sovereignty from the time of his death, as already seen in chapter 8.

West :	Macedon and Greece under Cassander.
North :	Thrace and Northern Kingdoms under Lysimachus.
South :	Egypt and Cyrene under Ptolemy.
East :	Syria and all the East under Seleucus.

THE KING OF THE SOUTH AND THE KING OF THE NORTH

The prophecy in detail begins at Daniel 11:5:

"And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion."

The contest between the King of the South and the King of the North covers almost two centuries. The titles therefore do not apply to two individual kings, but are convenient terms applying to the northern and southern kingdoms of Alexander's former empire. The prophecy does not take into account the Macedonian and Grecian kingdom under Cassander; nor does it include Lysimachus, who for a time ruled the northern kingdoms, because Seleucus conquered the forces of Lysimachus, and the Syrian, eastern and newly conquered northern kingdoms filled the role of the King of the North.

The RSV gives a clearer rendering of Daniel 11:5: *"Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and his dominion shall be a great dominion."*

The Septuagint is also helpful in its version: *"And the king of the south shall be strong; and one of their princes shall prevail against him, and shall obtain a great dominion"*.

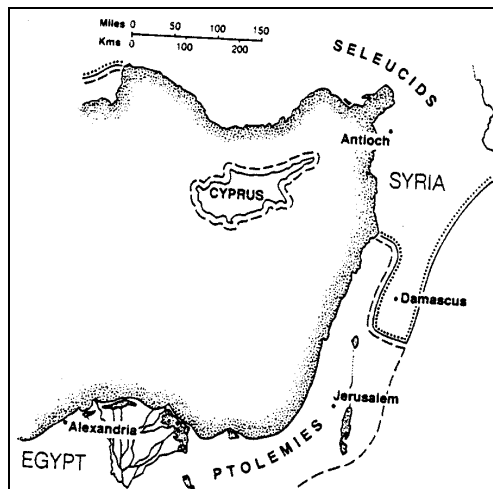
"One of his princes" (RSV) and *"one of their princes"* (Septuagint) must refer to the princes or rulers appointed by Alexander.

The main interest of this prophecy is centred in Palestine, the land of God's people at that time, and in the two kingdoms, the one to the north and the other to the south, who made the holy land a source of contention between them. (See the map on page 194.)

The first move in the contention over Palestine was made by the King of the South, Ptolemy I, the ruler of Egypt and Cyrene. He invaded Judea, intending to take Jerusalem. In his realm were Lybia, Cyrenaica and part of Arabia bordering on Egypt. He delivered the people of Rhodes from siege and thus acquired the title of Soter, or Deliverer. He conquered the whole coast of Phoenicia and the greater part of Syria, and would have added more to his territory had not Seleucus proved, as the prophecy states, *"strong above him"*.

Seleucus is the first *"prince"* in the prophecy to be described as stronger than the King of the South, and as having *"great dominion"*. He conquered Persia, Media, Babylon, Assyria, Bactria and Hyrcania. Seleucus also defeated Antigonus, another of Alexander's generals, and in doing so conquered Syria and Asia Minor which had been ruled by Antigonus. Antigonus had conquered Syria and Asia Minor previously and had overcome Lysimachus, thus Lysimachus was eliminated from the details of the prophecy.

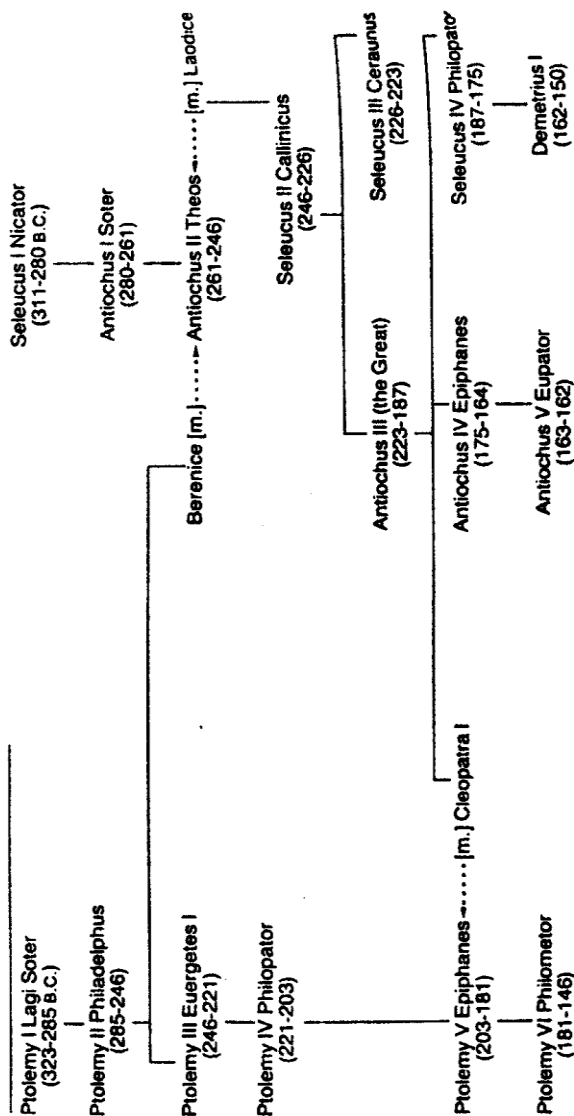
Seleucus was the greatest of Alexander's former princes, and was distinguished by the title Nicator, or Conqueror. His dominion extended for a time over all the realm of Alexander with the exception of Egypt.



Northern and southern kingdoms of Alexander's former empire.

The families of Seleucus and Ptolemy ruled over Syria and Egypt for several generations until both kingdoms were conquered by the Romans. After the Roman conquests, the titles King of the North and King of the South could no longer apply.

Ptolemies and Seleucids



Family lines of the kings of the northern and southern kingdoms.

AN UNFORTUNATE ALLIANCE

The rivalry between the two kingdoms continued during the reigns of Antiochus Soter, the son and successor of Seleucus, and Ptolemy II, Philadelphus.

Under Antiochus II Theos, the son of Antiochus Soter, the Syrian kingdom was jeopardised by the loss of the eastern provinces and Parthia. Ptolemy II Philadelphus might then have attacked and defeated the King of the North, but he adopted another plan, as the prophecy relates:

"And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her (margin: "he whom she brought forth"), and he that strengthened her in these times." (Daniel 11:6).

The plan was that Ptolemy II's daughter, Berenice, would marry Antiochus II, so that the north and south kingdoms would be united with the sons of Berenice on the throne. Antiochus II was already married to Laodice, but as the price of peace Antiochus divorced Laodice and disinherited her sons. Thus the "agreement" was made.

"But she shall not retain the power of the arm". The "arm" that was instrumental in placing Berenice in that position was her father, Ptolemy II of Egypt, and he sustained Berenice in that position until his death in 246 BC.

Another "arm" that sustained her was Antiochus himself, but in the course of time he abandoned Berenice and recalled his former wife, Laodice.

Laodice, now restored to favour and power, resolved to secure the throne for her son, Seleucus Callinicus. She caused Antiochus II to be poisoned, and Berenice to be slain. The Egyptian attendants of Berenice, *"they that brought her"* were also put to death with Berenice's son, *"he whom she brought forth"* (margin). The RSV, REV, the Amplified Bible and Young's literal translation have *"her child"*.

Thus in a few years the "agreement" was broken, and a renewed cause of enmity created between the King of the South and the King of the North.

Ptolemy III Euergetes (Benefactor)

"But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate ("in his place": margin, RSV, REV, NIV), which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.

So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land." (Daniel 11:7-9).

When Berenice's father died, her next natural defender was her brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes, "a branch out of her roots" who stood up, that is, ruled as king in succession to his father Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

Ptolemy III hastened to help and support his sister, Berenice, but she was put to death before Ptolemy III could reach her. His campaign then became one of revenge, to "deal against them" who had so dealt with his sister. He entered "into the fortress of the king of the north" and prevailed against Seleucus II Callinicus, the son of Laodice, who by this time was on the throne of the northern kingdom.

The people of many cities had been shocked by the cruelty of Laodice, and many joined forces with Ptolemy III. With a great army Ptolemy III overcame all opposition, secured the allegiance of many cities in Syria and Cilicia and extended his dominion to Babylon and Seleucia. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled that said he would "prevail".

From Babylon Ptolemy III brought great spoil: 40,000 talents of silver, many vessels of silver and gold, and 2,500 Egyptian idols which Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, had taken from Egypt when Persia was the dominant power in the east. It was by the return of these idols that Ptolemy III earned the title Euergetes or Benefactor.

Having taken revenge and secured much spoil, Ptolemy III returned to his own land to quell an insurrection and establish himself more firmly in his own domain. Ptolemy III outlived Seleucus Callinicus, thus fulfilling the prophecy that *"he shall continue more years than the king of the north"*.

THE KING OF THE NORTH *"STIRRED UP"*

Seleucus III Ceraunus, the Thunderer, succeeded to the remnant of his father's dominion, but despite his title he did not regain any of the lost possessions.

His brother Antiochus III, however, soon succeeded him, and had a long and successful reign. He recovered all the dominions his father had lost, and threatened to invade Egypt:

"But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress." (Daniel 11:10).

Antiochus III, known as the Great, fulfilled the prophecy in this verse. He overflowed and passed through all of the dominions that Ptolemy III had wrested from his father. When he reached Egypt, however, he found the Nile in flood. He therefore made a truce with Ptolemy IV, and postponed his attack on Egypt to a more convenient season. But soon Antiochus III was again *"stirred up, even to his fortress"* for the King of the South, Ptolemy IV, made a move against him.

Ptolemy Philopater

"And the king of the south shall be moved with choler [anger], and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north; and he (the king of the north, Antiochus III), shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his (Ptolemy IV's) hand.

And when he (Ptolemy IV) hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it."

(Daniel 11:11,12).

Ptolemy IV was a degenerate; but when he saw Antiochus the Great at the border of Egypt, he was *"moved with choler"*.

He mobilised a vast army of 70,000 foot soldiers, 5,000 horses and more than seventy elephants. These vast forces crossed the desert and met the even larger forces of Antiochus the Great. At first the forces of Antiochus were successful, but in the end Antiochus was defeated, losing 4,000 as prisoners of war, and 10,000 slain in battle. Thus Palestine came again under the rule of the King of the South.

Ptolemy's head was turned by his success, or as verse 12 says *"his heart" was "lifted up"*. His degenerate character was revealed in his revenge upon the Jews in Egypt for the disappointment he had suffered in Palestine, where the Jews resisted his entry into the Holy of Holies. Historians estimate that from forty to sixty thousand Jews living in Egypt were slain on Ptolemy's orders. But, as the prophecy states, he was not *"strengthened by it"*, that is, the killing of the Jews did not serve to strengthen him on his throne. In addition, Ptolemy's failure to press home his defeat of Antiochus the Great damaged his (Ptolemy's) prestige.

Antiochus The Great

Although Antiochus was defeated by Ptolemy, Antiochus was still a power to be reckoned with:

"For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers (literally "pests") of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand." (Daniel 11:13-15).

After his defeat Antiochus the Great entered into a treaty of peace with Ptolemy IV Philopater, and devoted his energies to re-conquering parts of his former dominion lost by his predecessors, including Media and Babylonia. When this was accomplished, Antiochus gathered together an army larger than the one he used against Egypt, and came again after fourteen years interval against the King of the South, in complete disregard of the treaty of peace he had formerly made with Egypt.

Antiochus induced the king of Macedon to join in the intended conquest, and offered him, if successful, one half of the kingdom of Egypt. Antiochus also induced revolt in some of the King of the South's conquered territories, and rebellion arose in Egypt itself. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy in verse 14 that *"there shall many stand up against the king of the south"*.

In Daniel 11:14 there is a distinct reference to the Jews (*"thy people"*) and shows that God considered as *"robbers"* (literally *"pests"*) the Jewish leaders who incited their fellow-Jews to insurrection. Nevertheless, by doing this they combined to *"establish the vision"*, that is, they contributed to its fulfilment. The Lord's directions to the Jews were that they should take no part in the wars of the Gentiles, but should be content to remain a subject people. Jewish leaders, however, were always ready to follow the Gentiles. But God's blessing would not be with them; *"they shall fall"*.

By this time the King of the South was Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the son of Ptolemy Philopater. Ptolemy V was only five years old, and the regency was in dispute, so Antiochus considered the time was ripe to invade. Antiochus laid siege to Sidon, and the Egyptian army under Scopas met the forces of Antiochus near the source of the Jordan River. Ptolemy's best generals, his *"chosen people"* endeavoured to raise the siege of Sidon, but did not succeed. Sidon was captured, and the whole of Syria became again subject to the King of the North, after having been for the reign of two kings subject to the King of the South.

This success of Antiochus the Great is indicated in the prophecy:

"But he (the king of the north) that cometh against him (the king of the south) shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed" (or, "in his hand shall be destruction" (RV); "and will have the power to destroy it" (Daniel 11:16; NIV).

The success of Antiochus the Great in gaining control of the holy land was to the disadvantage of the Jews, for about this time (200 - 205 BC) the Romans were increasing in power and influence, and came to the aid of the King of the South. New troubles were in store for the land of Palestine, which would soon become a province of the Roman empire.

ANOTHER ALLIANCE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

"He (the king of the north) shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; (or, "cause everything to prosper with him" Septuagint; or, "do all things that seem right with him" Septuagint footnote); thus shall he do: and he shall give him (the king of the south) the daughter of women, corrupting her (or, "to corrupt her"): but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him." (Daniel 11:17).

Antiochus was determined to overcome Egypt, but found that the King of the South was now supported by Rome, and Rome did not wish to see the power of Antiochus increased. Antiochus therefore, made an alliance with the King of the South at that time, Ptolemy V Epiphanes, hoping by this strategy to *"cause everything to prosper"*. Friendship with Egypt would release his army for a campaign against Rome, whose power was beginning to be felt in Greece and was threatening Syria.

The *"daughter of women"* signifies a young woman, a woman of prominence or noble birth. It seems clear that the reference is to Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus, whom he gave in marriage to Ptolemy V Epiphanes on the understanding that he, Antiochus, should retain the region in dispute, Syria, Phoenicia and Judea.

Antiochus wanted his daughter to work secretly in his interests against the interests of her husband. Cleopatra, however, resisted her father's attempts *"to corrupt her"* and did *"not stand on his side, neither be for him,"* just as the prophecy said.

THE END OF ANTIOCHUS THE GREAT

*"After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.
Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found"* (Daniel 11:18,19).

Having made the alliance with the King of the South, Antiochus felt sufficiently secure to turn his attention to further conquests. It so happened that Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, made a treaty of peace in 215 BC with Philip V of Greece, incurred the displeasure of the Romans, and fled to the court of Antiochus at Ephesus for protection.

Hannibal persuaded Antiochus to contest the growing power of Rome in Greece. Accordingly Antiochus led an expedition against *"the isles"* consisting of a fleet of three hundred vessels and a vast army commanded by his sons. He was successful as far as the straits of Thermopylae, north of Athens, but was met there by the Roman general, Cato, and defeated. The *"reproach"* referred to in the prophecy was *"offered"* to Rome and also to Philip V of Greece, because any increase in Antiochus' dominion into Europe implied weakness on the part of Rome and Greece.

Philip's people and his deputies were divided, some favoured Rome and some Antiochus. But as Antiochus advanced, it seemed likely that he would overcome Greece, and the general feeling turned completely in favour of Rome. Philip accepted the title of friend and ally of Rome, and the Roman Senate declared war on Antiochus. Thus the *"reproach offered"* to Greece and Rome was made to cease, and turned back on Antiochus. After the defeat of Antiochus' army by Cato, his fleet was twice defeated, and the Romans, to vindicate their honour still further, pursued him into Asia.

The Roman Consul, Lucius Cornelius Scipio, slew fifty thousand in battle, took twenty hostages (including Antiochus' son who afterward became Antiochus IV Epiphanes), required as compensation the whole cost of the war, and compelled Antiochus to surrender all Asia Minor west of Mount Taurus. In this way and at this time (190 BC), the Roman power was introduced into Asia, and remained there for many centuries.

Antiochus was humbled, returned to his capital Antioch to raise the tribute imposed, and his death occurred soon afterward in 187 BC. The manner of his death is unknown, and this uncertainty is expressed in the prophecy, *"he shall stumble, and fall, and not be found"*. Figuratively, he was no longer a great conqueror and ruler; and literally, he was not found at his death to be buried in state as is customary for a king.

Seleucus Philopater

"Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom (or "one causing an exactor to pass over the honour of the kingdom" [Young's literal translation]); but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle." (Daniel 11:20).

Little more than *"a raiser of taxes"* could be expected to *"stand up"* in the *"estate"* (or *"place"*) of a ruler subjected to heavy tribute by Rome. Seleucus IV Philopater reigned only twelve years (187 - 175 BC), and his twelve years were fully occupied in paying Rome a thousand talents yearly, and re-creating his shattered army. He fulfilled that which was predicted of him by sending his treasurer Heliodorus to *"pass over"* Judea to exact taxes. Jerusalem and the wealth of the temple were at his mercy, and he returned with much plunder.

When Seleucus' brother Antiochus, and son Demetrius happened to be away from court, Heliodorus brought about the death of Seleucus, not *"in anger nor in battle"* but secretly by poison. Heliodorus' purpose was to usurp the throne. Seleucus, though a King of the North, made no raids against the King of the South. His successor, however, took up the feud once more.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." (Daniel 11:21).

The rightful heir to the throne was Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater. Heliodorus attempted to usurp it, and various others were proposed as suitable to occupy it. But *"they"* did not suggest Antiochus, *"they"* did not *"give the honour of the kingdom"* to Antiochus. *They* could mean people generally, but here it would mean those who had power and influence sufficient to elect and appoint a ruler.

But Antiochus used intrigue and flattery to gain the support of a number of Romans and tributary rulers, and thus was able to overcome Heliodorus and other rivals, as the prophecy reveals:

"And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant." (Daniel 11:22).

The *"prince of the covenant"* is a reference to the Jewish High priest who was, by reason of his office, the chief ruler or prince among the Jews. Antiochus overthrew Onias, and sold the office to Jason, his younger brother.

But although he had paid for it, Jason was not long in the position because Antiochus resold it to a higher bidder, as the prophecy says:

"And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for (literally, "and") he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time." (Daniel 11:23,24).

A longer description is given of Antiochus IV Epiphanes than of any of his predecessors. In verse 21 he is described as a *"vile person"* and yet he was given the title Epiphanes (illustrious). The description *"vile"* or *"contemptible"* well describes Antiochus' character. While a hostage in Rome he contracted the full range of vices, and he continued in them on his return to Syria. Add to this the deceitfulness mentioned in the prophecy, and the free use of bribery to attain his ends, and we have the picture of a very contemptible person indeed.

The prophecy, as well as its fulfilment in history, shows that these very qualities gained for him the title Epiphanes, which means illustrious, since they were the means by which he extended his dominion. Neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers had used these devices so freely or with so great an effect. The liberal scattering of gifts combined with flatteries secured Antiochus the position he coveted.

When he was firmly established on the throne, Antiochus strengthened the strongholds or fortresses of Syria and Palestine, prepared and trained an army, and stirred up his courage to attack the King of the South:

"And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain." (Daniel 11:25,26).

Ptolemy VI Philometer

The words in Daniel 11:25 and 26 introduce again the King of the South, which at this time was Ptolemy VI Philometer, son of Cleopatra who was also sister to Antiochus Epiphanes. Cleopatra held the regency for her son after the death of his father, Ptolemy V Epiphanes, and maintained peace with Syria until her death in 173 BC.

Ptolemy Philometer was corrupted and his authority undermined by his tutors and governors, so that the real power and authority might be theirs. Philometer was no match for his uncle Antiochus Epiphanes, so that Antiochus was able to do that which neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers were able to do, that is, invade Egypt. Antiochus captured Pelusium, Memphis and the greater part of the country except Alexandria.

Ptolemy Philometer was eventually dethroned by the remainder of his subjects and his brother Physcon was given the throne. Truly *"devices against him"* were used, and the prophecy was fulfilled which predicted that *"they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him"*. The career and fortunes of Physcon are not followed in the Scriptures. Ptolemy Philometer was the last King of the South before the Roman power made both Kings of the North and South subject powers.

THE END OF BOTH KINGS

"And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed." (Daniel 11:27).

History informs us that an effort was made to unite by treaty the Kings of the North and South. Ptolemy Philometer desired the co-operation of Antiochus Epiphanes against his brother, Physcon, and Antiochus agreed to help him.

But both spoke lies, for each had it in his heart to do mischief against the other. However, when Philometer and Physcon discovered the real intentions of Antiochus, they became reconciled, and, supported by the power of Rome, compelled a truce with Antiochus. Philometer and Physcon reigned jointly for sixteen years (170 - 154 BC). Physcon then was sole monarch for twenty-nine years.

The "end" mentioned in Daniel 11:27 is evidently the end of both the north and south kingdoms. These two kingdoms were the two remaining portions of Alexander's empire, as Macedonia had already become a Roman province in 168 BC. The "end", therefore, is the end of the Grecian empire, the third world empire of Daniel chapters 2, 7 and 8.

Antiochus Epiphanes had met with success in Egypt, but was prevented by Rome from pressing his conquest further in that country:

"Then shall he (the king of the north) return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter."

(Daniel 11:28,29).

These verses briefly describe the movements of Antiochus following his rebuff in Egypt. He returned with great riches to his own land, besieged Jerusalem, desecrated the temple, killed some forty thousand Jews and sold many thousands into slavery. He then returned to Antioch to prepare for further conquests.

"At the time appointed" Antiochus returned to subjugate Egypt, but his former successes were not to be repeated. The *"time appointed"* by the Lord for the end of the north and south kingdoms had come. A Roman embassy forbade his interference with Egypt and he was obliged to obey:

"For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant."
(Daniel 11:30).

The only ships that could come against Antiochus at this time would be those under Roman orders. Josephus, the Jewish historian, identifies Chittim with the island of Cyprus, the principal town of which was Citium. The fleets of Tyre and the islands were nearly always available for hire, and Roman wealth and prestige were sufficient to secure all the help needed to overawe Antiochus.

Frustrated by his failure in Egypt, Antiochus again vented his wrath on the Jews. He took spoil from Jerusalem, set the city on fire, and killed many people. He made an agreement with apostate Jews, "*them that forsake the holy covenant*," and issued a decree abolishing Jewish forms of worship and substituting the pagan worship of the Greeks. He also undertook further campaigns in the east, but these, and his death soon after these (164 BC) are not noticed in the prophecy, nor is the career of his son, Antiochus V Eupater.

The final prophecy given to Daniel was designed to outline some of the main events of history that would come to pass when the Grecian empire took over from the Medo-Persian. The events covered in the prophecy relate to Palestine and God's covenanted people, and show how God's people would be buffeted by the northern and southern kingdoms.

The prophecy foretells the end of the kings of north and south as independent sovereigns, and leaves them more or less under the dominance of Rome. The prophecy then enters upon a description of the new power in the east, and foretells what will happen to God's people under its dominion.

CHAPTER 11

PART 2

PAGAN ROME - THE NEW WORLD POWER

The introduction of the Roman power into Asia was an event far reaching in its consequences for God's people. The Roman empire, the fourth world empire, was to endure the longest, to undergo the most changes, and to be responsible for the greatest abominations of them all. It was to become the greatest persecuting power the world has ever known, and under it God's people were to be tried and worn out as under no other.

Rome was pictured as the *"dreadful and terrible beast"* of chapter 7; the *"king of fierce countenance"* of chapter 8; *"the prince that shall come"* and the *"desolator"* of chapter 9; and now in chapter 11, the inventor of a new god which he calls upon people to worship under penalties for disobedience more severe than Nebuchadnezzar's furnace.

ARMS SHALL STAND UP

"And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice (the Continual), and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."(Daniel 11:31).

The King James Version gives the impression that *"arms"* come from Antiochus and support him, and modern translations assist in obscuring the meaning by translating *"arms"* as *"armed forces"* (NIV and the Amplified Bible), *"soldiers in his command"* (REV), and *"forces from him"* (RSV). Dr. Young's literal translation is better in that it translates *"stand"* as *"stand up"*, but still has *"strong ones out of him"* as applying to Antiochus.

The best renderings are by Sir Isaac Newton (1642 - 1727), Bishop Newton (1725 - 1807) and the theologian E. B. Elliott, all of whom agree that the clause should be translated: *"And after him arms shall stand up"*. Dr. Alexander Keith also translates the clause: *"And arms shall stand up after him"*.

The Hebrew word translated *"arms"* is *"zroah"* (Strong 2220) and refers in this passage to the arms of the body, as in Daniel 10:6, *"... his arms and his feet ..."*. The word is derived from a verb which means "to spread abroad", "disseminate" (Strong 2232), and figuratively signifies "force", according to Dr. Strong. The figurative use is seen in Psalm 71:18; 79:11; and Ezekiel 17:9.

As the arms of a person reach out to grasp or push aside, so the Roman power reached out from the west to grasp the dominion of the east and push aside opponents; by alliance when convenient, otherwise by force. In every description of Rome, the fourth world empire, force and strength are prominent features:

"Forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things ..." (Daniel 2:40);

"... dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet." (Daniel 7:7);

"... a king of fierce countenance ... and his power shall be mighty." (Daniel 8:23,24).

The Hebrew word translated *"stand"* in the King James Version is *"amad"* (Strong 5975). The word is used in Daniel as indicating the assumption of government by a new power or king (Daniel 11:2,3,4,7,20,31; 12:1). Its meaning, when used of a king, is explained in Daniel 11:3 by the statement *"shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will"*. The translation *"stand up"* is preferable to the KJV translation *"stand"* in Daniel 11:31.

The words *"on his part"* would be better translated *"after him,"* as the Hebrew word *"qets"* (Strong 7093) often indicates time that follows chronologically:

"... after the league made with him ..." (Daniel 11:23);

"... after certain years ..." (Daniel 11:13);

"... at the end of seven years" (Deuteronomy 15:1);

"... after rain" (2 Samuel 23:4).

The prophecy does not provide any details of the extensive conquests by Rome. No reference is made to the Jewish

rebellion, nor to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 68 - 70 AD. The Messiah's first advent has been covered in Daniel 9, and the main interest in connection with Rome in chapter 11 is the abomination of desolation and its eventual overthrow.

THE ABOMINATION THAT MAKETH DESOLATE

The "*arms*" that stood up after him, that is, after Antiochus Epiphanes, signified the Roman power. In chapter 8 it was seen that Antiochus Epiphanes, although he profaned the Jewish temple, was not the abomination mentioned in Daniel 11:31, because the Lord Jesus spoke of that abomination in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 as still future from His day.

Some commentators and Bible students apply Daniel 11:31 to the Roman army under Titus which destroyed the temple in 70 AD, and quote Luke 21:20 in support of this understanding : "*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*"

These words occur in a context closely similar to the contexts of Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, but should not be understood as the final and only fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy. There are compelling reasons for understanding the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman armies in the siege of 68 - 70 AD as a preliminary or first stage in the fulfilment of Daniel's prediction.

