

7. Daniel

- Daniel was taken captive as a youth to Babylon in 605 B.C. He spent the rest of his long life there as a governmental official and as a prophet of the true God. Throughout his life he was uncompromising and faithful to his God. The book of Daniel is important historically because it bridges the gap between Israel's historical books and the New Testament.

*Daniel 2; The king's dream and interpretation; four kingdoms (2:1-49)

- "Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king" (2:1-2). No one was able to tell the king his dreams and their interpretation until the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. When Daniel spoke to the king, he gave the glory to God. "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. As for you, O king, while on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place" (2:28-29).

- "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome" (2:31). "The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay" (2:32-33). "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them" (2:34). "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (2:35).

- "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king" (2:36). "You are the head of gold" (2:38). "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth" (2:39). "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces" (2:40). "In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay" (2:41). "As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle" (2:42). "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery" (2:43). "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure

forever" (2:44). "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy" (2:45).

- Babylon is the head of gold (2:32, 38). The breast and arms of silver (an inferior kingdom; 2:32, 39) probably represent the empire of the Medes and Persians and the belly and thighs of bronze probably represent the empire of Greece (2:32, 39). Many writers associate the fourth kingdom with Rome. However, it seems more probable that the fourth kingdom represents end-time Babylon the Great (2: 40-43), for a number of reasons. First, Daniel chapter 2 and Daniel chapter 7 appear to be describing the same four kingdoms. The fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 is describing Babylon the Great because the antichrist will arise from this kingdom (7:23-25). Since the fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 is clearly Babylon the Great, it would follow that the fourth kingdom in Daniel 2 is also Babylon the Great. Second, both kingdoms are made, at least partly from iron (2:33-35, 40-43, 7:7). Third, this kingdom shatters and crushes all things (2:40, 7:7, 19, 23). Fourth, the kingdom is separated into 10 parts; 10 toes (2:41-42) and 10 horns (7:7, 20, 24) which represent 10 kings (7:24). Fifth, the kingdom will be a divided kingdom, represented by its feet and toes made of iron and clay, which do not adhere to one another (2:33, 41-43). Some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle (2:42). During the first half of the Tribulation, most of the original 10 kings will fall (Daniel 7; Revelation 17:9-12), which is a sign of division. Sixth, immediately following the destruction of the fourth kingdom, God will set up His kingdom (2:34-35, 44-45, 7:14, 18, 22, 27). Refer to Daniel 7 and Revelation 17-18 for additional information about Babylon the Great and her kings. A stone that will be "cut out without hands" will strike the statue on its feet, causing the entire statue to be crushed and become like chaff (2:34-35). The wind will blow all the chaff away, leaving not a trace. The complete destruction of all these kingdoms will precede the millennial kingdom, which is represented by a stone which becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth (2:35). The millennial kingdom will precede God's heavenly kingdom which will endure forever (2:44).

*Daniel 7; Daniel's vision of four beasts, antichrist, Babylon the Great, Ancient of Days (God as Judge) (7:1-28)

- "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed; then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it" (7:1). "Daniel said, 'I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea'" (7:2). "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another" (7:3). "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it" (7:4). "And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'" (7:5). "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it" (7:6). "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely

strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns" (7:7). "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts" (7:8).

- Daniel chapter 7 is one of the most important passages in the Bible concerning the antichrist and Babylon the Great. This vision was revealed to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar's reign, 553 B.C. The four beasts of Daniel's vision represent four kings (7:17) and their associated kingdoms (7:23). These are probably the same kingdoms that were previously described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2. The first beast is probably Babylon, the second is likely the empire of the Medes and Persians, the third is probably the empire of Greece and the fourth is Babylon the Great (7:1-8). Babylon the Great is the end-time global empire that "will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (7:23) and will be controlled by Satan and the antichrist. Refer to Daniel 2 and Revelation 17 and 18 for additional information about Babylon the Great and her kings. Whereas the first three beasts are described as animals or combinations of animals, the fourth beast is not like any known animal, perhaps because it is so different from the former beasts. It has large iron teeth, claws of bronze, 10 horns and is dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong, able to devour, crush and trample all who oppose it (7:19, 20, 23).

- A significant characteristic of this beast is that it has 10 horns (7:7, 20, 24) which represent 10 kings who will rule over a global kingdom of unsurpassed military might (7:7,23). Another horn, a little one, comes up among the first 10 (7:8). This little horn, uttering boastful words (7:8, 11, 20), is later identified as the antichrist (7:19-26). The three horns that are "pulled out by the roots" (7:8) represent three kings and their kingdoms that will fall before it (7:20). Notice that these kings fall "before" the little horn, but not necessarily because of it. It is not likely that the little horn, while it is still rising to power and is not even one of the 10 kings, could be responsible for the decimation of three kingdoms. Horns that are "pulled out by the roots" probably signify the sudden and violent downfall of these three kings and their kingdoms. During the Ezekiel 38 battle, which will probably occur after the rapture but before the Great Tribulation, several nations will come up against Israel with a massive force and will be severely judged by God. Perhaps these nations represent the three horns (kings and their kingdoms) that will be "pulled out by the roots" and that will fall before the antichrist (7:8, 20). Maybe this is the reason that the dragon (Satan; Revelation 12:3, 9) and the beast of Revelation 13 and 17 are described with seven heads rather than 10. Babylon the Great will be established with 10 kingdoms (regions) and 10 kings before the Great Tribulation begins but will only have seven functional kingdoms and seven kings at the start of the seven-year Great Tribulation. The three fallen kingdoms will partially recover by the second half of the Tribulation because 10 new kings will be chosen to rule under the antichrist for the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:12-13, 17).

