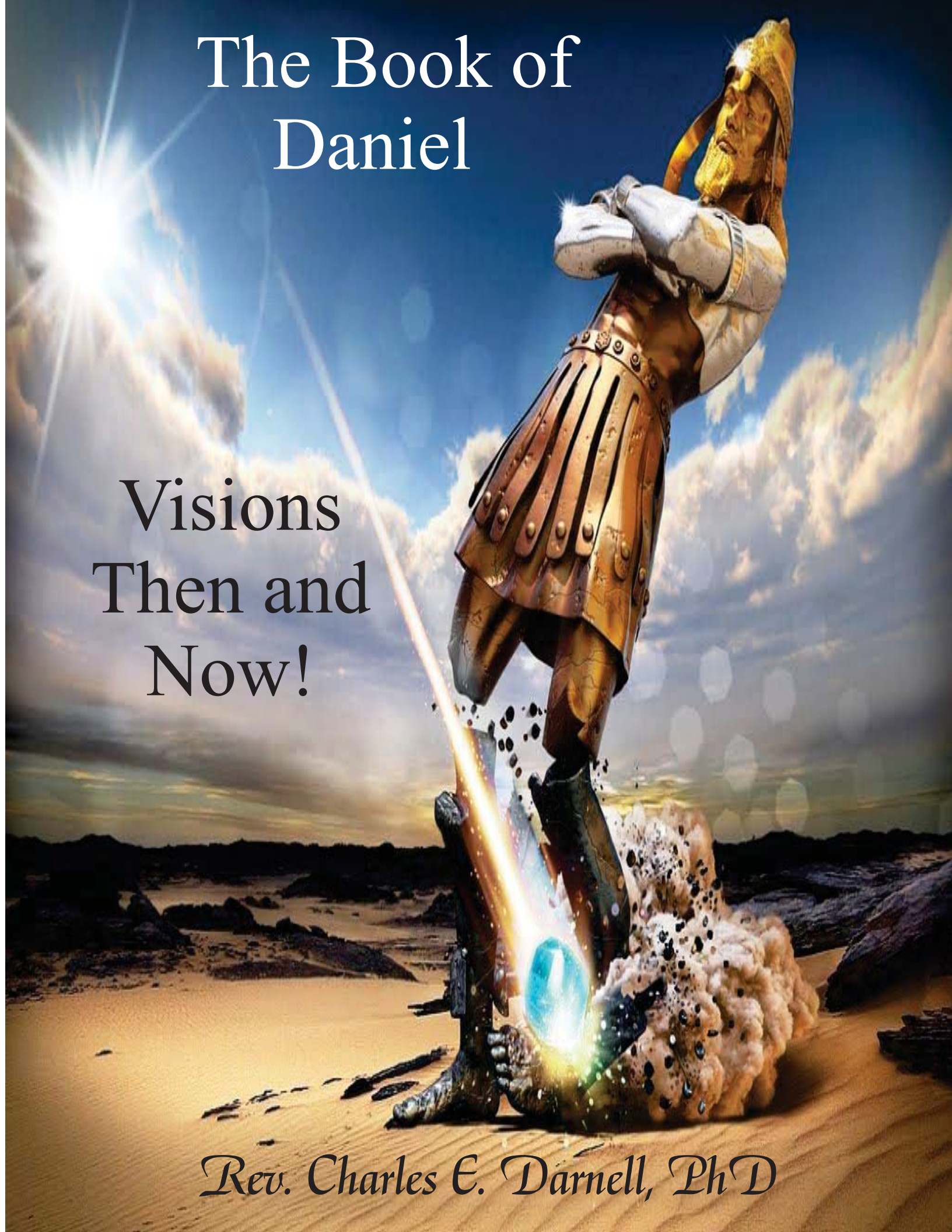


The Book of Daniel

Visions
Then and
Now!

Rev. Charles E. Darnell, PhD



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Scripture quotations

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The Publication Manual presents explicit style requirements but acknowledges that alternatives are sometimes necessary; authors should balance the rules of the Publication Manual with good judgment. Preface: p. xx.

Introduction

The book of Daniel is the one major prophet that I haven't written about. Yet, with only 12 chapters, it would seem to take a short period of time to write about the details of this book from the Bible. Somehow, I feel my God was delaying the writing of the prophecies in the book of Daniel. Why? Well, with many of the prophecies of the Bible, there seems to be a duality that is presented. There is a statement pertaining to the time the prophecy was recorded and a future statement that appears to meet the situations in the End Time. It seems to me that we are most certainly in the beginning days of the End Time.

What is there about the book of Daniel that makes it so different from some of the other books of the major prophets? I guess it is the very details of the End Time that causes the words of Daniel to stand out so strongly. The House of Judah had been warned by Jeremiah and others that God was going to place the people in exile because of their many sins. The House of Judah was not listening to the words of the prophets but going on with their daily life as if the covenant with God made no difference with them. The commandments had been given to God's people in the wilderness and a covenant had been established. The forefathers of the people of Judah had rebelled and prophets were sent to warn the people. Judah had gone so far as to watch their brothers in the House of Israel rebel, and God placed them in exile as punishment for their great rebellion of idolatry. Did Judah observe and learn from the ten tribes of the northern kingdom as they were taken into captivity? No! It doesn't appear that way and Judah also entered into idolatry.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, we learn that the period of captivity in Babylon would be seventy years. In the opening pages of Daniel, we see and understand that Daniel was a teenager who had been taken to Babylon. At the same time, Jeremiah was acting as a senior prophet to the remainder of the people of Judah in Jerusalem. Daniel, along with three of his peers, of the nobility of the House of Judah were selected to be trained in the customs and language of the Babylonians. These four were given new Babylonian names and were to be trained for three years. Daniel was given the name Belteshazzar; Hananiah was given the name Shadrach; Mishael was given the name Meshach; and Azariah was given the name Abednego. Along with new names, they were to be given food from the king's table, however the four did not desire to defile themselves with what the king ate. Therefore, they asked to be fed vegetables and water. The king's official was afraid that they would become thin and weak looking if that was all they ate. Daniel asked for a test to be conducted. He and his companions would eat only vegetables for ten days and their appearance would be compared to the other young men. At the end of ten days, they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food (chapter 1, verse 15). With this knowledge, the guard took away the king's food and fed them with vegetables and water for the remainder of the three year training period.

At the appointed time of three years, we find these four young men being brought before king Nebuchadnezzar. At this point, we pick up text from chapter one of the book of Daniel, verses 17-21, *17 As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. 21 And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.* Let us now study together to see the rest of the story about the trials and tribulations of Daniel.

The Book of Daniel

At the end of chapter one, because of their wisdom, we found Daniel and his three companions taken into the king's service as a part of the king's inner circle. We are dealing with the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, when the king had a vision that troubled him greatly. He called for magicians of the realm to appear before him and we read the transaction set by the king. Chapter 2, verses 3-4, ³ *And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream."* ⁴ *Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."* It seems we have a similar situation in our day and at this time. We do not have a king, nor magicians or others who claim to be servants of the people. Our form of government was set up so that those who went into the service of the people were to serve the people. They were not to serve themselves nor make foolish statements that if we, the people, would tell them what it was that troubled us, they would take care of the problem. The people's dream and vision was that of a free and democratic nation. The people already had enough of kings and rulers over them in Europe, and they wanted a different society structure. Established by our constitution, the government was to protect us from our enemies, and, that all the people of the land had a Godly moral spirit to deal fairly with our fellowman. At the same time, we were to act within the bounds of the law and in possession of the knowledge that the breaking of law could result in punishment for those violations.

We see the wisdom of king Nebuchadnezzar in his next statement, verses 5-6, ⁵ *The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. ⁶ But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."* I find it to be so funny that I am flipping the table on who is the person being served, and who are the servants. It is the people of this nation that are supposed to be served by the leaders of government. However, it is those leaders of government who are acting as false magicians and telling us, the people, what they want us to believe.

Those false servants, the magicians and sorcerers, made this reply, verse 7, ⁷ *They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation."* Ah yes! It sounds just like many of those in places of authority. They have to establish the ground rules for the answers they are going to give. The lies and the dishonest advice will be stated in the manner of all good lies, and have a small sprinkling of truth scattered amidst their words.

King Nebuchadnezzar makes a stand with the following statement to the magicians, verses 8-9, ⁸ *The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm ⁹ if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation."* The king made a bold move with that statement. The words of text from the Bible tells me that the king knew these pagan practitioners of magic and sorcery were just blowing smoke and only padding their own position. They were not, nor could not tell the king what he really wanted to know. Every American should evaluate the current situation in our nation. Why are we having millions of illegal aliens cross our border and receive free food, free housing, free medical treatment, free driver's license, and, in some states, the right to vote in our elections. They are not American citizens, and it is the citizens of this land that are having to pay for all of this through our state and federal taxes. It is time we, the people, join together in the motto of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the state of Missouri that, "Together we Stand, Divided we Fall". There is no sound reason for the actions that are being taken by our government, the woke left crowd, and those with a global, technocratic idea that there must be a reset to society.

To illustrate that what I'm saying is true, look at the next statement made to the king in verses 10-11, ¹⁰ *The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. ¹¹ The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."* We should all clearly see that the magicians admit that they cannot meet the king's request. False magicians admit that false gods cannot answer the desires of mankind. We should also consider that this nation, under our Constitution, needs to look at the laws and actions our officials are enacting as they push for changes being mandated upon every American (i.e., abortions, LBGTQ, Woke and open borders).

Look at the king's reply and the resultant action in verses 12-15, ¹² *Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. ¹³ So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them. ¹⁴ Then Daniel replied with prudence and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁵ He declared to Arioch, the king's captain, "Why is the decree of the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the matter known to Daniel.* The king was so upset with the statement to the false magicians that he ordered all of the supposed wise men to be killed. When the captain of the guard got to Daniel, Daniel was not understanding the situation and asked what was the rush. Daniel was told what had happened, and because of his status before the king, he was allowed to go and ask the king a question, verse 16, ¹⁶ *And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.* Recall from chapter one that Daniel and his companions had found favor with the king, and the king was impressed with their wisdom. In fact, the king had found them to be ten times better than the magicians in the king's service.

Verses 17-23 provide to us the actions that Daniel took with his companions, ¹⁷ *Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. ¹⁹ Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. ²⁰ Daniel answered and said:*

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. ²¹ He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; ²² he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. ²³ To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter." Yahweh revealed the king's dream and its interpretation to Daniel. Notice, in verse 21, that God makes kings and removes kings. Do not be surprised by the elections later this year. To those who believe in a living and loving God, pray. Pray for our leaders at all levels, pray for this nation, even pray for all the illegal aliens who are now in this country. Even pray for those who possess an understanding that Satan has sent some who follow the wishes of the leaders of Iran to attack this nation from within. It may not be our elected leaders who will stand and fight the good fight. It may be our God, Yahweh, who will fight for us as He fights for the nation of Israel itself.

Daniel is now ready to go and see the king to reveal his dream, verses 24-25, ²⁴ *Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show the king the interpretation."*

²⁵ Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste and said thus to him: “I have found among the exiles from Judah a man who will make known to the king the interpretation.”

The king asked Daniel if he could tell him the dream? Daniel says he couldn't, but, his God could reveal mysteries, and we see the dream in verses 26-35, *²⁶ The king declared to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, “Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen and its interpretation?” ²⁷ Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these: ²⁹ To you, O king, as you lay in bed came thoughts of what would be after this, and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be. ³⁰ But as for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.*

³¹ “You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening. ³² The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴ As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

We have learned a lot in these first two chapters of the book of Daniel, especially if a person would only stop, read and think for a moment of the meaning of things. In many ways, the book of Daniel illustrates for us the epic battle of spiritual warfare that has been going on since the sin of disobedience in the garden by Adam and Eve. In everything mankind does in life, there are always a minimum of two choices that is before everyone. We either choose right or wrong, good or evil, and either follow God's ways, or we follow Satan's ways. Recall from the book of Genesis that mankind's only job was to tend the garden and have dominion over the animals, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. When the man disobeyed, several things changed and began a new and different direction. The major item that changed by this action of disobedience was that a second kingdom was created, the kingdom of hell, Satan's domain. Also, at that time, the man lost the dominion over the creatures. From that point on the creatures were afraid of man.

Now, look at what these first two chapters teach us. In chapter one, we learned that Daniel and his companions would not defile themselves by eating the royal food and wine that was placed before them. They went so far as to ask for a test to be done in order to determine the effects of the royal food and wine over vegetables and water. Then, after three years of learning, they were presented to the king. The king was so impressed with Daniel and his companions that the king placed them within his court servants. It is recorded, in verse 20 of chapter one, that the king when questioning these four young men, found that they were ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in the entire kingdom of Babylon. We also see in chapter one, that Ashpenaz, chief of king Nebuchadnezzar's court officials, had found favor and sympathy for Daniel (verse 9 of chapter one). Another fact appears in verse 17, *¹⁷ As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.* (ESV) In chapter two, we find another situation where Daniel had an influence over another of king Nebuchadnezzar's officials. In verse 14, we see Daniel questioning Arioch, the commander of the king's guard who was on assignment to kill all the



magicians, etc. of the court. This would have included Daniel and his companions. Instead of killing them, Daniel asked Arioch to see the king.

All of these little things should be understood as illustrations from God to show the spiritual battle between what is right and what is wrong. But even with just two chapters from Daniel, we must go further in the questioning of the basis for these illustrations. From where did the concept of the spirit of Babylon come? There are places in Biblical text that the thought or presentation of a prophecy makes a jump forward in time to show a partial result of something placed in prophecy much earlier.

Our jump forward goes to Revelation, chapters 17 and 18. For the moment, I will only use one verse to identify the woman riding the beast. This is recorded in Revelation 17:5, ***And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*** (NKJV) In chapter 18, we find the fall of Babylon. For our present purpose let's review verses 1-8, ***After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.*** In the verse from chapter 17, we see that Babylon represents the mother of pagan (false) religion. It is the offshoot branches from this basic false religion who are the harlots. Babylon is also the mother spirit of all the variously named abominations, you can find, throughout the Bible. In the verses from chapter 18, we see the partial fall of Babylon the great. We find two verses that are important to our present study. Notice in verse 4, a voice calls from heaven for all of God's people to come out of her. If you claim to be a follower of Jesus, you need to understand that there are denominations that are false religions, and you need to leave that denomination and seek another that teaches the true gospel of the kingdom of God. The other verse is verse 8 which plainly states that false religions will be destroyed, along with those who practice these false religions including those who participate in the abominations spoken of in the Bible.

Let's go back to a question posed at the top of this page: From where did the concept of the spirit of Babylon come? In writing my previous book, *God's Full Circle*, I attempted to show from the book of Genesis that pagan religions started even at the time of the tower of Babel, or even before. I am reusing an excerpt from *God's Full Circle* to identify the three main pagan gods.