The first reason for considering the destruction under Titus to be only preliminary is contained in the words: "*... stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)*" (Matthew 24:15); and "*... standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand)*" (Mark 13:14).

The temple at Jerusalem was no longer holy in God's sight after Christ's death, and therefore the Roman armies were doing no violence to the Lord in destroying the structure that was no longer holy or acceptable for the worship of God. The Roman soldiers were standing where they ought to stand, because God was using them to destroy the place that was no longer holy or acceptable to Him, even as the Lord Jesus had foretold in Matthew 24:1, 2; Mark 13:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6; and in His parable in Matthew 22:7.

The words in brackets in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 indicate that there is a deeper, more comprehensive meaning to these prophetic words as well as the meaning that appears on the surface.

The second reason for seeking a deeper meaning is that Daniel 11:31 states that the Roman power would do three things:

- (1) pollute the sanctuary of strength;
- (2) take away the daily or "Continual";
- (3) place the abomination that maketh desolate.

None of these things was done by Rome as a pagan power, as it was at first indifferent to the spread of Christianity, and subsequently opposed it.

(1) The *"sanctuary of strength"* cannot be the sanctuary or holy of holies in the former Jewish temple because that was abolished by God as the place of His presence when the veil of the temple hiding the holy of holies from view was *"rent in twain from the top to the bottom"* at Christ's death (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

The *"sanctuary of strength"* is the true worship of God through Jesus Christ, the only way (Acts 4:12; John 11:25,26; 14:6). The *"sanctuary of strength"* is not a physical place or locality, but a spiritual fact, and a spiritual fact or reality can be polluted only by negation or perversion, or both.

Rome in its Papal form gradually developed doctrines and practices which polluted the sanctuary, that is, the true and acceptable worship of God. Some examples are: the doctrine and practice of the mass; the worship of Mary and the saints; the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, eternal torment in the fires of hell, purgatory, indulgences, intercession and forgiveness of sins by the priesthood; to mention only a few.

(2) In the KJV the text reads: *"take away the daily sacrifice"*. The word *"sacrifice"* does not appear in the original Hebrew, and the word *"daily"* is rendered *"continual"* in the RV, the RSV, the Amplified Bible and Young's literal translation.

As was seen in Daniel 8, the daily burnt offering under the Law Covenant was called "*the continual burnt offering*" (Exodus 29:42) and the fire on the altar of burnt offering was never to be allowed to go out (Numbers 28:3-8; Leviticus 6:9-13).

The Lord Jesus was the antitype of this continual burnt offering, as He was of all the sacrifices under the Law. He is now our "Continual" under the New Covenant, because although offered nearly two thousand years ago, the sweet odour of His sacrifice still arises to God, and it will never need to be repeated.

The Papal power could not take away the fact of Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice, but by the doctrine and practice of the mass, the Papacy has taken from the Lord Jesus Christ the credit of being the one and only "*continual*" in the minds of its adherents.

The mass is called a sacrifice, and the Papacy teaches that this sacrifice must be offered continually for sin as additional and supplementary to the "*once for all*" fully efficacious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

(3) The placing or setting in place of "*the abomination that maketh desolate*" resulted from the gradual progress of unscriptural ideas and practices. Pagan Rome became Christian when the Emperor Constantine professed conversion, and Christianity became the state religion in 324 AD. The Council of Nice was called by Constantine in 324 AD, as a result of which various doctrines were set forth as the true faith. From that time on, corruption of the true and simple gospel of Jesus Christ became more widespread, the outward forms of religion more imposing, and the bishops more powerful.

The time of the placing or setting up of "*the abomination that maketh desolate*" occurred in the years 529 to 539 AD when the Emperor Justinian pronounced the Bishop of Rome as universal bishop, and placed him in great authority. This act was followed by the imposition of the mass upon all Christians as an obligatory rite.

Thus was the Papal system placed or set up, and the period 529 - 539 AD is the time from which to reckon the 1,260, 1,290 and 1,335 prophetic days of Daniel 12:7, 11 and 12.

THE PEOPLE OF THE COVENANT

"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed." (Daniel 11:32-35).

Up to and including Daniel 11:30, the covenant referred to was the Law Covenant. But at verse 31 the prophecy leaves Daniel's people, the Jews, passes over their history as a dependency of pagan Rome, and describes in general terms the experiences of God's people under the dominion of Papal Rome, especially during the 1,260 years of Papal supremacy (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 13:5)

God's people in this age, the Gospel Age, are not under the former Law Covenant but under the New Covenant. The New Covenant, according to Daniel 9:27 was to be made by the Messiah with some of the Jews (called a *"remnant"* by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:5). Following the inauguration of the New Covenant, Jerusalem and the temple were to be destroyed.

Especially significant is the clause in Daniel 9:32 *"the people that do know their God"* because knowing God is one of the special promises of the New Covenant:

"... I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." (Hebrews 8:10,11). (The "they" and "all" in this passage mean all who accept the New Covenant.)

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3).

Paul stressed the importance of knowing God under the New Covenant in contrast to the bondage, formality and shadows of the Law Covenant: *"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"* (Galatians 4:9).

The promise of knowing God is reserved for those and only those who enter into the New Covenant with God by accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Mediator. All who have done this have come to know God. They know Him by the practical experience of His grace in the forgiveness of their sins and the granting of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 8:12; 9:14; 10:15-18).

There is no need for believers under the New Covenant to say to one another, *"Know the Lord"* because they all know Him. Even the newly-converted believer, the babe in Christ, has the new law, the law of love, written on his or her heart and mind (2 Corinthians 3:8-18). Such believers can *"be strong, and do exploits"* having in mind the great faith and mighty works of the apostles and early disciples. The example of Christian living and *"speaking the truth in love"* (Ephesians 4:15) are *"exploits"* that the least of us can do.

Wickedness against the Covenant and corruption by flattery mentioned in Daniel 11:32 have gone on side by side with the exploits of the faithful. The apostles wrote of *"false apostles"* and *"false brethren"* and of those who by fair speeches deceived the ignorant, and of antichrists, which were numerous even in the early church.

The first step often taken by enemies of the believer to lead him or her astray is to flatter him or her in one way or another. Loyalty to the New Covenant and to Jesus Christ the Mediator will enable the believer to remain faithful and not succumb to flattery (2 Corinthians 11:13,26; Romans 16:18; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7).

The apostles and faithful disciples were the first of *"they that understand among the people"* who instructed many, as related in Daniel 11:33. The apostles and early disciples travelled over all the known world preaching to all people, to the Jew first and then to the Gentile without discrimination and always in keeping with the teaching of the ransom: that Jesus

Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man (Colossians 1:23-29; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 2:9).

Yet severe persecutions continued, because only relatively few obeyed the Gospel when they heard it (Romans 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:1-5). Believers have been tortured, burnt at the stake and executed in various ways throughout the Gospel Age. The Gospel is still being preached and the faithful are still being persecuted today, though not in the same manner as under Pagan or Papal Rome.

But the reasons why believers are persecuted are the same, and both weapons are still in use: ostracism and opposition to truth on the one hand, and flattery on the other.

After the Papacy became established and hunted down all who would not conform and bow down to it, the Lord sent *"a little help"* to His people, as recorded in Daniel 11:34. The *"little help"* would seem to be mainly the Protestant Reformation, which curbed Papal power and freed many people from the Papacy's yoke, but the reformers still did not break from nor renounce many erroneous and unscriptural teachings.

The *"little help"* might also be understood as conflicts among the persecutors themselves, and the rise and fall of various parties and schismatics. To achieve its ends, the Papacy often resorted to flattery rather than persecution whenever the former seemed the more likely to be successful.

"Some of them of understanding shall fall". These words in Daniel 11:35 refer to influential teachers who began well but succumbed under either the persecution or the flattery, and this was an additional trial to the faithful few. The object of all the trouble that believers were permitted to suffer was that by *"the time of the end"* the *"people for His Name"* (Acts 15:14) should be ready, having been purified and made white. There is a positive assurance here that the time when persecution and flattery should end is a set time, a *"time appointed"*.

The Lord Jesus gives the same assurance in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 when He refers to the same *"abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet"*. His words are, *"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"* (Matthew 24:13).

THE KING ABOVE EVERY GOD

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." (Daniel 11:36,37).

In verse 37 the RV, RSV, NIV and REV all have "gods" of his fathers. The word "god" in Scripture means "mighty one" and is used of humans as well as angelic or divine beings (Exodus 7:1; Psalm 82:1; Exodus 22:28). The "God of gods" is the Lord God Almighty, and He alone deserves the title "*King of the Nations*" (Psalm 95:3; 96:4-6).

Who is the "*king*" of Daniel 11:36? The description given by the angel of this mighty king is so explicit that there can be no reasonable doubt as to the ruler or government that the description fits. As with the king of the north and the king of the south, the "*king*" refers not to any single sovereign but to a political system or power. By magnifying himself above every ruler and issuing laws to them all, the bishop of Rome as the Pope was placing himself in the position of the Almighty. The "*king*" therefore is the Papal system.

The words "*stand up*" are not used in connection with this king, but the phrase "*shall exalt himself*" means almost the same as "*stand up*" because it indicates the establishment of a new system or power within the Fourth World Empire and also the most prominent part of it. The words "*shall exalt himself*" may be intended to convey the fact that the Papacy did not "*stand up*" as did pagan Rome, but rose by subtler means.

The Roman government, even under the emperors, was in some respects democratic. It remained for the bishop of Rome to exalt himself first above all other ecclesiastical dignitaries or bishops, and subsequently over all political rulers. In both of these respects he was assisted by the subservience of other bishops, by geographical position, by the favour of the emperors and by an ostentatious display of luxury and finery which fascinated the ordinary people.

Having secured this supreme position, the "*king*" was able to "*do according to his will*" (Daniel 11:36). He made laws and issued decrees governing himself and the priesthood, as well as the people generally, and altered or abolished these laws at his own pleasure. He even changed or abolished, as far as God permitted him, times and laws laid down and issued by God Himself (Daniel 7:25).

He decreed the time that Christ would reign over God's Kingdom on earth as the time then present and claimed to be Christ's representative on earth.

He altered God's laws on the subject of marriage (Matthew 19:5), claiming that none were truly married except at the hands of a priest. He also claimed the right to disannul any marriage, even of his own celebration, the priests being authorised to withdraw their sanction at any time. Thus it was that persons lawfully married could at any time, by priestly act, be accused of living together as though unmarried and therefore in disobedience to the Church and its head, the Pope. These claims directly contravene the Divine decree, "*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*" (Matthew 19:6).

The time of remembrance of the Lord Jesus' death was discarded and another method of determining the date on which to remember Jesus' death was substituted, which would bring the date always on a Friday and Easter day always on the following Sunday.

Such crimes as lying, theft and perjury were justified by the Papacy on the basis that the "end justifies the means." Such practices are in direct contradiction to God's word.

A most important Divine arrangement or law that the Papacy changed was the provision God has made for the forgiveness of sins through faith in the High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ. The Papacy deprives Christ of His High Priestly office as Mediator and Intercessor by substituting the Virgin Mary and the saints as intercessors. Thus the Papacy prevents sinners going directly through Christ for pardon as the Scriptures say they should do (Hebrews 7:11-25).

It was the exaltation of himself in the Christian worship and the substitution of false worship for the true that made the Papacy *"the abomination of desolation"*.

Speaking *"marvellous things against the God of gods"* in Daniel 11:36 is probably a reference to the Papal doctrines of purgatory and eternal torment, which ascribe to the heavenly Father the attributes of a fiend; and to the doctrine of the Trinity, which makes God's nature and personality an incomprehensible and needless mystery. Other Papal teachings might be named, but the three mentioned above will suffice.

The Dark Ages were the season of the Papacy's greatest prosperity, but that prosperity was to last only until God's *"indignation be accomplished"* and until that which He *"determined shall be done"* (Daniel 11:36).

The lack of regard for *"the God of his fathers"* probably refers to the Papacy's disregard for Roman gods and renaming their statues in the temples after Christian saints and martyrs, the Virgin Mary taking the place of pagan female divinities. However, if the *"gods"* are taken as civil rulers, the Papacy disregarded them also, in spite of the Scriptural instructions to honour them as God's servants to maintain order in the nations (Romans 13:1-8; 1 Peter 2:13,14).

Not regarding *"the desire of women"* is doubtless a reference to the enforced celibacy of the clergy, a practice against which Christians were forewarned by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1-3 and Hebrews 13:4.

Another interpretation might be that the Papacy excluded Christian women from privileges in the church, maintaining that they could not be priests, whereas the Scriptures state that all true believers are priests, being members of the *"holy priesthood"* (1 Peter 2:5).

The Papacy disregarded the desire of women to be honourably married, and shut up millions in convents, where the visits of father confessors, bishops and priests frequently led to immorality in the name of religion. The church feared the influence of a good woman over a priest or a monk, hence the Papal denunciations of women in past times. The possibility of a priest's interests being centred on a home and family was not considered advantageous to the church.

NEW TESTAMENT SUBSTANTIATION OF DANIEL'S PROPHECIES

The prophetic writings of Paul and John agree with the prophecies of Daniel and provide us with more information:

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8).

These verses clearly prophesy the rise of the Papal system and its eventual destruction. The two words "as God" in verse 4 are omitted from ancient manuscripts, the RV, RSV, NIV and the REV.

The words "*letteth*" and "*let*" in the KJV meant "hinders" and "hinder" in the English of the day when the KJV was made. The hindrance to the development and manifestation of the "*man of sin*," the "*mystery of iniquity*" was Pagan Rome, at the height of its power when the Apostles wrote their prophetic words.

The Apostle John tells us that there were, even in apostolic times, "*many antichrists*" but there was a particular "*antichrist*" still to come (1 John 2:18). He also speaks of the "*spirit of antichrist*" of which his readers had heard, and shows it was already in existence (1 John 4:3).

The "*many antichrists*" were of two kinds: the open and the secret. The former openly deny Christ and proclaim themselves unbelievers. The latter profess the name of Christ, but in reality deny His teaching and the value of His sacrifice on the cross.

The Papacy is the largest embodiment of this spirit of antichrist and is therefore the Antichrist to which Paul referred in 2 Thessalonians 2 as *"the man of sin"*, *"the mystery of iniquity"*, hindered for a time by Pagan Rome but finally to be revealed making extravagant claims in *"the temple of God"*, that is, in the realm of the true worship of God, or where it could be expected that the true worship of God would exist.

In calling the Papacy *"the man of sin"* the Apostle is following the Old Testament precedent of speaking of reigning dynasties as though they were individuals.

DISREGARD OF GODS, THE WORSHIP OF MARY AND THE SAINTS

Daniel 11:37 prophesied that the Papacy would not *"regard the gods of his fathers,... nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all."*

This disregard of "gods" did not mean that the Papacy was non-idolatrous. On the contrary, the Papacy had increased images and idolatrous rites beyond anything heard of among the heathen, and the heathen were usually keen to add a new god to their sphere of worship (Acts 17:18- 3). The Papacy made its own gods, not for itself to reverence, but for the people, that the chains of ignorance, prejudice and superstition, combined with rites and ceremonies, might bind the people closer to the footstool of the Papal hierarchy. The angel gives this as one of the strong identification marks:

"But in his estate shall he honour the god of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things."
(Daniel 11:38).

In this verse the *"god of forces"* is ambiguous and does not express the meaning of the Hebrew *"Mahuzzim"*. *Mahuzzim* is the plural of *Mahoz*, which means "a fortified place, figuratively a defence, strength, a fortress, a strong tower, or a rock" (Strong's 4581). A literal rendering is, "In his place (or stead) he shall honour *Mahuzzim*". The Septuagint, Vulgate and the Geneva Bible practically transfer the Hebrew original. Most modern versions have "fortresses" for *Mahuzzim*.

The general intention of "Mahoz (plural Mahuzzim)" as rendered in the Old Testament seems to be that of defence or protection. Consider the words of the Psalmist:

"The Lord is ... the saving strength (literally: the mahoz of salvation) of his anointed." (Psalm 28:8).

"Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me." The margin has a *"rock of strength"* instead of an *"house of defence"* and the original Hebrew has *"a rock of mahoz"* (Psalm 31:2).

"Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength (or protector, Mahoz)" (Psalm 31:4).

In each of the above-mentioned instances the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate render "mahoz" by a word signifying a defender or protector. The "Mahuzzim" honoured by the Papacy are the multiplicity of saints, relics, images and idols which it has set up, all of which are alleged to offer strength and protection to the people belonging to it. The Hebrew "Mahuzzim" can be correctly understood as "gods-protectors".

The "Mahuzzim" or gods-protectors which the Papacy honoured were :

- (1) the Virgin Mary;
- (2) the Apostles;
- (3) the martyrs under Pagan Rome;
- (4) others canonised by the Church as saints;
- (5) relics of any or all of these such as their alleged bodies, or parts of their bodies, or anything pertaining to them, including their likenesses in statues, pictures or images.

IDOLATRY

Baal worship involved the use of idols. The Israelites tried to mix the worship of Jehovah with that of Baal. They even brought idols into Jehovah's temple. God's view of idol worship was made clear when he brought destruction upon Jerusalem and its temple.

Many of Christendom's churches are filled with idols, be they in the form of a cross, icons, or statues of Mary. Moreover, many churchgoers are taught to bow, kneel, or make the sign of

the cross before these images. In contrast, true Christians are commanded to *"flee from idolatry"* (1 Corinthians 10:14). They do not try to worship God with the aid of material objects (John 4:24).

These were all held in reverence and honour and were supposed to confer benefits and protection to all who acknowledged them and prayed to them or worshipped them. The calling upon the Virgin Mary and the canonised saints for protection as "Mahuzzim" or gods-protectors is still the practice of the Roman Catholic Church and its adherents today.

A STRANGE GOD

"Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain." (Daniel 11:39).

But while the Virgin Mary, the saints canonised by Rome as well as their relics and images are surely the "Mahuzzim" referred to in Daniel as being honoured by the "king" who exalted himself above all gods, they do not fulfil the reference to *"a god whom his fathers knew not"* and *"a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory"* (Daniel 11:38 and 39).

There was nothing new or strange in the Papacy's deification of the Virgin Mary. Female divinities were familiar objects of worship to both the Romans and the Greeks, as well as other nations, including the ancient Egyptians and Canaanites. It had also been a custom from early Egyptian times to worship prominent human beings as gods. The Roman emperors were proclaimed gods, and their images were placed in the pagan temples.

But a god was introduced by the Church of Rome such as had never before been heard of, or even imagined, by pagan leaders and worshippers. The heavenly bodies of the sun, moon and stars and earthly objects such as rocks, mountains and trees, as well as members of the animal creation were worshipped as gods by pagan people from earliest times.

It remained for Rome to deify a piece of bread, by which process the Roman priest became the creator of the god which he allegedly had brought into being. It follows from this that the

priest can be considered as superior to the god that he makes. Not any Roman Catholic could create a god out of bread, but only the priest duly "ordained" could do this.

It has long been a claim of Rome that God and Christ were in a way subject to the priest, because it was only when the priest pronounced the words of consecration that God or Christ could perform the act of converting the bread and wine into the veritable body and blood of Jesus. This alleged process is known as transubstantiation.

In past ages the allegedly converted bread, known as the Host, was at times carried through the streets and the people were required to bow down to it, as they also were required to do whenever the Host was elevated or presented to the people's view in church or elsewhere. This deified bread or "little god" as Chiniquy writes in his book "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome" became the subject of numerous rules and regulations. It had to be kept in specified receptacles, could be touched only by certain persons; instructions were given laying down procedures to follow if the consecrated bread were eaten by rats or mice, lost in the snow, eaten by unauthorised persons and so on.

These requirements and practices are contrary to the simplicity of the Lord's Supper and contrary to the Lord Jesus' words that the Heavenly Father could be worshipped anywhere at any time in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24). There is now in this Gospel Age no requirement to worship in prescribed places or buildings, or follow any prescribed rituals or ceremonies.

The "*strongholds*" or "*fortresses*" (RSV, KJV margin) of Daniel 11:39 are surely the churches, cathedrals, monasteries and convents; most, if not all of which are named after the Virgin or the saints who are considered to be their guardians and protectors; for example, St. Peter's, St. Paul's, Notre Dame (Our Lady), Our Lady of Victories, and the like. Some "*strongholds*" are named after consecrated relics, such as the Convent of the Sacred Heart.

Most, if not all of these "*strongholds*" are "*fortresses of munitions*" (KJV margin) in the shape of relics and images, some of which are accredited with miraculous powers. In the Dark Ages ingenious devices were used to make images speak or move or shed tears to the astonishment of credulous worshippers.

Protestants and social commentators have often drawn attention to the large and ornate churches towering above simple cottages in Catholic villages, towns and cities, and wonderment has been expressed as to how the poor inhabitants were induced to build and furnish these magnificent edifices. The explanation is not hard to find. Each church was impressed upon the people as a refuge, a tower of protection against war, calamities and other evils, but particularly against evil spirits or devils, against which the priests warned their parishioners. To this day, states, provinces and districts have their patron saints, who are supposed to protect their interests. Some well-known examples are St. George for England, St. Andrew for Scotland, St. Patrick for Ireland and St. David for Wales.

The prophet writes that the Mahuzzim or gods-protectors and the *"strange god"* were to be honoured with *"gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things"* (Daniel 11:38). This prophecy has been fulfilled literally. The art treasures of the Vatican and the lavish and costly furnishings and appointments of Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches all over the world are clear testimony to the prophet's words. Writers of past centuries as well as writers of today combine with the observations of tourists to bear out the prophet's prediction concerning the honouring of the Mahuzzim and the *"strange god"* with seemingly boundless wealth, pomp and ostentation.

THE LAND DIVIDED FOR GAIN

Daniel 11:39 concludes with the words *"and shall divide the land for gain"*. This prediction has also been fulfilled by Papal Rome. Kingdoms were sold for money as well as agreed concessions and grants, the latter usually including freedom for the clergy to establish monasteries and religious organisations in favourable localities with large attachments of land. These facts are so well known and documented that no detailed evidence need be given here.

"And he shall cause them to rule over many" (Daniel 11:39) signifies the extension of the influence of the *"strange God"* and the Mahuzzim over Papal adherents, so that the rule of the *"king"* who should *"do according to his will"* was spread over all the known world. The Papacy became the greatest embodiment of world power this world has ever seen. John writes of this in the Revelation:

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:7,8).

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Revelation 18:3).

DIVISION INTO EAST AND WEST

When the Pope of Rome was first recognised in the decade 529 to 539 AD as superior in authority to all bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, Christian Rome was undivided, consisting of the Roman or Western Church and also what are now known as the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches.

In 1054 AD, following disputes and controversies between the Western and Eastern Churches, the Great Schism began, which left Rome in control of the West, and Byzantium (later Constantinople and later still Istanbul) in control of the East.

Succeeding centuries have witnessed great controversies between the two, in which the secular powers were repeatedly invoked by both sides. But the principal doctrines held in common before the Great Schism have been tenaciously retained by both parties, as well as the points of difference which contributed to the occurrence of the Schism.

An outline of the beliefs and teachings of the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches will show that the Eastern Church, as well as the Western, is also to be included in the Scriptural descriptions as the *"abomination of desolation"* and the *"mystery of iniquity"* because of the teaching of transubstantiation and the celebration of the mass; the sanctioning of the invocation of saints and martyrs as Mahuzzim (gods-protectors) and the heaping of honour and wealth upon them; the establishment of *"strongholds"* (*"fortresses of munitions"*), the practice of a celibate clergy; and the use of the secular arm to extend its influence.

The Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, along with the Roman Catholic Church, are fittingly described by the Apostle's words "*mystery of iniquity*" (2 Thessalonians 2:7) on the ground that the simple truths of Christianity are made into "mysteries" which can be received only through an authorised priest. The priest therefore always stands between God and the believer as the channel of divine favour. The Scriptures tell us that there is only One Who can stand between God and the believer, and that One is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).

According to the Orthodox Churches, there are seven Mysteries or Sacraments, and of these, two are considered essential to salvation. A mystery is defined to be "a ceremony or act appointed by God in which God giveth or sanctifieth to us His grace". From The Orthodox Doctrine of the Russian Church we learn:

"The two chief and most eminent mysteries in the New Testament are Baptism and the Eucharist or Communion. Of the rest the Chrism and Penance belong to every Christian, but Ordination, Marriage and the Sanctified Oil are not binding on all. The Seven Mysteries or Sacraments are:

1. Baptism, whereby a person is mysteriously born to a spiritual life;
2. Unction with Chrism, by which he receives grace, or spiritual growth and strength;
3. The Eucharist, by which he is spiritually fed;
4. Penance, whereby he is healed of spiritual disease, i.e. sin;
5. Holy Orders, in which he receives power to spiritually regenerate, feed and nurture others by doctrine and Sacraments;
6. Marriage, in which he receives Grace, sanctifying the married life and the natural procreation and nurture of children;
7. Unction with Oil, in which he has medicine even for bodily diseases, in that he is healed of spiritual diseases."

The celebration of the Eucharist (thanksgiving) is as elaborate in the Orthodox Churches as is the mass in the Roman Catholic Church. The Eastern and Western Churches subscribe to three main most serious errors in their Eucharists and masses :

- (1) that the substance of bread and wine is changed into the substance of Christ;
- (2) that Christ is sacrificed afresh as an atonement for sin;
- (3) that the consecrated elements are to be worshipped.

Both churches believe "*grace*" is administered in the sacrament and both churches take away "*the Continual*", that is, both churches take from the Lord Jesus Christ the credit of being the one and only, once-for-all sacrifice for sin, and exalt an abomination in place of that sacrifice.

The Armenian Church is a branch of Christendom that differs in some respects from the Western and Eastern Churches. The Armenian Church has two main divisions, the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Catholic Church, but both observe the Armenian rite, which perpetuates the most serious errors of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches.

To Protestants, all Western and Eastern Churches, the Roman Catholic, the Orthodox Churches and the Armenian Church, represent the triumph of formalism over the true simplicity of "*the faith once delivered to the saints*". Their millions of adherents seem equally to need the enlightenment that only the true and simple Gospel can give.

The Kings of the North and South were not individual sovereigns but kingdoms to the north and south of Palestine, the land of God's covenanted people. These two kingdoms were two remaining powers of Alexander's empire, which came to their end when Rome made both of them subject powers, Macedonia to the north in 168 BC and Egypt to the south in 161 BC.

In Daniel 11 from verse 31 onwards we have seen that the prophecy passes over the further conquests and expansion of pagan Rome and makes no reference to the first advent of the Lord Jesus, the Jewish rebellion against Rome, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple in 68 - 70 AD.

These omissions should not be thought to be strange, because Messiah's first advent is covered by the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 and the main interest in connection with Rome in chapter 11 is the "*abomination of desolation*" and how it would be overcome.

