

INTRODUCTION:

Daniel went to Babylon during the first deportation in 606 B.C. He and other members of the Judean royal and noble families were given special training to serve in Babylonian court. He quickly gained a reputation as an interpreter of dreams and riddles, which led to his appointment to high government posts. As an old man, Daniel served in the Medo-Persian administration after Babylon fell in 539 B.C. He was unlike the other prophets in that he did not go around saying, “Thus says the Lord.” Instead, he was primarily an interpreter of dreams and riddles and a recipient of visions himself. The book falls naturally into two parts. In the first six chapters, Daniel spoke in the third person about activities involving himself and his three Jewish companions, and he interpreted dreams and riddles received by others. In chapters 7-12, he spoke in the first person about visions which he himself received. Some of the most well-known stories in the Old Testament are found in Daniel, especially those about Daniel’s three friends in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) and Daniel in the lion’s den (Daniel 6). The book has become a modern battleground on two counts. Liberal scholarship places the writing of the book in the middle of the second century B.C., whereas conservatives generally believe it was written by Daniel in the sixth century B.C. Secondly, scholars have been divided on the precise historical identification of features of the visions. The book has many important passages, but Daniel 12:2 stands out as the clearest Old Testament reference to the resurrection of the dead. The key Old Testament passage behind Jesus’ application of the term “Son of Man” to himself is Daniel 7:13. Material from every chapter in Daniel is either quoted or alluded to in Revelation and only two chapters are without some background in Daniel.

PROPHET DANIEL:

The name Daniel means “God has judged.” Daniel as the celebrated Jewish prophet of the Book of Daniel sprang from the princely family of the tribe of Judah (Daniel 1:3-7). When a youth, he was carried off with other captives by Nebuchadnezzar, in the third year of king Jehoiakim, 605 B.C. (Daniel 1:1; Jeremiah 25:1). At Babylon the boy was selected with other young captives of good birth and talents to be trained for the state service. He and three companions obtained leave from the master of the eunuchs to

substitute simple food for the viands assigned them by the king which were likely to be contrary to the Mosaic law and defiled by heathen rites (Daniel 1:8).

The four young exiles all became proficient in Babylonian learning, while the grace of God enabled them to manifest uncompromising principle, even when it brought them face to face with death. The period of tutelage ended in the third year (1:5), when they were given service at court; and Daniel continued in it with varying prominence until 539 B.C., the first year of Cyrus (1:21). In Nebuchadnezzar's second year, 603 B.C., doubtless toward its close, Daniel interpreted the king's dream of the great image (2:1-45). This success led to the prophet's being made ruler over the province of Babylon, and head over its wise men (2:46-40). He afterward interpreted the vision that revealed the approaching madness of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4). In the first year of Belshazzar, Daniel himself had a vision and saw, under the figure of animals, four successive empires reaching to the time when the Ancient of Days should sit, and one like a "son of man" come with the clouds of heaven to set up a spiritual kingdom which should endure eternally (Daniel 7). The scene of the vision of the third year of Belshazzar was at Susa (8:2), the Elamite capital, and residence of Cyrus, king of Persia. The prophet himself was probably at Babylon. In this vision he saw a ram smitten and trampled by a goat, and from the latter, when its power was in turn broken, four horns appearing, from one of which a little horn sprang and grew exceeding great, especially toward the glorious land and its sanctuary; whereby were symbolized the Persian and Macedonian empires, the division of the latter into four kingdoms, the rise of a fierce king, Antiochus Epiphanes, and his desecration of the sanctuary (Daniel 8).

On the fall of the Neo-Babylonian, or Chaldean Empire, Darius the Mede appointed 120 satraps over the new kingdom, with three presidents over them, Daniel being one of the three (6:1-2). Jealousy of Daniel on account of his ability and eminence led to a plot against him, and he was cast into the den of lions (6:3-23). In the first year of Darius (521 B.C.), Daniel concluded from the statements of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10) that the captivity was approaching its close (Daniel 9:1-2). He humbled himself, confessed the sins of the nation, and prayed. In consequence there was revealed to him the prophecy of the 70 weeks (9:24). In the third year of Cyrus (536 B.C.), king of Persia, he had a vision of the final conflict between the powers of the world and the

Kingdom of God (Daniel 10 to 12). Daniel is referred to in Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14; and, Hebrews 11:33).

BOOK OF DANIEL:

In the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and in the English version of the Bible, the Book of Daniel follows Ezekiel, but in the Hebrew canon it is placed in the Writings or Hagiographa. In other words, this book belongs to neither the Major nor the Minor Prophets. It was not put with the Prophets because Daniel, although called a prophet (Matthew 24:15), and one of the greatest of them, and although he was marvelously gifted by the spirit of prophecy, was not regarded as officially a prophet. He was officially a statesman, and his life was passed in the business of the state. He does not use the common prophetic declaration, “Thus saith the Lord,” and he does not exhort his contemporaries, as it was the function of the prophets to do. The book was written in Hebrew, except for Daniel 2:4b to 7:28, which is in Aramaic.