Consider this: We are dealing with spirits that are pagan spirits from thousands of years ago. Even so, as they began to influence the people at that time, they rose in authority and position of control over the human spirit to cause a tremendous amount of sin among mankind. We have already read about the three principal spirits of Baal, Istar and Molech. Understand that pagan culture was a possessed culture. It centered around practices of orgies, sexual rites and rituals as their main form of worship. Yeshua overcame their authority and pushed them into a minority position within the realm of man. Because, we have surely entered the end times, and, with the actions of mankind, we see that mankind is once again rebelling against God in a tremendous and similar manner. This has been a slow-moving takeover through the last 60 years. America took prayer out of the schools in the 1960's. We made it a

law of the land that abortion was legal. We removed the written Ten Commandments from our government buildings. Of more recent slaps to the face of Almighty God, we have made same-sex marriages legal under the disguise of equal rights for all. We brought the LBGTQ community out into the open with the same kind of change of mindset as same-sex marriage. The LBGTQ community pushed so hard, and the legislators were so compliant, that they enacted a law to establish the month of June as PRIDE month and as party time for all the degenerates to have an orgy. With all these changes, don't you feel even the smallest amount of shame for your actions? **America is following in the same exact pathways as the house of Israel and the house of Judah.** Don't you realize that God will punish, all your sinful nature, in the same manner as He has other groups of people? We now have the Woke left who are distorting truth in any manner they can! Everything from college classroom to kindergarten has been affected by the sins of many.

Don't you see that the story concerning the evil spirit is being fulfilled. Through the power of the blood of Yeshua, the breach was healed. That was the casting out of that spirit, however, with the lackadaisical mindset of the people in America, the spirit found the house empty, went and found seven other evil spirits to fill the house. God's wrath will be profound when it begins. Oh, by the way, we haven't even mentioned the worst, of the worst, of all this evil. They overturned the law of the land permitting abortions and the entire land went off in a pout declaring it was a harm to women's health. How indignant can you become? That act alone is the shedding of innocent blood for which God demands a repayment. From the blood of Abel to the 3 million plus babies killed for the sake of women to act foolishly in declaring that an abortion is a health condition, God will extract a repayment. Wait and see!

I have given three entities, as the demonic trio of evil, who were cast out of the house that was swept clean, given order and reason by the authority of the blood of Yeshua. They are back! Let's look at these three spirits that make up the dark trinity:

1) Baal, the possessor, chief god of the Canaanites. First time recorded in the Bible, Numbers 22:41. **Baal is the ancient sun god!** As such, he is the father of the Woke agenda. He pushes the joining of animals and man together in DNA splicing and other surgery tricks. He is the master image of all idols. Since he is the possessor, he has taken charge of our technology as a source of idol worship. Our smart phones and computers are now the house of AI, holograms, killing games and pornography.

2) Ishtar, the enchantress, consort or wife to Baal. She is the Goddess of sexual desires. As the Mistress of prostitutes, she has moved sex out of marriage and into the market place. On the darker side, she is a gender changer, mimicking her shape shifting ability as a spirit. She is the emasculator of men, the Queen of "Drag", who has men dress as women and women dress as men. She is the goddess of PRIDE month and the fairy of all orgies.

3) Molech, the destroyer, is the orchestrator of Child sacrifices. He assists Istar in gender changes. He is the abuser of children and the poor. He assists Baal in the world sex-trade. He is the Master of abortions! He is the destroyer of families and marriages.

We should understand that the religious practices of the Babylonians included sun god worship and the worship of the king. Nevertheless, we need to understand the interpretation of the king's dream. We find that in chapter 2, verses 36-45, ³⁶ *"This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.* ³⁷ *You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory,* ³⁸ *and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all, you are the head of gold.* ³⁹ *Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.* ⁴⁰ *And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.* ⁴¹ *And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but*

some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.⁴² And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.⁴³ As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together; just as iron does not mix with clay.⁴⁴ And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,⁴⁵ just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

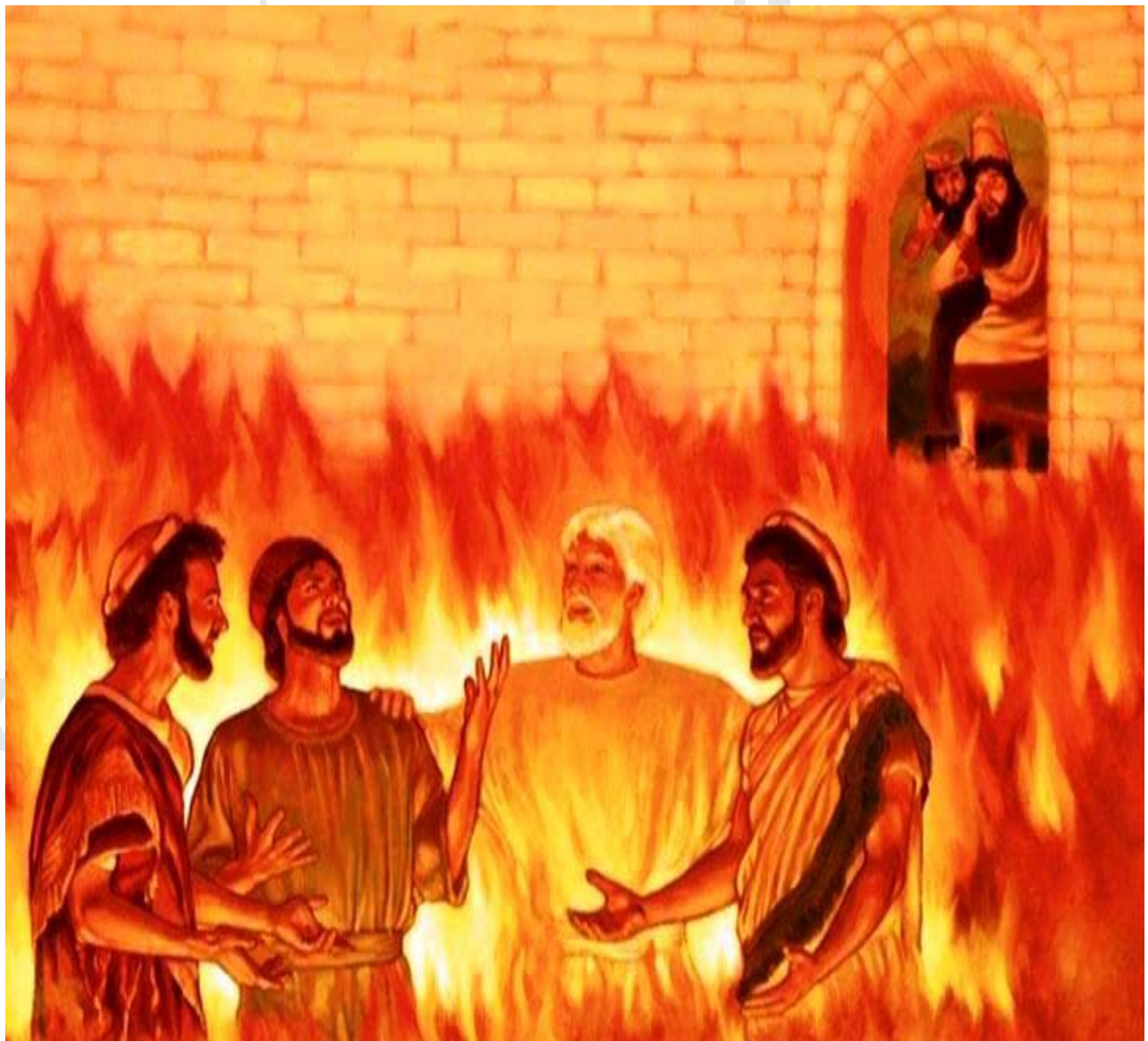
We see the result of this interpretation upon the king in verses 46-49,⁴⁶ *Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.*⁴⁷ *The king answered and said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.”*⁴⁸ *Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.*⁴⁹ *Daniel made a request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king’s court.* Over the course of history, we have seen many times where a king allows a statement to go to their head and stupidity seems to be the result. Observe from these three verses that, the king acknowledged that Daniel’s God was the God of Gods. Nevertheless, look at what king Nebuchadnezzar did in chapter 3, verse 1, *1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.* Recall that a cubit was roughly 18 inches in length, therefore, this statue was 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. I sure hope it was hollow in its construction. Can you imagine the wastefulness of this statue if it was made of solid gold? Nebuchadnezzar’s Empire was only about five years old and, like many other kings, he was trying to use some form of religion to unite all the territories he had recently added to his empire. His religion demanded worshiping the image as a way of promoting loyalty to himself. He was not the first, nor will he be the last, world leader to use religion for political purposes or self-promotion. At any rate, the king sent for the officials of the realm to gather for a dedication of this image. Once gathered, a herald proclaimed aloud that, when you hear the horn, pipes, lyre, zither, harp, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the image. So, we see that even with the admission that God was God, the king went right back to pagan idol worship by making an idol of himself, king worship.

If, however, you did not worship this image you were to be thrown into a burning fiery furnace. Let’s face it, the magicians, and those others who couldn’t answer the king about his dream, were not very pleased in being downgraded to a position under Daniel. They didn’t like the Jews themselves either. So when the sounding was made and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not fall down and worship the image, they immediately ran to the king and maliciously accused these three of not obeying the king’s decree. The king called for these three to appear before him and he asked them whether they did or did not fall down and worship the image. The answer stated to the king is in verses 16-18,¹⁶ *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.*¹⁷ *If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*¹⁸ *But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”* In this generation, how many people do you think would take a stand such as this. Yet, our American veterans make a stand daily to defend this nation against any enemy, foreign or domestic.

Verses 19-23 explains for us just how upset the king was that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not honor the king’s decree and he ordered them to be bound and thrown into the fiery furnace.

Here are those verses, ¹⁹ *Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.* ²⁰ *And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.* ²¹ *Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace.* ²² *Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.* ²³ *And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace.* There was a slight change of the king's order. Notice, in verse 19, that the king ordered the furnace to be heated to seven times its normal heating. In verse 22, the men who had bound these three were consumed by the flame of the furnace. Did you catch the fact that the three were not killed as those who had bound them? Finally, notice, in verse 23, that these three fell into the furnace, they were not thrown in.

King Nebuchadnezzar still hadn't figured out exactly how great the Most High God was, however, we get an idea from the passage of scripture from 3:24-4:3, ²⁴ *Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."* ²⁵ *He answered and said, "But I see four men*



unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. ²⁷ And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them. ²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.” ³⁰ Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

^{4:1} King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! ² It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. ³ How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.

In earlier days, I remember that there were two Sunday School lessons that came from the book of Daniel. The first was this story of the fiery furnace, and the second we haven’t come to yet, however, it will be the story of the lions den that Daniel will face. Continuing with our study, we have come to the second vision of king Nebuchadnezzar. We find this in Chapter 4, verses 4-7, ⁴ *I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.* ⁵ *I saw a dream that made me afraid. As I lay in bed the fancies and the visions of my head alarmed me.* ⁶ *So I made a decree that all the wise men of Babylon should be brought before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.* ⁷ *Then the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers came in, and I told them the dream, but they could not make known to me its interpretation.*

We find two items to bring into our study in verse 8, ⁸ *At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, First, Daniel was the last wise man to come before the king, and second, Nebuchadnezzar was still worshiping his deity and not the God of Daniel. We learn of king Nebuchadnezzar’s second dream in the verses from 9-18, ⁹ “O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation. ¹⁰ The visions of my head as I lay in bed were these: I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. ¹¹ The tree grew and became strong, and its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. ¹² Its leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.*

¹³ *“I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven. ¹⁴ He proclaimed aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. ¹⁵ But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from a man’s, and let a beast’s mind be given to him; and let seven periods of time pass over him. ¹⁷ The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.’ ¹⁸ This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw.*

And you, O Belshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.” There is one item we need to look at in order to have a firm understanding. Look at verse 16 and the amount of time that this dream is in effect. Do you see time stated as seven seasons? What does this mean? No! This is not indicating seven years. It says seven seasons, and since we are speaking about Babylon, we can assume that there are only two seasons per year in Babylon at this point in history. That would mean the seven seasons are three and one half years.

We find Daniel’s interpretation of this dream in verses 19-27, ¹⁹ *Then Daniel, whose name was Belshazzar, was dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king answered and said, “Belshazzar, let not the dream or the interpretation alarm you.” Belshazzar answered and said, “My lord, may the dream be for those who hate you and its interpretation for your enemies! ²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew and became strong, so that its top reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth, ²¹ whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which beasts of the field found shade, and in whose branches the birds of the heavens lived— ²² it is you, O king, who have grown and become strong. Your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and your dominion to the ends of the earth. ²³ And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,’ ²⁴ this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king, ²⁵ that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will. ²⁶ And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules. ²⁷ Therefore, O*



king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.” What can we find in this interpretation? We already know that this will be over a three and a half years of time. We should also know that Babylon was the first kingdom of the age of the Gentiles. That was illustrated by the giant image in the king’s first vision. We should also understand that an angel (watcher) brought this message from God (Most High) and for 3 and 1/2 years the king’s mind will be like that of an ox.

This did happen, just as the watcher had stated. We find this humiliation of king Nebuchadnezzar in verses 28-33 of chapter 4, ²⁸ *All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar.* ²⁹ *At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon,* ³⁰ *and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”* ³¹ *While the words were still in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you,* ³² *and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.”* ³³ *Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles’ feathers, and his nails were like birds’ claws.* The king had a major ego problem. He claimed that the beauty and influence of Babylon was by his hand and not by the hand of the Most High. We see this in the underlined section in verse 30. In verse 31, we see what happened to the king’s arrogance and, verse 32, we see the majesty of the Most High and understand that all things are under His sovereign control.

Can we relate any of the information recorded in the book of Daniel to be applied to today and what is going on in the United States? Well, maybe! The Epoch Times issue for the period of Jan 3-9, 2024 has these as headlines:

Scientists Counter Narratives on CO². Think about that for just a moment. The United Nations, our nations leaders and many others around the world declare that there is a problem of Global Warming and that we must control CO² emissions in order to save the planet. What is it you breath? Isn’t it oxygen? Where do you get oxygen from in its natural state? Isn’t it produced as a by-product from all plant life? And what is it that plant life needs in order to produce this by-product? Isn’t it CO²? If this is the situation, can’t you see that a benevolent God created a cycle between plant life and animal life. The main need of each species is what the other species produces as a by-product, however, each needs the other to survive. You cancel out the CO² level and you kill off animal life at the same time. How stupid can you get as an intelligent society?

Illegal Immigrants Surpass 6 Million. Look at the text above and read again the underlined portion in verse 32. Do you understand that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom He will? Read Deuteronomy and Leviticus to see what God will do to a nation who rebels against His Commandments and rules. Part of the judgment against a rebellious nation is that the alien rules over you, and they become the head, you become the tail. Also, that as you once lent to other nations, you have now become the largest debtor nation.

Why It May be Impossible to Disqualify Trump From the Presidency. The Colorado justices disregarded substantial evidence that when the Constitution uses the phrase “Office under the United States,” it refers only to appointed offices such as the Secretary of State, or the Secretary of the Treasury. This evidence suggests that the Office under the United States doesn’t include elected offices, such as Senators, Representatives, the Vice President or the President.

There are other articles written over the past month that indicate there was so much voter fraud in the 2020 election, that Donald J. Trump surely won the election. Here is part of that report: The Heartland Institute study tried to gauge the probable impact that fraudulent mail-in ballots cast for both

then candidate, Joe Biden and his opponent, President Donald Trump, would have had on the overall 2020 election results.