DIFFERENT APPLICATIONS OF THE KINGS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH UNDER ROMAN DOMINION

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." (Daniel 11:40).

The pronouns *"him"* and *"he"* of Daniel 11:40 and subsequent verses, as well as the pronoun *"his"* in subsequent verses of Daniel 11, refer to the *"king"* of verses 36-39. We have already seen that this *"king"* is Christian Rome from the time of the Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nice in 325 AD.

The King of the South and the King of the North of Daniel 11:40 have a different application from the king of the south and king of the north of the earlier verses 5 to 30. As we have already seen, verses 5 to 30 of Daniel 11 refer to two divisions of the four into which the Grecian empire was divided at the death of Alexander, and both came completely to an end when Rome conquered Syria and Egypt in 168 to 161 BC. Verse 40 therefore introduces two new powers, one of which arose to the south and the other to the north and east of Christian Rome, new powers not previously mentioned in the prophecy.

The King of the South pushed at the Roman empire soon after the issue of Emperor Justinian's decree establishing the bishop of Rome as supreme pontiff (539 AD). The seat of the empire was at Byzantium, later Constantinople, now Istanbul.

The power which is described in Daniel 11:40 as the King of the South was the Saracen power or Mohammedanism, which arose in Arabia under the leadership of Mahomet. The growth of Mohammedanism was rapid, and its message was soon distributed by powerful armies, one of which captured Jerusalem in 637 AD. Alexandria fell in 709 and Spain was conquered in 714. Bagdad was founded in 762 and in 823 the Saracens conquered Sicily and Crete. They attempted to take Constantinople but were not successful.

The power of the King of the South steadily waned and the King of the North arose to continue the role of scourge to idolatrous Christendom. The King of the North was the Turkish

power which began in the east, embraced Mohammedanism and with the cry, "There is one God Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet" conquered most of the Saracen lands, and in 1453 captured Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern empire and seat of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

These two movements against the Christian Roman empire are also symbolically represented in the ninth chapter of the Revelation. The prophecy there provides more details of the rise and conquests of these two scourges of Rome.

The events of Daniel 11:40 are said to occur at "*the time of the end*". What is meant by the "*end*" of this verse? In harmony with the context and the explanatory comments of the previous paragraphs, the "*end*" is the time when the King of the South - Mohammedanism - pushed at Christian Rome when Christian Rome, which had taken the place of pagan Rome, became Papal Rome.

In other words, no sooner had the "*Continual*" been taken away by the large-scale observance of the mass, and the "*abomination of desolation*" set up in 539 AD, than forces were set in motion to harass the apostate church. The branch of the church which first felt the restraint was the Eastern. The King of the South - Mohammedanism - pushed at Syria, Palestine and Egypt, and pushed his way to the very gates of Constantinople.

Eight centuries of history are compressed into the first two clauses of Daniel 11:40. The historical timing stretches from the first Saracen campaign in 632 AD to the fall of Constantinople in 1453 AD. This telescoping of history might seem peculiar if it were not also the case in previous visions. For example, in Daniel 2 the fact that there were to be developments in the kingdoms or territories symbolised by the ten toes of the image is passed over. This was done in order to emphasise the fact that the Kingdom of God would break in pieces the fourth world empire and fill the earth in its stead, the developments in the kingdoms, symbolised by the toes, being reserved for a later vision recorded in chapter seven.

The telescoping of history in Daniel 11:40 is intended to concentrate on the main theme of the vision, namely, the "*abomination of desolation*" and how it would be brought to its end.

The details concerning the Saracen and Turkish conquests coming against Rome might have been given to Daniel in another vision, but since the events prophesied were to occur in the Gospel Age, the Lord saw good to reserve their description until the time of John, who recorded them in the Revelation. By this means and timing, God's people had the information when it was required.

ROME OVERFLOWS AND PASSES OVER

In two short clauses of Daniel 11:40, the angel has touched on some eight centuries of the Saracen and Turkish powers coming against the king who *"did according to his will"* and then proceeds to give Daniel further details regarding this great king:

"... and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps."

(Daniel 11:40-43).

The word *"countries"* does not occur in verse 41 in the original, but it does occur in verses 40 and 42.

As previously pointed out the *"he"*, *"him"*, *"his"* and *"himself"* of Daniel 11:36 to 45 refer to the king *"who shall do according to his will"* (Daniel 11:36), namely Christian Rome from the time of Constantine and the Council of Nice.

A number of commentators consider that the *"he"* and *"his"* of Daniel 11:40- 43 refer to *"the King of the North"* mentioned in verse 40, that is, the Turkish empire. The reference, however, is not to the Turks, but to Rome. This matter would have been made simpler had the last two clauses of verse 40 been made the first two clauses of verse 41. These two verses would then read like this:

40. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships;

41. And he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

It is true of course that the Turks as well as the Saracens overflowed several countries and passed over, that is, their tenure was not permanent, but the same is true to an even greater extent of Rome. Rome took possession of all the countries which comprised Alexander's empire, except the extreme East. The countries Rome entered were Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. Rome also entered the "*glorious land*", that is, the Holy Land or Palestine, Jerusalem being taken and the Jews made subject to Rome, as they had previously been to Greece. The land of Egypt did not "*escape*", for on the death of Antony and Cleopatra, Augustus made it his personal estate in 30 AD.

But while the land of Egypt did not "*escape*", Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon formed the eastern boundary of the Roman empire, and these people escaped "*out of his hand*", that is, they were not conquered by Rome. Rome conquered many countries in Europe and North Africa, but Egypt was Rome's richest prize.

Before examining the effect of Roman rule in Egypt as outlined in Daniel 11:42 and 43, we will look again and consider the central focus of Daniel's final vision, namely the great desolating abomination which would stand in the holy place, that is, this abomination which would occupy the central position in Christian worship, and deny, by the observance of the mass, the efficacy of the Lord Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice, and thereby defile the sanctuary, that is, the true worship of God (Daniel 8:13; 9:27; 12:11). But Daniel was told positively that the desolating abomination would be overthrown, and was given in chapter 10 a glorious vision of the Messiah, Who would eventually accomplish the overthrow and destruction of the abomination.

In Daniel 11 the angel reveals to Daniel the conflicts which would take place between the two principal portions of Alexander's empire, and in verse 30 prophesies the rise of pagan Rome. With the aid of the "*ships of Chittim*" (Cyprus), Rome befriended Egypt against Syria, defeated the latter, and thus gained control of both Syria and Egypt. Verses 31 to 45 give a description of Rome, successively pagan, Christian, and Papal; with the exception of the first two clauses of verse 40, which are introduced parenthetically to show that Rome's expansion would be checked by two strong powers, the Saracens and the Turks. These two powers would not, however, overthrow Rome because that honour was reserved for the Messiah Himself, as depicted in Daniel 12:1; 7:9-14,26.

Verse 30 of Daniel 11 mentioned briefly the use by Rome of the ships of Chittim in defence of Egypt (the King of the South) against Syria (the King of the North). The last two clauses of verse 30 and verses 41 to 43 show both the extent and the limitations of Roman power in Syria and Egypt.

THE WEALTH OF EGYPT

Egypt was rich in the wealth of the court that Cleopatra had maintained, in the treasure of the pagan temples, but above all in grain, upon which Rome depended for a long period for its very existence. The fact that "*the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps*" was literally true of Rome. These peoples were either conquered by Rome or by agreement given certain territory in exchange for military duty. Roman ambassadors were sent from time to time to Ethiopia. Rome also secured the advantage of the trade which passed, in the hands of Arab traders, from India to Europe through Red Sea ports.

On the whole the internal situation in Egypt improved steadily during the first hundred years of its government by Rome. The second century of Roman government was also one of general prosperity for Egypt, although marred to some extent by trouble with the Jews in Alexandria in 126 AD. Some of these Jews and their descendants remembered the revolt in Judea in 68 - 70 AD and their subsequent defeat and expulsion by Rome. During the reign of Trajan (53 - 117 AD) Egypt was so peaceable that only one Roman legion was stationed there. A Roman legion consisted of 3,000 to 6,000 foot soldiers, usually accompanied by 300 - 700 cavalry. In the third century of Roman government Egypt underwent a decline, principally because of the unsettled state of the Roman empire in Europe.

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

The Christian religion was growing in strength, and Rome was obliged to take notice. Persecution of Christians began in the reign of Decius (249 - 251 AD); continued in the reigns of Diocletian (284 - 305 AD), Galerius (305 - 311 AD), and Maximus (305 - 313 AD), and under the joint reign of Constantine and Licinius (313 - 323 AD). But as soon as Constantine obtained sole power, Christianity became the recognised religion of the Roman empire, and with Constantine's reign began the application of Daniel 11:41 - 45 to Christian Rome.

CHRISTIANITY ESTABLISHED

As pagan Rome entered into and stretched its hand over countries, entering even the "*glorious land*" of Palestine, so now Christian Rome repeated the operation by imperial edicts supported by the force of arms. From Constantine's reign dates the era also when in a special sense the treasures of gold, silver and other precious things of Egypt came under the power of the king who did "*according to his will*".

It became the turn of Christians to persecute the pagans. But the attention of Christians was devoted to the controversy between Athanasius and Arius on the relationship existing between God and Jesus, between the Father and the Son. The Emperor Constantine felt called upon to decide the matter, and so the matter became a political issue. The Emperor claimed the right to appoint bishops, and used arms when necessary to impose his will on church and state.

In 325 AD Constantine called together the Council of Nice, the first ecumenical or general council, at which were present 318 bishops, almost all from the Eastern Church. The emperor presided in person. The bishop of Rome did not attend, but was represented by two presbyters or elders. The Council drew up the Nicene Creed, a statement of Christian belief which was then enforced by the secular power. The Nicene Creed was subsequently revised, but remains today basically the same as the original statement, except for the deletion of the concluding anathema which was as follows:

"But as for those who say that there was a time when He was not, and that before He was begotten He was not, and that He came into being from things that were not, or who affirm that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or created, subject to change or alteration, them the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes."

The controversy concerning the relationship between the Father and the Son continued under succeeding emperors, and gave rise to the use of the secular arm at various times. The teaching of Athanasius eventually prevailed, and the doctrine of the Trinity became firmly established in the Christian Church.

Immediately on his accession, Theodosius (378 - 395 AD) decreed that the whole of the Roman Empire should become Christian. This decree was vigorously enforced in Alexandria and Lower Egypt. Pagan temples were captured by Christians and turned into churches. The supremacy of the Christian Church in Egypt was maintained during the years 378 to 529 AD. Under the reign of Arcadius (395 - 408 AD), the patriarchs or bishops of Alexandria took on civil powers and used soldiers to destroy theological opponents and their monasteries.

Christian forces had already taken the treasures of the pagans, and they next took possession of treasure hoarded by the Jews. In the reign of Theodosius II (408 - 450 AD), the Jews had become numerous and influential in Alexandria, and the richest by far of all sections of the community. Christian monks and others plundered Jewish possessions, their quarter of the city was sacked and the Jews were all driven from their homes.

In the period 378 - 527 AD the Christian Church sought to grasp governmental power in Egypt, and seems to have taken possession of most of the country's wealth. Monasteries held large quantities of land which were cultivated by the monks; whole districts were placed under monastic control, which meant that all the produce and work of the people would pass through the hands of the superiors of the monasteries. These church organisations were strong enough to resist government interference and maintain their general prosperity and the comfort of individual monastic superiors.

CHAPTER 11

PART 3

POWER OVER THE PRECIOUS THINGS

We have seen in Daniel 11:43 that Christian Rome would *"have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt"*. When Rome finally yielded political supremacy to the Saracens, Rome had taken from Egypt wealth, land and temples from pagans and Jews.

But three more important *"things"* were taken. These were:

- (1) doctrine;
- (2) the idea of united temporal and spiritual power;
- (3) the practice of monasticism.

(1) Doctrine.

After the introduction of Christianity, the Alexandrian church took its place among the philosophical sects of the city. Christianity influenced them and was in turn influenced by them. Alexandria was the home of more schools of thought than any other locality in the Roman world, and as a result Christianity in Alexandria developed an unusually large number of peculiar ideas. The earliest Egyptian heresy was Gnosticism which consisted mainly of an attempt to blend Christianity with the old Egyptian magic.

Egypt was the birthplace of the controversy between the teachings of Athanasius and Arius. This controversy led to a breach between the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire. The religious difference thus begun continued as the main issue in all the quarrels and disputes which led to the eventual severance of Rome and Constantinople.

The Christian Church in Egypt came under the influence of the philosophy of Plato, and learned from him the belief in the immortality of the soul. A more striking example of the debt of Christianity to paganism may be found in the worship of Mary, an idea borrowed from the Egyptian conception of Isis with her child Horus.

It is also highly likely that the doctrine of the Trinity is traceable to Egyptian influence. Trinitarian doctrine formed no part of Jewish teaching, and was never taught by Christ and His Apostles and disciples in the early church. The whole of the old Egyptian theology was permeated with the idea of triple divinity, as seen in the triads of gods which the various cities worshipped, and in the threefold names under which each god might be addressed.

The doctrine of the Trinity was the development of theories regarding the nature of Christ and His relationship to God advanced as early as 319 AD by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. The teaching of three persons in one God was opposed by Arius, and in 321 AD Arius was ex-communicated at a Synod of one hundred bishops held in Alexandria. The controversy, however, continued and in 324 AD, Hosius, bishop of Cordova, convened another Synod at Alexandria at which Alexander was upheld and Arius condemned.

The continued controversies led Emperor Constantine to convene the Council of Nice in 325 AD to settle the matter. Athanasius attended the Council as deacon to Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. The creed which the Council compiled was made obligatory in the Christian Church.

The Creed of Constantinople (381 AD) and the Decree of Chalcedon (451 AD) were also concerned with the nature of Christ and the relations existing between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Finally came the Athanasian Creed, dating from the middle of the fifth century. Athanasius, who lived from 296 to 373 AD, was not the author of this creed, but it embodies the teachings of the Nicene Creed and the nature of Christ as set forth by Athanasius, and the extreme Trinitarianism of the Alexandrian philosophy. It was intended to settle for all time the standard of orthodoxy.

2. The Idea Of United Temporal And Spiritual Power

We have seen thus far the fulfilment of Daniel 11:41-45 in pagan and Christian Roman aggression. The Emperor Justinian (527 - 565 AD) tried to settle the differences and troubles in Alexandria by sending a nominee of his own, backed up with force of arms. The native Egyptian bishops resisted and were at first successful, but Justinian met force with force, and gave the new patriarch (bishop) of Alexandria the office also of prefect, so

that the ruler of the Church had under his command soldiers to enforce his decisions on the people under his care, and to collect revenues exacted from them.

By a general massacre the new patriarch rid himself of his opponents. The native Egyptians, however, refused to acknowledge his authority in religious affairs, and his office was largely confined to management of secular matters. Justinian began to use monasteries as forts and garrisoned them with monks.

Notwithstanding this combining of religious and temporal power, Roman prestige continued to decline in Egypt. In 616 AD the Persians invaded Egypt and their rule lasted ten years. The Arabs, who embraced the new doctrines of Mahomet, then obtained a comparatively easy victory. In the reign of Constans II (642 - 668 AD) Roman troops were withdrawn from Alexandria, and the Roman empire in Egypt came to an end.

During all this time (325 - 642 AD) the Ethiopians and Libyans had been "*at the steps*" of Rome (Daniel 11:43). Sometimes they invaded Egypt and had to be forced back, while at other times they were satisfied to pay tribute to Rome.

But the idea of the union of church and state had taken root in Egypt and this idea was wholeheartedly embraced and extensively utilised by the Papacy in succeeding centuries.

3. The Practice of Monasticism

The monastic idea originated in Egypt as a development of the contemplative hermitage of the east, brought to Egypt by Buddhist missionaries from India and adopted by followers of the old national religion.

In Egypt the desert is always close at hand for those who wish to retire from the world and live in seclusion. The earliest Christian hermits lived about the time of Constantine, and the practice spread so rapidly that only half a century later in the reign of Valens (364 - 378 AD) the monasteries were well established and recognised by law as bodies competent to hold property. The practice became so popular that it presented a serious problem to the government because of the number of men who claimed exemption from military service on the ground of monastic vows.

The weakness of the secular Roman government increased, and it became necessary for the monks to provide for their own safety against the desert tribes, who raided the country and individual monasteries from time to time. Thus it was that the fortress type of monastery became common.

It was this system of community living rather than the eremitic (hermits living in seclusion), that finally spread throughout Europe and moulded the ideas of the Christian Church of the Middle Ages. It was Athanasius who introduced monasticism to the West after his three-year stay in Rome (339 - 342 AD) with a monk who accompanied him.

ATHANASIUS THE FATHER OF ORTHODOXY

Athanasius was so strongly in favour of monasticism that he is regarded as the Father of Western Monasticism as well as the Father of Orthodoxy. After the adoption of his views on the nature of Christ by the Council of Nice, he returned to Alexandria, where, on the death of the bishop there in 328 AD, he was made Bishop of Alexandria and held the office, with intervals of banishment, for forty-six years. During this long term he was unceasing in his propaganda and even the periods of banishment were used to spread his teachings. During the three years (339 - 342 AD) he spent in Rome, Pope Julius convened a council of about fifty bishops (mostly western), and at this council Athanasius and his writings received endorsement.

When Athanasius returned to Alexandria he resorted to violence to overcome the Arians and other opponents, and in 361 AD convened a synod of twenty-one bishops for the purpose of dealing with heretics. He was the most powerful bishop of his time and his influence extends even to our own time.

THE "FALLING AWAY"

Daniel's prophecy is endorsed and made a little clearer by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, ..."*.

There was no sound reason why the Christians of Egypt should ever have forsaken the truth of the gospel and followed after pagan philosophies.

The gospel in its purity was preached on the day of Pentecost to devout Jews and proselytes of Egypt and Libya who had come to Jerusalem to attend the Passover.

The eunuch to whom Philip preached was an Ethiopian holding a high position at the court of his native country (Acts 2:10; 8:27). Cyrenians and Alexandrians were among those who disputed with Stephen (Acts 6:9). Apollos, "*an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures*" (Acts 18:24), was born in Alexandria. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch preaching the gospel. Lucius of Cyrene is also mentioned (Acts 11:20; 13:1). It is also highly likely that those who were born in Egypt and Cyrene would have returned to preach to their countrymen after preaching the good news in other places.

Therefore, when we find such controversies recorded in history as those which centred in Alexandria, they could have come only from a great "*falling away*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3) from the purity of the gospel. By the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era, the number of Christians in Egypt was great, and they accepted readily the creeds formulated by ecclesiastical councils and foisted upon them with carnal weapons if necessary. They were "*tares*" (Matthew 13:24-30) which had grown up amongst the true believers and had outnumbered and submerged them.

The Nicene Creed is the basis of all subsequent creeds of Roman, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox and Anglican churches, and the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century did not question it. The so-called Apostles' Creed was of later date than the Nicene. Yet many millions recite both creeds without ever comparing them with the Scriptures to verify their truth or untruth, or to decide for themselves whether any who think otherwise deserve to be counted as heretics.

The Protestant reformers were apparently too much concerned with other and later errors of Rome and with freeing themselves from Roman political power, to return to the thinking and teaching of the Apostles and the inspired letters to the early churches on the nature of God and of Christ.

The Christian Church had been in existence some three hundred years before belief in the Trinity was made compulsory. The illogical and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity was formally stated in the Athanasian Creed, which appeared about 450 AD.

This creed seems little known or read today, and many churches and Christian people have either ignored or rejected it. The theology of the Athanasian Creed, however, is generally accepted by Christian churches and organisations without comparison with the Scriptures to see "*whether those things were so*" (Acts 17:11).

Believers must, of course, have definite beliefs because these are necessary to true believers' spiritual well-being; but such beliefs must be clearly stated in the Word of Truth and verifiable from its pages, and must not be accepted without question or examination, as are so many beliefs of the Christian Church as a whole.

At this stage it has been demonstrated conclusively how Rome fulfils the predictions of Daniel 11:40-43.

1. Rome, the fourth world empire, over-flowed and passed over many countries formerly under Greece, the third world empire, including the Holy Land and Egypt. Rome also stretched forth its hand over many countries of Europe.

2. Pagan Rome took possession of the treasures of Egypt of a material kind: the powers of the government of Cleopatra, the wealth of the temples, the grain of the fertile Nile valley, and the trade with the East. The tribes of Ethiopia, Libya and the desert were in subjection either by agreement or force of arms. Pagan Rome also showed its power over the Christians in Egypt by persecution on the one hand and granting some of them public office on the other as suited its convenience.

3. Christian Rome, that is, the Roman Empire after Christianity became its official religion, took over all Egypt's sources of material wealth; seized the gold and silver hoarded in the pagan temples; invested magistrates with religious prerogatives; appointed bishops with civil powers; and formulated creeds to be believed, with banishment or death the penalty for denial.

But above all Rome took hold of the "*precious things*" of the Alexandrian philosophies and of the ancient worship of Egyptian divinities and incorporated them into Christianity, by means of which the whole thrust of Christian doctrine has been defiled for more than fifteen hundred years.

The main false doctrines imposed by Rome on the Christian Church were the Trinity, the alleged dual nature of Christ, the immortality of the soul, the worship of Mary and saints, monasticism and eternal torment.

THE GLORIOUS LAND

"He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." (Daniel 11:41).

The *"glorious land"* (*"land of delight or ornament"* - KJV margin, *"desirable land"* - Young's literal translation, *"beautiful land"* - NIV, *"fairest of all lands"* - REB) is surely a reference to Palestine, for that was the only land in which God had placed His Name and in which He took pleasure.

When Daniel was given his visions, the Jews were captives in Babylon and their land lay desolate. But the promise of their return and of the re-population of their land was soon to be fulfilled (Jeremiah 25:11-14). In 536 BC the Jews returned and though still a subject people, continued as a nation until 70 AD.

The original *"glory"* of the days of David and Solomon never returned, but another greater *"glory"* was given to the land by the earthly ministry of the Son of God, Who for three and a half years preached there the gospel of peace and love.

A further *"glory"* was given to the land by His sacrifice on the cross, by which He paid the price for our sins, by His burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, by His resurrection and appearances to His disciples, and by His constituting Jerusalem the place from which the good tidings should begin to go forth to all nations (Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 24:47,50,51; Acts 1:12;15:2,4 22; Galatians 2:9).

The gospel message spread rapidly, and the glory of Judea and Galilee was reflected in Syria and Asia Minor (now Turkey). Congregations of Christians flourished in Caesaria (in Samaria), at Antioch (in Syria) and in the seven cities of Asia Minor whose names appear in Revelation 1:11: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Philip the Evangelist lived in Caesaria, and the believers were

first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 21:8-10; 11:26,27; 13:1; 15:22,30-35). There were disciples also at Tyre, the ancient Phoenician city with which King David had once formed a commercial alliance (Acts 21:3,4; 2 Samuel 5:11).

After the death of the Apostles and their immediate successors, their high standard of faith and doctrine was no longer maintained. Christianity became popular in Palestine, as it did in Egypt and the great "*falling away*" from the purity and simplicity of the gospel which took place in Egypt, also took place in the "*glorious land*", as instanced by the prominence of Eusebius of Caesaria in the Council of Nice which formulated the Nicene Creed (325 AD).

Daniel's prophecy of Rome entering the "*glorious land*" began in 30 BC when pagan Rome made Judea a Roman province. When the Jews rebelled against Caesar in 68 - 70 AD, the Roman legions besieged Jerusalem, sacking the city and destroying the temple so that one stone was not left upon another (Matthew 24:2). The people were overthrown and scattered throughout the then known world.

When Constantine set up Christianity as the established religion of the Roman empire, pilgrimages to the holy land began. Constantine and his mother encouraged such pilgrimages and built churches on traditional sites. By the end of the fourth century the practice of pilgrimages had so much increased as to give rise to the custom of collecting alms for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem.

Travellers in those days reported seeing Gauls and Britons, Persians and Armenians, Indians and Ethiopians, all dwelling in the city in peace and harmony. In the time of Jerome (342 - 420 AD) there were so many sacred places in Jerusalem that a visitor could not see them all in one day. The sacred sites remained when, one hundred and fifty years later, the city was adorned by the splendid buildings of Justinian.

Early in the seventh century Jerusalem was plundered by Chosroes the Persian, but soon afterwards the Saracens overthrew the Persian monarchy and expanded their wide dominion. A mosque was built on the site of the Jewish temple by the Caliph Omar in the years 634 - 644 AD. From that time Jerusalem became a goal of Mohammedan as well as Christian pilgrims.

European pilgrims returning from the holy land expressed in their homelands grief at seeing the holy land in the hands of infidels and gradually a sentiment developed that the holy city and sacred shrines should be wrested from their possession.

THE CRUSADES

Kings and rulers, knights and bishops took up the challenge of winning back the holy land from infidel dominion and were ready to be shown how this could be achieved. The Popes of Rome preached in support of the crusades and worked on the fears, ambitions and weaknesses of the kings, principally those of France, Germany and Britain, in order to bring about the freeing of the holy land by warfare from the rule of the infidel.

The crusades are usually numbered at eight, but there were many more than that. They dated from 1097 to 1270 AD. In the crusades of almost two centuries we see further fulfilment of Daniel 11:36-39, *"He (that is, Christian Rome) shall enter also into the glorious land, and many shall be overthrown"*.

The First Crusade was preached in 1095 by Pope Urban II at a council held at Clermont and was placed under the command of Godfrey de Bouillon. In June 1097 they took Edessa and seven months later Antioch. Jerusalem was taken in July 1099 and all of these localities came under western jurisdiction. As a result of the First Crusade, four states or provinces under the control of western rulers and under the patronage of the Church of Rome were established in Syria: the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the County of Tripoli, the County of Edessa, and the Principality of Antioch.

But the Mohammedans struck back and in 1146 captured Edessa. A Second Crusade was preached and undertaken. The Christian forces were, however, defeated firstly in 1163 by the Sultan of Aleppo, then again by Saladin in 1187, and Jerusalem was captured by the Saracens.

The Third Crusade for the recovery of Jerusalem was preached in 1189. Its leader was Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, but he met his death by drowning in Cilicia in 1190. However, Richard the Lion-Hearted of England won many battles against Saladin and secured a number of concessions for Christians in Jerusalem. He conquered Cyprus in 1191 and also recovered Acre. Cyprus became a Roman

kingdom with a Roman archbishop, while Acre became the residence of the Greek patriarch. Saladin died in 1193 and Richard met his death in battle in France in 1199 at the early age of forty-two.

In 1197 Joppa (also known as Jaffa), was taken by Saladin's brother Saphadin, and ten thousand Christians were massacred. Many converts were made to Mohammedanism from the ranks of the Crusaders and many of the descendants are still to be found in various parts of Syria today.

As the crusades continued, they were viewed with increasing suspicion by the Eastern Orthodox Church, because the Eastern Church became aware that the crusades were establishing the authority of the Roman Pope in the east. The Eastern Church's suspicions were well founded, as revealed by the Fourth Crusade.