A brief summary of the book follows:

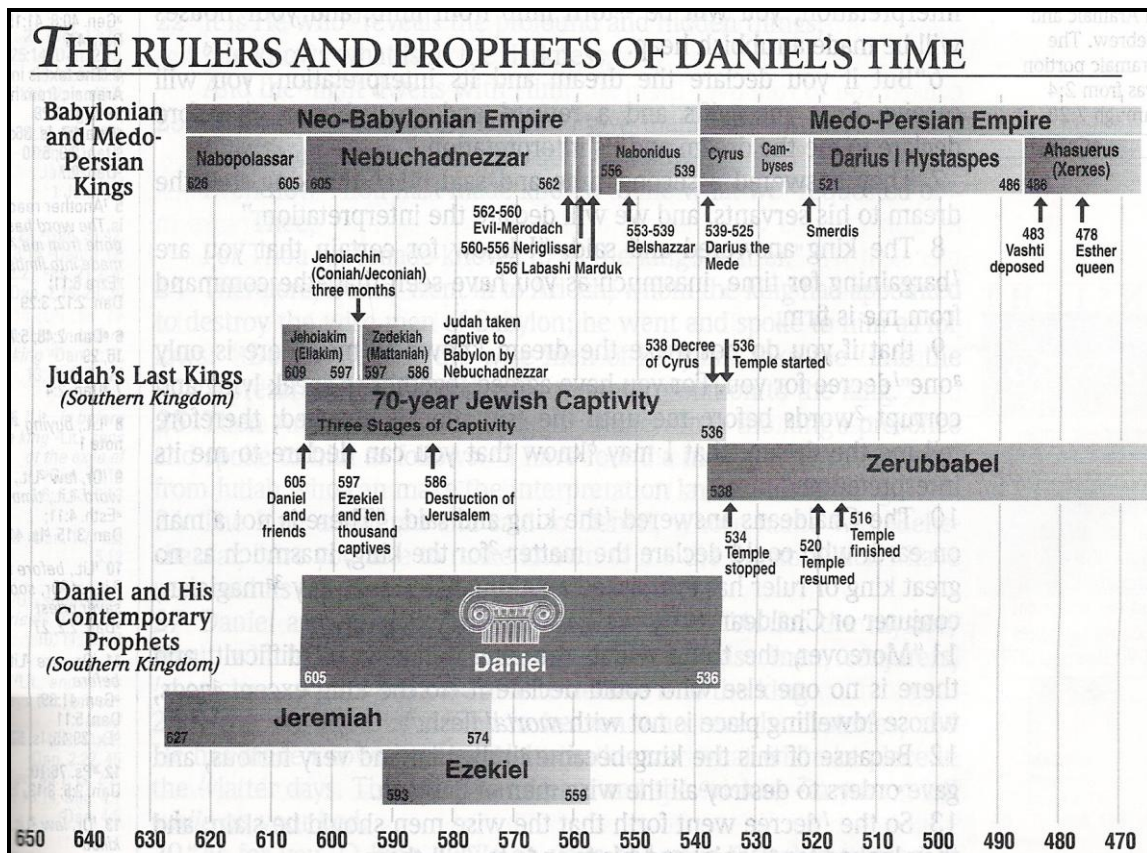
1. Six anecdotes of his life in company with three compatriots (Daniel 1 to 6): (a) the preparation of Daniel and his three companions for their work (Daniel 1); (b) witness borne by God through the four, at a foreign court and largely to foreigners, of his omnipotent and omniscient control of the powers of the world in their development and in their relation to the Kingdom of God (Daniel 2 to 6). It includes Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the image made of four metals, together with clay in the feet, and its destruction (Daniel 2); the attempt against Daniel’s three companions and their deliverance from the fiery furnace (Daniel 3); Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the tree hewn down (Daniel 4); the writing on the wall at Belshazzar’s feast (Daniel 5); the plot to destroy Daniel, and his deliverance from the lions’ den (Daniel 6).

2. The visions of Daniel: (a) the four beasts and the being “like a son of man” (Daniel 7); (b) visions having the fortunes of God’s people especially in view (Daniel 8 to 12), comprising three visions: (1) Concerning the cessation of sacrifice, desolation of the sanctuary, opposition to the prince of princes (Daniel 8:13, 25). (2) In view of the near completion of the predicted 70 years of exile, Daniel prepared for the great event by confessing national sins and supplicating forgiveness. From prophecies gone before, it might be supposed that the Kingdom of the Messiah would be established immediately at

the expiration of the captivity; but in a vision Daniel is informed that 70 weeks must elapse after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem is issued before reconciliation is made and everlasting righteousness brought in (Daniel 9). (3) He is further informed by a vision in the third year of Cyrus in regard to the overthrow of the Persian Empire, the persecution of God’s people that shall ensue, and the final relief of the saints and the resurrection to glory (Daniel 10 to 12).