The study was based on data obtained from a Heartland/Rasmussen survey in December that revealed that roughly one in five mail-in voters admitted to potentially fraudulent actions in the presidential election. After the researchers carried out additional analyses of the data, they concluded that mail-in ballot fraud **significantly** impacted the 2020 presidential election. They also found that, absent the huge expansion of mail-in ballots during the pandemic, which was often done without legislative approval, President Trump would most likely have won. “Had the 2020 election been conducted like every national election has been over the past two centuries, wherein the vast majority of voters cast ballots in-person rather than by mail, Donald Trump would have almost certainly been reelected,” the report’s authors wrote.

Recall the statement made in verse 25 of chapter 4, *know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses*. God has sent prophets to warn His people that they need to repent and change their ways. The House of Israel and the House of Judah faced this statement of the Most High. It now seems the House of the United States isn’t listening too well, and we are following in the footsteps of those other two houses. King Nebuchadnezzar learned his lesson, will we, in the United States, learn as well?

The final portion of chapter 4 concludes with the following in verses 34-37, *³⁴ At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; ³⁵ all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” ³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my majesty and splendor returned to me. My counselors and my lords sought me, and I was established in my kingdom, and still more greatness was added to me. ³⁷ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.*

My study Bible provides additional information and indicates that Nebuchadnezzar’s reign was 44 years in its length. I didn’t realize, until I started this book, that things shifted in chapter 5, King Belshazzar was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and the kingdom of Babylon would be turned over to the Medes and King Darius, at the end of chapter 5. Let’s see what we can find out about Babylon in chapter five. Chapter five begins with King Belshazzar having a huge banquet for over a thousand lords. Unfortunately, his pride jumped all over himself and he ordered the gold and silver vessels that had been taken from Jerusalem’s temple be brought to the feast to be used by all as their drinking cup. We see this in the verses from 1-4 of chapter 5, *¹ King Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine in front of the thousand.*

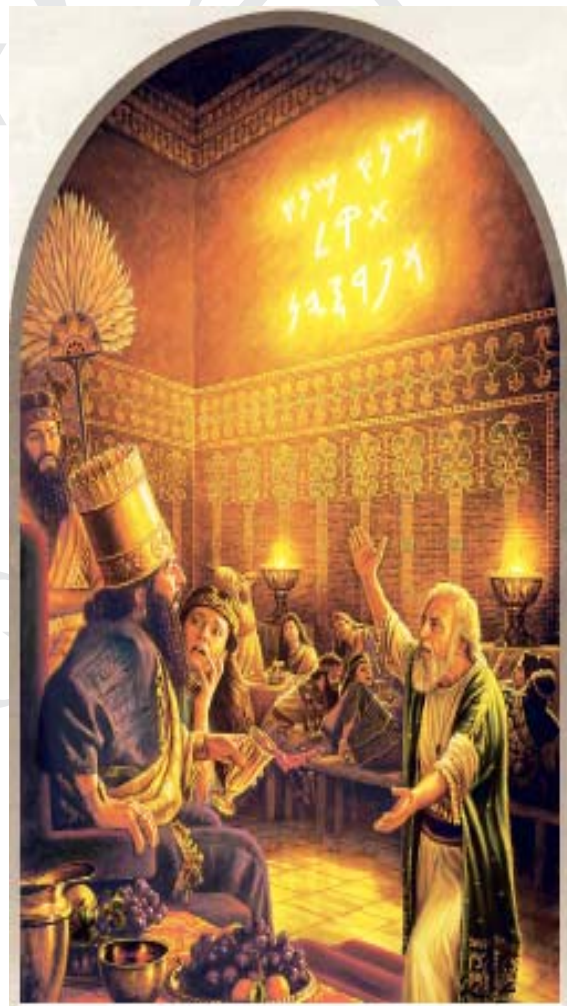
² Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. ³ Then they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. ⁴ They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. They praised the gods (idols) made by the hands of men and did not humble themselves before the Most High God. We learn the rest of this story pertaining to King Belshazzar, in the verses from 5 to 31, even down to the killing of Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede becoming the king of Babylon in verse 30, ⁵ Immediately the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, opposite the lampstand. And the king saw the hand as it wrote. ⁶ Then the king’s color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his

knees knocked together. ⁷ The king called loudly to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the astrologers. The king declared to the wise men of Babylon, “Whoever reads this writing, and shows me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around his neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.” ⁸ Then all the king’s wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or make known to the king the interpretation. ⁹ Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and his color changed, and his lords were perplexed.

¹⁰ The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banqueting hall, and the queen declared, “O king, live forever! Let not your thoughts alarm you or your color change. ¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers, ¹² because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.”

¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. ¹⁴ I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. ¹⁵ Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. ¹⁶ But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.”

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, “Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ¹⁹ And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. ²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. ²¹ He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. ²² And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, ²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the



Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.

²⁴ “Then from his presence the hand was sent, and this writing was inscribed. ²⁵ And this is the writing that was inscribed: Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. ²⁶ This is the interpretation of the matter: Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ Tekel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ Peres, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

³⁰ That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. ³¹ And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

We have arrived at chapter six. It contains that other Sunday School story that is taught to children, the story of Daniel and the lions den. This is the complete chapter 6 of the book of Daniel.

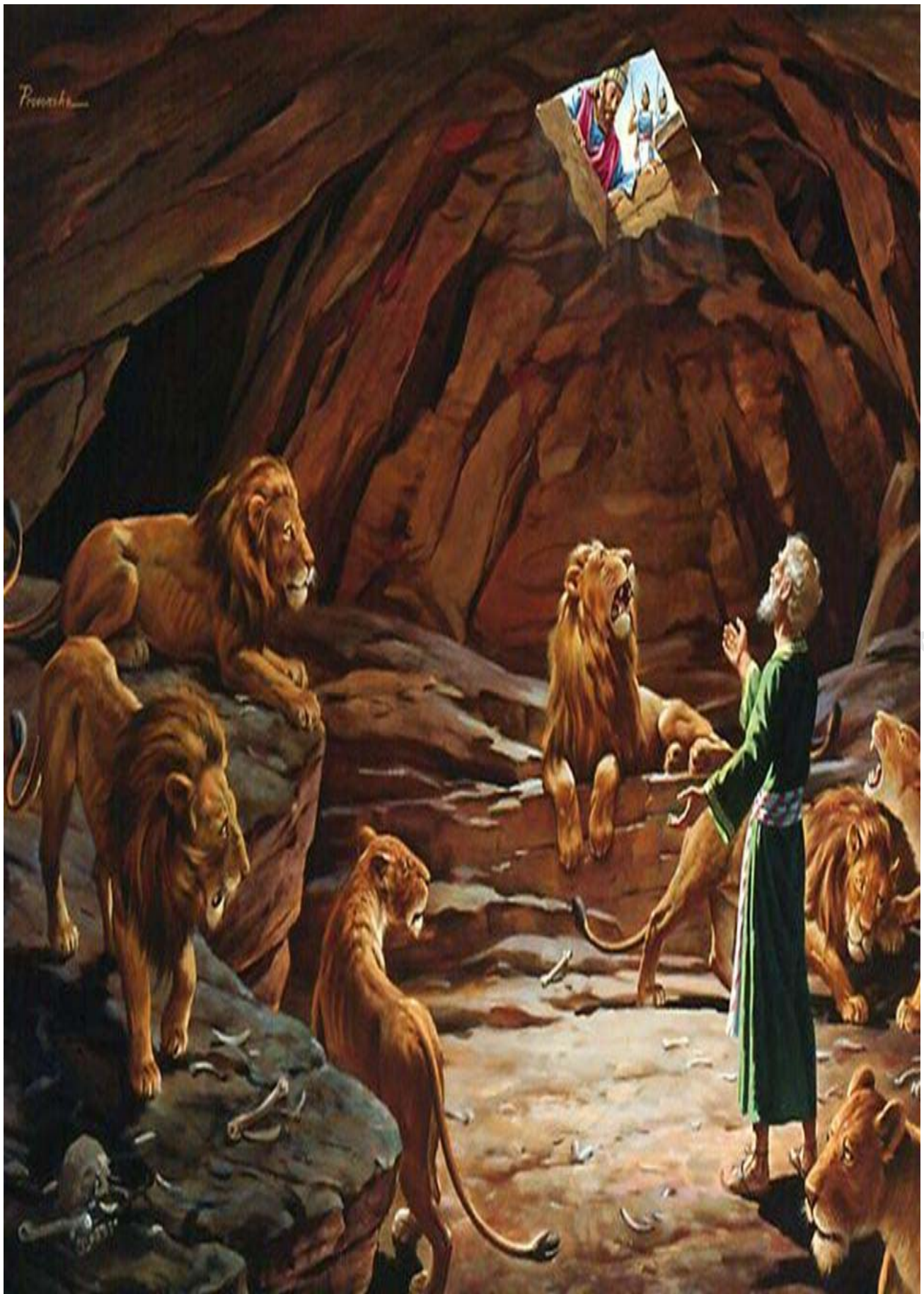
¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵ Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

⁶ Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷ And a stone was

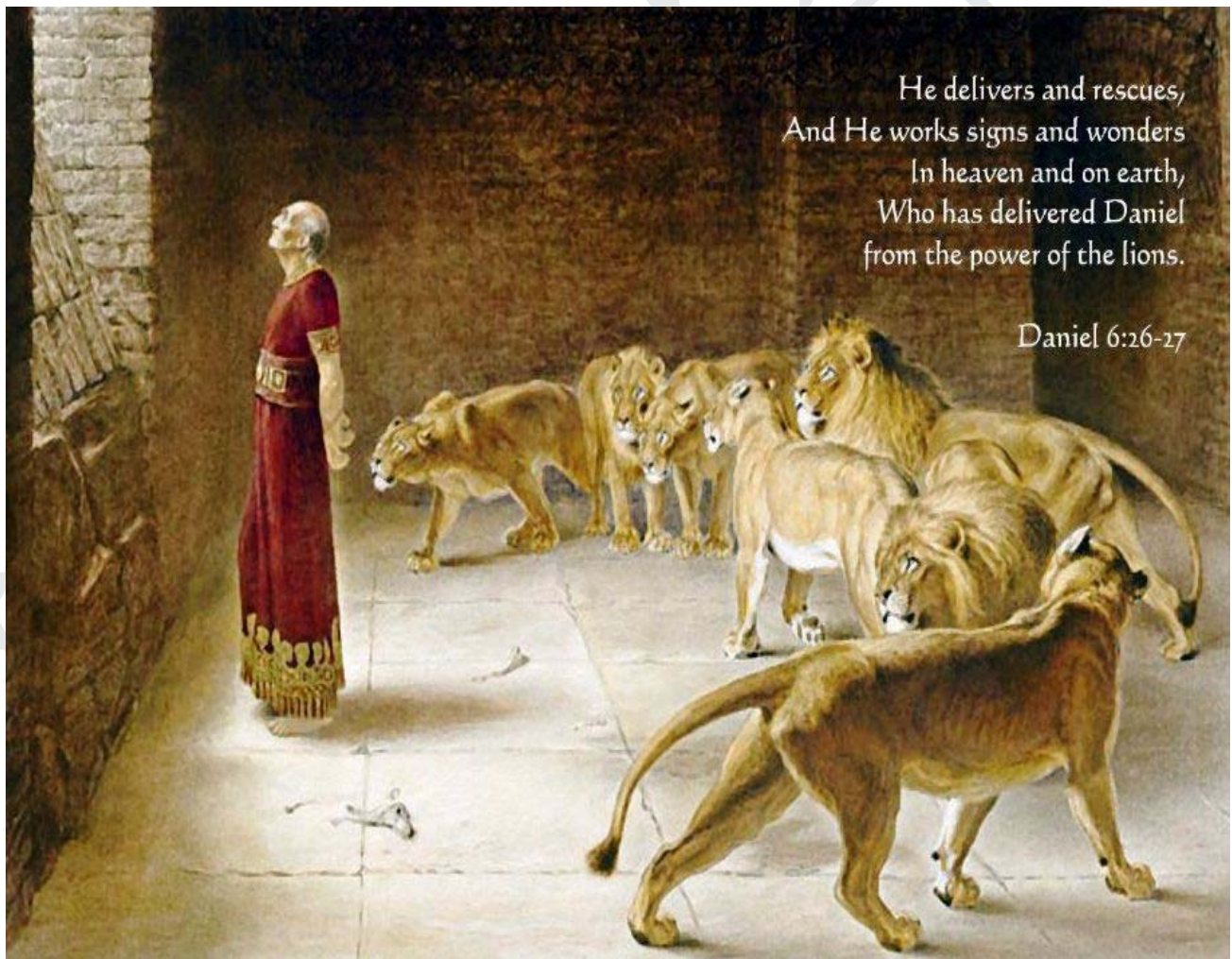


brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” ²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

²⁸ So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.



I am totally amazed at the similarities between this sixth chapter of Daniel and the parallels in the book of Esther. King Cyrus and King Xerxes are parallel kings. Mordecai and Esther are the parallel players to Daniel. The officials in the court of King Darius and Haman, in the story of Esther, are the parallel bad guys. The officials in the Persian kingdom disliked the Jews and especially the one Jewish leader(s), Esther and Mordecai who were being singled out because of their respect and prayers for the Jewish people and the position they held before the king. Daniel had found favor with King Darius and King Cyrus. Queen Esther had found favor with King Xerxes. Haman and his ten sons were all hung. Those who brought the false report concerning Daniel, along with their wives and their children, were all thrown into the lion's den, where Daniel had been placed.

In the study of the book of Daniel, up to this point, we found two dreams (visions) about which King Nebuchadnezzar had questioned Daniel. We also read about the hand upon the wall at the banquet held by King Belshazzar. Now it is Daniel's turn to tell us about his dreams and what they meant. The first of these visions is in chapter 7, and provides for us information pertaining to the four beasts. These four beasts may be a counter parallel to King Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the giant image. If this is the case, then the characteristics of each beast is given as part of the description of each beast and the corresponding portion of the image.

For example, turn to chapter 7 and verses 1-4, ¹ *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel saw a dream and visions of his head as he lay in his bed. Then he wrote down the dream and told the sum of the matter.* ² *Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.* ³ *And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.* ⁴ *The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man, and the mind of a man was given to it.* The head of the image was King Nebuchadnezzar and, at one point, God gave him the state of mind of a beast. He was to eat grass like an ox. His hair became like huge bird feathers and his nails like cat claws. The first beast was a lion with the wings of an eagle. The lion is the king of beast and the eagle is the king of the birds. Both represent the head of a kingdom. When the wings of the eagle were torn off, it could represent the period of time when God humbled the king in chapter 4. When the eagle lost its wings, it was lifted up and told to walk as a man. The mind of a man was given to it. Wouldn't that be a counter opposite to what happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. Wasn't his mind changed to that of a beast, and he was on all fours eating grass.

The second beast was like a bear, as shown in verse 5, ⁵ *And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear. It was raised up on one side. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and it was told, 'Arise, devour much flesh.'* This beast would correspond to the silver chest of the image, and would be the Medo-Persian empire. The three ribs could represent their conquest over Babylon, Lydia and Egypt.

The third beast is shown in verse 6, ⁶ *After this I looked, and behold, another, like a leopard, with four wings of a bird on its back. And the beast had four heads, and dominion was given to it.* This beast would be the empire of Alexander the Great. The wings are representative of his rapid conquest. The four heads are the four kingdoms that came out of his empire that was divided after his death.

We find the vision of the fourth beast in verses 7-8, ⁷ *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.* ⁸ *I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots. And behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.* The fourth beast was more powerful than the others. It equates to the Roman empire and represents the legs and feet of the image in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The ten horns represent the ten toes on the image, or the ten kings

under the power of the Antichrist in the Revelation. The little horn represents the Antichrist himself, and the three plucked up horns are kings overpowered by the Antichrist.