The Fourth Crusade, in which some 200,000 Westerners took part, was diverted at Venice to an attack on the King of Hungary and eventuated in an attack on Constantinople in April 1204. No regard was shown for age or sex and two thousand Greeks were murdered and the city sacked. A Roman emissary was placed in the patriarchal chair and the Roman dominion thus established lasted for sixty years. The crusaders were repudiated by Pope Innocent III, but their actions destroyed any hope of alliance between the Eastern and Western Churches.

In 1215 Pope Innocent III called for another strike at the Muslim world. The Fifth Crusade was manned chiefly by French and German crusaders and was under the direction of Frederick II of Germany. The crusaders captured Damietta near the Nile in 1219. Floods stopped a march on Cairo and the crusade ended indecisively with an eight-year truce.

In the Sixth Crusade, Frederick II of Germany negotiated in 1229 a treaty which returned Jerusalem to the Europeans for ten years. But in 1244 Turkish Mohammedan hordes captured Jerusalem and slaughtered thousands of pilgrims.

King Louis IX of France launched the Seventh Crusade in 1248, but, like the Fifth, the Seventh Crusade failed in Egypt.

Twenty-two years later King Louis led the Eighth Crusade, the last of the numbered crusades. But shortly after landing in Tunis, most of the army and King Louis died of disease.

Although ill-fated expeditions to the Holy Land continued to be launched, even into the fifteenth century, the era of the crusades had come to an end. Jealousy among the military orders, the resident nobles and the newly-arrived crusaders prevented the co-operation necessary for success against the threatening Turks.

Both the Eastern and Western Empires "*overflowed and passed over*" Palestine and other countries, and "*many were overthrown*". The Pope of Rome exerted as much influence as possible whenever the crusaders pushed back the Saracens.

During the two hundred years of the crusades there were also three different Romanising influences at work in the merchant guilds of Genoa, of Pisa and of Venice. The Genoese helped in the capture of Caesaria in 1101, Tortosa in 1102, Acre in 1104 and Tripoli in 1109; and the Venetians at Tyre and Sidon. Great traffic was carried on by these merchants with nations to the east as well as with Christian nobles, many of whom had fine estates yielding wine, cotton, sugar cane and other produce, while in the cities manufactures of various kinds were carried on as well as dyeing, tanning and brewing.

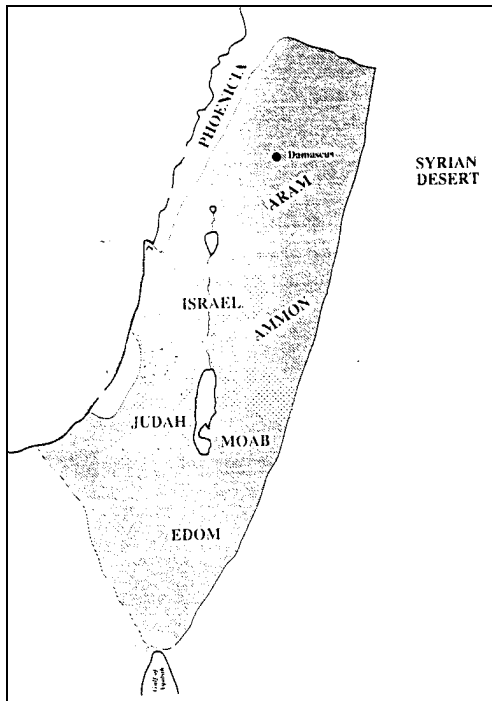
The Kingdom of Jerusalem, established in the First Crusade, was maintained during the two hundred ensuing years, but eventually the Turkish forces overran the land and brought the Roman dominion to its end. Acre, the flourishing port of Jerusalem, was the last to give way to the Turks in 1291.

Pilgrims from Europe continued to visit the churches and shrines of the Holy Land whenever Turkish rulers were disposed to allow such visits up to the time when the Turkish rule in Palestine was ended by the British in 1917.

THESE SHALL ESCAPE

"... but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon" (Daniel 11:41).

These countries and peoples escaped out of the hands of pagan and Christian Rome and also out of the hands of the crusaders. The contour of the land explains why Edom, Moab and Ammon escaped out of the hands of the crusaders. The territory in question from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt was about 800 kilometres (500 miles) in length and about 80 kilometres (50 miles) wide.



***Relative Locations of Edom,
Moab and Ammon***

This long narrow tract of land left a long frontier open to attack and included many great Mohammedan cities such as Damascus, Emesa, Hamah and Aleppo.

The crusaders established some fortresses east of the Jordan and also organised raiding expeditions against the Mohammedans in that area, but they were not able to gain control of the land between the Jordan and the desert. Thus the prophet Daniel foretold exactly the limitations of the crusaders' conquests.

WHAT THE CRUSADES ACCOMPLISHED

To maintain the Kingdom of Jerusalem on hostile ground for two hundred years was a great achievement, but much more could have been accomplished by unity among the crusaders. The chief result of the crusades, however, was not in Palestine but in Europe. The Eastern empire was weakened so that it fell an easier prey to the Turks.

Western Europe was also affected in a vital respect. The crusades meant the removal of many feudal and quarrelsome knights and rulers from France, Britain and Germany, and the consequent abatement of strife and internecine warfare in those countries permitted the gradual rise of more democratic institutions with a greater regard for law and the rights of ordinary people. The "days of chivalry" are featured in poetry and song, but the ordinary people are glad that these days have passed, and their rights can no longer be ignored and trampled underfoot by selfish and filibustering knights.

Rome sought to use kings and princes, lords and knights, for the advancement of its power and influence, but the reaction in Europe had the reverse effect. Rome was quick to offer indulgences to all who undertook the so-called holy war. This resulted in a double monetary gain to the Papacy, as any who did not or could not go were obliged to purchase their freedom from the vows with gold.

The traffic in indulgences increased more and more until Luther's day, when the people were ready to revolt against the sale of indulgences and other Papal abuses. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the "*many overthrown*" referred to in Daniel 11:41 included not only those who were overthrown in the crusades, but those who were overthrown in Europe by the changing social conditions which were brought about by the crusades.

TROUBLESOME TIDINGS FROM EAST AND NORTH

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." (Daniel 11:44).

The "*him*" and "*he*" in this verse continue (from Daniel 11:36) to refer to the Papacy, the "*king*" who did "*according to his will*". What were the "*tidings out of the east and out of the north*" which troubled the Papacy? When did the Papacy learn of these tidings? The tidings were so adverse that "*he*" was moved to "*great fury*" and determined "*utterly to make away many*".

These tidings were of three kinds: political, ecclesiastical and doctrinal.

TIDINGS OUT OF THE EAST

When the Greek Church and the Eastern Empire had been weakened by the crusades and the growing power of the Seljukian Turks, Rome was pleased because *"he"* expected to advance in power and prestige as the East declined.

Therefore, the failure of the crusades to maintain dominion in the Holy Land was very troublesome to Rome because it meant thousands of lives and immense treasure largely wasted; and it also meant that there was the possibility for the Greek Church to re-assert itself in Asia and Syria. The fact that the Pope's appeals for fresh crusades awakened no response showed his waning power over the kings and nobles of Europe.

Troublesome tidings from the East came also with the news of the progress of the Tartars and the Ottoman Turks. While the Eastern and Western churches were vying for political and religious control in Lithuania, Poland, Transylvania (now Romania), Hungary and the Balkans; the Tartars and Turks worked their way westward from 1291 to 1683.

The most significant Turkish victory was the capture of Constantinople in 1453. Vienna was twice besieged by the Turks in 1529 and 1683, but they were unable to capture it. Such tidings from the East were very troublesome to Rome.

Papal influence was prospering in Lithuania and Poland from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, notwithstanding Russian opposition, but in the sixteenth century troublesome tidings came from these countries also. Batou, a nephew of Genghis Khan, the Mongolian conqueror, penetrated Poland to the border of Germany, advanced almost to the Baltic, devastated the countryside north of the Danube, as well as Serbia, Bosnia and Bulgaria and besieged Neustadt in Austria.

Wherever Rome was checked or frustrated in the East, *"he"* went *"forth with great fury to destroy"* either with force of arms whenever the Pope could arouse Western kings and rulers, or with secret propaganda and intrigue if force of arms were not available.

TIDINGS OUT OF THE NORTH

If we take the "*north*" to be France, Britain, Scandinavia and Germany, the most troublesome tidings came after Rome had reached its zenith of power and prosperity.

This height of power and influence was reached when the Holy Roman Empire was governed by the Pope through the various emperors and kings, who were compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of the Church over the state. The height of Papal power was in all probability reached in the reigns of Innocent III (1198 - 1216) and Gregory IX (1227 - 1241).

Therefore when tidings out of the North that acknowledgment of Papal authority over Church and state would no longer be made, the Papacy went "*forth with great fury to destroy*" and "*make away many*" who dared to question the right of the Papacy to implicit obedience in all things sacred and secular, civil and political, public and private.

Frederick II, the German Emperor, defied Pope Honorius III (1216 - 1227). Frederick's attitude to the Church was that the Church was not the mother of Christendom but an intrusive inspectress and his attitude to the Pope was that the Pope was the champion of all that hindered the extension of true civilisation and the increase of human culture and knowledge.

When Pope Gregory succeeded Honorius, one of his first acts was to excommunicate Frederick. Frederick's response was swift. His forces routed the Pope's troops and he forced the Pope to grant him absolution. Ten years passed and again the Pope excommunicated the emperor. Frederick II was declared a heretic and Pope Innocent IV (1243 - 1254) stated that the emperor had forfeited his throne.

It is one of the most important indications of the beginnings of the disintegration of the church's power that the emperor remained on the throne and the emperor's friends remained faithful to him until his death in 1250, in spite of the fact that the curse not only of the church but also of Heaven seemed to rest upon him.

But Frederick II was not the only ruler who dared to defy the Pope. Philip the Fair, King of France, also resisted the Pope's claims which Boniface VIII endeavoured to enforce upon

him by means of a bull (a formal Papal document with an official seal). In 1303 Philip ordered a celebrated lawyer, William de Nogaret, to draw up an accusation against the Pope, charging him with simony (making money from ecclesiastical favours), heresy and other vices and crimes, demanding at the same time the convening of an ecumenical council to depose the Pope.

The Pope responded by excommunicating the king. The church historian, Mosheim, describes Nogaret as the "most intrepid and inveterate enemy the popes ever had before Luther". Philip made Nogaret Chancellor of France for his resolute opposition to the Pope.

Philip subsequently secured the election of a French archbishop as Pope, who took the name of Clement V (5 June 1305). At Philip's request, the Pope remained in France and removed the Papal residence to Avignon, where it remained for seventy years (1305 - 1376). According to Mosheim, Italians derisively call this period the Babylonian captivity.

Philip compelled Pope Clement V to call a general council at Vienne in 1311 in order to condemn the Templars, a religious military order of knighthood established at the time of the crusades. The Templars became a powerful army and acquired considerable wealth and property. Philip feared their power and desired their wealth and succeeded in having Pope Clement suppress the order in March, 1312.

The Papal residence continued in Avignon until 1276, during which year Pope Gregory XI returned to Rome. After Gregory's death in 1378, two Popes were elected: Urban VI and Clement VII. Urban was resident in Rome, while Clement went to Avignon. Clement was supported by France, Spain, Scotland, Sicily and Cyprus, while all the rest of Europe supported Urban.

J. L. Mosheim in his work "Ecclesiastical History" writes: "Thus the union of the Latin Church under one head was destroyed at the death of Gregory XI, and was succeeded by the deplorable dissension, commonly known by the name of the Great Western Schism. For fifty years the church had two or three different heads at the same time. By these dissensions the papal power received an incurable wound".

No doubt the firm attitude of Philip of France and Frederick of Germany in opposition to the Papacy, their defiance of

excommunication, and their comparative prosperity in spite of the curses of the so-called Vicar of Christ, did much to impress the people and prepare them for further advancement in political and religious liberty.

But Ottoman conquest from the East and protests by kings and emperors from the North backed up by armed resistance, were not the only tidings which troubled "*him*" from the East and the North. From the East came the Renaissance, an invasion of learning which threatened to undermine the Catholic religion in all countries of Europe, and from the North came voices raised more and more loudly against the ecclesiastical claims and doctrines of the Papacy. These voices were the beginnings of the great Protestant Reformation.

THE MENACE OF THE RENAISSANCE

The term "renaissance" means the revival of learning in the arts and sciences. It is a movement marking the transition from medieval to modern history, covering the years from about 1377 to 1610.

The Turkish conquests in the East, especially the capture of Constantinople in 1453, brought about the exile of many learned Greeks and scholars, who sought new homes in the West, or were taken as slaves. The learning they brought with them was classical and this entered at once into competition with the restricted learning of the monasteries which embraced Scripture study and transcription of manuscripts.

The Greeks sought to impart their learning and their paganism, for the classics set forth the old mythologies and the old philosophies. Rome was opposed to this new learning and to the education of people outside her own schools and monasteries. The Popes at first opposed the new learning, but later Popes realised that the new learning could not be stopped, and concluded that it was better policy to endorse it and make it serve the purposes of the church. Hence universities were founded and schools opened under the patronage of the church to meet the challenge of the new learning and to restrict as far as possible the new learning to her own institutions and to let as little as possible circulate among ordinary people.

Hence it has come to pass that the Roman church looks back with pride on her response to the Renaissance because

she encouraged the arts by fine buildings, painting and sculpture, music and literature. What is not emphasised is that the period of the Renaissance was still a time of dense ignorance of ordinary people. Very few could read or write, and all were mentally and spiritually bound to the priest, who claimed to hold their souls and their eternal destiny in his hands.

The Renaissance was an important part of the tidings from the East which troubled Rome for a time. She went out at first with great fury to destroy, but in time bowed to the inevitable and made adjustments and adaptations to this movement of revival which she could not stop.

A greater movement from within the Papal system which could not be absorbed or crushed, was soon to menace and deliver a "*deadly wound*" to the Papacy (Revelation 13:3).

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

In studying the Protestant Reformation it must be remembered that those who worked to bring about reform and took part in it were, to begin with, Roman Catholics. The reformers initially believed that Rome was the only teacher of religion authorised by heaven and that salvation was attainable only by obedience to the church. But they deplored the worldliness and abuses of churches and monasteries, the simony, immorality, luxury and general sins of the flesh that abounded on every hand. But they could see no remedy.

There were some bishops and abbots in control of monasteries who tried to introduce reforms from time to time and occasionally one of the better Popes would send emissaries to convents and monasteries to reinforce discipline, and would depose an unscrupulous bishop and replace him with one of better character. The system, however, was too well established and its doctrines and practices so deeply rooted, that the self-seeking and unscrupulous ecclesiastics would soon re-emerge and continue their evil ways.

It was the hope of the earlier reformers, such as Wycliffe and Huss, to reform the Church from within, by calling attention to the way in which people were deprived of their rights and by appealing to those in authority to rectify matters. Their sincere and well-meant efforts were misunderstood and they received fierce opposition and blame instead of praise from church

authorities. They did not realise that the *"tidings out of the North"* would arouse *"him"* to go *"forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many"*.

In the early stages of the Protestant Reformation the reformers did not realise that many of the basic doctrines of the church needed to be rejected and replaced by sound, Scriptural doctrines -- and that the whole system of monasticism, and a priesthood to stand between God and the believer, were wrong.

PROMINENT REFORMERS AND ROME'S OPPOSITION

Wycliffe and Huss

It would be unwise to attempt to detail the lives and work of the great reformers such as Wycliffe and Huss, and to consider closely the three centuries of reform that followed the circulation of their writings. There are many writings and books which expound fully the *"tidings out of the north"* which so troubled the Papacy, and the fury with which *"he"* went *"forth to destroy and utterly to make away many"*.

There were protesters against Rome before Wycliffe's day, such as Peter Waldo, but Wycliffe was the first learned and vigorous voice raised against Rome after Rome reached the height of its power and influence in the period covered by the reigns of Innocent III (1198 - 1216) and Gregory IX (1227 - 1241).

Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire in 1324, and was educated at Oxford. He learned the Gospel from one of his teachers who was letting his light shine in those dark times. At that time the Bible was virtually unknown in England and Europe. Printing had not been invented and copies of it and of Wycliffe's writings had to be copied laboriously by hand and therefore manuscripts were expensive. In any case few people were able to read, and were taught and indoctrinated by the false teachings and practices of the Papacy, and were in mental and spiritual subjection to the Roman priesthood.

At this period in history there occurred an event whose immediate consequences were terrible, but whose longer term consequences resulted in benefits and furtherance of reform. The Black Death began in Asia and in 1348 spread over the

whole of Europe and England. This epidemic of Bubonic Plague destroyed more than one hundred thousand people in London alone, and caused the death of approximately one quarter of the population of Europe and England. The effect of such widespread devastation was to give pause to many conflicts and set many persons thinking, including Wycliffe.

Wycliffe raised his voice and used his pen against the Pope's claims over England, against the power of the clergy and against the profligacy and greed of the monastic orders. The Franciscans and Dominicans were rich and powerful and much courage was needed to oppose them. Wycliffe was Professor of divinity at Oxford, but these were the days of Papal ascendancy and he was excluded from this position in 1367 because of his views. He did, however, continue as rector of Lutterworth, a small parish, until his death in 1384.

From Lutterworth his writings, laboriously copied by hand, were circulated throughout England, and many of his writings found their way to the Continent. His writings on freedom, justice and independence from Papal rule did much to open people's minds to their political, intellectual and spiritual bondage and his translations of the Scriptures set people to reading the Word of God for themselves.

Toward the end of his life, Wycliffe saw the error of the mass and taught that men should accept Christ as the one Mediator between God and men, and should discard the many mediators set forth by Rome in the persons of the Virgin Mary, canonised saints, and priests.

Because few people were able to read, and because Wycliffe's manuscripts were costly, his writings reached and influenced at first only the rich and learned. It was only as the gospel became better known, and as voluntary preachers carried it from village to village, that the truth of the Scriptures reached the people generally. Bibles were scarce and expensive and only some churches could afford a Bible. Such churches chained to a desk the copy of the Bible that each possessed so that people might examine it but not carry it away.

The following is a specimen of Wycliffe's writing:

Specimen from Wycliffe.

(LUKE ii. 1-11.)

Forsothe it was don in tho dayes, a maundement went out fro Caesar August that al the world schulde be discruped. This first discrupinge was maad of Cypre iustice of Cirpe, and alle men wenten that thei schulde make profescioun ech by himself in to his cite. Sothly and Joseph stighede up fro Galilee of the cite of Nazareth in to Jude, in to a cite of Dauith that is clepid Bedleem, for that he was of tho house and meyne of Dauith, that he schulde knowleche with Mary with child spousid wif to hym.

Sothly it was don whanne thei weren there the dayes weren fulfilled that she schulde bere child. And she childide her firste born sone and wlapide hym in clothis and putted hym in a cracche, for ther was not place to hym in the comyn stable.

In the meantime French and German students at Oxford were hearing the Gospel and carrying Wycliffe's writings home with them. It was in this way that John Huss of Prague learned the Scriptures and carried the Gospel message to Bohemia (now Czechoslovakia). There he circulated the ideas of political freedom and an open Bible, with the good news of salvation through Christ, which the people of Bohemia were pleased to receive, as the English people had also been.

In 1402 Huss was appointed rector of the University of Prague and began to preach there the message of the good news that he had learned from Wycliffe. Subsequently, by his exposure of Papal corruption and error, he accomplished a partial reformation in Bohemia, which spread to Germany and indirectly paved the way for the larger Reformation in the following century under Martin Luther.

Huss preached an open Bible, denounced the doctrine of the mass, and insisted that all believers should partake of the cup in the Memorial Supper. He was excommunicated in 1411 and burned at the stake in July, 1415. Many of his followers also suffered martyrdom during the fifteenth century.

It was inevitable that, with the Bible in their hands, Wycliffe and Huss and their followers should come to see some of the Papacy's errors of doctrine. The main doctrine to come under attack was the doctrine of the mass and transubstantiation, the very core of Roman Catholic teaching and the secret of the priest's power to bind the conscience.

Wycliffe, Huss and their followers attacked the mass and caused people to realise its true nature: the taking away from the Lord Jesus the credit of His being the once for all and only true sacrifice for sin; as well as the idolatry of worshipping bread and wine falsely said to have been changed into the very body and blood of Christ. It was this attack on the Papal doctrine of the mass that especially aroused the fury of the Papacy, and brought upon the reformers condemnation as heretics, followed in many instances by the rack and the flames.

Erasmus, Henry VIII And Tyndale

Thirty years after Wycliffe's death the Council of Constance condemned his writings to the flames, and Rome put forth every effort to stamp out their influence, succeeding to some extent.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467 - 1535) was one of the most learned men of his day. From 1499 he spent considerable time in England and in 1511 was appointed Professor of Greek at Cambridge. He subsequently returned to Flanders, published a new Greek text of the New Testament, prepared a Latin

translation of this work, and wrote a paraphrase of the Gospels, all between the years 1517 and 1523.

He also criticised the Papacy and monastic orders, and in many important matters he sided with the German and Swiss reformers. But as he never fully left the Roman Catholic Church, his position remained on the borders of the reform movement. Nevertheless his writings helped the Reformation on its way.

Perhaps the most alarming tidings to reach Rome from the North came from Henry VIII of England. When he found that the Pope would not comply with his wishes, he defied the Papacy and by an order in Council of 15 January 1535, Henry VIII was proclaimed head of the Church of England. From that time onward, with the exception of a few years under reactionary rulers, England was lost to Rome.

But a more notable voice than Henry's rose out of England at this time: the voice of the Word of God translated and circulated by William Tyndale.

Tyndale was born in 1484, a hundred years after the death of Wycliffe and one year after the birth of Luther, and was educated at Oxford. Later at Cambridge he met Erasmus and became acquainted with the latter's Greek New Testament.

In disputes with the priests, the conviction came to him that he ought to translate the Greek text of Erasmus into English, so that even the plough-boy might read the Scriptures for himself. Translations of portions of the Scriptures had previously been made by a number of earlier writers, including Wycliffe, but Tyndale's translation is the first to be made directly from the Hebrew and the Greek, and his translation had enormous influence on the English of the King James Version in 1611.

In preparing his translation of the Scriptures, which was his life's work, he had to leave England and find refuge in Germany from the opposition of the priests. In 1535 he was arrested in Antwerp through the treachery of Henry Philips, a Roman Catholic zealot, imprisoned, tried, and finally strangled and burnt at the stake on 6 October, 1536.

Specimen from Tyndale.

(LUKE ii. 1-11.)

Bit folowed in thoose dapes that there wente oute a commaundment from Auguste the Emperour that all the woorlde shulde be valued. This tarynge was first executed when Syrenus was lefテナunt in Siria. And every man wente in to his awne shire tounne there to be tared. And Joseph also ascended from Galile oute of a cite called Nazareth, unto Jewry, into a cite of David which is called Bethleem, because he was of the housse and linage of David, to be tared with Mary his wedded wyfe, which was with childe. And it fortunied while they there were her tyme was come that she shulde be delpyvered. And she brought forthe her first begotten sonne and wrapped hym in swaddlynge clothes, and layed hym in a manger be cause there was no rounge for them within in the hostrey.

Martin Luther

The writings of Wycliffe, though suppressed by the Church, continued their work on the Continent, and prepared the people for the advent of the most striking figure of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther.

Martin Luther was born of godly parents at Eisleben in Saxony in 10 November, 1483. At eighteen he entered the University of Erfurt, where he came across a copy of the Vulgate (the Latin translation of the Scriptures). In 1503 he obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree. Later in 1505 he became a monk of the

Augustinian Eremites (one of the Mendicant Orders), and at the same time Professor of Divinity in the university which had been erected a few years before at Wittenberg by Frederic the Wise. On 2 May, 1507 Luther was publicly ordained a priest.

Luther was sufficiently learned in Latin, Hebrew and Greek and in his own native tongue to translate portions of Scripture and write useful tracts for the benefit of the people. His translation of the Bible into German, in which he had the assistance of Melancthon and others, is still regarded as a classic by the German people, and became the basis of translations into Dutch, Swedish and other Continental languages.

The influence of Wycliffe and Erasmus had been largely academic, but Luther's appeal was popular: it reached the hearts of the people. He turned people from futile attempts to obtain forgiveness by God -- the purchase of indulgences, tramping on pilgrimages from shrine to shrine, kissing, reverencing and adoring of relics -- to the grand and glorious truth of justification by faith in God through Jesus Christ, the only way.

This fundamental true doctrine had been buried for centuries under the traditions of the Church and it was Luther who re-discovered it. He publicly and fearlessly exposed the errors and corruption of the Church, and showed people that they did not need either to confess to a priest or receive absolution at his hands.

Had Luther been content to criticise and expose the simony, immorality and other abuses in the church, while himself still remaining a devotee, the authorities would have humoured him as they did others who spoke against abuses within the Church; or he might, as were some others, have been made a special legate to carry out reform work in clerical and monastic circles. Luther *"troubled"* the Papacy because he had experienced a genuine conversion, having been helped to it by other thinking priests and monks, and felt duty bound to assist his fellow men and women to the same deeply moving and joyful experience.

Those who helped Luther to enlightenment were priests and monks, but they themselves did not take a leading part in the reform movement because they expressed their understandings only among themselves. Luther, on the contrary, showed true

zeal for the Lord and His truth by wanting and working to deliver everyone from the bondage of superstition and fear. Hence when the monk Johann Tetzel publicly and shamelessly sold indulgences which permitted the purchaser to sin without restraint, Luther protested publicly by nailing his ninety-five theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg on 31 October, 1517 and the Reformation had begun in earnest.

It was Luther's personal discovery of the doctrine of justification by faith during the years 1515 - 19 that led to a reformation of medieval doctrine, and along with other factors, to the rise of the Protestant churches.

Other Reformers

From Wittenberg the protest spread to Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia, and also revived the reform movement in England. Because the Papacy claimed and exercised temporal as well as doctrinal authority, the protest was twofold: against the Pope's claim to be ruler of earthly monarchs, and against his claim to be the sole judge of people's consciences and the sole interpreter of the Scriptures. To fight against one Papal claim meant also to fight against the other. When the Elector of Saxony defended Luther personally and doctrinally, his action meant war with Rome politically and on the field of battle.

Similarly in the next century Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden from 1611, champion of Protestantism and known as "The Lion of the North" came to the rescue of Protestants against the Catholic League of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, and won significant victories in the Thirty Years War which lasted from 1618 to 1648.

Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, Farel, Knox, Cranmer, Cromwell, Latimer, Ridley and William of Orange are other great names associated with the Protestant Reformation. Their lives, although far from faultless, are still an inspiration to the Christian today who sees the importance of holding the true faith, and proclaiming and defending it fearlessly, come what may. Imprisonment, torture and the stake do not now await the Protestant, but it is still the case that fidelity to the truth of the Scriptures often brings persecution (albeit in more subtle ways than formerly), ostracism, as well as personal and financial disadvantage.

REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The Protestant Reformation really began with John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century, and reached its most widespread influence after Luther's protest and subsequent work in the sixteenth century. The writings of Wycliffe and Huss were quietly circulated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and prepared people's minds for Luther's protests which awakened the whole of Western Europe.

A second reason for success of the Reformation was that the Papacy's policy of oppression became more pronounced and therefore more galling and more deeply resented by the people.

The third and most potent reason for the Reformation's success was the invention of printing by John Gutenberg in 1450. It seems reasonable to conclude that this discovery was providential. The Lord's time had come for the truth of the Scriptures to be brought to light and spread abroad at this time in the Gospel Age. The great benefit of printing can be seen in the contrast between the time of Wycliffe and that of Tyndale. One of Wycliffe's Bibles took ten months to copy by hand and cost forty pounds; while Tyndale's New Testament was issued by thousands from the press in Germany in 1525 and copies sold for about three shillings and sixpence each.

Both Papists and Reformers were quick to see the value of the press. Bibles and New Testaments were wanted for the universities and monasteries, and people were beginning to want copies for themselves. Luther published his complete edition of the Bible in German in 1534. It must always be remembered that Rome restricted the use of German translations, as it did with the Vulgate, to certain classes of society, and did not encourage the ordinary people to read or study the Bible, whereas Luther preached and wrote and translated impartially for the benefit of poor and rich, ignorant and learned, peasant and prince.

Luther and Tyndale alike were moved with the holy desire to place the Word of God in the hands of all people everywhere, believing that God intended His Word to be read and studied by everyone. It is fair to say, in view of what follows, that any wide circulation of the Bible by Rome has been done in imitation of Protestantism, and to counteract Protestant influence, rather than from any zeal for or interest in teaching Biblical truth to the people.

THE OPPOSITION OF ROME

Prior to 1966 the Papacy authorised and published the Index Liborum Prohibitorum (Index of Forbidden Books). The Index was suppressed in June 1966, but this is what the Index said when Papal power was much greater than it is today:

"If any shall have the presumption to read or possess the Bible without written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he have first delivered up such Bible to the ordinary. Booksellers who shall sell or otherwise dispose of Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any person not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books, ... and be subjected by the bishop to such other penalties as the bishop shall judge proper."

In the above passage the "ordinary" means an archbishop, a bishop or other ecclesiastic or his deputy.

At the Council of Trent (1545 - 63), a protracted series of meetings of Roman Catholic dignitaries, the writings of the Reformers were absolutely prohibited. The Vulgate (the official Latin Bible of the Roman Catholic Church) was the only authorised version of the Scriptures, and the only one to be quoted as an inspired text. Scholars might, by special permission of their ecclesiastical superiors, possess another version, but they were never to quote it as authoritative. Versions in the vernacular were never to be quoted.

In 1816 Pope Pius VII issued a Bull (an official Papal document) in which he called Bible Societies a pestilence, and prohibited the use of Bibles printed by heretics. In 1825 Pope Leo XII issued another Bull against Bible Societies, meaning, of course, societies which circulate Protestant translations such as the King James Version and various translations in other languages.

It goes without saying that the objections of Rome to widespread Bible reading amount to the realisation that study of the Scriptures will reveal and expose Catholic errors. What Rome really opposes is the interpretation and explanation of the Bible, because such will reveal gross and fundamental Papal errors in doctrine, practice and tradition.

If it is ever asserted that ordinary people like ourselves cannot or do not have the learning or training to compare with qualified, trained and ordained ecclesiastics, or with learned scholars, we ought to remember our Lord's words: *"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"* (Matthew 11:25); and those of the Apostle Paul: *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"* (1 Corinthians 1:26,27).

CHAPTER 11

PART 4

ROME'S GREAT FURY

"... therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." (Daniel 11:44).

Other modern translations of Daniel 11:44 are clearer :

"... and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many." (NIV);

"... and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many." (RSV);

"... and he will depart in a great rage to destroy and to exterminate many." (REB).

Rome fought the Reformation with three weapons:

1. Excommunication and the curse of eternal torment for ever and ever without end or intermission;
2. The sword and the flame to begin in this life the tortures promised for the next;
3. Flattery and cajolery with a view to reclaiming the dissentients;

None of these succeeded in breaking the movement.

Then *"he,"* that is Papal Rome, tried a fourth method which met with a measure of success, namely, slandering the characters of the Reformers and their followers, mis-stating their doctrines, counterfeiting whatever *"he"* saw *"he"* could use to bolster his waning power. These activities together are called by historians the Counter Reformation.

The Papacy used excommunication and interdict (exclusion from sacred acts) to coerce the monarchs of Europe. When these failed, one or more neighbouring kings would be persuaded to punish the offender by conquering his territory or at least devastating it. But the Papacy's greatest fury was spent on those who loved the Word of God, and who declared the availability of salvation outside and apart from the Church by faith in Jesus Christ.

Wycliffe had at least three Bulls issued against him and escaped martyrdom only because he had influence at Court. His writings, however, were burnt, and thirty years after his death his body was exhumed and publicly burnt and his ashes were scattered in a nearby stream. Huss and Jerome of Prague were imprisoned and subsequently burnt at the stake; their country was invaded and their followers persecuted and killed.

Tyndale was imprisoned, strangled, and his body cast into the fire. Luther would have suffered a similar fate had it not been for the powerful protection of the Elector of Saxony and other rulers who were glad of the opportunity to break with their tyrannical overlord.

Luther gave them the courage they previously lacked by showing them the falsity of the Pope's claim to be the Vicar of Christ and judge of people's souls; and pointing them to the true Head of the Church and true Judge of the human race, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Once assured that their eternal salvation did not depend on submission to Papal authority, but on their personal faith in Christ, and once realising that the poverty and ignorance of their subjects were due largely to the influence of priests and monks, many rulers in Europe were ready to assert themselves for liberty and the Gospel.

Luther died in 1546 and seventy years later the Thirty Years War commenced. This was the greatest effort that the Papacy and its adherents put forth to stamp out Protestantism in Germany. The conflict spread to all of Europe, and resulted in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 signed by Austria, Sweden and Germany, extending toleration to Calvinists as well as Lutherans.

THE INQUISITION

The Inquisition was another weapon of "*great fury*". The idea conveyed in the term "inquisition" is the punishment of spiritual or ecclesiastical offences by physical pains and penalties. The idea was not a new one in the Reformation period. It had existed in the days of Constantine. As far as the medieval Church is concerned, historians distinguish between the Episcopal, the Papal and the Spanish Inquisitions.

In the semi-barbarous Church of the early Middle Ages, an understanding between Church and State was reached. It was recognised as the Church's duty to point out heretics, and that of the State to punish them, the Church being represented by the bishops. This was the Episcopal Inquisition and it took many forms, but was never very effective in the suppression of heresy.

In 1208, Pope Innocent III, alarmed at the spread of alleged heresies throughout southern France and northern Italy, published a Bull censuring the indifference of the bishops, and appointing the Abbot of Citeaux his delegate in matters of heresy, and giving him power to judge and punish heresy.

This was an act of Papal centralisation, and was the beginning of the Inquisition as a separate institution. This is known as the Papal Inquisition. It did not displace the former Episcopal Inquisition, but existed side by side with it. The Papal Inquisition, however, was by far the more effective weapon in the suppression of heresy. It was known officially as the "Apostolic Tribunal for the Suppression of Heresy," and was usually managed by the Dominican and Franciscan Orders.

The Spanish Inquisition arose in the closing decades of the fifteenth century. It differed from the Papal Inquisition in that it was to be strictly under royal control, that the sovereigns (Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain) were to have the appointment of the Inquisitors, and that the fines and confiscations were to flow into the royal treasury.

Two royal Inquisitors were appointed on 14 September, 1480 and the first auto-da-fe, at which six persons were burnt at the stake, took place on 6 February, 1481. (An auto-da-fe is a public declaration of the judgement passed on persons tried in the courts of the Spanish Inquisition, followed by executions of the sentences imposed, including the burning by civil authorities of heretics at the stake.)

Various modifications in the constitution of the Spanish Inquisition were made in succeeding years, but it was finally organised with a council, presided over by an Inquisitor-General, Thomas de Torquemada.

The Spanish Inquisition was highly successful in its nefarious work. Noting its success, Rome reorganised the Papal Inquisition. Thus it came about that the "Congregation of the

Inquisition" was founded by Pope Paul III in 1542, consisting of a number of cardinals whose duty it was to inquire into heresies. He also suggested the creation of the "Index of Forbidden Books" in 1548.

Pope Paul IV is said not to have missed a single sitting of the Holy Office, the inquisitorial court that judged heretics. He also issued a Bull for defining and punishing rulers who were heretics or friendly to heretics, and he prohibited all translations of the Bible into the everyday language of the people.

The Inquisition of the Middle Ages had been persistent in searching out and punishing heretics, notably the Waldensians and other small groups of Christians who resisted the claims of the Pope. These inhabited the valleys of northern Italy and parts of Switzerland and France, and it is believed they handed down the Scriptures by word of mouth from one generation to another from earliest times in the Gospel Age. They were a serious, industrious people, and whenever a Pope became zealous for the Catholic faith, he would send inquisitors to find them in their mountain homes, seek by various means to convert them, and when these failed, send armies to annihilate them and confiscate their goods.

In 1390 one hundred and fifty men, women and children of the Valley of San Martino were massacred in cold blood by an Inquisitor named Borelli. In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a Bull commissioning Charles VIII of France and Charles II of Savoy to continue the work. An army of 18,000 men was sent against the so-called heretics, some of whom were saved from discovery by clouds in the mountains which hid them from their pursuers. Others defended themselves as best they could, but many were killed, unable to defend themselves against trained soldiers. This campaign of extermination continued intermittently for three centuries, and its "*great fury*" is responsible for many thousands of martyrs.

THE JESUITS

While the Inquisitions were engaged in their nefarious work, the rulers of Europe were breaking free to a great extent from Papal political dominion. The campaign against so-called heretics and the opposition to the Reformation might have eased somewhat but for the foundation by Ignatius Loyola of the Order of the Society of Jesus, confirmed by Pope Paul III on

27 September, 1540. Membership of this Society required members to make a fourth vow added to the three customary vows of the priesthood, pledging the Society to serve the Roman Pontiff.

The Jesuits, as they came to be called, were granted the rights of the clergy and of the Mendicant Orders, and together with their goods, were exempted from all secular jurisdiction and taxation. They were therefore subject to no one but their own superiors and the Pope. Whatever the Pope commanded them to do, and into whatever countries he might send them, they would consider themselves bound to obey without hesitation or excuse.

The Order grew rapidly in wealth and influence, sometimes with the favour of the Pope, and sometimes in conflict with him. The leader of the Jesuits is known as the Black Pope, and at times has been considered more powerful even than the Pope himself.

The Jesuits soon spread all over Europe, opening schools to gain control of the young, meddling in politics to regain if possible lost temporal power, influencing the decisions of councils such as the Council of Trent, founding to all intents and purposes the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), under Gregory XV (1621 - 23), writing expositions of the Catholic faith and fighting against heretics secretly or publicly, as best suited their purposes.

Nowadays the Jesuits are not as powerful or influential as they once were, but their doctrine still remains: "Cum finis est licitus etiam media sunt licita" (when the end is lawful the means are also lawful). The doctrine is also stated in "Theologia Moralis" by a Jesuit priest called Laymann: "Cum concessus est finis concessa etiam sunt media ad finem ordinata" (when the end is allowable the means ordained to the end are allowable also). Both statements are paraphrased in English as "the end justifies the means".

ROME'S CONTINUED FURY

In England on 27 November, 1527, the itinerant preacher Thomas Bilney, was arrested and subsequently burnt at the stake. He was followed by Bayfield, Tewkesbury and Bainham, while hundreds of less prominent people were mercilessly persecuted.

In 1553 Henry VIII's daughter, Mary, a Catholic, came to the throne of England and married Philip II of Spain, also a Catholic, and the persecution of Protestants in England was undertaken and pursued with vigour. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, Rogers, Coverdale and Bradford were burnt at the stake.

All reform ministers who would not recant were deprived of their livings and hundreds sought refuge abroad. Some two hundred and eighty-eight persons were publicly burnt between 4 February, 1555 and 15 November, 1558, when five martyrs perished in one fire in Canterbury. The Spanish alliance wrought terrible havoc in the land as the yoke of Rome was again upon the neck of England.

When Elizabeth I came to the throne of England in 1558 she took up the Protestant cause. Books and printing were again encouraged and the Gospel again proclaimed. Scotland embraced Protestantism and united with England to expel the foreign power and influence of Rome. What was the Pope's reply? Pope Pius V absolved all Catholics from allegiance to the Queen. Bands of Jesuits travelled the country, and several attempts were made on the Queen's life.

The supreme effort of Spain and Rome to impress Romanism on England was the Spanish Armada in 1588. It was blessed by Pope Sixtus V, but met with disaster against Sir Francis Drake and the smaller English warships and England was free again.

In Scotland and Ireland, persecutions were continuous for at least one hundred years from 1538 to 1638 when Scottish leaders signed a Covenant granting freedom of worship and frustrating Papal designs. On 23 October, 1641, there occurred a horrible massacre in Ireland, in which some forty thousand Protestants were killed in cold blood.

England suffered some thirty years of war and tyranny before Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans threw off the Roman yoke, set up the so-called Commonwealth and deposed the monarchy from 1649 to 1660.

The monarchy was restored in 1660 and Charles II came to the throne. Under the Act of Uniformity of 1662, in imitation of Papal methods, two thousand Protestant clergymen in England

gave up their livings rather than give unqualified assent to the Book of Common Prayer with its ambiguous references to the Lord's Supper. The same Act of Uniformity also drove some four hundred Presbyterian ministers from their churches.

The next King of England was James II, a strong Papist. There were more persecutions under his reign until the people had had enough. James II was deposed and William of Orange, a staunch Protestant, was invited to take over the English throne in 1688.

The thumb-screw and various instruments of torture used by the Papists in those days are still to be seen in the Tower of London. *"With great fury"* truly describes the energy with which Rome persecuted Protestants and, wherever possible, destroyed them.

In France, also, Protestants were tortured to obtain their recantation. William Farel, preacher, and Lefevre, who published a French New Testament in 1524, paved the way for Calvin and later Reformers. Both had to flee to Switzerland to save their lives. On 22 April, 1529, Louis de Berguin was publicly burned to death. Hundreds of others met a similar fate.

On 21 January, 1535, Francis I of France ordered a great procession and fast in Paris. The bishops traversed Paris bearing aloft the host, the *"strange god"* of Daniel 11:39, and there followed a massacre of every Protestant that could be found. Francis prohibited printing throughout the realm, and, before his death in 1547, Francis caused twenty-two towns and villages in Provence to be sacked by his soldiers and Protestants put to the sword.

The Inquisition was set up in Paris, presided over by three Spanish Inquisitors, before whom suspects were brought and tortured and many afterward burned. For thirty years Catherine de Medici, Queen of France, alternately encouraged and suppressed the French Protestants, known as the Huguenots. She is directly implicated in co-operation with the terrible Duke of Alba in the fearful massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day on 24 August, 1572.

The Duke of Alba's soldiers hunted the unarmed Huguenots from house to house and street to street and killed them. In the Louvre, which was then the monarch's palace,

some two hundred Protestant nobles and gentlemen of rank, who had been invited as guests of the Court, were murdered. In all, some seventy thousand Huguenots perished throughout France by this one massacre alone.

What was Rome's response to this wholesale persecution and slaughter?

It was one of rejoicing. Pope Gregory XIII gave thanks for deliverance from the Church's enemies, rewarded the messenger who brought the news with 1000 crowns and caused a medal to be struck commemorating the event. *"He" had truly gone forth "with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many"*.

But the Duke of Alva, the Spanish Inquisitors and the Pope's envoys did not confine their nefarious work to Spain, France and Britain. They turned their attention to Switzerland and the Netherlands. The people of Switzerland were greatly helped by their surrounding mountains, and were able to defeat the Pope's forces and open their gates to refugees from other lands.

In the Netherlands, however, the Protestant conflict was long and severe, the Netherlands being devoid of natural defences such as the Swiss possessed. False promises, treachery, the sword: the Duke of Alva and his successors used them all. Inquisitors were sent throughout the seventeen provinces to hunt out suspects, offering rewards for evidence against them. Suspects were brought before the Inquisitors in batches as large as ninety-five at a time and hastily condemned. The Duke of Alva wrote to Philip II telling him of 1500 taken early one morning from their beds, and later another batch of 800, and in each case he added, "I have ordered all of them to be shot". The highways of the country were lined with the bodies of Protestants killed by the Duke of Alva's soldiers.

When the Duke of Nassau, William of Orange (later King of England) and other princes organised rebellion against Papal tyrannies, Spanish ships and troops were brought against them. The Dutch were victorious against Spanish ships, but their towns could not hold out against trained soldiers. Massacres of men, women and children followed. Ultimately, however, the Dutch were victorious, their last line of defence being the dykes, the walls which kept out the sea, and which, in the hour of greatest peril, they breached to engulf the invaders.

Despite this extensive bloodshed, Rome gained little in Holland, Scandinavia, Britain, Germany and Switzerland. The Inquisition in Spain was more successful in exterminating Jews and Protestants and other so-called heretics, but the number of its victims can only be conjectured. During the first one hundred and thirty-nine years of its existence, Spain was depopulated by some three million people. During Torquemada's presidency 144,000 persons were accused, 10,320 were burnt to death, and 97,000 condemned to life imprisonment or public penitence.

Where in history can be found a more exact fulfilment of the prophecy: *"He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many"*? Of all earth's powers, only the Papacy has ever been guilty of such *"fury"*. The Revelator, speaking of Great Babylon, a symbol of the Papacy, writes: *"In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."* (Revelation 18:24).

The Spanish Inquisition, in spite of being such a blight on Christianity and humanity generally, continued until 1809, when Napoleon forcibly deposed it, opened the prisons and exposed the instruments of torture to a horrified world.

THE COUNTER REFORMATION

This term is applied to Roman Catholic efforts in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries against the Protestant Reformation. The term is also used more broadly to refer to all the attempts at internal reform that took place within the Roman Catholic Church and that began shortly before Luther.

The Counter Reformation was inaugurated by more far-seeing Popes, who realised that the harsh methods of the three Inquisitions against so-called heretics were alienating many who would otherwise have remained Romanists. Therefore, these more far-seeing Popes imposed much-needed reforms in morals and general conduct on priests and people in an endeavour to take away, or at least minimise, the reproach brought about by the harsh and often brutal measures against "heretics".

But the Counter Reformation did not stop at the general work of purification. Much of the growth and stability of Protestantism was due to the founding of schools and colleges for all classes; children were taught to read, and were instructed in the principles of Protestantism.

The Jesuits opened schools and colleges in all countries, placed their own literature in the hands of people and thus retained many of their adherents who might otherwise have turned Protestant. Through their schools the Jesuits gained the obedience of the children of unbelievers and sceptics, and through the children, the parents.

The Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555 secured the recognition of the Reformation within the Holy Roman Empire. This gave Protestants a sense of security, but also left the way open for peaceful Jesuit propaganda. The Jesuit Petrus Canisius was rapidly advanced by the Jesuit's founder, Ignatius Loyola, and was quick to seize the opportunity for Jesuit propaganda. He organised clergy and people to steadfast resistance of the worldly tendencies of some of the German princes, formed student associations, and built up the Order so that it became very powerful. Results of his work can still be seen, though less clearly nowadays, in the Catholic states of Germany and Austria.

The Jesuits and their activities amount to the fourth weapon, in addition to the three previously mentioned, by which Rome fought Protestantism. What could not be crushed or annihilated by fire and sword might be rendered comparatively harmless by diplomacy, flattery, distortion and mis-statement of facts, and if necessary, bribery. By such methods the Jesuits became, in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the marvel of Christendom. Space forbids details and examples of these methods in action. Suffice it to say that they succeeded in undermining Protestantism to a considerable extent. Even today some Protestant clergymen and women are seen to be praising Rome and recommending union with it.

Thus it has come about that instead of the Great Reformation accomplishing what its founders and designers intended -- the complete overthrow of the Papal hierarchy and the liberation of its adherents -- God's true people received only a *"little help"* (Daniel 11:34). The masses of mankind are still in bondage or in ignorance, and the *"deadly wound"* which the *"beast"* received is largely *"healed"* (Revelation 13:12).

As evidence of this, Protestantism still upholds many of the false doctrines and creeds of Rome. One of the great truths that Luther saw clearly is that every true believer is a priest. This is denied by the Papacy and Protestantism, both of which require priests or pastors to be specially trained and be granted special

privileges not available to lay persons. The Scriptures, on the contrary, grant these privileges freely to all believers.

THE TABERNACLES OF HIS PALACE

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." (Daniel 11:45).

The pronoun "he" which occurs twice in this verse, still refers to the same "he" of Daniel 11, verses 36 and onward:

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans, and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." (Daniel 11:36-45).

"He" in this verse is the *"king which shall do according to his will"* who shall *"exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods"* (Daniel 11:36), and exalt *"himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is (a) God"* (2 Thessalonians 2:4). "He" is clearly the Papacy. No other power or kingdom could possibly fulfil these prophetic words, as has been commented previously.

Chapter eleven of Daniel has detailed the history of kings and nations which would succeed one another in possession of the Holy Land to which Daniel's people, the Jews, had returned from their captivity in Babylon. After the Messiah came at His first advent, *"Daniel's people"* were no longer the Jewish nation exclusively, but were the *"remnant"* who accepted their Messiah, joined to those from among the Gentiles who believed into Jesus Christ, the whole constituting a new Israel, the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16; Romans 11:5; 1 Peter 2:10).

The Israel of God are called individually, and together constitute the Church of Jesus Christ called in this Gospel Age to the Kingdom and glory of the Messiah. These are the *"saints of the Most High"* to whom in vision Daniel saw the Kingdom given 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Daniel 7:18; Revelation 3:21).

It is most important, therefore, to understand in what relationship the Papacy would stand to that Kingdom. Daniel 11:45 tells us:

"... he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain."

Modern translations make this clause clearer by using "and" instead of "in":

"And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain." (RSV);

"He shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious Holy Mountain." (Modern Language Version);

"He will pitch his royal pavilion between the sea and the holy hill, ..." (REB);

"And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain." (RV).

The Variorum footnotes and margin, Young's literal translation, and the Amplified Bible also have *"and"* instead of *"in"*.

Because the *"glorious land"* of Daniel 11 verses 16 and 41 refers to Palestine, some commentators assume that the *"glorious holy mountain"* of verse 45 also refers to the Holy Land. Some commentators and translators, such as the translator of the Living Bible, take the *"glorious holy mountain"* to refer to Jerusalem.

Acting on this interpretation it is thought that the *"king"* or power to fulfil this prophecy must be one literally established in the land of Palestine. The Turkish power was established in Palestine for several hundred years, so the Turk is thought to be meant in Daniel 11:45. If this is so, then the *"he"* of verse 45 must also be the *"he"* of previous verses. The Turkish power does not fit the words of prophecy in Daniel 11:36-45. In any case Turkish power came to an end in 1917 when Palestine was liberated by the allied armies.

Some greater and more significant interpretation must be sought for verse 45 in harmony with the context. It is reasonable to consider the possibility of the symbolic use of *"mountain"* and *"seas"* in this passage because both terms are used symbolically in other parts of Daniel and in other Scriptures.

In Psalm 46:2 and 3 we read: *"Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea: Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."*

Verse 6 explains the meaning of these symbols: *"The heathen (or nations) raged, the kingdoms were moved"*. Here it is clear that *"mountains"* stand for kingdoms or governments, while the *"sea"* stands for people ruled over, who are continually beating up against and seeking to bring down the governments in the sense either of making them more democratic or even overthrowing them altogether.

Another illustrative passage is Jeremiah 51:42: *"The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof"*.

This was not a literal inundation of Babylon by the ocean, as the ocean lay hundreds of kilometres away. The reference is to the overthrow of Babylon by the multitudes who came against her under Darius and Cyrus.

Haggai 2:6 contains three symbols: *"For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land"*.

The following verse explains that what is meant by shaking the heavens, earth and sea is that God will shake all nations:

- (1) the ruling authorities (heavens);
- (2) the social order (earth); and
- (3) the restless masses of humanity (sea).

The shaking of heaven and earth has the same meaning in Hebrews 12:26, 27. The Lord Jesus used the same symbolism when He spoke of *"the sea and the waves roaring"* (Luke 21:25).

When John wrote in the Revelation *"And there was no more sea"* he used the same symbolism (Revelation 21:1). He did not mean that there would be no more oceans, but rather that the time will come when the masses of the nations will no more be agitating and surging against governmental authorities, but will be in peace and contentment under the Kingdom of God.

Earlier in his prophecy Daniel had seen four winds strive upon the sea, and four beasts come up out of the sea (Daniel 7:2,3). Here again the *"sea"* represents the restless masses of humanity. It is therefore reasonable to understand the angel's continuing use of this symbol to give God's people an idea of what to expect from the Papal system. The idea is that the Papacy (*"he"*) places itself between the people and God's glorious holy mountain.

What is meant by the *"glorious holy mountain"*? The angel uses *"mountain"* in the same symbolic sense as in other passages, especially Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image. There a stone represented the Kingdom of God which struck the image on the feet and broke it to pieces. Then the stone became a *"great mountain"* and filled the whole earth. This great mountain is specifically stated in Daniel 2:44 to represent the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is indeed a *"glorious holy mountain"*, a *"mountain of delight of holiness"* [Variorum footnotes and margin] (Isaiah 11:1-9; 25:6-8). The same symbol is also used in Isaiah 65:25: *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord."*

When the time comes for God's Kingdom to be established in power and authority on the earth, the Papacy will not be able to withstand it, but for the present in this evil order of things the Papacy is able to interpose between the people and the Kingdom of God. The Papacy has been able to do this for centuries because the Kingdom has consisted of an absent King, of subjects in a state of humiliation, and a government over the minds of believing people rather than a government over material, physical things (Luke 19:12; 1 Peter 4:12,13; Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 3:17).

The Papacy has been, and still is to some extent, a material power usurping the functions of the Kingdom of God, and being established visibly on earth with political power and influence (more in past centuries than now), is able to obstruct people and keep them separated from the true Kingdom of God. This obstruction of people is what is meant in Daniel 11:45 by:

"... he shall plant the tabernacles (or tents or pavilions) of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain."

The Hebrew word "appeden" translated as *"palace"* is probably of foreign origin, and means a pavilion or palace tent. Daniel 11:45 is the only place where it occurs. The chiefs of nomadic Asiatic tribes often dwelt in luxurious tents. The kings of Assyria, Babylon and Persia did likewise when on military campaigns, often taking with them their families and servants. The same was later true of the Turks.

In the case of the Papacy, *"he"* did not scatter literal tents all over Europe, but *"planted"* what these luxurious palace tents stood for, that is, *"he"* placed himself and his emissaries between the people and the Kingdom of God. *"He"* did not enter the *"glorious holy mountain"* himself, and those who sought to enter it *"he"* barred and hindered.