TIME OF DANIEL

The time in which Daniel lived and wrote is highly debated. As stated in the introduction many liberal scholars believe that Daniel was written in the second century B.C. They take this view primarily because of the accuracy of Daniel’s predictions, assuming that the book was written after they had occurred and the information already known. Conservative scholars take to book’s witness at face value as it states the events as being in the future. This is the view charted below with Daniel depicting events and prophetic visions which occurred during the time of the Babylonian exile.



EVENTS IN DANIEL’S LIFETIME

As previously stated, some of the most famous stories in the Bible are found in Daniel. The two most famous would be the story of God’s deliverance of Daniel’s three friends from the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lions’ den. Not as well known but also significant and consistent in their teaching are the stories of the vision of the “great tree” and the “handwriting on the wall.” What follows is a brief overview of each in the order in which they occur in Daniel.

(Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace)

King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon built a giant golden image ninety feet high and nine feet wide (Daniel 3:1) and commanded all the people to worship it, stipulating that anyone who didn’t worship it would be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, adding, “*and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hand*” (Daniel 3:15b). Daniel’s three friends refused to worship the image and were reported to the king (Daniel 3:8-18). The king became very angry, ordered the furnace to be heated to seven times its usual heat, and that the three be thrown into it (Daniel 3:19-22). But the fire did not touch Daniel’s friends and the king witnessed a fourth person in the furnace who appeared as the son of gods (Daniel 3:23-26). The faith of Daniel’s friends and the power of their God caused Nebuchadnezzar to acknowledge God as the Most High God, saying, “*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 4:3). The lesson of this story found in Daniel 3:1 through 4:3 is that God’s servants can and should trust in Him, and that God is more than capable of delivering them from any danger. In addition, as it did for the king and his nobles, the witness of faith in God can cause others to recognize God as the Most High and one true God.

(Vision of the Great Tree)

King Nebuchadnezzar sees in a vision a great tree which is beautiful and feeds the earth, but then he sees a holy one descend from heaven and proclaim that the tree be chopped down and that the man’s mind be changed to that of a beast and for seven periods of time be made to eat grass like a beast. Daniel is summoned to interpret the dream and informs Nebuchadnezzar that the dream is about him and that he will fall from power until he

“recognizes that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes” (Daniel 4:25b). Everything happens to the king just as it was shown in the vision. Twelve months later while reflecting on the palace roof he says to himself, *“Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?”* (Daniel 4:30). Immediately, God answers from heaven, saying, ***“King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes”*** (Daniel 4:31-32). *“Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws”* (Daniel 4:33). After the prescribed period of time, the king’s mind returns to normal and he blesses and praises God, recognizing Him as the Most High God, and Nebuchadnezzar’s majesty and splendor were restored along with his sovereignty over the land (Daniel 4:34-37). The obvious lesson of Daniel 4:4-37 is that we must always acknowledge God as our sovereign Lord and not think too highly of our own abilities and accomplishments.

(The Handwriting on the Wall)

King Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar, threw a feast for a thousand of his nobles and ordered the gold and silver vessels which had been taken from God’s temple in Jerusalem be used to serve wine to his guests. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly a hand appears and writes a message on the plaster of the wall for all to see. Belshazzar is frightened and summons Daniel to interpret the message. Daniel begins by explaining how when his father Nebuchadnezzar had offended God with his arrogance that God had punished him, and that now Belshazzar has offended God by not humbling his heart but exalting himself against the Lord by using the vessels of God’s temple to praise the gods of silver, gold, bronze, iron, wood and stone. Daniel then interprets the message as follows: *“MENE—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. TEKEL—you have been weighed on the*

scales and found deficient. *PERES—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians*” (Daniel 5:26-27). That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. So Darius the Mede received the kingdom (Daniel 5:30). From this event we get the saying, “The handwriting is on the wall,” which means the signs are obvious regarding something that is about to happen. The lesson is that it should be obvious to all that to fail to honor and humble ourselves before God will result in our downfall.

(Daniel and the lions’ den.)