The verses between 9 and 14 take us from the presence of earth to the throne room of God. Verses 9-14, ⁹ *“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. ¹⁰ A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. ¹¹ “I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.*

¹³ *“I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.* That picture was not given to Daniel when he saw King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. However, the last portion, of these verses (13-14), reflects the great stone, not made by hands, that crashed into the image, in the king’s dream and destroyed those Gentile empires.

Daniel is perplexed by this vision. While he was able to interpret the king’s dream, this dream did not make sense to Daniel. He sought guidance and assistance from a watchman (angel - see verse 16 for someone standing there). The verses, from 15-28, provide us with an understanding of what Daniel was told as an interpretation of his dream, ¹⁵ *“As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me. ¹⁶ I approached one of those who stood there and asked him the truth concerning all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of the things. ¹⁷ ‘These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth. ¹⁸ But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.’*

¹⁹ *“Then I desired to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the rest, exceedingly terrifying, with its teeth of iron and claws of bronze, and which devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet, ²⁰ and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. ²¹ As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.*

²³ *“Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces. ²⁴ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. ²⁵ He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.*

²⁶ *But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. ²⁷ And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey them.’*

²⁸ *“Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”*

Daniel, and anyone who reads the book of Daniel, was dealing with pure prophecy. God’s Word will always explain pure prophecy within the text itself. There is no reason why anyone would have to

retrieve another book to find out what pure prophecy is trying to teach us. All we need to do is study what the one standing there told to Daniel. For an example, let's go back just a little to look at the dominion given to the Son of Man.

The kingdom belongs to the Son of Man, but the saints receive the kingdom and share in Christ's reign over the kingdom. The Saints are those who are holy, meaning they are spiritually pure, complete in character and separated from evil.

Let's go forward and look at the interpretation given by the one standing nearby. The little horn will appear after the ten horns and will occupy the area of the old Roman Empire during the end times. The little horn mentioned here is different from the horn that was *little* in verses 8-9. That horn comes out of the Greek kingdom and represents Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was an antichrist type figure. The little horn in this verse comes out of the Roman beast and takes control of three kingdoms by force. The remaining kingdoms seem to delegate their powers to him. He speaks blasphemy against the Most High. He will wear out the saints as he tries to change *the times* and distort God's laws. He will continue to persecute followers of Christ for a period of three and one-half years until he is destroyed. The description of these verses identifies this little horn with the first beast of the book of Revelation.



That concludes another chapter. We turn to chapter 8 and find another vision that appeared to Daniel. This dream came to Daniel in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar. I'm going to break this chapter into two parts. Verses 1-14 gives the dream and verses 15-27 provides the interpretation. Here is the first half, in verses 1-14, ¹ *In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.* ² *And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal.* ³ *I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.* ⁴ *I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.*

⁵ *As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground. And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.* ⁶ *He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath.* ⁷ *I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him. And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power.* ⁸ *Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.*

⁹ *Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.* ¹⁰ *It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them.* ¹¹ *It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.* ¹² *And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper.* ¹³ *Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?"* ¹⁴ *And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."*

My, oh my, there is a lot to study in these verses. It seems we have a problem right at the beginning. In verse 2, we may find any of three different versions of what the verse even reads. Here is the verse from the King James (KJV), The New King James (NKJV) and the English Standard Version (ESV):

² *And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. Dan 8:2 (KJV)*

² *I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. Dan 8:2 (NKJV)*

² *And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the capital, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal. Dan 8:2 (ESV)*

According to Strong's, there are two words that I looked up. First, Shushan is the capital of Persia. Strong's number 7800, shûwshan, *shoo-shan'*, capital of Persia. The second word is palace, as used in the KJV, Strong's number 1002, bîyrâh, *bee-raw'*, castle or palace. Well, at least we know where Daniel was.

In verse three, we need to understand that the ram with the two horns represents the Medo-Persian Empire. In verse 5, we find a male goat with a horn between its eyes, looking something like a unicorn. In verses 6-7, we see the goat charging at the ram, overturning the ram and trampling the ram while on the ground. This goat represents Alexander the Great and his Greek army. This empire overthrew the Medo-Persian Empire. In verse 8, we see the Greek Empire becoming exceedingly great, but, the

horn between its eyes was broken and four little horns replaced the one horn. This depicts the death of Alexander, and the four generals that took the Greek Empire and divided it up into four kingdoms.

In verse 9, we find a little horn that came out of one of the four horns and grew exceedingly great in the south, the east and the glorious land. We have to shift over to the historical facts to see some of this vision of Daniel's. This little horn is the representation of the Greek ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who in 168 BCE set up an image of the Greek god Zeus in the Jerusalem temple and sacrificed a pig on the altar. The two holy speakers, in the verses of 13-14, indicate that it will be 2,300 evenings and mornings or 1,150 days before the restoration of the temple will take place.

Now, for the remainder of chapter 8, verses 15-27, ¹⁵ *When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.* ¹⁶ *And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."* ¹⁷ *So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end."*

¹⁸ *And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up.* ¹⁹ *He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end."* ²⁰ *As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia.* ²¹ *And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.* ²² *As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power.* ²³ *And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise.* ²⁴ *His power shall be great, but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.* ²⁵ *By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken, but by no human hand.* ²⁶ *The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now."*

²⁷ *And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.*

We have seen the vision and had to give some meaning to portions of the vision itself. In the interpretation, we will confirm what we have learned in the first half of chapter 8. In verses 15-16, we find an unusual statement. A spirit, in the form of a man, gave instruction to Gabriel to teach Daniel what the vision meant. This spirit, who speaks to Gabriel, must be either God, Himself, or Yeshua (Jesus). Only those two would have the authority to give instructions to Gabriel. Verse 17 tells us that Daniel was fearful, however, Gabriel told Daniel that the "vision was for the time of the end".

Daniel must have relaxed after being told this because, verse 18 says, he fell into a deep sleep. Gabriel touched Daniel and made him stand up. Verse 19 indicates that Gabriel confirmed the timing of this vision by saying, "*Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.*" Gabriel continued with his explanation to Daniel. Verse 20 confirms that the ram with the two horns represented the Medo-Persian Empire. Verse 21 confirms that the goat represented the Greek Empire of Alexander. The great horn was its first king, Alexander. Verse 22 explains the horn that was broken and the four little horns that came up at the death of Alexander as four kingdoms formed from the Greek Empire.

We get into the hardest part of this vision in the verses from 23-26. The thoughts presented by those who have studied these verses, far more than I have, indicate that these verses are foretelling of an antichrist type, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who desecrated the temple in Jerusalem, set up an image of Zeus and sacrificed a pig on the altar. This did, in fact, happen and is recorded in the annals of history.

However, it is believed that Gabriel foretold this to Daniel, but, at the same time, foretold of the Antichrist or the beast of Revelation, is also foretold in this vision. Finally, verse 27 states that Daniel was overcome and sick for several days prior to going back to performing his duties for the king. Nevertheless, Daniel states he was appalled by the vision and that he did not understand it.

We have another time shift in chapter 9. Chapter 8 was recorded while Daniel was under the kingship of Belshazzar, a Babylonian. Chapter 9 was recorded while Daniel was under the kingship of Darius, a Mede. Daniel, somehow, had the knowledge of the prophet Jeremiah and knew the appointed time of seventy years was getting close. The closeness that Daniel had to the Most High God caused him to offer a prayer of intercession to God for all the people of Israel. This clearly was meant for both the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Daniel's prayer of intercession is recorded in the verses from 3 through 19, ³ *Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.* ⁴ *I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,* ⁵ *we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.* ⁶ *We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.* ⁷ *To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you.*** ⁸ *To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you.* ⁹ *To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him* ¹⁰ *and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.* ¹¹ ***All Israel** has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.* ¹² *He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem.* ¹³ *As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth.* ¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice.* ¹⁵ *And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.*

¹⁶ *"O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us.* ¹⁷ *Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.* ¹⁸ *O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.* ¹⁹ *O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."*

If there is anyone, who claims to be a Christian and a true believer in Yeshua (Jesus), who can read this prayer of Daniel's and not come away in tears is beyond me. It is because the words of Daniel reflect the rebellion that mankind has had toward God since the giving of the Ten Commandments in the wilderness. We, believers, are to boldly claim our belief. We are to seek God daily and obey His law and His Commandments. I happen to be a person who has felt led to understand that the scattering of

the House of Israel has marched down through history to today. The people of the United States who are of European descent, especially of English Isles descent, are Israelite. We are not Jews, but Israelite. If we follow God's ways, we are to understand our brothers, the Jews, and stand with them and for them. We are not to follow in the influence of Satan, who hates the Jews and hates us for being Israelite. We are in the End Times and Satan understands God's plan for all of mankind. Satan hates anything that God has created that causes worship toward the Most High God. He hates Jews, Jesus, Jerusalem, the Bible and all those who worship the Most High God. These words from Daniel should give us an understanding of mankind's rebellion against God along with the wrath that He has stated within His Word that will occur because of disobedience! Read and understand, this will happen, and the only way to avoid that wrath is with a belief in Christ as the Son of God!

In verses 20-23, we see that Gabriel was sent, once again, to Daniel to provide to him an understanding of End Time events. Here are those verses, ²⁰ *While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God,* ²¹ *while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice.* ²² *He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.* ²³ *At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.* Notice the wording in verses 7, 11 and 20 that Daniel is speaking about all Israel in his prayer. Gabriel brought to Daniel an answer and another vision. This vision is the seventy weeks that Daniel is to understand. First, here are the verses themselves, verses 24-27, ²⁴ *"Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.* ²⁵ *Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.* ²⁶ *And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.* ²⁷ *And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."*

In the reading of these verses, who would have thought that four verses of scripture would cover well over two thousand years of human history? I can only pray that my God will provide me with insight to completely explain these seventy weeks. Yes! I am assisted by the commentary that is laid out in the ESV Bible. Together, I hope and pray these seventy weeks are explained. The words that Gabriel brought to Daniel are broken down into different periods of time for specific events to happen.

The first period, we need to understand, is the seventy weeks itself. In this passage, a week represents a period of seven years, so we see that this entire prophecy will cover a total period of 490 years. Now, we are dealing with prophecy and the time stated is God's time. Verse 24 speaks of many things that must occur over the whole of the seventy weeks. Verse 25 begins by revealing to us that 69 of these weeks (483 years) will pass between the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the coming of an anointed prince. Because of the wording that the beginning of this period is the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, and not the rebuilding of the temple, most likely means that this date should be 457 BCE when Ezra returned and began to rebuild the city. That would bring the conclusion of this period in 27CE when Christ (the anointed prince) began His earthly ministry. I know you just added these two figures together and ended with 484 years and said, "Ah, I caught you. It doesn't add correctly." Now it is my turn, remember that there is no such thing as the year zero, therefore, a total of 483 years as stated.

There is a definite gap between the 69th and the 70th week. Some have suggested that this period will be the time between the giving of the Holy Spirit to empower the church as the beginning of the church age, and the ending will be the rapture of the church. I can't go along with that thought. Here is my reason. We do not know when the rapture of the church is going to happen, however, we do know that the seven year (the one final week) period at the end of time will begin with the signing of the covenant of peace with Israel. That is a definite known date to look toward. In the middle of this 7 year period, the person making the peace deal will be filled with the authority and power of Satan, and will end the daily sacrifices at the temple, make himself to be god and make desolate the land of Israel until the second coming of the True Prince of the Most High God. That brings to a close chapter 9.

Chapter 10 appears to be rather straight forward and not very complex. As such, I am using the full account of the verses from chapter 10, and then a short summary of my interpretation. Verses 1-21, *¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.*

² In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. ³ I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks. ⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river (that is, the Tigris) ⁵ I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. ⁷ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength. ⁹ Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.

¹⁰ And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. ¹² Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. ¹³ The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, ¹⁴ and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

¹⁵ When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and was mute. ¹⁶ And behold, one in the likeness of the children of man touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke. I said to him who stood before me, "O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength. ¹⁷ How can my lord's servant talk with my lord? For now no strength remains in me, and no breath is left in me."

¹⁸ Again one having the appearance of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹ And he said, "O man greatly loved, fear not, peace be with you; be strong and of good courage." And as he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." ²⁰ Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? But now I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, behold, the prince of Greece will come. ²¹ But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince.

Chapter 11 begins with Daniel giving a prophecy concerning Darius the Mede. We can see this in verse one, *¹ "And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.* From this verse on through the remainder of chapter 11, we have words from the Bible and

historical events in the affairs of Persia and Greece. Since this is a very challenging chapter, let's go through this chapter a little at a time and explain what we have read from the Biblical verses. All the verses for chapter 11 will be from the ESV translation. Verse 2 reads, ² *“And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.* Daniel proceeds to give a prophecy outlining the key events leading to the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus was the Greek ruler who defiled and violated the Jerusalem temple. Prior to all of this, Persia would go through three more kings, Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata and Darius. Then, a fourth king, Xerxes, would fight against Greece. With the mention of Greece, no more is said about Persia, though Persia continued for a while. The content of this chapter shows the detail and accuracy of Biblical prophecy as it relates to the history of nations and world events, as these events were still centuries away when the prophecy was given. Not only do we have text of history pertaining to Xerxes and Persia, but we also have the second source of information from the book of Esther in the Bible.

Verse 3 reads, ³ *Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.* This simple little verse is referring to Alexander the Great of Greece. Verse 4 provides a little more information toward the breakup of the Greek Empire after the death of Alexander. Here is verse 4, ⁴ *And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.* Alexander died in his thirties and he had no heir. His Empire went to four of his generals, who created kingdoms of their own. Lysimachus took Thrace and Bithynia, we will call this the east since the account in Daniel 11:4 says the Greek Empire would be divided toward the four winds of heaven. Cassander took Greece and Macedon, the west. The two major kingdoms would be under Seleucus, who took Babylonia and Syria, the north, and finally, Ptolemy, who took Egypt, the Holy Land and Arabia, the south.

Verses 5-6 provides for us some of the early fighting between these generals that took place after Alexander died. Here are those two verses. ⁵ *“Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority. ⁶ After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times.* Ptolemy I Soter of Egypt (323-285 BCE) was the king of the south, and Seleucus I Nicator (311-280 BCE) was king of the north. After several years, Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 BCE), married Antiochus II Theos (261-246 BCE), the king of the north. Antiochus had divorced his former wife, Laodice, in order to marry Berenice. In 246 BCE, Ptolemy II died, and about the same time Laodice murdered Berenice, Antiochus and their son.

Verses 7-9, ⁷ *“And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail. ⁸ He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. ⁹ Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.* The one from a branch from her roots is Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes of Egypt (246-221 BCE), who defeated the king of the north, Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226 BCE). Ptolemy III entered the fortress (probably the Syrian city of Antioch) and took back to Egypt both Syrian images and the Egyptian images that had been stolen by the Persian King Cambyses when he conquered Egypt in 525 BCE. Ptolemy III returned to Egypt with a lot of plunder, but he refrained from any further attacks on Seleucus. After a time, Seleucus attempted to invade Egypt to recover what he had lost, but he failed and was forced to go back to his own land.