"He" diluted and weakened the authority of Christ the King by the worship of Mary, saints, and various objects such as the host, images and relics, and obstructed the path of those who

sought to approach their Saviour directly. Further, *"he"* substituted for the true holiness required by God's Kingdom an outward and ostentatious show of ritual and ceremonial.

But *"he"* did more. *"He"* made himself the only channel of communication between God and men; *"he"* usurped our Lord's office as Mediator, *"he"* made membership in the Roman Church the only ground of salvation and the only means of entry into God's Kingdom.

All this *"he"* did for centuries with considerable success. Then came the Protestant Reformation, by which his position as obstructor and false mediator was exposed to the people. But that storm *"he"* weathered, and his *"deadly wound"* was healed. *"He"* went out with *"great fury"* to destroy his opponents, and by various means had some success. However, as Daniel 11:45 says, *"... yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him"*.

This prophecy is reassuring. That great system that deceived *"all nations"* is to be brought to nought. (Revelation 18:23). But how will this be done? Who will do it and when?

CHAPTER 12

HE SHALL COME TO HIS END

"... yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."
(Daniel 11:45).

"He" as we have seen in earlier verses, refers to the Papacy. "His end" as we see from other Scriptures, consists of a number of stages leading up to the final and complete end of the Papal system.

The Great Reformation brought one phase of the Papacy to an end, namely its dominance over the northern rulers and countries of Europe. The next phase of *"his end"* was the loss of temporal power in the Papal states, and the loss of prestige in France and Italy. This phase began about the time of the French Revolution. Daniel 7:11 has given us an indication that the Papacy would not be destroyed in a moment or a short period of time, but would be consumed in stages: *"I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame"*.

The Great Reformation restricted the Papacy, but did not destroy it or put it out of existence. A period of time had been set, during which the Papacy would be permitted to prosper. Daniel 7:25 tells us this: *"And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."*

These words refer to the Papacy. Consequently *"his end"* could not take place in any final sense until that prophesied period had ended. Until then the destructive forces are largely held back. *"But"* the prophecy continues, *"the judgment shall sit,"* and as a result, *"they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end"* (Daniel 7:26).

"His end" therefore, of Daniel 11:45, consists of a period of time, which in its turn has an end, for the Papacy is to be consumed and destroyed *"unto the end"*, that is, the final and complete end.

The "time, and times and the dividing of time" amount to 1,260 years, as we saw in chapter seven. This period of time extended from 529 - 539 AD to 1789 - 1799 AD, at which latter time the consumption of the Papacy began as decreed by the "judgement" of Daniel 7:26. The consumption has continued up to the present time, and will continue until its full accomplishment. The consumption has been gradual, with waves of trouble breaking upon the Papacy, but its final end will be, according to Revelation 18:21, like a great millstone cast into the sea, a sudden rapid sinking beneath the tumultuous masses of humanity, never to rise again.

When a large stone such as a millstone is thrown into the sea it makes a great splash, sinks to the ocean floor and remains there. This is illustrative of the Papacy's final overthrow: it will cause a great disturbance in the "sea," that is, among earth's peoples. In the past the Papacy has found supporters and helpers among the nations, but a time is coming when no-one will lift a finger to help him. We do not know how near or how remote that time is, but earnest Bible Students are watching world events and the consumption of the Papacy that is happening before our eyes.

The Apostle Paul writes of the consumption of the Papacy in 2 Thessalonians 2:8: *"Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the manifestation of His presence."*

The King James Version translation has, for the last clause, *"... shall destroy with the brightness of His coming"* which conveys a different idea from the Lord's presence (parousia) being revealed or manifest. It seems from the Apostle's words and other Scriptures that when the period of consumption is completed, the Papacy will be finally destroyed by the appearing of the Lord Jesus, that is, His revealing to the people of the world as God's King taking over the government of the whole world.

AT THAT TIME SHALL MICHAEL STAND UP

The "end" of Daniel 11:45 is not the final and complete end of the Papal system, but the end of the prophetic period of Papal dominion, the 1,260 prophetic days of Daniel 7:25. As we have seen in previous comments the end of the prophetic period of 1,260 years ended in the period 1789 - 1793 - 1799. This period marked the beginning of the end for the Papacy, the beginning of the consumption which will end in the Papacy's final destruction.

Who is Michael? He is mentioned in Daniel 10:13 and 21 as *"Michael your prince", "the first of the chief princes"* (KJV margin). The Hebrew word "sar" translated *"prince"* is used of the head of any rank or class, as the prince of the eunuchs in Daniel chapter one. The Angel who occupied the position of prince in connection with the children of Israel is called *"The Angel of His Presence"*. Moses was assured that this Angel would accompany the children of Israel in the wilderness, and would assist him in discharging his responsibilities as mediator, law-giver, and ruler, as the Scriptures tell us:

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared." (Exodus 23:20).

"For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off." (Exodus 23:23).

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." (Isaiah 63:9).

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them." (Exodus 14:19).

In the latter reference the Angel is shown to be in control of the pillar of cloud, moving it before or behind the camp of Israel as a sign that they should either go forward or pitch camp.

Moses did not live to see these tribes conquered and the Israelites settled in their lands, as he died in Beth-peor in the land of Moab, after having been given only a sight of the promised land in which dwelt the peoples mentioned in Exodus 23:23.

In Exodus 32:34 Moses is told by the Lord, *"Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee ..."*.

Moses guided the children of Israel and the Angel guided Moses. And so through all the history of the children of Israel, the Angel directed the destinies of the nation, and was still doing so in Daniel's day.

Gabriel gives us His name and title: "*Michael your prince*", "*the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people*" (Daniel 10:21; 12:1).

The Hebrew name "Miykael" is defined in Strong's Concordance as meaning, "who like God?" or "Who is like God?". It was in Scripture the name of nine Israelites and Israel's Angel-prince. In the latter case the name may well have been chosen to indicate that the Angel was acting as God's representative exercising sovereign power.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 the Israelites are spoken of as having partaken of a Rock that went with them: "*... for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them*". The Greek word for "Rock" here is *petra*, and Dr. Strong informs us that it can be used literally or figuratively. The word rendered "*spiritual*" is *pneumatikos*, and has the sense of non-carnal or supernatural. The meaning is that the children of Israel partook of food and drink that was miraculously provided, and partook of the spiritual strength and blessings brought to them by the Angel, the spiritual Rock.

The Apostle then tells us specifically, "*that Rock was Chris.*" (1 Corinthians 10:4). In these words the Apostle Paul identifies Michael as the "*Rock*" of the wilderness, the "*Angel of His Presence*". The pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ is here established. In His pre-human estate He was God's chief messenger: His Agent in creation; (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16) by Whom He made the ages (Hebrews 1:2), and the Builder of the Jewish house (Hebrews 3:2,3. He was in all probability the chief of the three angels who visited Abraham (Genesis 18), and the "*captain of the host of the Lord*" who appeared to Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15).

This mighty Prince, Daniel was given to understand, stood for the children of Israel. He cared for them during their captivity in Babylon, and at the time Gabriel spoke, was actively engaged in affairs relating to their well-being under Cyrus the Persian King.

Michael is called by Jude *"the archangel"*, or chief angel, and one of his duties was to prevent the devil obtaining Moses' body (Jude 9). Coming from the land of the mummy, where the custom was to place the bodies of kings in stone pyramids, to be worshipped by the people in temples built at the bases of these pyramids, the children of Israel would easily have been tempted to preserve Moses' body to be worshipped also. It was therefore in the devil's interest, ever on the alert to tempt and deceive, to secure Moses' body and let it fall into the hands of the children of Israel. But Michael was stronger than he, and buried Moses' body so effectively that no-one has ever been able to locate his burial place (Deuteronomy 34:6).

Further identification of Michael as the Lord Jesus Christ in His pre-human estate is the *"voice of the archangel"* in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This voice causes the dead to rise from the grave. The only One with this power and authority is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:25-29). There is only one archangel mentioned in Scripture, Michael the Archangel. Many angels are mentioned, but only one archangel.

Let us note the sequence and closeness of the words: *"Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at that time shall Michael stand up."* (The original manuscript was not divided into chapters and verses.) The words indicate clearly that *"he"*, the Papacy, is to be brought to his end by Michael, Whom we now know as the Lord Jesus Christ, and Who is prophesied to take a particularly defined action, namely to *"stand up"*. In the comments on chapter eleven it was pointed out that to *"stand up"* means to begin the exercise of kingly authority and power (Daniel 11:3).

But if Michael is our Lord Jesus Christ, did He not begin to exercise His kingly authority and power after His resurrection? Jesus Himself said, *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18).

Peter said in Acts 2:36, *"... God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

It is true, of course, that all power in heaven and earth was given to the Lord Jesus Christ after His ascension. But He did not begin to exercise that kingly authority immediately, because firstly in God's plan and purpose the fourth world empire was to continue and fulfil prophecy by the setting up and development of

the Papal system, and secondly a people was to be taken out of the Gentile nations *"for His Name"* (Acts 15:14).

Moreover the turmoil and warfare, the suffering and persecution of God's people throughout the Gospel Age, the general injustice, calamities and prevalence of evil people, along with the suffering and wretchedness of millions of human beings, should be sufficient evidence to conclude that the Lord Jesus Christ, God's rightful and righteous King, did not begin to exercise kingly authority and power immediately after His ascension.

One thousand two hundred and sixty years had been decreed during which the Papacy would be permitted to exercise dominion to *"wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time"* (Daniel 7:25). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Lord Jesus would not *"stand up"* to begin to exercise His kingly power and authority until the close of the 1,260 years of Papal ascendancy.

When was this?

In comments on previous chapters, especially chapter seven, it was stated that the Papacy's career began in the years 529 to 539 AD. The Papacy's temporal and spiritual powers were maintained with varying vicissitudes for 1,260 years, ending in the period 1789 - 1799. This latter period was the beginning of the end for the Papacy, but it was not the complete end, because the Scriptures tell us that the Papacy is to be brought to its end by a gradual consumption. *"They shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end."* (Daniel 7:26).

The Apostle Paul says the same thing of the Papal system: *"... whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the manifestation of his presence"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Young's literal translation).

What happened in the period 1789 - 1799 to lend support to the understanding that the Lord Jesus commenced to exert His kingly power and authority at that time? Are there events and developments at that time and since that time that might confirm, or at least indicate, that the Lord Jesus began to exert His influence on this evil world order?

1. Firstly, as if to mark the end of the 1,260 years of prophecy, the Pope, the one who claimed to be the Vicar of Christ on earth, was taken prisoner in 1799 by Napoleon's forces and carried off in captivity to France.
2. At Napoleon's coronation as Emperor, Napoleon did not permit the Pope to place the crown on his (Napoleon's) head, but took the crown from the altar and placed it on his own head. Napoleon's action demonstrated in a practical yet symbolic manner that the Pope's domination of temporal rulers was at an end.
3. Following the French Revolution the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity were more widely disseminated than they had ever been before, and political constitutions were granted to many peoples who had never before enjoyed these safeguards of the rights of all people.
4. The last vestige of temporal power, apart from the Vatican itself, was removed from the Papacy in 1870.
5. At the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, there occurred the formation of missionary associations and Bible societies for the free circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment. The first of these was the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. Then followed the London Missionary Society in 1795, the Netherlands Missionary Society in 1797, the Church Missionary Society in 1799, and the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804.
6. By the end of the eighteenth century, interest in the Millennium and the Second Advent of Jesus Christ arose, and in the nineteenth century the Second Adventists began to emphasise the importance of the Lord's return. The interest in the Lord's return rapidly increased and spread. William Miller, a Baptist minister, preached of the Lord's return from 1829, and predicted that this event would occur in 1844. The nineteenth century was the century of Second Advent expectation, evidenced by the many Advent Conferences during that century, attended by leading Christians, ministers and laymen, involving a great part of the Christian world.

7. The increase of knowledge prophesied in Daniel 12:4 has continued apace. At the end of the nineteenth century the sum of human knowledge was double the amount it had been at the beginning of that century. Now the sum of human knowledge is doubling at least as often as every six years.

8. The *"time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time"* of Daniel 12:1 is different from previous times of trouble such as:

- (i) the whole experience of our race from Adam onward;
- (ii) the time of trouble upon the Jews after Rome punished them and scattered them in 71 AD; and
- (iii) the 1,260 years of Papal ascendancy.

The time of trouble following Michael's standing up in the period 1789 - 1799 also differed from all other reforms and revelations which had preceded it.

The French Revolution levelled up society in its political, social, religious and economic phases as no previous movement or revolution had ever done. Its devastation of the social order was like the devastation of an earthquake when it strikes earthly localities.

The French Revolution upset the equilibrium of long established laws, customs, practices and ideas, and nearly everything else connected with the social order, often symbolised in Scripture by the earth.

The French Revolution can also be likened to the effects of a severe storm of wind and hail on the literal earth which damages, overturns and washes away almost everything that stands in its path.

In the midst of this figurative earthquake and storm there was revealed (very imperfectly, but nevertheless revealed) a picture of a new order of society in which all are citizens and brethren, in which the good of each and all is sought by all and by each, and in which religion is a daily mode of life as well as a system of doctrinal belief.

Society as it existed in 1789 - 99 was not ready for so great a change in the social order to become permanent. There were too many ready to use the Revolution for their own personal

profit. Many were fearful of the mighty forces let loose, and cried to the *"mountains and rocks"* to fall on them and hide them *"from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb"* (Revelation 6:15-17). Many looked about for protection, and found it by a return to the laws, religion, economic and social arrangements, and other institutions of the old order which they had ostensibly left.

From 1795 onwards plots and counterplots followed one another, in the effort on the one hand of the people to retain the liberties gained by the Revolution, and on the other of interested persons to secure their own advancement, of royalty and the aristocracy to re-establish themselves, and of the Church to regain its former position of guide and overlord to the state.

It is not feasible to enter into details of the rise and wars of Napoleon Bonaparte. Suffice it to say that Napoleon's rise and the wars he waged had in general terms a double effect. The first effect was to check the Church of Rome and spread the revolutionary ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. The second effect was to discourage and suppress liberty, equality and fraternity and to return the reactionary rulers, the Pope, and the Church to power.

In these contrary movements we see a conflict between Michael, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator and Uplifter of the people, and the Papacy, along with other reactionaries, which stood for the bondage of the people socially, politically, religiously and economically. We can also see by faith the spiritual conflict between Michael and Satan, *"the god of this world"* (2 Corinthians 4:4) the undoubted power behind the Papacy.

But we know and can ever be thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church will eventually be victorious, as the Scriptures tell us: *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."* (Revelation 17:14).

We should keep in mind that even before the years 1789 - 1799, the due time for the Lord Jesus' assumption of office and power, the Lord Jesus had set influences at work, as He said in the messages to the Church He would do (Revelation chapters 2 and 3). The effect of those influences was clearly seen in the Protestant Reformation, which involved both a

religious and a political revolution in central and northern Europe, and which spread also to America.

None of these movements equalled the French Revolution in scope, but they set the pattern for the French Revolutionists, who added an economic and social revolution to the religious and political, a combination never before attempted or seen. The German, the English and Scottish reformations all continued to tolerate a state church, a feudal system, an aristocracy and a monarchy. The French Revolution cast out all four.

Never before in the history of the human race had there been such uprisings of the people against established authority, both political and religious. During the Reformation there had been protests and wars against Papal tyranny, now in one country, now in another. The Papacy's term of dominion, in accordance with Biblical prophecy, did not end until 1799, so the liberation movements could not forge ahead until after that date. But once these movements did forge ahead, the Papacy's time of trouble greatly increased and has continued to increase.

This particular *"time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation"* could come about only by the spread of general education, the granting of voting rights to the masses, and the transfer of governmental authority from monarchs to parliaments and from titled aristocracies to ordinary people. These very features of our own times were foretold in Daniel 2 under the symbolism of miry clay mixed with iron in the legs, feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dream image. The *"clay"* is an apt symbol for democracy, and in the decades following the French Revolution, the clamour for democracy was at the base of every revolution in Europe, whether accomplished peacefully as in England, or by force of arms as on the Continent.

These revolutionary movements are still in evidence today, and this is another reason why the *"time of trouble, such as never was"* differs from all other times of trouble. The *"time of trouble"* of Daniel 12:1 is of wider extent and involves more nations and peoples than any previous time of trouble ever did. In this twentieth century there have been two world wars, and the shackles of colonialism have mostly been thrown off by previously oppressed and exploited nations and peoples. Many of the world's nations and peoples are now astir and clamouring for rights previously denied them.

We then are witnesses of, and to some extent participants in, this *"time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation"*. We are so privileged as to understand that the reason for world-wide unrest, agitation and even warfare is that the Lord Jesus Christ is overturning this present evil world, that is, the whole social order among the various countries of the human race, in preparation for the Kingdom of God to be set up in power and authority.

What humanity has yet to learn is that fallen human beings, however well-intentioned and idealistic some of its leaders may be, and however altruistic and self-sacrificing some of its members may be, simply cannot govern themselves successfully because as yet sin has not been taken away. Sin, as long as God permits it to endure, will always undo and bring down every attempt human beings may make to govern themselves.

And so it is that this extraordinary time of trouble and conflict will persist until the Lord God, through His appointed King, Jesus Christ, will say to the world, *"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth"* (Psalm 46:10).

Our present day was foretold by the Lord Jesus Himself in Luke 21:25,26: *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the seas and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."*

The Lord was speaking of the unrest, agitation and conflict of our own day. Although we are saddened and often deeply moved by the suffering and distress of so many of earth's peoples, we understand why all this turmoil is happening, and have no need to be perplexed or fearful. The Lord Jesus tells us why in His very next words in Luke 21:27,28 and 31:

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

AT THAT TIME THY PEOPLE SHALL BE DELIVERED

"... and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Daniel 12:1).

What time is meant by *"at that time"*? Who are Daniel's people? When, how and by whom will they be delivered?

The expression *"at that time"* may be understood to cover the whole period when Michael is to *"stand up"*, not merely the first days or years after He begins to take control. We have seen from Daniel 11:3 that to *"stand up"* means to assume kingly authority and power and then to exercise it.

The standing up of Michael, *"the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people"* must mean nothing less than *"standing up"* meant in the case of any of the kings mentioned in Daniel 11. When the three kings of Persia stood up, it meant that they occupied the throne and executed the office of kings. Similarly with Alexander the Great, described in this way, *"a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will"* (Daniel 11:2,3).

So then it is reasonable to understand that when Michael, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, God's rightful King, stood up, it meant that He began to exercise His authority as Heir of the world, and occupied Himself with the consumption of the Papacy and the deliverance of His people.

The work of delivering His people is to proceed simultaneously with the consumption of the power which had for centuries held them in bondage. Just as the kings of Persia and Greece were said to *"stand up"* during the whole of their reigns, it is consistent to understand that the standing up of the Lord Jesus covers the whole of His dealings with the human race until His Kingdom is established *"under the whole heaven"* (Daniel 7:14,27; Isaiah 9:7). The great time of trouble of Daniel 12:1, however, including the consumption of the Papacy, occupied only the first portion of the *"standing up"* period.

It is to this time, to this period of conflict, that the prophecy refers when it says, *"At that time thy people shall be delivered"*.

Who are meant by Daniel's people? Daniel was a Jew, and in the Jewish Age Daniel's people would have been the Jews. But the fulfilment of Daniel 12:1 occurs in the Gospel Age, long after the Jews had been cast off from divine favour because of unbelief and rejection of the Messiah at His first advent (Romans 11:20).

From the time of Christ's earthly ministry and that of the Apostles, the rule has held: *"He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; ... but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly"*. Also, *"they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:"* and *"in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature"* (Romans 2:28,29; 9:6; Matthew 3:9; John 1:47,48; 8:39; Galatians 6:15).

Daniel's people are not the fleshly descendants of Abraham, they are those in this present Gospel Age who are people of faith. Daniel was a man of extraordinary faith, as were the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11. It is faith that God desires, as we read in Hebrews 11:6: *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

So it is that in Daniel's prophecy it is foretold that when the time came for Michael to *"stand up"* and begin the consumption of the symbolic *"beast,"* the people who specially claimed the attention of Michael, the Lord Jesus Christ, were those of faith who worshipped God in sincerity through Jesus Christ, and were opposed to the doctrines and practices of the *"beast"* (Daniel 7:7,8,11; Revelation 3:4,5; 14:9; 15:2).

When Michael stood up, the people of faith were in bondage to the Papacy directly, or to one or other of the Protestant systems which had maintained and upheld many Papal beliefs and practices and had repeated Rome's error of a state church, that is, a church with political as well as religious power and influence. In many countries of Europe the people of faith were so bound politically that they were not able to gain religious freedom without outside help. It seems reasonable and appropriate to understand that the Lord sent help to people seeking religious liberty by the rise of democratic governments and policies in such countries as Switzerland and the United States of America, by the French Revolution and by the subsequent circulation of liberal ideas during the nineteenth century.

In regard to deliverance from doctrinal errors and traditional unscriptural practices and customs, further comments will be made in connection with the increase of knowledge mentioned in Daniel 12:4.

The deliverance promised began to come to the people of faith in the period 1789 to 1799. Deliverance has also come to people of faith since that time when they saw and understood the true gospel light for themselves. Everyone who has been blest with the light of the simple gospel of Christ has rejoiced in that light, and the liberty that all believers have in Christ, a liberty even more precious than the political liberty which great world forces have brought to so many in more recent times.

WRITTEN IN THE BOOK

"... thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Daniel 12:1).

What is meant by *"written in the book"*? Is it appropriate to think that the Lord God has a literal book in which the names of His people are recorded?

Such a thought does not seem appropriate because God is all-wise, all-knowing and all-powerful, and has the ability to remember the identities, characteristics and names of all His people from the least to the greatest. If God does have a literal record of names, it would be as a convenience and an assistance to others, such as the angels, and not as a necessity.

When addressing human beings, God expresses Himself in terms which they can understand. The simplest way of showing people that God remembers everyone, every individual who is living, who has ever lived and who will ever live, is to use the figure of a symbol of a book, which is our human method of recording whatever we wish to remember. Several *"books"* of record are mentioned in the Bible, and Bible Students should be able to understand and discern the correct application in each instance.

In praying to God on behalf of his people, the children of Israel, who had sinned so grievously, Moses said, *"Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written"*. To this the Lord replied, *"Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book"* (Exodus 32:32,33).

In this case both the Lord God and Moses seemed to use blotting out of the book as meaning the loss of this present life, for that is what God threatened against the idolatrous Israelites, and it was loss of this present life from which Moses by his intercession was able to save them. The punishment of most of that idolatrous generation was deferred to a later time (Exodus 32:34), all of that generation dying in the ordinary way in the wilderness, except Joshua and Caleb (Numbers 14:22-24; Psalm 106:13-26; Hebrews 3:16,17).

The *"book of the living"* of Psalm 69:28 seems also to refer to the present life.

The *"book"* in the Scriptures quoted above would seem to mean God's memory, which cannot lapse or fail, of those to whom eternal life will be granted in the resurrection.

In Malachi, the children of Israel are reminded of their covenant-breaking sins, their selfishness, idolatry and carnality. The proud seemed to be having things all their own way, and those who tempted God prospered (Malachi 3:15). But the true people of faith still feared the Lord, and did the best they could until the Lord Jesus came at His first advent, when they, that is those who lived at that time, became His true followers.

Of these faithful ones who were waiting, the prophet said,

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." (Malachi 3:16-18).

However, of those who were not faithful and obedient, the prophet said,

"Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." (Malachi 4:1).

That day came when the Lord Jesus came to them as their King in Judea, and was their Judge, condemning the whole nation to an overthrow which has endured throughout this Gospel Age. But not all were cast off, as we have just seen, because there was to be a remnant who were *"Israelites indeed"* (Luke 19:41-44; Romans 9:27; 11:4,5).

When the Lord Jesus came to His own, *"His own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* (John 1:12). He came to them as *"the Sun of righteousness ... with healing in his wings"*, and those true ones who did receive Him were called forth, and they grew up *"as calves of the stall"*, that is, as specially nurtured and cared for spiritually, as hand-fed calves are cared for temporally (Malachi 4:2).

So the Lord Jesus fed His true disciples spiritually, giving them truth suited to their needs and essential for their growth. He fed them because they were of those whose names had been written in the Lord's book of remembrance, faithful people such as Simeon and Anna, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Mary the mother of Jesus, Matthew, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, Joseph of Arimathea and others who constituted the *"jewels"* whom the Lord chose out of the Jewish nation to become the first to be called to citizenship of the heavenly kingdom.

With the Gospel call, a new book was opened for those who would become believers into the Lord Jesus. It seems appropriate and tenable, continuing with the symbol of a book as God's record, to think of the faithful *"Israelites indeed"* as having their names transferred from the *"book of remembrance"* to the *"book of life"*, the book of believers and disciples of Jesus.

Concerning this book, Jesus said to the seventy who returned rejoicing because even the devils were subject to them, *"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"* (Luke 10:20). Having one's name written in heaven is an evidence of God's favour and love. The believer is accepted in Christ Jesus, and that is of far greater importance to the believer than any deeds he might be able to perform.

Following the precedent set by the Lord's words, the members of the *"general assembly and church of the firstborn"* are said to be *"written in heaven"* (Hebrews 12:23, Philippians 3:13,14). This book, in which the names of Christian believers are recorded, is called *"the book of life"* (Philippians 4:3) since the gospel message is a message of *"life through his name"* (John 20:31).

When the Apostle Paul sent a message to the Philippian brethren to *"help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life"* (Philippians 4:3), the intimation is that he is referring to a record of Christians who have taken steps shown by the Lord Jesus and the New Testament writers to be essential to salvation. Life is offered only to believers in the Lord Jesus, as the Apostle John informs us:

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20:31).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36).

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3)

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11,12).

Consequently the believer who has the Son has also the promise of life which is in the Son: *"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life"* (1 John 2:25). Such a believer can be said to have his name written in the book of life.

The Revelation uses the expression *"book of life"* seven times: 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19. Three times the reference is to the book containing the names of the overcomers of the Gospel Age, three times to the saved ones during the Kingdom Age, and once (22:19) is a warning suitable to both Gospel and Kingdom Ages. The first instance is a

promise to believers in Sardis: *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."* (Revelation 3:5).

From this we learn that every believer is known to Jesus Christ, and will not receive his or her promised reward until the Lord Jesus confesses him or her before the Father. The significance of this is that believers must remain in Christ in order to inherit the promised reward. A warning is also implied to the effect that if believers do not remain in Christ, their names will be blotted out of the book of life. Clearly then, unfaithfulness to the Lord could mean loss of the glorious prize offered to overcomers and mentioned repeatedly in Revelation chapters 2 and 3.

The references to the *"book of life of the Lamb"* in Revelation 13:8, and the *"book of life"* in Revelation 17:8 are of particular importance in connection with the *"book"* of Daniel 12:1. The ten-horned *"beast"* of Revelation 13 is identical with the *"fourth beast"* of Daniel 7:7 and 8, which held God's people in spiritual as well as physical bondage for 1,260 years. John, the recorder of the Revelation, writes:

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:7,8).