King Darius appointed Daniel as one of three to be in charge over his kingdom, but Daniel excelled and the king considered putting Daniel in charge of the whole kingdom. This resulted in jealousy among the other administrators but they could find no grounds for accusation or evidence of corruption against Daniel. Thus, knowing that Daniel worshiped the Lord God each day, they plotted to trap him by having the king sign an order that no god could be worshiped other than the king. Anyone violating the king’s statute would be thrown into the lions’ den and eaten. Knowing that the king had signed the order, Daniel continued to worship and praise God, which resulted in his arrest. While the king favored Daniel, he was obligated to fulfill the law and ordered Daniel cast into the lions’ den, but he said to Daniel, “*Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you*” (Daniel 6:16b). The opening to the den was closed with a stone and sealed with the king’s signet ring that it not be disturbed. Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him. At dawn the king rushed to the lions’ den and cried out, “*Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?*” (Daniel 6:20b). Daniel responds saying, “*My God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime*” (Daniel 6:22). Then the king gave orders that the men who maliciously accused Daniel, along with their children and wives, be cast into the lions’ den and they were crushed (Daniel 6:24). And the king made a decree that in all the dominion of his kingdom “*men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel; For He is the living God and enduring forever, and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed, and His dominion will be forever*” (Daniel 6:26-27). The obvious lesson is consistent with the others. God is to be honored.

Those who witness their faith and trust in God through open worship will be protected and delivered. This witness will be recognized by others and cause others to honor God. Those who oppose and dishonor God will be punished.

DANIEL’S OUTLINE OF THE FUTURE

Daniel contains graphic visions that provide an outline of what God would do from the sixth century B.C., when Daniel lived and wrote, until the coming of the Messiah’s kingdom. The key prophetic chapters are Daniel 2, 7, 9, 11, and 12. Chapters 2, 7, and 9 also provide outlines for Jewish and Gentile history.

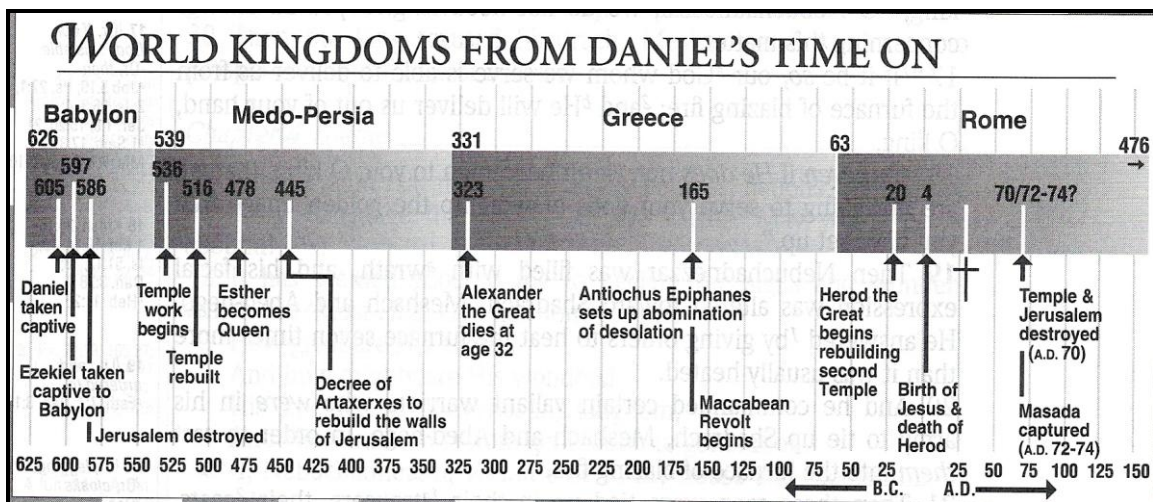
God provided Daniel and the nation of Israel with an outline of their history during the Babylonian captivity in order to give them hope that God would work out His plan for them in the future. In Daniel 2 and 7 we see an overview of the four Gentile kingdoms that would play an important role in world history. The first of the four kingdoms was Babylon, under whose jurisdiction Daniel saw and wrote many of his prophetic visions in the sixth century B.C. The other kingdoms were Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Daniel’s prophecy concludes by saying that the Roman Empire would undergo a revival into a ten-nation confederacy right before the coming of Messiah’s kingdom. Daniel 2 records these kingdoms from a Gentile perspective while Daniel 7 repeats the overview from God’s perspective, which explains why the kingdoms are characterized as beasts. (*See also chart on page-12.*)

Here are the specifics of the four kingdoms as revealed in both Daniel 2 and 7:

- **Babylon** (626-539 B.C.)—represented by the head of gold and a lion having the wings of an eagle (2:32; 7:4).
- **Medo-Persia** (539-331 B.C.)—represented by the silver upper body and a bear (2:32; 7:5).
- **Greece** (331-63 B.C.)—represented by the belly and thighs made of bronze and a leopard with four wings and four heads (2:32; 7:6).
- **Rome** (63 B.C.—A.D. 476; Tribulation)—the first phase of the kingdom is represented by legs of iron and an unspecified beast with iron teeth and bronze claws (2:33; 7:7). The final phase is described as feet and toes that are a mixture of iron and clay, as well as ten horns or ten kings and “another” (2:41-44; 7:24-

25). The book of Revelation builds upon Daniel’s revelation and further develops the final phase of the fourth kingdom that will play such a significant role during the Tribulation as Antichrist’s kingdom.