Verses 10-13,¹⁰ *“His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. ¹¹ Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. ¹² And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. ¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.* The two sons of Seleucus II were Seleucus III Ceranus (226-223 BCE) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187 BCE). Antiochus III was defeated by Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-203 BCE) with a loss of nearly 10,000 Syrian soldiers at the fortress of Raphia in southern Israel.

Verses 14-17,¹⁴ *“In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail. ¹⁵ Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siege works and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand. ¹⁶ But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand. ¹⁷ He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.* Antiochus III attacked Egypt in 200 BCE, but was crushed by the king of the south, Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181 BCE). Antiochus then gained new strength and conquered the fortified city of Sidon. By 197 BCE, Antiochus had taken control of the glorious land, referring to the land of Israel.

Verses 18-19,¹⁸ *Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him. ¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.* After several years, Antiochus III made a peace treaty with Egypt (194 BCE) and gave his daughter, Cleopatra I, as wife to Ptolemy V. Then Antiochus III advanced north but was defeated at Magnesia in Asia Minor in 190 BCE. Later (187 BCE), he died in an attempt to loot a pagan temple in the province of Elymais.

Verse 20,²⁰ *“Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.* The murder of Seleucus IV Philopater (187-175 BCE) was arranged by his finance minister, Heliodorus.

Verses 21-27,²¹ *In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. ²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. ²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers’ fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.* This chapter has been leading up to the coming of the contemptible person, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BCE), the brother of Seleucus IV. He seized power while the rightful heir to the throne, Seleucus’s son, Demetrius, was still very young. Antiochus (the *little* horn mentioned in chapter 8:9-14, 23-25) made several military campaigns against Egypt. He murdered the prince of the covenant (the high priest, Onias, in 170 BCE,

verse 22). His treaties with other nations were based on conspiracy and deceit. He supported Ptolemy Philometor against Ptolemy Euergetes for selfish reasons, and he made unprovoked attacks on rich cities in times of peace (verse 24). His attacks on Egypt were successful because those who should have helped Egypt did not, and Antiochus was able to return home with extreme wealth (verses 25-28).

Verses 28-31, ²⁸ *And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.*

²⁹ *“At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.* Antiochus developed a hatred of the Jews and their holy, God given law. He was persuaded that Greek culture and language were superior to all others. But the Jews claimed that their religion was exclusive (it claimed that there was only one true God, and that God alone determined the way for people to have a relationship with Him). These same attitudes of cultural superiority among nations and hatred toward Christians have produced, and will continue to produce, much suffering in the world. About 168 BCE, Antiochus invaded Egypt again, but the ships of the western coastlands (verse 30) headed by the Roman consul Laenas, defeated him, and he turned back to his own land. There he took out his frustration against the Jews with persecution. Some Jews yielded and betrayed the holy covenant, the basis of their special relationship with God, and joined Antiochus. These rebellious and unfaithful Jews tolerated the persecution of their countrymen and invited Antiochus to introduce Greek culture and religion to their society (verse 30). That is when Antiochus marched to Jerusalem, offered a pig on the temple altar, stopped the daily sacrifices required by God’s law and set up an image of the Greek god Zeus. This altar to Zeus is the abomination that makes desolate (verse 31), which is a sign of another abomination that Jesus said will occur in the last days of this age. All of this is an example of the spiritual corruption and wickedness that can result when God’s people allow ungodly worldly culture to influence their lifestyle and relationship with God.

Verses 32-35, ³² *He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, ³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.* Some of the Jews were flattered and fooled by false compliments and chose to join the enemy, Antiochus. But in all the troubling times throughout the Old Testament, often caused by the sin of this wayward people, God always had, at least, a small group of Jews who remained faithful to Him. This situation was no different. There were those who knew God and remained loyal to Him. Though the persecution by Antiochus continued, the faithful Jews under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, of the Hasmonean priestly family, strongly resisted. Through covert warfare, they eventually wore down Antiochus and caused him to take his armies home. After that, the temple was ritually purified and rededicated to God. Part of this ritual involved relighting the lamps, an event still celebrated by the Jews as the Feast of Hanukkah. God has not yet completed His dealings with the Jews, however, and the people will continue to go through a spiritually purifying process all the way through the end-time period. This verse is a small reminder of the importance of a close relationship with God. Even today, those who truly know God will have the wisdom to recognize, along with the strength to resist, ungodliness. This resistance is not through physical warfare, because Christ is patiently extending mercy and reserving His judgment until the

end, but through trust in God and the development of spiritual disciplines. These include prayer, Bible study and godly character that will hold up under pressure, even to the point of death.

Verses 36-45, ³⁶ *“And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. ³⁷ He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. ³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.*

⁴⁰ *“At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. ⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. ⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. ⁴⁵ And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.* The prophecies in these verses do not fit Antiochus. The mention of **the time of the end**, verses 35 and 40, tells us that this prophecy is jumping ahead to the end of this present age to the one whom Antiochus symbolized, the antichrist. The antichrist will be a dictatorial ruler who will present himself as greater than any god and will speak astonishing things against the Most High God. He will not acknowledge, the gods [God] of his fathers (verse 37; Hebrew *‘elohim*, which can mean either *gods* or *God*); neither will he acknowledge the one beloved by women (some take this to be Tammuz, a Babylonian fertility god). That is to say, he will have no consideration for any authority, earthly or spiritual, other than himself. The only *god* he will honor will be the god of fortresses (verse 38), which may refer to his own ability to make war or the god of war, Mars. He will also redivide the territories he conquers in order to secure his power and promote his own gain. Though the antichrist will be successful for a time, there will be further battles with another king of the north and another king of the south. This conflict will develop into the battle of Armageddon. This is the stage where the antichrist will, finally and completely, be defeated by the sword coming out of Christ’s mouth (by His Word). Finally, the antichrist will be thrown into the fiery lake (Revelation 19:20).

That concludes chapter 11, and, we are now ready to address the final chapter in the book of Daniel. That portion of Daniel’s prophecies will provide us a forward looking view to the time of the end as we know it. As with chapter 11, I will use the aid of the ESV commentary and will use the verses as recorded in the ESV translation. Chapter 12:1, ¹ *“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.* Michael is the archangel protector over Israel. Daniel predicts a time of extreme trouble for Israel, fulfilling Jeremiah 30:7. But God’s purpose is still to rescue those whose names are written **in the book**. They are those who have accepted forgiveness for their sins, entrusted their lives to God and have a personal relationship with Him because of Christ’s personal sacrifice. Among these will be the Jews who accepted Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah and placed their faith in Him as Savior and Lord, the Forgiver of their sins and Leader of their lives.

Verse 2, ² *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* This verse contains the clearest Old Testament

reference to the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked, those who have followed the true God and those who have rejected Him. This points to the fact that there are only two destinies for all people. We all choose for ourselves whether to follow Yeshua on the path to eternal life, or reject Him and take the path that leads to eternal punishment. Yeshua Himself explains that there are two distinct resurrections (John 5:28-29).

Verse 3, ³ *And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.* When the Old Testament refers to the wise, it usually means the godly. They show their wisdom, not only by how they live, but also by how their lives and testimonies influence others to follow God. The fact that they shall shine means their lives will be spiritually transformed, and God's glory will be reflected in and through their lives. The lives of all who follow Yeshua should light the way for others to come to Christ.

Verse 4-9, ⁴ *But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*"

⁵ *Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream.* ⁶ *And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?"* ⁷ *And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.* ⁸ *I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"* ⁹ *He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.* Daniel is told to seal the book because the prophecies are not just for his own time, but for *the time of the end* as well. They are to be a source of encouragement to those who will be alive during that time. Daniel then sees two angels, one on each side of the river, asking how long it would be until that time is completed. The man clothed in linen promised, on God's honor, that the time would be three and one-half years, probably referring to the last half of the 70th week of seven years (refer to 9:27).

Verses 10-13, ¹⁰ *Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.* ¹¹ *And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.* ¹² *Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.* ¹³ *But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.*" It is revealed to Daniel that the full understanding of the prophecy will not come until *the time of the end* (verse 4). During that time, those who trust Christ will be spiritually purified, refined and strengthened through times of extreme difficulty and testing. Then, they will be the wise ones, who comprehend what is happening. No wicked or rebellious person will grasp the meaning of what will take place in the end. From the time when the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there will be a period of 1,290 days, corresponding to the last three and one-half years of the tribulation period, plus 45 days. There will be a special blessing on those who come through the 1,335 days. The significance of these days is not explained to Daniel, but this vision does let us know that there will be a period of time between the battle of Armageddon, when the forces of the antichrist will be destroyed, and the full establishment of the millennial kingdom. The important thing to keep in mind is that the wise (the godly) will understand. Even if they do not understand everything, they will understand enough about end-time events to maintain their trust in Christ and secure their place in His eternal kingdom.

That completes the 12 chapters of the book of Daniel. There are visions and mysteries that are recorded for all to see and to know. Most of these visions and mysteries are reserved for *the time of the end*, which I personally believe that we have entered. There are many events that must occur prior to

the return of Yeshua to the earth. There are battles that must be fought and a signing of a peace treaty between Israel and their neighbors, then, the period of rule of the antichrist.

I feel that over the last forty years God has led me to comprehend and understand the meanings of His Holy Word. He has had me to write and record things that are to happen and the meaning of many things in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. He has had me to go deep in the readings and their meanings. He has led me to record all the things sent for me to understand and to place them on my website for others to have available for themselves, all for free. Everything that God has given to me was freely given and they are freely given to you for your personal knowledge. Please understand that everything God has given me has been in a learning experience. I had to learn a small simple thing before He would take me to the next thing to learn. There are simple books that God gave me twenty, thirty, even forty years ago that are on the website. Some things, in the beginning, were changed as the knowledge grew and God took me further on my journey. They have been left in place so that you could go from the simple truth to complex facts that need thought, prayer and understanding to fully comprehend the meaning of particular passages in the Bible. Along the way, my loving wife, a teacher for over forty years, gave me the understanding that repetition is necessary for training a subject. For that reason, I am going to add to this book several discussions on the Rapture, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, false teachers and the spirit of Babylon. Please pray with me that these additional subjects provide you with either new understanding, or an additional encouragement, that will guide you in faith toward the end of days.

Maranatha



The Rapture

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (ESV)

The word *rapture* comes from the Latin word *raptu* which means “caught away” or “caught up.” This Latin word is equivalent to the Greek term *harpazō* which is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (underlined above) and translated as caught up. This event described here and in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 ²⁰ *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* ²¹ *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.* ²² *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.* ²³ *But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ,* refers to the time when Christ will take His followers from the earth to meet Him in the air and be with Him in heaven. It involves only those who are part of Christ’s true church, His faithful followers worldwide who are in a right relationship with Him.

(1) Just prior to the rapture, as Christ is descending from heaven for His church, the resurrection of the dead in Christ will occur. This is not the same resurrection described in Revelation 20:4, ⁴ *Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.* This is an event occurring after Christ returns to earth, destroys the forces of the antichrist and confines Satan to the bottomless pit. We find that in Rev 19:19-20:3, ¹⁹ *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.* ²⁰ *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.* ²¹ *And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of Him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.* Rev 20:1-3, ¹ *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.* ² *And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.* ³ *and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.* Now, the resurrection described in Revelation 20:4 is limited to those who turned to Christ and died for their faith in Him during the tribulation (the period following the rapture, during which the antichrist will rise to power and God will execute His severe end-time judgments on the earth). The Revelation 20:4 reference may possibly involve Old Testament followers of God as well.

(2) At the same time as the dead in Christ rise, followers of Christ who are alive on earth will be transformed, their bodies becoming imperishable and immortal. 1 Cor 15:51, 53, ⁵¹ *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, . . .* ⁵³ *For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.* This will happen in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye. 1 Cor 15:52, ⁵² *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.*

(3) Both, the resurrected Christians and those who are instantly transformed, will be caught up together to meet Christ in the air (in the atmosphere between earth and heaven).

(4) They will be visibly united with Christ. See the reference at the beginning of this article. They will be taken to heaven. John 14:1-3, ¹ *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* There they will be reunited with loved ones who have died knowing Christ. 1 Thes 4:13-18, ¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

(5) They will be removed from all suffering and distress, 2 Cor 5:2, ² *For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, and Phil 3:20-21, ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself,* also from all persecution and oppression, Rev 3:10, ¹⁰ *Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth, and from the entire realm of sin and death, 1 Cor 15:54-58, ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.* The rapture also rescues Yeshua’s followers from the wrath to come, the Great Tribulation. 1 Thes 1:10, ¹⁰ *and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*

(6) The hope that our Savior will soon return, to take us out of the world to “always be with the Lord” (stated above), is the blessed hope of all who have yielded their lives to Christ. Titus 2:13-14, ¹³ *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.* The reference verse above is a major source of comfort for suffering Christians.

(7) Paul uses **we**, in 1 Thes 4:17, because he believed the Lord’s return could happen in his own lifetime. He communicates this same sense of urgency and anticipation to the Thessalonians. The Bible insists that Christians, must remain alert and ready for the Lord’s return at all times and in all periods.

(8) Those who claim to be Christians and part of the church, **yet are unfaithful to Christ** and do not truly have a personal saving relationship with the Lord, will be left behind. They will be left with only a false system of religion and will experience God’s wrath during the tribulation period.

(9) Following the rapture is the day of the Lord, referring to a time that brings distress and judgment on the ungodly. That will be followed by the second stage of Christ’s coming, when He literally returns to earth at the end of the tribulation, to defeat the forces of the antichrist, destroy the ungodly and reign on earth for a thousand years at the end of time as we know it.

The Age of the Antichrist

Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (ESV)

According to the Bible, in the last days the spirit of antichrist must come. 1 John 2:18-24, ¹⁸ *Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.* ¹⁹ *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.* ²⁰ *But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge.* ²¹ *I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.* ²² *Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.* ²³ *No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.* ²⁴ *Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.* This antichrist will be a satanic empowered opposition to God. All he has accomplished against Christ will be represented in bodily form as an influential, international leader. This person will engineer Satan's final attempt to overthrow Christ, His work and His followers just before Christ returns to establish His kingdom on earth for the last thousand years of time as we now know it. Paul uses a couple of terms for the antichrist: the man of lawlessness and the son of destruction. Both terms are shown above in the reference verse. Other terms used in the Bible for this figure are the beast rising out of the sea, Rev 13:1, ¹ *And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads, a scarlet beast,* Rev 17:3, ³ *And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns, and the beast,* Rev 17:8, ⁸ *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*

Signs of the Antichrist's Coming. Unlike the rapture, the coming of the antichrist will not be without warning. Several signs will point to his appearance and rise to power. At least three events must occur before he appears on earth: (1) the mystery of lawlessness already at work in the world must greatly increase, 2 Thes 2:9-10, ⁹ *The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,* ¹⁰ *and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved;* (2) the rebellion must come (stated above); and (3) **He who now restrains it** must be taken **out of the way**, 2 Thes 2:7, ⁷ *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.*

(1) The mystery of lawlessness, will increase until it reaches its climax, referring to the behind the scenes activity of evil powers that are evident throughout the world. That point will be characterized by the complete ridicule, rejection and rebellion against any standards and commands established in the Bible. Because of a ruling spirit of rebellion and lawlessness, most people will lose any sense of true love and compassion. Matt 24:10, ¹⁰ *And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another;* Luke 18:8, ⁸ *I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"* Yet, there will always be those who choose to follow Christ

and remain loyal to the Christian faith as revealed in the New Testament. Matt 24:13, ¹³ *But he who endures to the end shall be saved*; Matt 25:10, ¹⁰ *And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut*; Luke 18:7, ⁷ *And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?* Through these faithful people, the true church will remain strong using the sword of the Spirit (God's Word) as the most effective weapon in the ongoing battle against the forces of evil.