"... and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." (Revelation 17:8).

Well does John add *"If any man have an ear to hear, let him hear"* (Revelation 13:9). Daniel and John agree, each stating the case clearly and emphatically giving two sides of the coin, as it were. John says that all whose names are not in the book of life shall worship the *"beast,"* while Daniel states that all whose names are in the book of life shall be delivered from the tyranny of the *"beast"*. The saints, being only a *"little flock"* must conduct themselves faithfully, and watch with prayer so that they will not be drawn again into bondage to the *"beast"* or his *"image"*, once they have been delivered and made free by Jesus Christ.

The book of life of the Gospel Age began at Jesus' first advent, and contains only the names of members of the Church, or rather the names of those who have become believers and are striving to gain the high reward of eternal life and joint-heirship with Christ.

Does this mean that only believers in this Gospel Age will be saved? The answer is no, because John tells us of another book of life being opened. This is good news for all, whether remaining worshippers of the Papacy, or some other religion, or atheists and unbelievers who do not hold any future hope for themselves. This new book of life will be opened when Christ and the Church begin to rule the world in righteousness for a thousand years.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:11,12).

These verses give us a symbolic picture of the Kingdom of God set up on earth in power and glory. The *"great white throne"* is not a literal throne of marble or ivory, and the *"dead"* mentioned in verse 12 are said to stand before the throne. The King James Version in Revelation 20:12 has *"before God"*, but the three most ancient manuscripts, the RV, RSV, NIV, REB, the Diaglott and the Amplified Bible all have *"before the throne"*. Rotherham's translation has *"in presence of the throne"*.

The throne is a symbol of dominion, power and authority and the meaning of the prophecy is that the whole human race, consisting of all who have been raised from death, as well as those who may be living when God's Kingdom is established, will be subject to God's rightful and righteous King, Jesus Christ.

The *"earth and the heaven"* which *"fled away"* are the old ruling authorities, false religious systems, and social arrangements. These former symbolic heavens and earth give place to the *"new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"* (2 Peter 3:7,13).

The institutions and arrangements of this present evil world pass away, but the people remain, including the many millions to be brought forth from the grave, to become subjects of the new Kingdom of peace.

The *"joint-heirs"* (Romans 8:17) are not included in *"the dead, small and great"* who stand before the throne, because the *"joint heirs"*, the Gospel Age Church, are to sit with Christ in the throne (Revelation 3:21; 7:9-17), having been made spirit beings like Him (1 John 3:2). The privilege of sitting with Christ in the throne means to live and reign with Him *"as priests of God and of Christ"* for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4,6).

The *"books"* to be *"opened"* are not the records of each person's life and deeds, whether good or evil, but are the books of Scripture which have been to a great extent obscured by human error and tradition.

In God's Kingdom the truth of the Gospel and life through Christ will be made plain to all, so that all who will heed the good news and be obedient will gain everlasting life on earth.

A distinction should be made between the *"books"* (plural) and *"another book ... which is the book of life"*. This other book, the book of life, would seem to be a symbol for some means of keeping a record of all people in the Kingdom Age who accept Christ as their Saviour and willingly obey Him. Faith and obedience will be the conditions for people to fulfil, in order to gain everlasting life, or as figuratively expressed, have their names written in the book of life (Revelation 21:27). If any choose not to believe and obey, they will not be permitted to live, as the Scriptures say (Revelation 20:15; 21:8).

Revelation 21 gives us a most wonderful picture of the Kingdom of God, and the world-wide peace and happiness which will prevail for all who will believe and obey. The concluding verse of Revelation 21 tells us that the only ones who will be accepted as citizens of that new world order are *"they which are written in the Lamb's book of life"*.

Before continuing with Daniel 12, we will examine briefly a text which is thought by some to mean that God knows and remembers all parts of our human bodies, and by implication, will

raise individuals from the grave with exactly the same bodies as they had in their lives on earth. The text in question is Psalm 139:16:

"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

Modern versions help to make the meaning clearer, if a little different. The NIV reads, *"Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."* An important principle in understanding the meaning of Scripture is consideration of the context of any verse or passage being studied. To understand Psalm 139:16 we need to consider the immediate context, particularly the preceding verses 11 to 15.

In verses 11 and 12 the Psalmist says that darkness does not hide anything from God, and then refers in verse 13 to the darkness of the womb. So, concealed from every eye, the developing child is *"fearfully and wonderfully made"* according to the processes of development and growth programmed by God, in which every member, organ, and detail of the human body appears and develops in its proper place, ready to function at birth. This pre-arrangement of the form and substance of a human being is spoken of figuratively by the Psalmist in the words, *"... in thy book all my members were written"*.

The context of Psalm 139:16 and the verse itself should not be understood to refer to the resurrection. The lesson seems rather to be a lesson of faith, namely, that there is no place where the love and power of God cannot penetrate, hence His people can feel He is with them anywhere in all circumstances. Verse 8 expresses this thought: *"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell (sheol, the grave), behold, thou art there."*

It is certainly in order to think that if God by His design and power can arrange for thousands of millions of human beings to be brought into the world, He is able by resurrection power to bring those same thousands of millions out of their graves when His appointed time comes.

THEY THAT SLEEP SHALL AWAKE

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." (Daniel 12:2,3).

These verses make a straightforward statement of the Bible teaching of the resurrection. The state of the dead referred to as sleep is in complete harmony with other Scriptures. The resurrection of the dead, likened to waking from sleep, is the second great event of special concern to God's people in the early period of Michael's standing up. The first great event, as already stated, is the deliverance of God's people from the power of the symbolic Beast.

The raising of the Church is one of the first acts of Michael, the Lord Jesus Christ, at His second advent, as the Apostle Paul tells us: *"We which are alive and remain shall be caught up"*, but we *"shall not prevent* (old English for "precede") *them which are asleep"*, for *"the dead in Christ shall rise first"*, and the saints will be *"changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"*.

As the Apostle says, some will not sleep, but will be changed in an instant from flesh to spirit. It seems reasonable to understand that this instantaneous change will take place with the saints as each finishes his or her life's course during the progress of the period in which Michael, the Lord Jesus, stands up to begin to exercise dominion (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

SHAME AND CONTEMPT

The association of the end of the old order and the resurrection at the beginning of the new order is expressed in Revelation 11:15 and 18:

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever ...

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

This passage in Revelation 11 covers the whole Kingdom Age, as it includes the resurrection of all members of the human race, the *"many"* of Daniel 12:2. Daniel 12:2, Revelation 11:18 and John 5:28 and 29 divide the dead into two general classes: those who have done good and those who have done evil. Those who have done good are to be rewarded immediately on resurrection, while those who have done evil are to be further dealt with.

Is it right, some may ask, to say that those who *"awake to shame and everlasting contempt"* are raised to be further dealt with? Contempt due to them is said to be *"everlasting"*, so is it not encouraging evil-doing to claim that those who now live so as to deserve shame and contempt will be further dealt with?

In response it should be said that each text or passage on a given subject does not necessarily give all details of, or all that could be said on, that subject. For example, our Lord said to His disciples that in the regeneration they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, but He did not enter into any details of the activity from their thrones. Another example is the text that says we are saved by grace, and another that says we are saved by the blood of Christ (Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:5; 1 Peter 1:18,19).

The whole truth is reached by associating all the statements on the subject being considered. Thus the twelve apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel in the resurrection, but not over them only, because the twelve apostles will rule over all the earth, as joint-heirship with Christ means reigning with Him over all the earth (Revelation 21:14; 20:4).

We as believers into Christ are saved by faith in the blood of Christ, which was shed for the remission of our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of all people everywhere (1 John 2:1,2).

The shame and contempt of many who are raised from the dead will be everlasting unless and until, under the justice, righteousness and love of the Kingdom of God, they repent of their wrongdoing. All members of the human race, except those of faith, will be raised to shame and contempt because they will be raised as the same individuals with the same identities and characteristics as they possessed when they died. The Jews, for example, will experience shame and contempt by their sinfulness and pride in their former lives, but will be repentant, and God will be pacified toward them (Ezekiel 16:52,54, 61-63).

In John 5:29 "*they that have done evil*" are said to rise to the "*resurrection of judgement*". The judgement will not be an immediate passing of sentence, but a government of peace and love which Jesus Christ will establish to rule over the human race to enlighten and instruct all members in the ways of righteousness and everlasting life.

AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT

The high position of the Church in the resurrection is expressed in Daniel 12:3. In their earthly life they heeded the Lord's words, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, witnessed to the truth of the Scriptures as their abilities and opportunities permitted. But in the resurrection the members of the Gospel Age Church, formerly ignored or opposed, persecuted, ridiculed and generally despised by the world at large, will "*shine as the brightness of the firmament*".

The Lord Jesus promised that the righteous will "*shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father*" (Matthew 13:43). The sun is the brightest body of light in the firmament, and illuminates the whole earth. So shall the overcomers in the Kingdom give the light of Christ to the world to enlighten its millions.

AS THE STARS FOREVER AND EVER

The sun lights the day, but the stars are the lights of the night and serve as guides to navigators and travellers. The sun, as used in Daniel 12:3 and Matthew 13:43 aptly represents the "*overcomers*" taken collectively, while the stars represent the members of the Church taken individually. This individual aspect is given support by the Apostle Paul when he wrote:

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

So also is the resurrection of the dead."

(1 Corinthians 15:41,42).

The members of the Church even now shine as lights in the world, but their light is very limited in its influence (Matthew 5:15,16; Philippians 2:15). Some exceptions were the early Apostles and evangelists, and the great reformers of the Protestant Reformation. They turned many to righteousness by their preaching and example, but in the resurrection all saints will shine out as guides and lights for the nations of the world.

"They that turn many to righteousness" in Daniel 12:3 would seem from the context to be the same as *"the wise"* in Daniel 12:10, that is, the true believers living on earth in the days of Michael's standing up, because the *"wise"* are referred to in their earthly capacity: *"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."*

Thus it seems that Christians living before those days and the faithful of past ages are not referred to, although they also had wisdom under other circumstances, and they also will be lights and guides in the Kingdom of God.

The promise is like each and all of the promises of Revelation 2 and 3, where a specific promise is given to each of the seven churches, not by way of excluding other members of the Church from the same promises, but rather by way of emphasising certain peculiarities of the trials of each of the seven churches, and promising correspondingly appropriate rewards.

As was the case during the Papacy's dominion, so it was also at the time of Michael's standing up: there were great tests of humility, wisdom and other personal virtues, and of diligence in turning others to righteousness. To the *"wise,"* who are *"purified, made white, and tried,"* the promise is that they would *"understand"* the prophecy in due time, and also that as a reward for their faithfulness they would be resurrected to everlasting life and to the glory of being perpetual lights, *"forever and ever"*.

SHUT UP THE WORDS

Next comes the command to Daniel:

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4).

We might wonder why the angel, after giving Daniel the long explanation from the beginning of chapter 11, should tell him to shut up the words and seal the book, as though no one was to be permitted to read the book.

This cannot be the meaning because the book of Daniel was in use among the Jews when the Septuagint version of the Old Testament was made in 273 BC. It was part of the Scriptures which the Lord told the Pharisees they were searching daily, and in His great prophecy of Matthew 24 He refers to the prophecy of Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 as something all Jews were familiar with (Matthew 24:15).

The Septuagint translation has:

"And thou, Daniel, close the words, and seal the book to the time of the end; and until many are taught, and knowledge is increased."

To "shut up" or "close" the words seems to mean simply that Daniel had now received all the communication and explanation the Lord intended to give him; his task was ended when he had recorded the visions and explanations that had been given.

SEAL THE BOOK

A message, letter or document may be sealed in two ways:

- (i) Placing in an envelope which is then closed and the flap stuck down;.
- (ii) Placing an official seal or impression beside or close to the signatures of the principals and witnesses.

In Old Testament times "sealing" was used with both of these meanings, as may be seen by reference to Jeremiah 32:10-15, where a land transfer is officially sealed;

while Job 14:17 uses "*sealing*" in the sense of fastened: "*My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity*". See also references to the king's seal fixed to documents, and to the door of the den of lions into which Daniel was cast (Esther 3:12; 8:8,10; Daniel 6:17; Nehemiah 9:38).

If a document is sealed in the sense of closed up in an envelope, none can read it until the seals are broken. The book, strictly the "*scroll*" of Revelation 5:1 and 2, was sealed with seven seals which were opened one at a time. As each seal was broken, more of the scroll could be read.

When the Lord wished to show the children of Israel how blind they had become and unable to understand or appreciate the teachings and warnings of His chosen prophets, He said to them: "*And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed.*" (Isaiah 29:11).

The meaning seems to be that although the writings of the prophets and the requirements of the Law were available to all to read and study, the Israelites' hardness of heart and stiffnecked attitude were such that they could not understand what they read. For this hardness of heart it is written that "*the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*" (Isaiah 29:14).

Similar words are used in Isaiah 6:9,10 and these words are quoted by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10), and referred to by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:7-10 and 25. The same hardness of heart remained characteristic of the Jews right down to our Lord's day, and Isaiah's words were frequently quoted against them (Acts 28:25-27; Romans 10:16,20 and 21).

It is therefore, reasonable to conclude that the sealing of Daniel's prophecy may be understood in the two senses mentioned above. Firstly, Daniel sealed his writings by adding his signature and seal, identifying the writings as of interest and significance to the Jews, who thereupon added Daniel's prophecies to their Scriptures. Secondly, the writings were sealed in that none of the hard-hearted, stiff-necked, hypocritical Jews, who made up the vast majority of the nation, could understand them.

THE PROPHECIES TO BE UNDERSTOOD IN DUE TIME

There was still another sense in which the prophecies of Daniel were sealed. As is the case with many other prophecies, the prophecies of Daniel could not be fully understood until God's time came for them to be understood. Habakkuk's prophecy, chapter one, verses 6 to 10, for example, contain predictions of happenings to Israel when the Babylonians would rise against the nation.

The Lord said:

"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Habakkuk 2:2,3).

The word "*tarry*" is used to translate two different Hebrew words (Strong 4102 and 309), and the last four clauses should read "*though it seem to be delayed, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not be late.*"

Isaiah was also told to record and prophesy Israel's disobedience:

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever (or, "for a testimony forever"):

That this is a rebellious people ..." (Isaiah 30:8,9).

Thus, when the foretold events or developments came to pass, the sincere believers were able to recognise the fulfilments of prophecy, and they were helped and encouraged by what they saw of God's provision for them years before their time. God not only predicted events accurately but also included instruction valuable to His trusting people.

Centuries later, faithful believers recognised Christ by His fulfilment of prophecies concerning Himself, and such believers were aided by teachers inspired to verify that what the faithful ones saw and heard were matters spoken of by the prophets (John 1:45; Acts 2:16; 13:29,40,41,47).

THE LATTER DAYS

In Daniel 10:14 it is stated that the angel came to Daniel to explain *"what shall befall thy people in the latter days"*. After briefly referring to the kings who should yet arise in Persia to succeed Darius (Daniel 11:1,2,) the angel refers to Alexander the Great, and in detail to the successive kings of Greece, Syria and Egypt, then to the Roman empire, and finally to the Papal successor of pagan Rome.

This long period was divided into two parts: the first reaching from Daniel's day to the Messiah's first advent, and the second reaching from Messiah's first advent to His *"standing up"* at the time when the prophesied *"end"* of Papal ascendancy was to occur.

Daniel was most anxious to be informed about these two culminating points, that is, the coming of the Messiah, and the judgement of the *"dreadful and terrible"* beast with ten horns seen in previous visions. In these previous visions Daniel had been shown that Messiah would be *"cut off, but not for himself"*, and also that Messiah would triumph over the ten-horned beast. How could both be true? How could Messiah be cut off, and still triumph?

The angel gives no further explanation as to why Messiah should be cut off. The vision of Daniel 9 was evidently considered sufficient, namely, that Messiah would be *"cut off, but not for himself"*, the implication being that Messiah would be cut off for others.

Isaiah, who prophesied prior to Daniel's day, had foreshown that Messiah's death would be as an offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10-12). The Messiah had no sin, and was to die as an offering for the sins of others.

The Gospels show us that much of Daniel's prophecy was understood at Messiah's first advent. The *"seventy weeks"* of Daniel 9:24-26 had been a clue to the time when Messiah would come, so when the Lord and His Apostles and disciples went about saying, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Mark 1:15), sincere, truth-loving Israelites were able to confirm this truth by reference to the prediction in the ninth

chapter of Daniel. The birth and death of Jesus, the Messiah, occurred *"in the fulness of the time" "in due time"* as recorded by Paul in Galatians 4:4 and Romans 5:6.

Concerning the death of Christ (*"cut off, but not for himself"*), the Apostles were God's spokesmen to declare to the people this portion of Daniel's prophecy. It was after Jesus' resurrection that they understood what Daniel did not understand: how Messiah, Who was *"cut off"* as the once-for-all offering for sin, could, because of His resurrection to life with all power in heaven and earth, accomplish that other mighty work of destruction of the *"dreadful and terrible"* ten-horned beast.

The angel passed over Daniel's enquiries about Messiah's first advent, but gave an outline of the history of the world power which would be in office at Messiah's first advent (pagan Rome), and of the development from that power of the *"abomination"* mentioned in chapter nine.

The period between Messiah's first and second advents is called by the angel *"the latter days"* (Daniel 10:14), and Bible students refer to this period as the Gospel Age. The Apostle John called it *"the last time"* (1 John 2:18).

Beginning with his own day, the Apostle John considered the *"last time"* as the period when the foretold Antichrist would appear. The Apostle Paul mentioned the Antichrist as a development and sign of the last time, and gave a further mark of identification, agreeing fully with Daniel 11:36 and 37.

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." ...

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now hindereth will hinder until he be taken out of the way."

(2 Thessalonians 2:4,7)

What *"hindered"* when Paul wrote was pagan Rome, which for a time was able to resist and hinder the growth of the Christian Church and the growing power of the bishops. Pagan Rome was *"taken out of the way"* when the Emperor Constantine in 324 AD proclaimed that Christianity would thenceforth be the religion of the Roman empire in place of the ancient paganism.

MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO

Nowadays these words are often taken to refer to modern day travel facilities, and the fact that large numbers of people today are engaged in travel. Certainly it is true that great numbers of people are travelling throughout the world to an extent not known or anticipated in years gone by, but this understanding does not seem adequate in view of the context and other renderings of Daniel 12:3.

The Septuagint translates the clause as *"many shall be taught"* and the Variorum footnote has *"many shall peruse it"*. The Amplified Version has *"[Then] many shall run to and fro and search anxiously [through the Book], and knowledge [of God's purposes as revealed by His prophets] shall be increased and become great."*

Verses 11 and 12 of Amos chapter 8 provide us with an explanation of the words in Daniel 12:4:

*"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.
And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it."*

The translations mentioned above and the reference from Amos suggest that the running *"to and fro"* is that of the eyes of the reader of Daniel's prophecy as well as other prophecies inspired by God. Daniel's prophecy indicates that there would be faithful ones who would study the writings of God's inspired prophets (run to and fro to discover and understand the word of the Lord) and by this means would receive the enlightenment and understanding that Daniel sought.

The Gospels show us that much of Daniel's prophecy was understood at Jesus' first advent.

The *"seventy weeks"* of Daniel 9:24-26 were a clue to the time when Messiah would be expected, so that when the Lord and the apostles went about saying, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand"* (Mark 1:15), humble, truth-seeking Israelites were able to find evidence of this claim by reference to

the prophetic words of Daniel and other Old Testament prophets. The birth and death of Christ occurred "*in the fulness of the time*", "*in due time*" (Galatians 4:4; Romans 5:6).

As time passed and prophecies were fulfilled, the earnest seeker after truth has come to understand the meaning and significance of both Old and New Testament prophecies, so that this explanation of running "*to and fro*" fits the facts as we understand them.

KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED

The message of the Gospel spread with extraordinary rapidity over the then known world except the far east. In the fourth century AD, Christianity was proclaimed by the emperor Constantine as the established religion of the Roman empire. The Christianity thus established was, however, sadly mixed with error, and controversies arose between factions and parties of the two divisions into which the Roman empire became divided: the Eastern and the Western.

These controversies continued for centuries, with some truth and much error on both sides. From the sixth to the twelfth centuries, education was confined mostly to the schools of monasteries and convents, chiefly for those intending to enter the monastic orders, but also for those of the more privileged ranks of society who desired a general education. The masses and the majority of the nobility remained in ignorance, few being able to read or write, and all living in superstition and fear.

These six centuries are generally known as the Dark Ages. The darkness and prevailing ignorance of these centuries were brought about by the unsettled state of society, the invasion of barbarians and the gradual decay of the Latin language into unwritten and corrupt provincial forms, so that in the course of time people of one district could not understand those of another district.

The Church continued to use classical Latin which over time could no longer be understood by the people. The priests and members of the clergy were also guilty of worldliness and immorality, and keeping the people in subjection by false doctrine, particularly the fear of hell fire, by insisting on unquestioning submission to the authority of the Church, and by fierce persecution of any and all who opposed or dared to criticise them.

However, God had decreed that knowledge should be increased and this increase in knowledge had its beginnings in the growth, establishment and standardisation of modern languages.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries French became the recognised successor of the various corrupted Latin dialects, although literary Latin continued to be used in legal and clerical documents. The Italian language was purified and given stability by Dante (1265 - 1321) and Petrarch (1304 - 1374). In England the Anglo-Saxon and Norman languages were being combined to form the English language, of which Geoffrey Chaucer (1340 - 1400) was the first great poet.

While these different languages served to keep nations and people apart, people generally profited because each nation had a fixed language in which to express its thoughts and preserve its ideas in written form. At this early stage of the gradual increase in knowledge, the written word was contained in manuscripts, because printing had not yet been invented, and books as we know them did not exist.

The invention of linen paper about the middle of the fourteenth century led to a great increase in the number of manuscripts in circulation. Linen paper was much more durable than the perishable type of paper made from cotton, and was a serviceable prelude to the invention of printing which took place about 1440 AD.

The Renaissance was accompanied by the establishment of police systems in the cities, the limitation of the depredations of robber barons, and the gradual rise of the lower classes into free citizens, skilled craftsmen and traders. But the greatest influence in the increase of knowledge was the secret circulation and reading of the Scriptures among all classes of society. The Scriptures exposed the false doctrines of the Papacy and the profligacy of the priests and monks.

Rome furiously opposed and forbade the possession and reading of the Scriptures by the laity, and persecuted even to death any who were found in possession of or found reading the holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, God's decree that many should run to and fro and that knowledge should be increased could not be stopped or diverted.

Notwithstanding all of Rome's fierce opposition, the Scriptures reached the people. And Greek and Saracen learning, as well as scientific investigation, and knowledge of navigation, gradually spread throughout the Western world, and there arose such thinkers and men of action as Columbus (1445 - 1506), Copernicus (1473 - 1543) and Galileo (1564 - 1642) to disturb the authority of the Church.

When the Dark Ages were merging into the Middle Ages in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a philosophical and religious movement known as Scholasticism made its appearance. The movement sought to bring about a compromise between Christian theology and Greek and Saracen philosophy and science. The value of Scholasticism is said to rest chiefly in that it awakened the minds of people and prepared the way for the establishment of universities and the Renaissance. The movement continued for several centuries, but has now ceased to exist and been forgotten except by historians and students of philosophy.

Among the institutions of the Middle Ages were the guilds of craftsmen or skilled workers. They were formed to further and protect the interests of skilled craftsmen and to maintain acceptable standards of work. The Church allied itself with them, mainly to obtain converts, and subsequently converted the guilds into craft and merchant guilds. The skilled craftsmen travelled about to obtain work, hence the term "journeyman" came into use as applying to a trained workman travelling about in pursuit of employment. The guilds to which the skilled artisans belonged were conducive to another aspect of the running *"to and fro"* prophesied in Daniel 12:4.

The merchant and craft guilds each had a patron saint and incorporated religious activities and ceremonies at meetings. Gradually, however, the guilds became organisations for the attainment of political liberty. Some exercised considerable power in opposition to the feudal lords, while others worked clandestinely against the established Roman Church.

The guilds founded and developed schools, called Guild and Burgher Schools, to provide an education for children of middle classes, as well as training and higher levels of education for journeymen who became masters and secured the freedom of the towns. Two years of travelling and working were required

of journeymen wishing to become masters, and this travelling to and fro was an education in itself to the workmen.

Thus God saw to it that prophecy was fulfilled, even making use of institutions fostered by the Church of Rome when He desired a running to and fro and an increase of knowledge. These very institutions, in the period just before the Reformation as well as during the Reformation, became agencies for the propagation of ideas of freedom, religious liberty, and finally of Christian doctrine.

Charles Reade, the author of "The Cloister and the Hearth" gives an interesting as well as historically accurate description of the streams of people of all classes and nationalities continually travelling on the roads and rivers of France, the Rhine provinces, and the Low Countries. There were soldiers, students, mendicant (begging) and other orders of monks and priests, merchants, craftsmen, adventurers, crusaders, pilgrims to and from Rome. Together they constituted a cosmopolitan crowd ready to pick up and pass on items of information on all subjects.

The expansion of learning up to the time of the Reformation did not reach to any extent the peasants and labouring classes. These were by and large considered beneath notice except to serve the interests of the wealthy and to provide obedient dupes and slaves for the Church. But the Renaissance, that great revival of learning during which schools and universities were founded, had a more far-reaching effect than people at that time realised.

The Church no longer monopolised education, and in the expanding opportunities for education of the upper and middle classes, there arose here and there persons of generous heart and sincere piety who became concerned for the lower orders and desired to deliver them from their bondage of ignorance and superstition.

Thus it came about that when the light concerning justification by faith came to Luther, there were ready listeners prepared to receive this truth, and help Luther to spread it abroad. There was also in the doctrine of justification by faith an incentive to reach out to people never before recognised, because this fundamental doctrine emphasised the importance of the individual to exercise personal faith, repentance and change in his or her life.

The importance of individual study of the Scriptures became apparent, and therefore the teaching of the people to read and write became imperative. Our present-day compulsory school systems owe their origin to the great reformers of the sixteenth century. The civil and religious liberties, which are still priceless treasures of civilisation, are due to the heroic defiance of Popes and kings by the reformers.

ROME'S COUNTER MEASURES

No sooner was Rome fully aware of the success of the Reformation and the enthusiasm of civil rulers and people concerning educational questions, than teaching orders were founded by Rome. Schools were opened to teach Roman Catholics and thus prevent them coming under the influence of Protestant teachers and schools.

Progress in education has been much slower in countries and regions where the Church of Rome has not been subject to Protestant competition, as in Spain, South America, Mexico and parts of Ireland. In these countries and regions Rome continued its policy of keeping the masses in ignorance and illiteracy. But where Protestantism introduced education, as in Europe during the Reformation, in sections of Ireland in the nineteenth century, and in Cuba and the Philippines when those islands were taken over from Spain by the United States, the Papacy has introduced counter educational organisations. In this may be seen further evidence of the fulfilment of prophecy, in that God, through Jesus Christ, has brought about increase in knowledge in spite of Papal opposition.