The chart below outlines the four kingdoms described above along with the dates of significant events that occurred during these kingdoms. Each of the kingdoms described by Daniel came into existence and is documented in the history of the world just as he prophesied.



The Stone Cut without Hands:

In the last portion of the king’s dream we are told that a “stone was cut without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Daniel 2:34-35). In Daniel’s interpretation of the king’s dream he explains the stone that becomes a mountain, saying, “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever” (Daniel 2:44). As with the four kingdoms, in Daniel 7 we find a parallel to the stone which becomes a mountain—a kingdom that will last forever. Daniel 7:13-14 speaks of the “Son of Man” who is coming and is presented to the Ancient of Days, stating, “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the

clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” This passage should remind us of Jesus’ words to His disciples after the resurrection and before the ascension. Jesus said, **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth... I am with you always, even to the end of the age”** (Matthew 28:18b, 20b). Indeed, Jesus, who referred to Himself as “Son of Man” is the stone described in Daniel and spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. God said through His prophet Isaiah, **“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed”** (Isaiah 28:16). Regarding this stone, the apostle Peter will state that *“for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”* (1 Peter 2:7b-8a). Consistent with God’s revelation through other Old Testament prophets and the New Testament, Jesus has brought the kingdom of God to earth, which continues to grow to fill the entire world, and in the second coming of Christ, will overcome the world and reign forever.

Vision of the Ram and Goat:

In Daniel 8, Daniel describes a vision he had of a ram with two horns which was butting westward, northward and southward. No other beasts could stand before the ram and no one could rescue from his power. Then a goat came from the west with a conspicuous horn between his eyes. The goat shattered the horns of the ram and became the dominate power and magnified itself, but as soon as he was mighty the horn broke and was replaced with four smaller horns of less power. Out of one of these horns grew another that became exceedingly great, reaching to the host of heaven, causing some of the host to fall to the earth and be trampled, and even magnifying itself to be equal to the Commander of the host. It will remove the regular sacrifice from Him, cause His sanctuary to be thrown down, and fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper (Daniel 8:1-14).

In Daniel’s interpretation of the vision we are told that the vision pertains to “the time of the end” (Daniel 8:17b). Daniel identifies the “ram” with two horns as

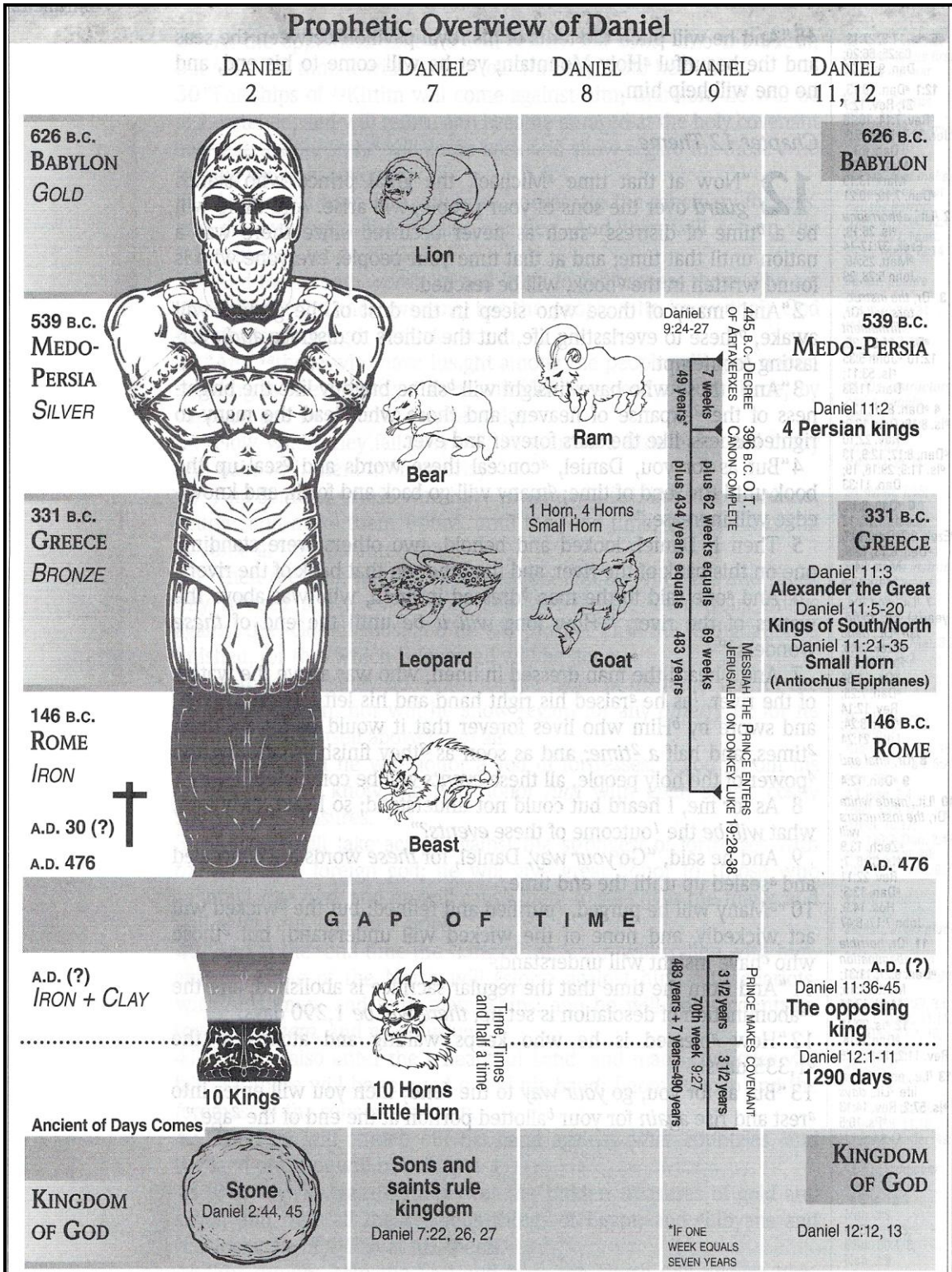
representing the kings of Media and Persia (Daniel 8:20). The goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn between the eyes is the first king (Daniel 8:21). Most agree that this king is Alexander the Great who unified the Greeks and conquered the Medo-Persian empire. As soon as Alexander had completed his conquest he died, and his kingdom was divided into four kingdoms under four rulers. These would be the kingdoms of Diadochi: Macedonia (under Cassander), Thrace and Asia Minor (under Lysimachus), Syria (under Seleucus), and Egypt (under Ptolemy). Hence the broken horn and four that came up in its place (Daniel 8:22).