(2) The rebellion (Gk. *apostasia*), which literally means departure, falling away or abandonment, will occur. In the last days, many people who once followed Christ will abandon Biblical truth and reject true faith in Christ.

(a) Both, Yeshua and Paul paint a dark picture of the condition of much of the visible church (people in local congregations) as the present age comes to a close. Matt 24:5, ⁵ *For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray*; 24:10-13, ¹⁰ *And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved*; 24:24; ²⁴ *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect*; 1 Tim 4:1, ¹ *Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*; 2 Tim 4:3-4, ³ *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths*. The corruption will be evident morally, spiritually and doctrinally regarding foundational beliefs and teachings. Paul, in particular, stresses that the churches will be invaded by godless influences in the last days.

(b) This rebellion within the church will have two dimensions. [1] Theological apostasy refers to people turning from and rejecting part, or all, of the true and original teachings of Christ and His apostles as recorded in the New Testament (see the 1 Tim and 2 Tim passages just above). False leaders and teachers will offer salvation and cheap grace without true devotion to Christ. They will claim that people can be spiritually saved even though they reject Christ's demand for repentance, separation from evil and loyalty to God and His standards. False hope that centers on human desires, activities and goals of self-interest will become popular. [2] Moral apostasy refers to the rejection or abandonment of one's saving relationship with Christ and returning to a sinful, rebellious way of life. People who have abandoned true faith in Christ may still claim to believe the right things and to accept the Bible's teachings, **yet they reject God's moral law and standards!** By doing so, they corrupt the truth and embrace deception. Many churches will tolerate almost anything for the sake of attendance, money, success and honor. The true message of Christ, with its call to suffer, to radically renounce sin, Rom 8:13-14, ¹³ *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God*; to sacrifice for God's kingdom and to deny one's own selfish way, will be more unpopular than ever, 2 Tim 3:1-5, ¹ *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power*.

(c) Both, the history of the church and the predicted end-time rebellion within the church, should challenge all followers of Christ **not to be naive** about the widespread corruption of Christ's message of truth in the last days. At some point in time, it seems that rebellion against God and His

Word will reach an astounding, almost unimaginable level. The day of the Lord will bring God's wrath, His justified anger, judgment and punishment on those who reject His truth.

(d) The ultimate, or complete, triumph of God's kingdom and purposes in the world does not depend on the gradual increase of the church's, so-called, success. God's purpose will prevail, because of His own final intervention, when He breaks into the order of world events with right and proper judgment.

(3) A final and indisputable event must occur before the *man of lawlessness* can be revealed and *the day of the Lord* can begin. That event involves the taking out of the way of someone or something that currently holds back, or restrains, the secret power of lawlessness and the man of lawlessness. The day of the Lord can begin when the restraining influence is taken out of the way.

(a) He who now restrains it may best be understood as God, as He is revealed through the Holy Spirit. He alone has the power to hold back evil, the man of lawlessness and Satan. The restrainer is referred to by both the masculine article and by the neuter article. In the same way, the word Spirit in the Greek can be referred to by a masculine or neuter pronoun.

(b) At the beginning of the final seven years of tribulation, the restraining influence of God's Spirit will be lifted, or taken out of the way. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world completely, but only that He will cease to exercise His restraining influence against lawlessness and the antichrist's rise to power. All of God's restraints against sin will be removed and the satanically inspired rebellion will begin. Certainly, the Holy Spirit will still remain on earth during the tribulation to expose people's sin and convince them of their need for God. Why? Because, no one could be saved without the Spirit's enablement and life renewing power. The Spirit will enable those who show faith in God to turn from their own way and follow Him. The Spirit will empower those who choose to follow Christ during this time of widespread suffering and persecution.

(c) As God removes, or lifts, His restraining influence, the man of lawlessness then comes on the scene. God will send a strong delusion on all those who refuse to accept and love the truth. As a result, **they will be greatly deceived and will accept the claims of the man of lawlessness**. As a result, human society will degenerate to a depth of corruption never before seen.

(d) God's sin restraining presence and ministry are carried on, largely, through the church, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, many interpreters believe that the removal of the Spirit's sin restraining influence will occur simultaneously with the rapture of the church.

(e) Some scholars believe that the restrainer of 2 Thes 2:6 refers to the Holy Spirit and His sin restraining ministry, while in 2:7, he who now restrains it refers to Christ's followers before the rapture. They will be taken out of the way when they are caught up to meet Christ in the air to be with the Lord forever.

The Antichrist's Activities. The *man of lawlessness* is revealed as *the day of the Lord* begins. He will be a world ruler who will make a covenant with Israel seven years before the end of the age. (1) His true identity will be confirmed three and one half years later as he breaks his covenant with Israel, becomes the world ruler, declares himself to be God, defiles the temple in Jerusalem, forbids the worship of the Lord and brings devastation to the land of that region. (2) The antichrist will declare himself to be God and will become a ruthless dictator, severely persecuting those who turn to and remain loyal to Christ during this time. He will demand worship, evidently from a great temple that he uses as the center for his prideful announcements. In their ungodliness, humans have attempted to achieve this godlike status since the beginning of creation. (3) The *man of lawlessness* will be empowered by Satan to perform great signs, wonders and miracles **in order to deceive people and make his lies believable**. *False signs and wonders* refer to actual supernatural occurrences that deceive people into accepting a lie. (a) It is possible that these supernatural happenings will be seen around the world

through various forms of media! Millions will be impressed, deceived and persuaded by this charismatic leader because they have no deep commitment to, or love for the truth of God's Word. The words of both Paul and Yeshua should caution believers against assuming that all miracles are from God. Every expression, of the supernatural gifts, needs to be tested by the standards given in God's Word, to be sure that it is the gift and work of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor 12:4-11, ⁴ *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;* ⁵ *and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;* ⁶ *and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.* ⁷ *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.* ⁸ *For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,* ⁹ *to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,* ¹⁰ *to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.* ¹¹ *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

The Defeat of the Antichrist. At the end of the tribulation period, Satan will gather many nations at Armageddon under the direction of the antichrist. He will prepare to make war against God and His people in a battle that will involve the entire world. When that time comes, Christ will return to earth and supernaturally intervene to destroy the antichrist, his armies and all who defy God and His Word. Christ will then bind Satan and confine him to the bottomless pit, establishing his kingdom of peace on earth for the last thousand years of time as we know it. Following this final period of history, Satan will be released for a brief time to deceive anyone who is not completely loyal to God, and he will gather them for a final battle against Christ. That battle will be brief and decisive, as the enemies of Christ will be consumed with fire, and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet already are, to be tormented for eternity. Rev 20:9-10, ⁹ *And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,* ¹⁰ *and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.* A new heaven and new earth are then created in which God will live with His people forever. 2 Peter 3:7-13, ⁷ *But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*

⁸ *But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* ⁹ *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.* ¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.*

¹¹ *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,* ¹² *waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!* ¹³ *But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

False Teachers

For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. Mark 13:22

Description. Yeshua's followers today must be aware that, within some churches, there may be ministers and leaders who preach and teach God's Word, however, inside they are just like the corrupt teachers of God's law in Yeshua's time. Matt 24:11, 24, ¹¹ *And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. . . .* ²⁴ *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.* Yeshua warns that not everyone who claims to know and follow Him is a true believer. There are a number of Christian writers, missionaries, pastors, evangelists, teachers, musicians and other church leaders and workers who are not what they claim or appear to be.

(1) On the outside, these individuals will appear righteous to others. Matt 23:28, ²⁸ *So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.* They come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Matt 7:15-16, ¹⁵ *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.* ¹⁶ **You will recognize them by their fruits.** *Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?* One of the reasons, that this type of minister could fool even godly people, is because they seem to base their messages on the standards and principles found in God's Word and talk of high moral and spiritual standards. They seem truly concerned for God's work and may show great interest in the spiritual salvation of the lost. These leaders may appear for a time to be great ministers and servants that are empowered by the Holy Spirit. They may even perform miracles and experience great success, causing many to follow their leadership. Matt 7:21-23, ²¹ *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.* ²² *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'* ²³ *And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

(2) No matter how spiritually successful these people may seem, they are speaking and acting out of empty hearts. The Bible says they are related spiritually to the false prophets of the Old Testament. For example, 1 Kgs 18:40, ⁴⁰ *And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.* Together with the Pharisees of the New Testament. Matt 23:13, 15: ¹³ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.* ¹⁵ *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.* When they were away from the crowds and living their hidden lives, the Pharisees were full of greed and self-indulgence. Matt 23:25, ²⁵ *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.* Yeshua strongly challenged the Pharisees and teachers of the law who made it difficult for people to understand and accept the truth. He exposed their double standards and false leadership when He said the following in Matthew 23:27-28, ²⁷ *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.* ²⁸ *So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

(3) These imposters gain influence in the church in two ways. (a) Some false teachers, preachers and other leaders begin their ministry with right motives and are devoted to spiritual truth, moral purity and genuine faith in Christ. Then through pride (often due to insecurity, a desire for acceptance or a drive for success) and immoral desires, they gradually lose their love for and commitment to Christ. As they continue on this path, their devotion dies, and they lose their place in God's kingdom. 1 Cor 6:9-10,⁹ *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God; Gal 5:19-21,¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God; Eph 5:5-6,⁵ For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. As a result, they become instruments of Satan, while still disguising themselves as ministers of truth. (b) Other false teachers and preachers have never been genuine followers of Christ. Satan has planted them within the church from the start of their ministry. Matt 13:24-28, 36-43,²⁴ *He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field,²⁵ but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.²⁶ So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also.²⁷ And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'²⁸ He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' . . .³⁶ Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."³⁷ He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one,³⁹ and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels.⁴⁰ Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age.⁴¹ The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,⁴² and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. He uses their abilities and appealing personalities to affect others and to move them further along toward success. The devil's strategy is to place them in positions of influence so they can weaken and hinder the genuine work of Christ. Satan knows that when these dishonest and deceitful leaders are exposed, even more damage will be done to the message and reputation of the church. Yet even worse, the name of Christ will be put to open shame.**

Testing. Yeshua warned His disciples fourteen times in the Gospels to watch out for leaders who would twist the truth and mislead people. Let's see how this warning was given: Matthew 7:15-16,¹⁵ *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?; 16:6, 11,⁶ Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.", . . .¹¹ How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."; 24:4-5, 24,⁴ And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray.⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. . . .²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.; Mark 4:24,²⁴ And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear: with the*

measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you.; 8:15,¹⁵ And he cautioned them, saying, “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”; 12:38-40,³⁸ And in his teaching he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces³⁹ and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts,⁴⁰ who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”; 13:5-6,⁵ And Jesus began to say to them, “See that no one leads you astray.⁶ Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray.”; Luke 12:1,¹ In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another; he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.; 17:23-25,²³ And they will say to you, ‘Look, there!’ or ‘Look, here!’ Do not go out or follow them.²⁴ For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day.²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.”; 20:45-47,⁴⁵ And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples,⁴⁶ “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts,⁴⁷ who devour widows’ houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”; 21:8,⁸ And he said, “See that you are not led astray. For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and, ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. In other places, God’s Word instructs His people to test teachers, preachers and leaders in the church to prove that their hearts are in a right relationship with Him and that their lives and messages are consistent with the principles and standards of God’s Word. 1 Thes 5:19-22,¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit.²⁰ Do not despise prophecies,²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good.²² Abstain from every form of evil.; 1 John 4:1-3,¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. The following steps can be taken to discern, test and expose false teachers or false prophets.

(1) Discern their character. Do they have active and consistent prayer lives? Do they show a heartfelt and pure devotion to God? Are they people of honesty, integrity and moral discipline? Do they show the fruit of the Spirit as a growth in godly character and evidence that God’s Spirit is living in and through a person? Gal 5:22-23,²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Do they truly love and reach out to those who do not yet have a personal relationship with Christ? Do they hate wickedness and love righteousness? Do they preach against sin and avoid all forms of it in their own lives? Luke 3:15-17,¹⁵ As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ,¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

(2) Discern their motives. True and genuine Christian leaders will seek to do four things: (a) Honor Christ above all else. 2 Cor 8:23,²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.; Phil 8:19-20,¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (b) Lead the church into spiritual growth and holiness, meaning a moral purity, spiritual wholeness, separation from evil and devotion to God. Acts 26:18,¹⁸ to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’; 1 Cor

6:18, ¹⁸ *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*; 2 Cor 6:16-18, ¹⁶ *What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* ¹⁷ *Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,* ¹⁸ *and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."*; (c) Lead those who are spiritually lost into the light of forgiveness and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Yeshua). 1 Cor 9:19-22, ¹⁹ *For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.* ²⁰ *To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.* ²¹ *To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.* ²² *To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.*; and (d) Proclaim and defend the true message of Christ as revealed throughout the New Testament. Phil 1:15-16, ¹⁵ *Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will.* ¹⁶ *The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel.*

(3) Evaluate the fruit of their lives and message. Just like any living thing, people reproduce what they are. This applies spiritually as well as physically. A person with ungodly character will eventually show the fruit of ungodliness. Their message will hide the truth, confuse people and cause division in the church. Often, the fruit of false preachers will be followers and converts who also do not have any depth of character and who are not totally committed to all of God's Word. Matt 7:17-20, ¹⁷ *So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.* ¹⁸ *A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.* ¹⁹ *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.* ²⁰ *Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

(4) Discern their level of reliance on God's Word. This is the key issue in revealing a false messenger. If what they believe, preach or teach is not consistent with the original writings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, then their message should be rejected. If they do not believe that God's written Word, as revealed in the Bible, is fully inspired by God and that we are to submit to all its teachings, then anything they teach is subject to doubt. 2 John 8-11, ⁸ *Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.* ⁹ *Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.* ¹⁰ *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting,* ¹¹ *for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.* If a minister is not personally convinced of or committed to the truth of God's Word, we can be sure that neither the minister nor his or her message is from God.

(5) Finally, test their integrity in the area of handling the Lord's money. Do they refuse to take large amounts for themselves? Do they handle all finances with the highest sense of truth and responsibility? Do they further the growth of God's work in ways that are godly and in line with New Testament standards for ministry leaders? 1 Tim 3:1-5, ¹ *The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.* ² *Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,* ³ *not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.* ⁴ *He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,* ⁵ *for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?*

We must realize that in spite of all that God's faithful people do to evaluate leaders' lives and messages, there will still be false teachers who, with Satan's help, remain undetected until God decides to expose them for what they are.

The Acts of the Sinful Nature and the Fruit of the Spirit

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Gal 5:22-24

No passage in the Bible draws a clearer contrast between the lifestyle of Spirit filled followers of Christ and that of people still controlled by their sinful human nature than Gal 5:16-26, ¹⁶ *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* ¹⁷ *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* ¹⁸ *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* ¹⁹ *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* ²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* ²⁴ *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

²⁵ *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.* ²⁶ *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.* Paul discusses general lifestyle differences by emphasizing that God's Spirit and the sinful human nature are at war with and in opposition to each other. He also includes a specific list of both the acts of the sinful nature and the fruit of the Spirit.