Many schools and colleges were founded in the eighteenth century in France, Germany, Britain and America which assisted the increase in knowledge, including to some extent Scriptural knowledge, since many of the schools were church schools founded by the various denominational churches.

These broad educational movements in England, America, and Germany during the early part of the eighteenth century produced a reading public for the writings of Rousseau, Voltaire and other leaders of French pre-revolutionary thought, and formed a sympathetic group of observers when France fought for religious, economic and political freedom and announced it to be the policy of the state to provide universal education, secular and free.

SCATTERING THE POWER OF THE HOLY PEOPLE

At this stage in the course of his final vision, Daniel saw two men, one on one side of the river Hiddekel - the river Tigris according to the Septuagint - (Daniel 10:4), and the second man on the other side:

"And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?"

And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." (Daniel 12:6,7).

The "he" of Daniel 12:7 continues to refer to the Papacy. When and how would the Papacy accomplish "to scatter the power of the holy people?" It seems in accordance with the historical period as prophesied in Daniel 12:7 that the "power of the holy people" was scattered in the period between the Reformation and the French Revolution, that is, from about 1600 AD to 1790 AD. The Papacy scattered the power of God's true people as well as Protestantism generally by its Counter Reformation with its political agents, its secretly-working religious orders, and its educational system set up to rival and compete with Protestant educational movements.

The power of God's true people was, of course, spiritual power gained through the reform movements. The rulers, politicians and influential people also gained power in a secular sense because they were able to ally themselves with the reform movements and gain ascendancy over Rome and its claims of overlordship.

Rome's Counter Reformation succeeded in subtly introducing Roman doctrine and practice in the Protestant Church of England prayer book and ritual. In our day we see doctrines and practices of Rome in the Anglican Church, especially that part known as the "High Church" and the same influences extend in varying degrees also to other Protestant denominations. It seems highly likely that some of God's true people have been deluded spiritually by Rome's activities to counteract the effects of the Protestant Reformation.

Seventy years after Luther's death in 1546 the Thirty Years War commenced in Europe. This war was the greatest effort ever put forth by Rome to stamp out Protestantism in Germany and the rest of Europe. Almost the whole of Europe was engaged in this conflict. At the end of these years of warfare the Peace of Westphalia was signed on 24 October, 1648 in Austria, Sweden and Germany, extending toleration to Calvinists as well as Lutherans.

But by the time the French Revolution commenced, Rome had scattered the power of many Protestants and Protestant movements, as the prophecy predicted. Since that time the activity of scattering the power has continued with varying degrees of success as well as failure.

In Reformation days a considerable body of Protestants existed in France, but by the middle of the eighteenth century they had been almost blotted out by the undermining activities of the Counter Reformation. The government was a centralised and tyrannical monarchy with consequent oppression, corruption, injustice, inefficiency, bankruptcy and crippling taxation. The monarchy, nobility and clergy were privileged classes. There was no provision for the intellectual and spiritual needs of ordinary people, and individual judgement -- a basic feature of Reformation teaching -- was suppressed.

France lacked a Wesley to preach and advocate repentance and holiness, or a Luther to re-kindle the fire of a fresh Protestant Reformation. Thus it came about that Papal-ridden France headed straight for the Revolution, just as the Prophecy had predicted:

"When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." (Daniel 12:7).

WHAT SHALL BE THE END?

"All these things" that *"shall be finished"* would mean all the events foretold up to the end of the 1,260 years, that is, that same period described as *"a time, times and the dividing of time"* of Daniel 7:25 and 12:7.

Having listened to the angel's statement, Daniel asked a question:

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my lord, what shall be the end of these things?" (Daniel 12:8).

The Angel had said **when** the time of the end would be, but Daniel asked **what** shall be the end of these things?

Daniel probably wanted to know more about how the end would come and how Messiah would triumph. But God did not reveal any more details to Daniel. The honour of revealing more of the events still to come was reserved for the disciples and apostles of the Lamb, whose writings have come down to us in the New Testament.

When studying the book of Daniel, we have the advantage of these subsequent visions and revelations from the Lord:

"It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord." (2 Corinthians 12:1).

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:" (Revelation 1:1).

As for Daniel, the record tells us:

"And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." (Daniel 12:9,10).

The information not given to Daniel, but given to God's people in *"the time of the end"* is that the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we have thought to be the Michael of Daniel's prophecy, will *"smite the nations"* with a sharp sword that proceeds *"out of his mouth"* (Revelation 19:15). This sword is a symbol of truth, and has two edges, the religious and the secular.

The Apostle Paul called this symbolic sword *"the spirit of his mouth"*: *"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the bright shining (or manifestation) of his presence."* (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

All the remarkable religious, political and educational movements, which began toward the end of the 1,260 years of prophecy, may reasonably be understood as the beginning of the Lord's operations as King of kings and Lord of lords.

At the close of the 1,260 years the Papacy received a crushing blow from the French Revolution and the subsequent campaigns of Napoleon.

At the same time the increase of knowledge received an unprecedented impetus: increase of religious and scientific knowledge, increase of mechanical knowledge and the means of application of this knowledge, increase of political knowledge, increase of understanding of human nature and human physiology and anatomy, and of liberty, freedom, fraternity and democracy. And there came also an undreamt-of increase in running to and fro in all the senses previously indicated.

A NEW ERA OF RESEARCH AND INVENTION

In the nineteenth century, discovery and invention went forward by leaps and bounds. The scientific achievements of the hundred years which ended on 31 December, 1900 exceeded in number and surpassed in importance the sum total of discoveries and inventions of all centuries preceding the nineteenth.

During the twentieth century the discoveries and inventions increased and multiplied so tremendously that we have ceased to marvel at them. One of the most astonishing fields of discovery and inventions was that of various kinds of light, both visible and invisible to the human eye. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) discovered that electricity and lightning are the same, while Heinrich Hertz (1857-1894) proved that electricity and light are but equal movements of the ether, that is, the realm of space including the earth's atmosphere.

As Scripture students we may well see a deeper significance in those passages of Scripture which tell us that His lightnings enlighten the earth. We see free lightning in the literal heavens, organised lightning in the radio, the telephone, facsimile transmission, television and satellite communication all over the world, as well as symbolic spiritual lightning, that is, truth, in people's minds.

"Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled." (Psalm 97:2-4).

"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices." (Revelation 4:5).

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

(Revelation 8:5).

"And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." (Revelation 16:18).

The symbolic language of the book of Revelation leads us to understand that the language of Psalm 97 is also symbolic.

The earthquake of Revelation 16:18, accompanied by voices, thunderings and lightnings, may be understood in its context as symbolising the French Revolution, when the whole social order was severely shaken. Similar earthquakes have continued and still continue to the present day: wars throughout Europe during the last century, struggles against oppression in Australia, the First World War, the Communist Revolution in Russia, the rise of Nazi Germany and the Second World War, many countries throwing off colonial rule, while wars and rumours of wars persist throughout the world.

The symbolic voices, lightnings, thunderings and earthquakes will continue until *"the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea"* (Psalm 46:1), that is, until the kingdoms of this world go down powerless into the surging masses of humanity, to be followed in God's due time by His Kingdom of true light and peace. Then will be fulfilled the words of Scripture: *"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."* (Revelation 11:15).

INCREASE OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE SINCE 1799

Since 1799 unprecedented progress has been made in the dissemination of scientific, political and general knowledge. Great progress has also been made in Bible knowledge since that date. We have already noted the founding of Bible and missionary societies for the distribution of Bibles in all countries, and these activities continue strongly today.

But mere distribution of the Scriptures does not entail the spread of an accurate knowledge of Scripture teachings. The various denominations and sects teach different views and not all of these views can be right. The fact is that since 1799 there has been a remarkable increase of knowledge regarding God's plans and purposes, but this knowledge has failed to impress the main denominations of Christendom because these denominations still cling to some serious errors handed down from the Dark Ages, such as hell fire, the immortality of the soul and the Trinity. These and other errors have been repudiated more or less by small groups of Christians from the Reformation onward.

It is probably correct to say that from the days of the Apostles the Lord has had His witnesses in the world, and that here and there down the centuries were to be found Christians who did not bow to Rome or follow orthodox teachings which are contrary to the Scriptures, as indicated in Revelation 2:24,25 and 3:4.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, all Christendom, Protestant as well as Roman, Greek and Russian Catholic, was in a state of dense ignorance. The Church had a "*reputation of being alive*" (NIV), but it was dead. (Revelation 3:1) The patience of true believers was severely tried (Revelation 3:10). At the close of the eighteenth century the Bible was neglected, and the Bible teaching that the saints should live in expectation of their Master's return, when He would establish God's Kingdom on the earth, was almost completely forgotten.

But what a marvellous array of Scriptural truths has come to light since 1799: the three worlds, the plan of the ages, the ransom, the kingdom of God, the new covenant, the truth concerning death and the second death, justification by faith, joint-heirship and Christ's promised return.

Another great truth which has come to light in more recent times is the High Calling and the distinction between the High Calling to joint-heirship with Christ in the heavenly places and the blessings of enlightenment and opportunity to be offered to all people on earth in God's Kingdom.

The truth of the resurrection and the Kingdom of God on earth as well as in Heaven solves many problems concerning God's permission of evil, and the fact that He allows many thousands of millions of ignorant humanity to die uninstructed and unsaved (Philippians 3:7-15; Romans 8:16-23; Colossians 3:4; 2 Timothy 2:11,12).

Still other great truths more clearly seen in these last days are the Scripture teaching on the Covenants. Light has been focused on our Lord's true position as Mediator of the New Covenant, how that the New Covenant was sealed and made operative by His precious blood shed at Calvary, and how that the New Covenant is the arrangement and the only arrangement under which believers now and in the age to come receive the forgiveness of their sins.

God's love in providing the Ransom for sinners in giving His own Son to die on the cross has been brought out more clearly than ever before, because the Ransom lays the foundation for the salvation of the whole human race both now and in the time to come.

These truths have spread gradually throughout the world, printed matter having been circulated in most major languages. Preachers and missionaries have also carried abroad the various ideas and theories.

And now in very recent times we have satellite communication via computers and the Internet. So, notwithstanding an admixture of error, truth has been spread and the Lord's purpose accomplished.

But what is that purpose? What part of God's plan has been served by the increase of religious and Bible knowledge? To this question we may also add: What purpose is served or will be served by the great increase of knowledge on scientific subjects and social issues, and by the wonderful inventions and discoveries of the last two hundred years?

PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEW WORLD ORDER

When a great event is expected to take place, those who are to take part in it make preparations in advance. The event is given publicity so that all who wish to know about it and prepare may do so, while the majority who may not be involved may ignore it and continue with their daily lives and activities.

The Lord prepared for the earthly advent of the Lord Jesus and rapid spread of the Gospel by seeing to it that:

- (i) the known world was subject to one government so that His apostles and disciples could travel freely and safely;
- (ii) the world was at peace so that the Gospel could have free course;
- (iii) the Greek language was understood and spoken everywhere with other localised dialects and languages; and
- (iv) the Jews were scattered everywhere with their synagogues and the Old Testament Scriptures.

In addition, the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek nearly three hundred years before Christ came. Thus the Old Testament Scriptures in Greek were widely known and read, and people were able to search them, as did the noble Bereans, to see *"whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

Nearer to the time of Christ's ministry, John the Baptist was sent to the Jewish people *"to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"* (Luke 1:16,17). It should not surprise us, then, to find that preparations of various kinds are being made before the time finally comes for the setting up of the Kingdom of God in power on the earth.

A very important feature of God's dealings with the human race is that His purposes have been revealed to a few, while many have been kept in ignorance. This is not because of favouritism, but because people generally preferred to go their own way and were not willing to listen to God's word or the messengers proclaiming it. The condition of natural Israel when the Lord Jesus preached to them is well described in Matthew 13:13-15, while the few who did hear and understand were described in verses 11, 16 and 17 of Matthew 13.

The Lord Jesus also thanked God for hiding the truth of the gospel from the *"wise and prudent"* of this world and revealing that truth to *"babes"* (Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21). The Apostle Paul gave the same message to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:19-28. So now as we near the end of the Gospel Age, there are in Christendom two classes: those who know and those who do not know of the times and seasons:

"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

The people referred to as *"they"* in the above passage do not understand when *"the day of the Lord"* may come, nor do they heed the Lord's words to *"watch"* nor do they discern that there are signs in these times that the end of this present order of things is near.

The teaching of the Lord's presence (Parousia) is an issue on which Bible students differ and this issue must be resolved by each individual believer in accordance with his or her study and understanding of the Scriptures. Some believers are looking for the Lord Jesus to return suddenly to this earth in literal and somewhat spectacular circumstances, while others consider that the Lord Jesus has already returned and is present unseen by the human race.

Bible students who hold to the understanding that the Lord Jesus is working unseen for the overthrow of the Papacy and the current social order, are looking for the *"manifestation of His presence"* (2 Thessalonians 2:8), or in other words they are looking for the Lord's appearing (epiphaneia) mentioned in 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; and 1 Peter 1:7.

To the world at large, when the *"sudden destruction"* (1 Thessalonians 5:3) of the present order comes, it will be to them a complete surprise. They have always thought that *"peace and safety"* are attainable by this or that form of government and that eventually the desired conditions of peace

and prosperity will be brought about. The fact that the world in its wisdom does not know or acknowledge God will not hinder or delay God's plans for the destruction of this present social order and the establishment of His righteous and everlasting Kingdom.

Earlier the question was raised concerning the purpose in God's plan and course of action in permitting the vast array of discoveries and inventions in recent times. There is first of all a present purpose in enlightening people's minds, facilitating travel and global communication and making people more fully aware of the resources of nature, conservation and environmental protection. People are becoming aware more and more of the wonders and beauties of our world, and are being prepared for the introductory years of God's Kingdom. No doubt new wonders will be discovered and new mechanisms invented once the Kingdom is firmly established and continuing in power.

We may rest assured that the Lord will cause all necessary steps to be taken to provide for the resurrected millions as they come forth from the sleep of death. They will need to be housed and fed, and led to see the arrangements God has made in Jesus Christ for their return to life, and the means by which they can go on living for ever.

THE WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND

The two classes already mentioned -- those who know of the times and seasons and those who do not -- are described in Daniel 12:10 as the *"wise"* and the *"wicked"*: *"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."*

The *"wise"* are those who believe in God through the Lord Jesus Christ and who under the trials and tests of today take their stand with the Lord and His truth. The *"wicked"* are those who ignore or resist the Lord as well as those who uphold false doctrine and support the *"abomination of desolation"*.

The *"wise"* are not wise in worldly wisdom as the Apostle Paul said, *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"* (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). But they are wise in coming to God in repentance and humility through Jesus Christ, studying the Scriptures to obtain wisdom and understanding by His Holy Spirit.

John in the Revelation also refers to these two classes. On the one hand *"all that dwell upon the earth ... whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb"*, and who are misled by the *"beast"* and his *"image,"* and on the other hand the *"saints"* against whom the *"beast"* and the *"image"* make war to overcome them (Revelation 13:7-18).

THE 1290 DAYS

"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." (Daniel 12:11).

We are not told of any specific happening or event to take place at the fulfilment of the 1,290 prophetic days. It has been maintained earlier that the *"abomination"* was set up in 539 AD, so the 1,290 prophetic days or years reach to 1829 AD. The only event of religious significance at that time was the "Miller Movement", a movement that awakened new interest in the subject of the Lord's return and the setting up of God's Kingdom.

THE 1335 DAYS

"Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." (Daniel 12:12).

Here also is omitted any definite statement of what was to be expected at the close of the 1,335 prophetic days or years, but a special blessing is promised to the *"wise"* who are watching and praying at that time. From 539 AD, 1,335 years reach to 1874 AD. No striking event in world history occurred in 1874 that could be considered a fulfilment of this prediction, so we must consider it as some event or development that related to saints or wise ones only.

The New Testament helps us to understand what the promised blessing might be. Passages in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 14 give us a clue, because they suggest a contrast between Daniel's long rest in the grave and a *"change," "in the twinkling of an eye"* which is to be experienced by members of the Church *"at the last trump"* (1 Corinthians 15:51,52).

The passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:13- 7 tells us that at the return of Christ the dead are to be raised, and *"we which are alive and remain shall be caught up."* The dead in Christ are to be raised first, changed into the likeness of their Lord, then the living ones are *"changed"* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). The change promised to the living saints does not say that they will not die, rather the promise is that they will not sleep as the apostles and others have done. *"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."* (1 Corinthians 15:51).

Paul said he expected his reward at Christ's second coming, when all who love His appearing should be rewarded (2 Timothy 4:1, 8; 1 John 3:2). He also said that the living saints should not precede the dead saints in the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:15). We are not told, however, the exact time at which the Lord would call forth His sleeping saints during the time of His return, whether at the end of 1,260 years or at some subsequent date.

A blessing promised in Revelation 14 further helps us to an understanding of the blessing promised in Daniel 12:12:

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (literally "follow with them"). (Revelation 14:13).

A point of time is mentioned in this verse: *"from henceforth"*. This point of time may be fixed in the context of the third angel's message in Revelation 14 as 1874, the same year as the end of the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12.

We may reasonably conclude from the comparison of Daniel 12:12, 1 Corinthians 15:51 and 52, and Revelation 14:13 that the blessing promised in Daniel 12:12 and Revelation 14:13 is to the saints living at that time and since that time. The blessing is that these saints will not sleep in death as those before them have done, but will be *"changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"*.

The latter part of Revelation 14:13 supports this understanding in that those who die in the Lord *"from henceforth"* rest from their labours; *"and their works do follow with them"*.

"Labours" may be taken to refer to the difficulties and trials experienced by the believer in the Christian walk, while *"their works"* may be taken to refer to believers' activities in serving the Lord and giving praise and honour to His holy name. The *"dead which die in the Lord from henceforth"* are therefore *"blessed"* in that they pass immediately to their reward in heaven, and there join the Lord in the overthrow of this present evil order and the establishment of His righteous Kingdom.

DANIEL'S LOT

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Daniel 12:13).

The clear implication in this verse is that Daniel would rest in the grave and must wait for his resurrection until after those waiting ones of verse 12 have received their reward.

The manner of casting lots in ancient times was to take small stones or pebbles, each stone bearing the name of an individual, a family or a tribe. The lot was used as a means of discovering the Lord's will in disputes, and also to seek divine aid in the discovery of a guilty person:

"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." (Proverbs 16:33).

"The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." (Proverbs 18:18).

"... it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man." (Joshua 7:14). [(Verses 16 to 18 describe how this choice by lot was carried out.)]

Men were chosen by lot for an invading force: *"And the Lord said, Judah shall go up"* (Judges 1:1,2; 20:9,10).

Choice of the *"Lord's goat"* and the *"scapegoat"* on the day of atonement was made by lot (Leviticus 16:7,8).

When the children of Israel entered the promised land under Joshua, the land was divided among nine and one-half tribes by lot, two and one-half tribes having received their portion previously from Moses: *"And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions."* (Joshua 18:10).

Not only was the whole land divided by lot among the twelve tribes, but within each tribe each family received its inheritance by lot (Numbers 34:18-29; Joshua 19:49,50; 14:6-15; 15:12,10; 16:5; 17:2).

The portion of land received as a result of the lot by each family was called *"the lot of his inheritance"*. Thus we see that the term *"lot"* applied not only to the stones which were used in making the distribution, and to the method of distribution, but also to the land itself when thus divided. Each person's portion of land was his lot, and he was expected to keep it in his family as an inheritance from the Lord (Leviticus 25:23,24).

Daniel must have belonged either to a royal or an aristocratic family, for it was only of the higher ranks that Nebuchadnezzar chose a company of well-educated young men for special training in the language and wisdom of the Chaldeans (Daniel 1:3,4). As such, Daniel must have had a *"lot of his inheritance"* in the land of Judah, to which tribe he belonged. That inheritance would have been forfeited when he was carried captive to Babylon, and although Daniel lived until the first year of Cyrus, when the children of Israel began to return to their own land, there is no evidence that Daniel returned with them.

"The end of the days" when Daniel is to stand in his lot would not be the end of the Babylonian captivity, but the end of the 1,335 days of the prophecy. This would not necessarily be the moment when the 1,335 years end, but some time after that date. A special blessing was to come to the *"wise"* who would be living and waiting when the time of the 1,335 years was reached, but Daniel would come into his lot at the end of those days, after the *"wise"* had received their promised blessing.

Daniel's *"lot"* in the resurrection will be more than his inheritance as a faithful Jew in the land of Judah. Daniel's lot can be nothing less than an inheritance provided for him by God as a reward for his extraordinary faith and life-long faithfulness. The prophet Isaiah tells us:

"Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." (Isaiah 56:5).

Since Daniel lived before the "High Calling" of the Gospel Age, his "lot" will be a lesser position than that of the joint-heirs, the members of the Gospel Age Church, but still an honourable one. Our Lord explained in Matthew 11:11 that no greater prophet had arisen than John the Baptist, yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven was greater than he.

The distinction and difference in rewards between the prophets and the Church is not one based on merit or personal character but a matter of the Lord's appointment. The least of the joint-heirs will be greater, or hold a higher office than will the prophets and other ancient worthies. This is the message of Hebrews 11:39 and 40:

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The "promise" which Daniel and the other prophets died before they obtained it was that they should have an honourable position in the Kingdom of God when it should be set up. The Church is invited to an inheritance in heaven; the ancient worthies were invited to a noble inheritance on earth. This distinction was foretold in Psalm 45, but its significance could not be understood until after the call to the Church was made, and is one of the truths lost during the Dark Ages.

After referring in poetic language and imagery to the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, Whom God would establish upon an everlasting throne (Psalm 45:1-8), to which prophecy the Apostle refers in Hebrews 1:8 and 9, the Psalmist describes "*the king's daughter*" which may be taken as a reference to the Church, who enters the king's palace as bride of the Lamb (Psalm 45:9-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7,8). Verse 13 of Psalm 45 is clearer if we read "*All glorious is the king's daughter in the inner palace*" as indicated in the Revised Version, the Variorum and Leeser translations.

Next are described the *"virgins her companions"* who also follow her into the king's palace. The virgins may be understood symbolically, representing the same class of justified believers as the *"fathers"* of verse 16 of Psalm 45: *"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth"*.

We are assisted to reach an understanding of the symbolism of Psalm 45 by Jesus' words:

*"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.
He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,
The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?
If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"*
(Matthew 22:41-45).

The account in Mark 12:35-37 tells us that Jesus spoke these words while He taught in the temple. Luke also records these words of Jesus in Luke 20:41-44. The same uniqueness of the relationship between David and Christ had also been expressed by Isaiah:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:"
"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek:" (Isaiah 11:1,10).

In these verses the One promised as a Branch or Offspring of Jesse -- Jesse being the root -- subsequently becomes the root of Jesse. Paul quotes this prophecy in Romans 15:12, and points out that Christ is the Branch which afterward becomes the Root.

In the final chapter of the Revelation, Jesus declared to the Churches, *"I am the root and the offspring of David"* (Revelation 22:16). Christ came as a descendant of Jesse and of David, *"as concerning the flesh"* (Romans 9:5), through his mother Mary, not through Joseph, because Joseph was not His father. God was Christ's Father and Christ's birth of the virgin

Mary was a miracle (Matthew 1:18-25). As the son of David, our Lord in His earthly life would owe David obedience and respect in accordance with Jewish law.

The fact that David, in the prophetic Psalm 110, by the Holy Spirit called Jesus "*Lord*" indicates a change of position, Christ becoming the father or "*root*" (Romans 15:12) and David becoming the child or "*branch*" (Isaiah 11:1). This change of position will affect not only David, but all the ancient worthies including Daniel, for all are dependent upon Him for their resurrection from the dead. One of our Lord's titles is "*the everlasting Father*" (Isaiah 9:6).

These passages bear out the statement of Psalm 45:16 that those who had been our Lord's "*fathers*" shall in the resurrection be His "*children*" and when God's Kingdom is established in power on earth, these ancient worthies, the fathers and the prophets, will be made "*princes in all the earth*". This means that the ancient worthies will be given positions of authority and trust in the administration of the Kingdom on earth.

The Gospel Age overcomers will be with the Lord in heaven, and will themselves be a kingdom of priests to assist Christ as executives in that new and righteous order.

An important part of Daniel's "*lot*" is mentioned by Luke in his gospel:

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." (Luke 13:28,29).

Daniel will be one of the prophets mentioned in verse 28 above. The "*they*" of verse 29 above would mean the faithful of past ages, some of whom are named by the Apostle in Hebrews 11.

To "*sit down*" in the Kingdom of God would mean to occupy a position of authority in that Kingdom. In ancient times to "*sit in the gate*" of a city meant to act as a judge or a magistrate. The subjects of the Kingdom are represented in figurative language in Revelation 7:9 as standing in the presence of the throne, that is, the ruling authority.

The hope of all Jews was to occupy a position of authority in the Kingdom under their Messiah (Matthew 20:21; 19:28; Acts 1:6). Some of them will be grievously disappointed when in the resurrection they are raised to see others occupying the places they might have had, had they humbled themselves and accepted their Messiah when He came to them (Deuteronomy 21:19; Ruth 4:1,2; 2 Samuel 19:8; Luke 19:42-44; Romans 11:7; Isaiah 53:1-3,7,8).

The faithful of old are not promised an inheritance in heaven. They are a separate class of holy ones or overcomers for whom a special place of honour is prepared under Christ and the Church. Peter states plainly that David, one of the greatest of the prophets *"is not ascended into the heavens"* (Acts 2:34). David is not ascended to heaven and never will ascend there. His prophecies which seem to speak of such an ascension refer to Christ, not to David. David's place will be with Daniel and others as one of Christ's children, resurrected to be *"princes in all the earth"*.

The distinction between the ancient worthies and the Gospel Age saints is maintained throughout the Scriptures. Revelation 11:18 tells us of *"... the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints"*.

The saints will be raised in the Lord's likeness as spirit-beings while the faithful of old will be raised as human beings with perfect bodies and minds such as Adam possessed before the fall. Daniel's *"lot"* as well as the lot of each and every one of the ancient worthies will be a happy one, for they will be given dominion over the resurrected human race to help them all to develop the faith and character necessary to gain everlasting life in the security and happiness of God's Kingdom. Thus will the faithful of old obtain that *"better resurrection"* (Hebrews 11:35) in hope of which they suffered much. In that high position Daniel's righteous character will stand out even more than it did when he was Nebuchadnezzar's prime minister and faithful interpreter of visions and dreams.

Having now considered the grand vision of Messiah's glory as given to Daniel, and having striven by prayer and study, with the Holy Spirit to help us to understand all His prophecies, may we all *"take the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience"* (James 5:10). And may we also heed the exhortation of the Apostle Paul, who writes in Hebrews 12:1 and 2:

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."



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