Regarding the smaller horn that becomes mighty and causes so much trouble for the host of heaven. Many scholars believe this to be Antiochus Epiphanes, who in 165 B.C. desecrates the sanctuary of God, stopping the sacrifice and setting up an “abomination of desolation” in the temple. The problem with this theory is two-fold. First, in Daniel 8:23-26, he makes it clear that this mighty ruler will come “*in the later period*” but “*not by his own power*” (Daniel 8:23, 24). In Daniel’s interpretation of the world powers to come he places the Romans as the last great power, coming after the Greeks. Antiochus Epiphanes ruled during the time of the Greeks and therefore cannot be of the “later period.” Likewise, when Daniel speaks of the “*abomination of desolation*” in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 he is referring, respectively, to conflicts to come in the future and to the time of the end. Secondly, Jesus spoke of the “abomination of desolation” as being one of the final signs prior to His second coming (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). Jesus spoke these words 200 years after Antiochus Epiphanes and was referring to a future and not a past event. Thus, Daniel is describing an “end times” event, which is certainly associated with the second coming of Christ. (*See chart on page-12.*)

SEVENTY WEEKS AND THE MESSIAH:

Daniel’s “70 weeks” prophecy, given in Daniel 9:24-27, is the framework within which the seven-year Tribulation (or the seventieth week) occurs. The prophecy of the 70 weeks was given to Daniel by God while Daniel was in Babylon (Daniel 9:1). In the vision God gave to Daniel, the Lord assured the prophet that He had not forgotten His chosen people. The angel Gabriel told Daniel that God would bring Israel back into their land and would one day set up the Messianic kingdom. What Daniel didn’t expect was

the revelation that the prophecy would not be fulfilled at the end of the 70-year captivity in Babylon, but at the end of the future 70-week period described in 9:24-27. According to Daniel 9:27, the Antichrist will come to power during the final seventieth week.



God had provided a time limit to the exile through the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ***“Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,”*** declares the Lord, ***“for the iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation”*** (Jeremiah 25:12). Realizing that the time had come for the exile to end, Daniel 9 begins with Daniel’s prayer for his people in which he confesses the sins of his people. Daniel is hopeful that God is about to restore his people and fulfill His promise of the coming Messiah. But instead God sends the angel Gabriel, telling Daniel: ***“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place”*** (Daniel 9:24).

(Starting Point and the First Sixty-Nine Weeks)

The period of seventy-weeks is revealed to be broken down into three segments, consisting of seven weeks, followed by sixty-two weeks, which add up to sixty-nine weeks. Ultimately, at the time of the end there will be another final period of one week. This time line will begin with the issuing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Daniel 9:25 reads: ***“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”*** The angel’s revelation is given metrically. Its substance is that the weeks are to be understood as hebdomads or weeks of years. Thus, the sixty-nine weeks (consisting of 7+62) will represent 483 years (49+434).