The Works of the Flesh. Works of the flesh (Gk *sarx*) refers to the human nature with its corrupt desires, resistance to God and insistence on going its own way. This has been in effect ever since the first man and woman disobeyed God and allowed sin to enter the world and infect human existence. The sinful nature remains within Christians even after they choose to accept and follow Christ. It continues to be their deadly enemy that battles against their spirit. Rom 8:6-8, 13, ⁶ *For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.* ⁷ *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* ⁸ *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. . . .* ¹³ *For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.;* Gal 5:17-18, ¹⁷ *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* ¹⁸ *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* Those who continue to yield to the sinful nature cannot truly be part of God's kingdom. For this reason, this sinful nature must be resisted and put to death spiritually through a continual spiritual battle that Christians must fight and win through the power of the Holy Spirit. The acts of the sinful nature include the following:

(1) Sexual immorality (Gk *porneia*) includes intercourse and other forms of sexual contact outside of a marriage relationship. It includes such things as pornography where sexual pleasures are fed through pictures or sexually suggestive forms of entertainment, films or writings. Acts 21:25, ²⁵ *But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality."*

(2) Impurity (Gk *akatharsia*) also refers to sexual sins, evil behaviors and ungodly motives, traits and habits. It includes secret thoughts and desires, which is where impurity begins and affects us

morally and spiritually. Eph 5:3, ³ *But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.*

(3) Sensuality (Gk *aselgeia*) refers to shameful and abnormal behavior and a lack of self-control. It involves selfishly following one's passions and desires to the point of having no shame or thought for public decency. 2 Cor 12:21, ²¹ *I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.*

(4) Idolatry (Gk *eidōlōlatria*) means worshiping spirits, false gods, persons, images or anything else instead of the one true God. Idolatry is also an issue whenever someone or something is loved, trusted or given importance over God. Allowing anyone or anything to have equal or greater influence or authority than God and His Word is the most subtle form of idolatry. Col 3:5-6, ⁵ *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.* ⁶ ***On account of these the wrath of God is coming.***

(5) Sorcery (Gk *pharmakeia*) includes spiritism, attempting to contact the dead, black magic (calling on the devil or evil spirits, attempting magic for evil purposes), worship of demons and use of drugs to produce spiritual experiences. Rev 9:20-21, ²⁰ *The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk,* ²¹ *nor did they repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

(6) Enmity (Gk *echthra*) involves all forms of consuming, hostile thoughts, motives and actions, including extreme dislike, anger or desire to cause conflict.

(7) Strife (Gk *eris*) involves quarreling, causing undue tension, disunity and struggling for superiority over others. Rom 1:28-32, ²⁸ *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* ²⁹ *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,* ³⁰ *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* ³¹ *foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* ³² *Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.*

(8) Jealousy (Gk *zēlos*) refers to resentfulness or envy of another person's situation or success. Romans 13:13, ¹³ *Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.*

(9) Fits of anger (Gk *thumos*) are explosive outbursts of anger that can result in violent words or actions. Col 3:8, ⁸ *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*

(10) Rivalries (Gk *eritheia*) involves pursuing personal power or success without considering the desires of God or the impact it will have on others. 2 Cor 12:20, ²⁰ *For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.*

(11) Dissensions (Gk *dichostasia*) refers to causing divisions or introducing teachings not supported by God's Word. Rom 16:17, ¹⁷ *I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.*

(12) Divisions (Gk *hairesis*) are divisions within a church congregation or group of Christians that develop into selfish groups or cliques destroying the unity of the church. 1 Cor 11:18-19, ¹⁸ *For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part,* ¹⁹ *for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized.*

The Great Tribulation

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. Matt 24:21

Beginning with Matt 24:15, Yeshua speaks about unique signs that will occur during the end-time period. This is the time often called the tribulation. Rev 7:14, ¹⁴ *I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. The signs that occur will be warnings that the end of this present age is very near. Matt 24:15-29, ¹⁵ "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³ Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶ So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷ For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*

²⁹ *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. These signs will lead up to and signal Christ's physical return to earth after the tribulation. Matt 24:30-31, ³⁰ Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. At Christ's return, He will destroy the forces of the antichrist and evil, and He will establish an earthly reign of peace for the last thousand years of time as we know it.*

The first major sign that signals the beginning of the great tribulation is the abomination of desolation. This phase refers to a specific observable event that tells God's faithful followers (who are alive during the great tribulation) that Christ's literal return to earth will happen very shortly. **Christ's followers, during the tribulation, are those who accept Christ after the rapture.** This visible sign or event refers primarily to the future desecration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by the antichrist. The antichrist, or man of lawlessness, will set up an image of himself in God's temple, declaring himself to be God. 2 Thes 2:3-4, ³ *Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.; Rev 13:14-15, ¹⁴ and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. The following are important facts about this event that will be the turing point for all that continues to happen.*

(1) The abomination of desolation will mark the beginning of the final stage of the tribulation, which ends in Christ's return to earth to defeat the forces of the antichrist and bring judgment and destruction on the ungodly at the battle of Armageddon. Dan 9:27, ²⁷ *And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.*"; Rev 19:11-21, ¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.* ¹² *His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.* ¹³ *He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.* ¹⁴ *And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.* ¹⁵ *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.* ¹⁶ *On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings and Lord of lords.***

¹⁷ *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God,"* ¹⁸ *to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great."* ¹⁹ *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.* ²⁰ *And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur.* ²¹ *And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*

(2) By noting the time of this event, "So when you see . . ." in Matt 24:15, ¹⁵ *"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)).* Christ's followers, during the tribulation, can know with great certainty when the tribulation will end and Christ will come to reign on earth. The time span between this event and the end is given four times in the Bible as three and a half years, or 1,260 days. Rev 11:2-3, ² *but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.* ³ *And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth."*

(3) Because those who are waiting for Christ's coming will be filled with such eagerness and expectancy (Matt 24:33, ³³ *So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.*), they must be aware that any report that Christ has returned will be untrue. There will be no doubt when Christ comes because the coming of the Son of Man at the end of the tribulation will be visible and known to all who are in the world. Matt 24:27-30, ²⁷ *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* ²⁸ *Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*

²⁹ *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.* ³⁰ *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Another sign, that the great tribulation has begun, will be the appearance of false prophets, messengers of Satan, who will perform great signs and wonders. Matt 24:24, ²⁴ *For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.*

(1) Yeshua strongly warns His followers to be especially alert and on guard against deception. Many people who claim to be Christian prophets, teachers and preachers will really be hypocrites and liars, even though they appear to perform miracles, healings and other signs. They will seem to have success in their ministries. But these false prophets will present a changed and twisted message, unlike the truth found in God's Word. Matt 7: 22-23, ²² *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'* ²³ *And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

(2) The Bible urges Christians to continually test the spirits that guide and empower all teachers, leaders and preachers to see how their messages, ministries and lives match up with the teachings, principles and standards of God's eternal Word. God allows deception, accompanied by miracles, to test believers and to reveal the depth and quality of their love for Him along with their loyalty to the truth of His Word. This period of deception will be extremely difficult. Yeshua states that, during the last days, religious deceit will be so widespread, and presented with such craftiness, that it will be difficult even for the elect to wisely judge and determine truth from lies.

(3) Those among God's people who do not truly love the truth will be deceived. They will be given no further opportunity to believe and accept the truth of the real Christ after the antichrist comes.

Finally, the great tribulation will be a specific period of horrible suffering and distress for all the people in the world. The following are Biblical facts, about this terrifying time, when the antichrist will assume world control and God will release His seven end-time judgments on the earth.

(1) It will be worldwide. Rev 3:10, ¹⁰ ***Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*** (2) It will be the worst time of suffering and distress ever to occur in the history of humanity. Dan 12:1-2, ¹ *"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.* ² *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* (3) It shall be a terrible time of persecution for the Jews. Jer 30:5-7, ⁵ *"Thus says the Lord: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace.* ⁶ *Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale?* ⁷ *Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob;*

yet he shall be saved out of it. (4) The period will be under the control of the man of lawlessness. Dan 9:27, ²⁷ *And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."* (5) Those in Christ's churches, who have been faithfully following Him before this time begins, are promised deliverance and escape from the tribulation. 1 Thes 5:9-10, ⁹ *For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him* (6) During this time, there will be both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Yeshua and are spiritually saved. But, those who come to trust Christ after the tribulation begins will have to endure what is to come. (7) It will be a time of great suffering and dreadful persecution for all who continue to be faithful to God. Rev 12:17, ¹⁷ *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.* (8) It will be a time of God's wrath and judgment upon the ungodly throughout the earth. Rev 6:15-17, ¹⁵ *Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals*

and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ *calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,* ¹⁷ *for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”* (9) Yeshua’s statement, that those days will be shortened, does not mean that the period will be less than the predicted three and a half years, or 1,260 days. It does seem to bring attention to the fact, that the period will be so awful, that if it were not limited to a shorter period of time, no one would survive; that is, the whole human race would be destroyed. (10) The great tribulation will end with Yeshua’s glorious return to earth with His bride, the church, to rescue those who come to know Yeshua during the tribulation and who survive up to that point. When He comes, Christ will destroy the forces of the antichrist who have gathered against His people of Israel at the battle of Armageddon and bring final judgment on all the wicked. (11) We must not confuse this coming of Christ at the end of the great tribulation with Yeshua’s reference to His sudden and unexpected descent from heaven to rapture the church that will occur prior to Christ’s final return at the end of the tribulation. Christ’s unexpected pre-tribulation coming to take His church from the world may be referred to as the first stage of Christ’s second coming. His physical return to earth at the end of the great tribulation would be the second stage of Christ’s second coming. (12) The major Bible passage describing the entire seven-year tribulation is found in Rev 6-18.

The entire tribulation period will last seven years. During that time, the antichrist will rise to political power. However, he will not be fully revealed, or assume world control, until the last three and a half years. This latter portion is typically referred to as the **great tribulation** because of the unique events described above.

The Spirit of Babylon

We began our study of the book of Daniel when Daniel and three other young men of Jerusalem were taken to Babylon and selected to receive training in the customs and culture of those living in Babylon. There was much to be said about the pagan practices of the Babylonians which ran all the way through the book of Daniel and carried forward, due to the end-time visions, to the book of Revelation. What actually is the spirit of Babylon? In searching the Internet, I ran across an article written in February 2019 by *David C. Grabbe* and published in the *CGG Weekly*. The entire article was in three parts. I have taken the liberty to place the article here with the following changes. First, I will continue my practice of placing scripture at the end of written statements in blue italicized lettering and use the ESV for scripture passages. Second, I may change the structure of the layout.

Genesis is the book of beginnings. In a well-known passage early within its pages, we find the beginning, not only of humanity, but also the source of humankind's separation from its benevolent Creator: Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." *Genesis 3:1-5.*¹ *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.*

*He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"*² *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,"*³ *but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'*⁴ *But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."*⁵ *For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

The words of the Serpent in verse 5, from the mouth of a being who had already rebelled against God, contains a motivating spirit of defiance. As the story unfolds, a promise of being just like God, able to choose for herself what is good and what is evil, sways the woman. The phrase "good and evil" means that it includes everything in between those extremes. The Serpent was promising Eve that she could choose and then experience for herself *anything* that she wanted.

This biblical story is the true account of Eden, but it is not the only account. Another ancient description is penned by a Babylonian poet named Enheduanna. In her carnal depiction, we can glimpse an influential spirit that has endured the millennia to ensnare the present Western world. By contrasting the Babylonian version of Eden with the truth of God, we can better recognize the spirit of Babylon and why God tells us to "come out of her". Revelation 18:4, *Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;*

Some literary and historical scholars regard Enheduanna, a high priestess and daughter of a king, as the earliest known author and poet. Best known for producing a collection of temple hymns used throughout Mesopotamia, she exerted considerable influence in the religion of the ancient world. She lived in the city-state of Ur, from whence God called Abraham. Despite the dates being uncertain, Abraham and Enheduanna likely lived in Ur at roughly the same time, with Enheduanna slightly pre-dating Abraham. God called Abraham out of the very city and culture in which Enheduanna was a significant figure.

Apart from the hymns, Enheduanna is also known for her devotional writings to the goddess Inanna. Not a commonly recognized false deity, Inanna, the goddess of both war and erotic love, is better known by the names Ishtar (Easter), Astarte, Ashtoreth, Isis, and much later, Venus. She embodied

wild abandonment and willfulness. We can readily see the spirit of Inanna in the music videos of any number of popular vocalist of the recent past: Madonna, Miley Cyrus, Britney Spears, Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj, and Rihanna. (The name *Rihanna* even means “great queen” or “goddess.”) These women and their kind are essentially channeling the spirit of Inanna.

In her poems, Enheduanna wrote about a place called Ebih, the Babylonian version of the Garden of Eden. She describes Ebih as a remote paradise, remote from Babylon, a place of harmony where animals live together in peace amid lush trees and abundant fruit. Unlike the perspective of Genesis, the Babylonians did not regard this paradise as desirable, but as inferior, a place to reject and even defeat! Babylonians viewed this place of peaceful abundance as something a person should overcome as part of the process of personal growth. They thought that Ebih, with all its bounty, represented dependence, particularly on the Creator, which is contrary to personal freedom and self-determination.

The Babylonians placed an extremely high value on civilization. In the idyllic Garden, however, the individual was dependent on the cycles of nature and natural law. The Babylonians considered civilization to be a way that a person could escape dependence and determine his or her destiny *apart* from the natural order. They also believed that the Supreme Deity (Yahweh, God) held a grudge against them because of their civilization’s accomplishments. They saw Him as oppressive, believing that He worked to limit human potential and prohibited humanity from determining its own destiny through the advancements of civilization, a possible reference to His intervention in both the Flood and at the Tower of Babel.

At this point, the goddess Inanna returns to the story. Enheduanna describes how Inanna overcomes Ebih, how she defeats the Garden of God! Through asserting her independence and her absolute right to self-determination. Enheduanna expresses this point by demonstrating Inanna’s freedom from any constraint. She can be good or bad, but above all, she can do *anything* she wants. Whereas Ebih represents yielding to divine control, Inanna conquers this by appropriating to herself the right to complete freedom to determine her own conduct.

In one of Enheduanna’s poems, she praises Inanna with these words: “To destroy, to build, to lift up, to put down, are yours, Inanna.” She asserts that Inanna already possesses these rights innately, whereas, in reality, they belong only to the Most High God. He at times gives such authority to His servants. For example, He tells Jeremiah, Jeremiah 1:9-10, ⁹ *Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.”* ¹⁰ *See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”* According to the poet, though, the goddess Inanna possesses this authority without any reference to God.

The poem continues, proving that there is nothing new under the sun (isn’t that what King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:9, ⁹ *What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.*): “To turn man into woman [and] woman into man are yours, Inanna.” This poem is 4,300 years old, yet it is describing something that is all the rage today. The media herald transgenderism as new and progressive, but the spirit behind this perversion of the natural order is very, very old. That spirit is now gaining influence and wreaking havoc on a new civilization, one that has the knowledge and technology to do gender reassignment surgeries and hormone therapies.

Remember, Inanna’s actions are part of overcoming the Garden of Eden. There, God created humanity “male and female” Genesis 1:27, ²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* He also established the institution of marriage Genesis 2:22-24, ²² *And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.* ²³ *Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;*

she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* But to overcome the Garden of Eden, Inanna must oppose all aspects of the divine order, so she takes to herself the right not to be constrained, even by gender. Wikipedia points out that, not only was temple prostitution a major part of her worship, and may have originated with her, but also that persons of asexual or hermaphroditic bodies and effeminate men were particularly involved in her worship. Inanna was the champion of overturning the social order.