In 445 B.C. Artaxerxes decreed that the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt. Some scholars believe that this is the decree that fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy and began the first period of seven weeks or first 49 year period. Other scholars believe the starting date to be 586 B.C. when the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed by Babylon. They use this date because it more closely coincides with the date that Antiochus Epiphanes sets up an abomination of desolation in the rebuilt second temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C., but even these dates do not exactly match, adding up to 421 years or about 60 weeks of years. Looking at the first week for clues, 49 years after 586 B.C. would be 537 B.C., which is about the time construction began on the second temple and is supportive to this date.

Forty-nine years after the 445 B.C. starting point would be 396 B.C., which is about the time that the Old Testament Canon (compilation of Scriptures) was complete. The last prophet was Malachi who began prophesying around 433 B.C. After Malachi we are told that there was approximately 400 years of silence (the absence of prophecy).

Interestingly enough among the list of things that are to occur during the seventy-weeks, the second to the last event is “to seal up vision and prophecy” (Daniel 9:24). Thus, the year 396 B.C. seems to coincide with the time that prophecy has ended and been sealed.

Now to address the sixty-two weeks which immediately follow the seven weeks. Based on the 586 B.C. starting date, this date would fall around 148 B.C., 17 years after Antiochus Epiphanes desecrate the temple and still during the time of the Greek empire. This does not fit with Daniel’s vision of the four kingdoms that end with the Romans, nor does it fit with the coming of the Messiah. Daniel 9:26 states: *“Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.”* Based on the 445 B.C. starting date, the first sixty-nine weeks would end in about 38 A.D. This date falls during the time of Roman rule and more closely coincides with the ministry and death of Jesus Christ. The Romans will execute Jesus (cut off the Messiah) and will destroy the temple and Jerusalem shortly after in 70 A.D. While the dates are not an exact match, the correlation of events more closely matches the prophecies of Daniel when using the 445 B.C. date. It is important to note that some place the date of Artaxerxes decree at 458 B.C. which would place the end of the first seven weeks and the end and sealing of prophecy at 409 B.C., and the end of the sixty-nine weeks and coming of the Messiah at about 25 A.D.

The Final Week—The Tribulation:

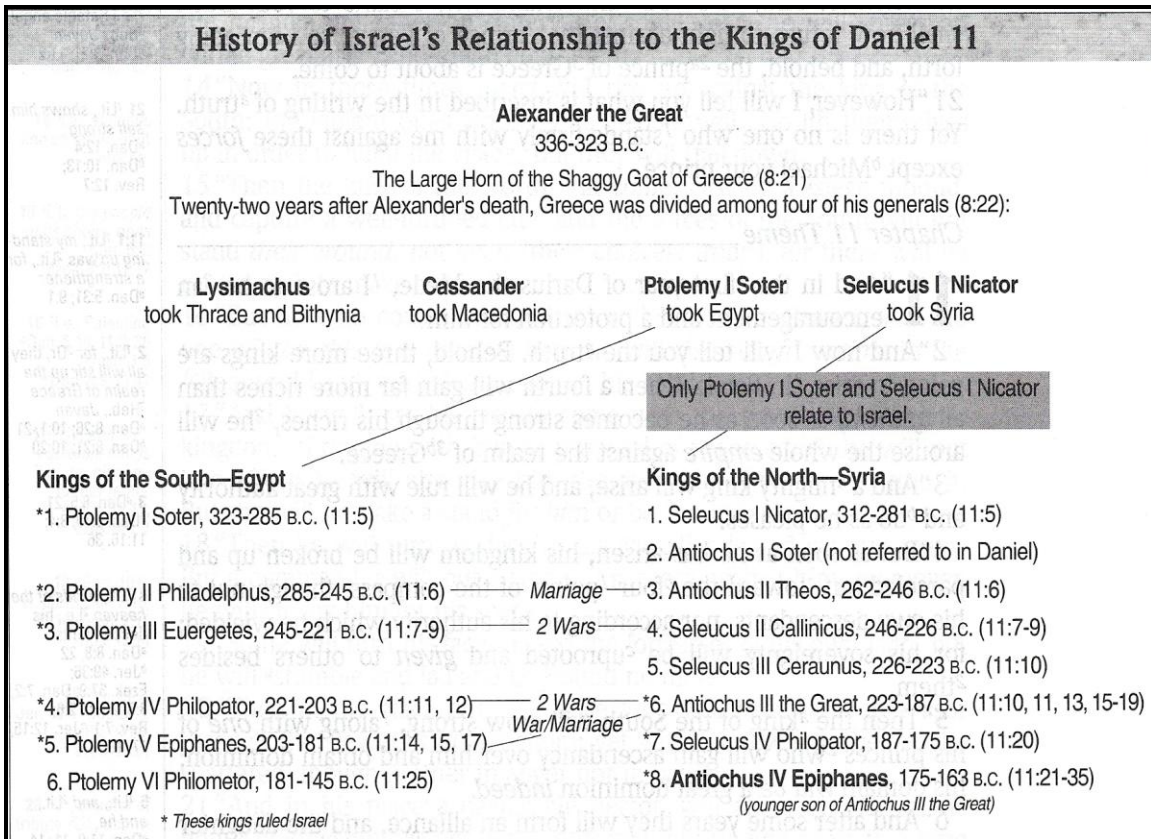
Many today evangelists believe the seventieth week of Daniel corresponds to the seven year Tribulation period spoke of both in Daniel and in the book of Revelation. This time is often spoke of as having two halves, each consisting of a “time, times and a half time,” or three and a half years. Daniel 9:27 describes the events of this week as follows: *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”* The “he” referred to in Daniel 9:27 is thought to be

the “Antichrist.” Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 also speak of the coming “abomination of desolation” and Daniel 12:11 references a period of 1,290 days which corresponds to a period of three and a half years. Only God the Father knows when this time will occur.

THE VISION OF THE LAST DAYS:

The final three chapters of Daniel are dedicated to the events of the “time of the end.” Chapter 10 begins with a terrifying vision of great conflict which is not described (Daniel 10:1). The vision causes Daniel to mourn and fast but then a brilliantly illuminated man appears to him in another vision and brings comfort. Based on context we can assume the person that appears to Daniel is the angel Gabriel who speaks of a hidden heavenly battle being waged. In Daniel 10:21, the angel Michael is seen as the heavenly prince of Israel, as he is in Daniel 12:1. Persia, too, had its own prince, as did Greece (Daniel 10:13, 20). These princes or angels engaged in heavenly combat, and the implication is that what was happening to these nations on the earth was affected by this heavenly struggle (Daniel 10:12-14, 20). Paul, using different terminology, taught that the Christian’s real struggle was with these spiritual beings, rather than with physical ones (Ephesians 6:12).

Chapter 11 describes a long series of conflicts to come between the kings of the south and the kings of the north. Based on the descriptions of the conflicts and clues within the text many scholars believe that this chapter describes the struggle for power between two of the four leaders who succeeded Alexander the Great when his kingdom was divided among them. The two leaders in question would be Ptolemy 1 Soter who took Egypt, who’s successors would be the “kings of the south,” and Seleucus 1 Nicator who took Syria, who’s successors would be the “kings of the north.” The small horn that grew out of one of the four and became mighty is often assumed to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes who set up the “abomination of desolation” in the temple in 165 B.C. He would be of the “kings of the north” and perhaps the first of a series of “northern” princes who will cause trouble for God’s people. As we discovered in our study of Ezekiel, Gog of Magog will be the prince of Rosh (Russia) and come out of the “remote north” and among his allies will be Persia (Iran), which today is allied with Syria against Israel. The chart on the following page provides a history of the rulers that chapter 11 may describe.



Chapter 12 describes the final “time of the end.” Here we get the clearest view of judgment and resurrection in the Old Testament. This will happen at the close of a time of great distress, as the world has never seen before—a time of tribulation, which will be divided into two periods of “time, times and half a time” or three and a half years. At the midpoint sacrifice will end and the “abomination of desolation” will be set up. Regarding the resurrection and judgment, Daniel says, “everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:1b-2). Regarding the completion of the terrible events, it was revealed through Daniel that they will not be complete until “they finish shattering the power of the holy people” (Daniel 12:7). Thus, this will be a time of great religious persecution. Regarding when the time will be, Daniel is told to “conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of times” (Daniel 12:4), which might indicate that we will not recognize or understand the signs of the time of the end until it is upon us. Many believe that the statement, “many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase” (Daniel 12:4) is both a clue to identifying this time and describes the world today.

Finally, Daniel describes this end time as a period when “*many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand*” (Daniel 12:10). This would indicate that the signs of the end will be recognized by the faithful but denied and discounted by the wicked. Likewise, this will be a time when God will purify His own and the wicked will only further seal their fate as they participate in the persecution of the faithful. In reference to the final 1,290 days or three and a half years, plus one month (1,260 days equals 3-1/2 years, thus, 1,290 adds 30 days), after the “abomination of desolation” appears, Daniel suggests that those who persevere or “*keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days*” (Daniel 12:11-12) will be “blessed.” Thus it can be surmised that some faithful will persevere to the very end. Daniel does not provide any explanation regarding the additional 30 (in reference to the 1,290 days) or additional 45 days (in reference to the 1,335 days). Those who persevere will know and understand.

References:

Commentary from “*The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*”; “*Zodhiates’ Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*” published by AMG Publishers; and, “*Charting the End Times*” by Tim LaHaye.

Illustrations from “*The International Inductive Study Bible.*”