In Part Two, we will discover more modern worldviews through the eyes of this ancient Babylonian priestess, revealing that the pervasive spirit of Babylon is alive and well today.

The Spirit of Babylon (Part Two)

As we saw in Part One, what seems to be modern and progressive now is simply another version of something that began long ago. Even before the time of Abraham, the Babylonian priestess Enheduanna taught that individuals, to overcome the constraints of the Garden of Eden and to mature in their personality, can do *anything* they want, even to the point of taking on prerogatives of God Himself! Enheduanna also ascribes to her goddess, Inanna, the ability to turn men into women and vice versa, anciently reflecting the same things as the transgender movement advocates today.

Further, despite the myth of Inanna holding that she was married to a god named Dumuzi (Tammuz), she still took lovers whenever she wished, she would not be constrained by the divine order of marriage. The worship of Ashtoreth, one of Inanna’s iterations, used Asherah poles or images, and these images were phallic symbols, abominable in God’s sight. They mocked what God established in Eden. A later version of Inanna is found in the goddess Venus, from whose name we get the term “venereal disease.” Inanna/Venus was the goddess of sex without *any* boundaries.

Another element, of the divine order from the Garden of Eden, is that the husband/father is the head of the family, that is, the practice of *patriarchy*. However, patriarchal is among the very worst of labels today. Today, we see many situations where the male is not the head of the family and a male as head of the family is not wanted or desired. This reaction to the man being the head of the family occurs because an ancient, anti-God spirit is still motivating humanity to rebel against what God instituted.

Enheduanna’s poem of praise to Inanna continues: “To sneer at an answer, false or true; to say wicked words, are yours, Inanna. To joke, inflame a quarrel, provoke laughter; to defile, to esteem, are yours, Inanna.” Betty De Shong Meador summarizes this quotation in her book, *Inanna, Lady of Largest Heart*, “Inanna feeds the creative spirit that stretches the imagination beyond social confines. She is a goddess unbound by social order.” The same author notes: God unfolds himself in the world in the form of paired opposites, such as heaven/earth, day/night, male/female. Inanna is a single deity in whose being the opposing pairs of creation are joined. Inanna exhibits both benevolent light and threatening dark. She could reflect not only the best in human nature, but she could also exhibit what is abhorrent, unpleasant, dirty, sinful, terrifying, abnormal, perverse, obsessive, murderous, mad, and violent. She is the element of chaos that hangs over every situation, the reminder that cultures, rules, traditions and order are constructs of humanity.

Within the events of Genesis 3, the essence, of the Serpent’s words, is identical to what Enheduanna praises Inanna for. The Serpent promised that Eve could know, thus determine, good and evil for herself and experience everything in-between through the exercise of her will. All she had to do was reject God and the Tree of Life. Then, she would be free to follow her destiny rather than be constrained by God. Because of the demonic spirit in the Garden of Eden, humanity has been ensnared by an attitude of self-determination that vehemently resists being dependent on God or subject to Him,

Romans 8:7-8, ⁷ *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* ⁸ *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* The motivating spirit, behind the serpent, is the same one Enheduanna praised in Inanna, one who is active and stirring people to this day.

This attitude shows up in the very first person born. Jude 10-13, ¹⁰ *But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.* ¹¹ *Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.* ¹² *These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;* ¹³ *wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.* It refers to *the way of Cain*, loosely defined as religion or worship on one's own terms. Both Cain and Abel brought offerings to God, but only Abel's was by faith, Hebrews 11:4, ⁴ *By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.* Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, Romans 10:17, ¹⁷ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* Abel acted according to what he had heard from God. Cain would have heard the same instructions regarding sacrifices, yet he chose to bring an offering according to what *he thought would honor God* rather than what God specified. As the Serpent predicted, he determined for himself what was good and evil, though God had already given the standard.

This spirit again shows up again in Nimrod, the founder of Babel (Babylon) and the progenitor of many ancient religious traditions that continue to today. His name even means rebellion or let us revolt. A rebel or revolutionary is one who seeks to overthrow the present order in favor of his or her own, a perennial theme of Inanna, as well as the original rebel, Satan. Genesis 10:9, ⁹ *He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord."* This verse says twice that Nimrod *was a mighty hunter before the LORD*, but before also has the connotation of against, that is, against God! In addition, the context does not specify that he hunted animals. He may have been hunting people, determining for himself who lived and who died.

When God called Abraham out of ancient Ur of the Chaldees, He directed him to travel some 500 miles to the west. The actual journey would have been twice that distance, because the route moves in a great arc. God, purposefully, moved Abraham far from this environment of self-determination and opposition to God. When we fast-forward to the story of Abraham's descendants at the battle of Jericho, an interesting detail pops up in the sin of Achan:

And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed, I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." Joshua 7:20-21, ²⁰ *And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: ²¹ when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."*

Just as language is a function of a culture, so also is clothing. Even at this great distance, Babylonian culture had found its way into Canaan. However, there is more to consider here: Achan had been walking in the wilderness for forty years and probably had no idea what a Babylonian garment would look like. Yet, he somehow knew that the garment was Babylonian! The pervasive trappings of Babylonian culture had impressed themselves on at least one, and undoubtedly more, of the wandering

Israelites, and the cultural trappings were enticing enough to persuade Achan to defy God's clear instructions to possess this beautiful garment.

In Part Three, we will see yet more Babylonian influence, which the Bible prophesies will continue to hold sway over the minds of men until the return of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of Babylon (Part Three)

In Parts One and Two, we have seen that today's progressive thought mirrors its ancient counterpart remarkably well using the writings of Enheduanna, an ancient Babylonian priestess of the goddess Inanna. The modern progressive world is just Babylon reborn, from throwing off all restraints to transgenderism. This similarity can be traced back to the influence of Satan, the Devil, the source of immoral and anti-God beliefs in all the ages of humanity.

In the previous essay, we noted that this harmful, evil Babylonian influence had even infiltrated the camp of the children of Israel as they began their conquest of Canaan. During the battle of Jericho, Achan coveted and took for himself silver, gold, and a beautiful Babylonian garment. The last of which God had dedicated to destruction, Joshua 6:17-19, *17 And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the Lord for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. 19 But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord.* The temptations produced by Babylon induced him to defy God's clear instructions on the disposal of Jericho's plunder.

But, Babylonian fashion was not the only thing that had penetrated into Canaan. Almost immediately after the death of Joshua, the Israelites began to worship Ashtoreth, the Babylonian goddess Inanna under a different name. Judges 2:13-14, *13 They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroath. 14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies.* Solomon's wives caused him to go after Ashtoreth as well, allowing goddess worship to attain official, royal sanction. I Kings 11:4-6, *4 For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done.* King Asa removed his grandmother, Maacah, from the position of queen mother and destroyed her Asherah image. I Kings 15:13, *13 He also removed Maacah, his grandmother, (see NKJV or NLT for this change) from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah. And Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron.*

Jeremiah refers several times to the people worshipping the *queen of heaven*, another of Inanna's titles. Jeremiah 7:18; 44:17-25), *18 The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger; 44:17-25, 17 But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no disaster. 18 But since we left off making offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword*

and by famine.”¹⁹ And the women said, “When we made offerings to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands’ approval that we made cakes for her bearing her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

²⁰ Then Jeremiah said to all the people, men and women, all the people who had given him this answer: ²¹ “As for the offerings that you offered in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your officials, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them? Did it not come into his mind? ²² The Lord could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day. ²³ It is because you made offerings and because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey the voice of the Lord or walk in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies that this disaster has happened to you, as at this day.”

²⁴ Jeremiah said to all the people and all the women, “Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who are in the land of Egypt. ²⁵ Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You and your wives have declared with your mouths, and have fulfilled it with your hands, saying, ‘We will surely perform our vows that we have made, to make offerings to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings to her.’ Then confirm your vows and perform your vows!

Ezekiel refers to women weeping for Tammuz (Dumuzi), the husband of Ishtar, the same false goddess. Here is the reference verse 8:14, ¹⁴ Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the Lord, and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. From the time the Israelites entered the land at Jericho, and likely before, they were influenced by this ancient demonic spirit. It is fitting that Israel and Judah were both taken captive into the land of Mesopotamia, as that land’s gods, especially its goddess, had already enslaved the peoples’ hearts. In one sense, all God did was to move their bodies to where their hearts already resided.



As we know, Genesis shows the spirit of Babylon present in the Garden of Eden. Also in prophecies foretelling the end of the age, God depicts Babylon as a brazen, defiant, blasphemous woman: Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” . . . The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. Revelation 17:1-2, 4-6, ¹ *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” . . . ⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. ⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.” ⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.*

Just as there is a remarkable similarity between the serpent’s words in the Garden of Eden and the spirit of Inanna, so, too, John’s description of the harlot in Revelation 17 and 18 matches Inanna with remarkable accuracy. Inanna was the patroness of prostitutes, just as Babylon is the mother of harlots. The goddess is depicted as wearing a prostitute’s necklace of pearls, just as Babylon does in verse 4. Even as her devoted worshipper, Jezebel, slaughtered God’s prophets (compare I Kings 18:4, 13, 19, ⁴ *and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water. . . . ¹³ Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord, how I hid a hundred men of the Lord’s prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water? . . . ¹⁹ Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”), so this woman becomes drunk on the blood of saints. Finally, just as the spirit of Inanna spread over all the earth, so end-time Babylon sits on multitudes of peoples, nations, and languages.*

An angel identifies Babylon as being fallen, fallen, in Revelation 18:2, ² *And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.* This use of fallen need not refer to structural integrity. Fallen can also imply a diminished moral state, such as fallen angels or a fallen woman, a phrase rarely used anymore for fear of being judgmental. Verse 7 provides a further description: ⁷ *As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’*

Babylon’s self-glorification falls in line with Inanna’s attitude and that of those influenced by that spirit. Her words, *‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’* not only echo Inanna (the *queen of heaven*), but they also allude to God’s depiction of the daughter of Babylon, as illustrated in Isaiah 47:8, ⁸ *Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, “I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children”.* These words appear within her boast of self-sufficiency. Like Inanna, the daughter of Babylon claims the prerogatives of the Most High God, even to appropriating His title, **I AM**: Isaiah 47:9-15 provide the end results, ⁹ *These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of*

children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments.¹⁰ You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, “No one sees me”; your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, “I am, and there is no one besides me.”¹¹ But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone; and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing.¹² Stand fast in your enchantments and your many sorceries, with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you may be able to succeed; perhaps you may inspire terror.¹³ You are wearied with your many counsels; let them stand forth and save you, those who divide the heavens, who gaze at the stars, who at the new moons make known what shall come upon you.¹⁴ Behold, they are like stubble; the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!¹⁵ Such to you are those with whom you have labored, who have done business with you from your youth; they wander about, each in his own direction; there is no one to save you.

Regardless of the exact identity of this end-time city called **Babylon the Great**, we must recognize that this world is completely given over to the spirit of Babylon. It permeates wherever one lives. It first appeared in the Garden of Eden, and in these prophecies in the books of Daniel and Revelation, we see, in ungodly humanity, the effects of 6,000 years under that spirit. This spirit is antagonistic toward every institution of God, even toward something as basic as a person’s God-given gender. It is a spirit of deliberate gender questioning, gender-bending, and gender destroying that is influencing humans to desire to be in the image of Satan and his group of fallen angels. At its core, though, it is a spirit of self-determination and independence that rebels at the idea of submitting to anything but its own desires.

In Revelation 18:4, a voice comes from heaven, saying, “*Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.*” We have read it many times, but we must continue to think about it because the spirit of Babylon will never retreat! God Himself will silence this demonic spirit at the end of this age. At present it will only strengthen as more people receive and rebroadcast its concepts. The rampantly increasing sexual perversions may not sway us, but because of human nature that remains in us, we all desire self-determination and independence. To some degree, due to our exposure to the spirit of Babylon, we still hold God at arm’s length. To fully understand the final judgment upon this spirit of Babylon, we need to view the remaining portion of chapter 18 of the Revelation. Therefore, here are verses 5-24,⁵ *for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.*⁶ *Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.*⁷ *As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’*⁸ *For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.*⁹ *And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.*¹⁰ *They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”*¹¹ *And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore,*¹² *cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble,*¹³ *cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.*¹⁴ *“The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!”*¹⁵ *The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,*¹⁶ *“Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!”*¹⁷ *For in a single hour all this*

wealth has been laid waste.” And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off¹⁸ and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?”¹⁹ And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!”²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;²² and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more,²³ and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.”

That concludes my work of attempting to bring understanding to the Book of Daniel. I have tried to show the relationship between the visions and dreams that Daniel had to deal with in his time, and, how those visions and dreams are also something that we have to deal with in the end-times, that I believe we have now entered. The present war between Israel and Gaza appears, to me, to be the Psalm 83 war that begins the downward slope or spiral through the other wars of the end-times, including those that must occur during the Great Tribulation until the return of Yeshua to planet earth. The spirit of Babylon has most certainly regrouped and presents a powerful influence upon many who do not have a strong knowledge of God’s Holy Word. Without the Word and the Holy Spirit being with us, we are subject to the ever increasing influence of Satan as he deceives the world into the full-blown humanistic spirit of self-centeredness, and that we are in charge of our daily lives, and not God!

I have now studied and written books and booklets for over forty years, and can only pray and hope, that some of that knowledge has been passed on to others. If you still haven’t visited my website, go ahead and take a chance, there just might be something there that you want to know about. The website is located at www.vqpub.org and arrangements have already been completed to have it available for the next five years. After that, I cannot say whether God will keep me here or not.

As with many of my books and booklets, I try to leave you, the reader, on a positive note that selection is left up to each of us individually. There are at least two choices that can be made in any situation. It can be as simple as saying yes or no and also in any direction, a general decision in life, or an actual turn to one point or another. The ultimate decision is saying yes, or no, to the great free gift that God gave to all mankind. Do you accept Yeshua as your Lord and Savior or not? Do you follow the commandments of God or not? Understand this above all else. In over seventy years of life, I have only found it recorded in God’s Word that there is only one chance for saving your very soul. There are those denominations who claim that, at the Great White Throne Judgment, all those who have not submitted to Yeshua as Lord and Savior will be offered a second chance to have eternal life in God’s kingdom. I really don’t think so! I become very depressed that there are those who will be deceived into believing they can live their life their way and then be offered eternal life with God and Christ at the second resurrection. Doesn’t that thinking actually follow in the same manner as the spirit of Babylon that was the concluding discussion in this work?

I have tried my best to meet the expectation that my God has given to me in my writings. On those occasions that God presents an assignment to me, I accept and work to complete that mission. Within many of those occasions, I feel another work developing in my mind. On this task, I have not felt that presence as I complete the current work. I do not know if this will be the last book I write. I can only say that my God has led me through His word to present things from Genesis to Revelation. I

admit that not every book, of the 66 in the Bible, has been addressed, however, most major questions have been addressed, and there is a book presented that covers most major topics. Please, remember one thing! It is your choice what you will believe and what direction you will take. Either you will follow Yeshua as your Lord, or you will not accept the free gift of eternal life that He offers to everyone during their life on earth. Please make a wise choice in your decisions.

Maranatha