- "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning

fire" (7:11). This verse refers to the beast (antichrist) being slain, probably close to the midpoint of the Tribulation (perhaps by the two witnesses who breathe out fire, Revelation 11:5). Notice that the beast in verse 11 refers to the horn (antichrist) while in verse 7, the beast is describing Babylon the Great. Refer to Revelation 17 and 18 for additional information about the beast, the antichrist and Babylon the Great. It appears that the antichrist will be slain with a sword (Revelation 13:14) and then his body will be destroyed by fire. This passage does not mention that the antichrist will be resurrected after receiving his fatal wound (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14). Some writers place this event at the end of the Tribulation, where the beast will be judged at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The description of this event in Revelation does not quite match up with Daniel 7:11 because at the second coming of Christ the beast is seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). He is not slain and there is no mention that his body is destroyed and burned.

- The "Ancient of Days" is a reference to God as Judge (7:9-10). Jesus will be given glory and an everlasting kingdom. "One like a Son of Man was coming... and to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (7:13-14).

- "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me" (7:15). "I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things" (7:16). "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth" (7:17). "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come" (7:18).

- "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates" (7:19-20). "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom" (7:21-22).

- "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it'" (7:23). "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings" (7:24). "He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time" (7:25). "But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever" (7:26). "Then the sovereignty, the

dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him" (7:27). "At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself" (7:28).

- In three separate verses in this chapter, the fourth beast, which will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, is described as being "different" from all the other kingdoms (7:7, 19, 23). This certainly emphasizes that this kingdom will be unique and unlike anything that has ever existed. All three verses also mention that the beast will devour and crush and trample down "the remainder" (7:7, 19), which is clarified as "the whole earth" (7:23), and probably represents all who oppose it. This global empire will totally dominate and control the entire earth. Daniel emphasizes the incredible strength, destructive nature and terrifying presence of Babylon the Great. In Revelation 17 and 18, Babylon the Great is described as a wealthy, materialistic, evil harlot (prostitute) who reigns over the kings of the earth. The antichrist is also described as being "different" from the kings that will arise before him (7:24). The fourth beast represents end-time Babylon the Great (Revelation 17) and the 10 horns on the beast's head represent a global empire of 10 kings (7:24) and their 10 kingdoms (implied; refer to 7:27; Revelation 17:12). It appears that the kingdom will be established first and then "out of this kingdom ten kings will arise", as if they are appointed (7:24). The little horn is the antichrist. He is not one of the 10 kings, but will be "another" king that will come up from within one of the kingdoms and will arise after them (7:8, 24). It is very interesting that the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings, yet he has the authority to make a firm covenant with Israel at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 17:8-18). Eventually the little horn will become more powerful than the other horns because it will be "larger in appearance than its associates" (7:20), it will wage war with the saints and overpower them (7:21), it will subdue three kings (7:24) and it will become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great (7:24; Daniel 11:36; Revelation 17:11-13). The antichrist will "subdue three kings" (7:24), implying that he will take an active part in their downfall. These are probably not the same three kings that are "pulled out by the roots" (7:8) or that fall (7:20). The antichrist "will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time" (7:25). The phrase "time, times, and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years is used three times in the Bible to describe half of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14). In all three cases, the phrase describes the second half of the Tribulation. Refer to Revelation 12:6 and 12:14 for further information. By intending to make "alterations in times and in law" (7:25), the antichrist will attempt to be like God, since God is the author of time and laws (Psalm 31:15; Daniel 2:21; Acts 1:7, Exodus 24:12). At the end of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist and his empire will be judged by God (7:26). Then "the kingdoms under the whole of heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom" (7:27). Notice that kingdoms is plural, implying that Babylon the Great will also be an empire of many (10) kingdoms.

*Daniel 8; Daniel's vision of 2,300 days, antichrist, Tribulation temple (8:1-27)

- "In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously" (8:1). This vision appeared to Daniel two years after the vision of chapter 7. In this vision, a goat with a "conspicuous horn" came beside a ram, "and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns... he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him... Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven" (8:3-8). "Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land" (8:9). "It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down" (8:10). "It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down" (8:11). "And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper" (8:12). "Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?'" (8:13). "He said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored'" (8:14).

- After Daniel had seen the vision, the angel Gabriel came to give him "an understanding of the vision" (8:16). Gabriel said to him, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end... Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end" (8:17-19). The ram with the two horns "represents the kings of Media and Persia" (8:20). "The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king" (8:21). "The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power" (8:22). "In the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue" (8:23). "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; he will destroy mighty men and the holy people" (8:24). "And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency" (8:25). "The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; but keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future" (8:26). Daniel was "astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it" (8:27).

- Gabriel clearly explained to Daniel that the ram and the goat represented the kingdoms of Media and Persia, and Greece. The goat's large horn probably represents Alexander the Great. "As soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken" (8:8), representing the king's death at the height of his power. Alexander became ill and died in 323 B.C. at the age of 32 in Babylon. This is an amazing prophecy, which was accurately fulfilled several hundred years before Christ

was born, and represents the first part of Daniel's vision. The second part of his vision is what we will focus on below.

- When the angel Gabriel came to Daniel to explain the vision, the first thing he said was, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end" (8:17). The second thing he said was, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end" (8:19). So, when is the "time of the end" and the "final period of the indignation"? Several similar phrases, "end time" and "end of time" are used by Daniel (11:35, 40; 12:4, 9) to describe events that occur during the Great Tribulation. The "final period of the indignation" also occurs during the Great Tribulation, for the antichrist "will prosper until the indignation is finished" (11:36). During the Tribulation, God's indignation will be against all the nations (Isaiah 34:2); the nations will be trampled (Habakkuk 3:12) and the inhabitants of the earth will be punished (Isaiah 26:20-21). God's indignation has been displayed many times throughout history, but the "final period" indicates the last period of indignation. Based on these passages of Scripture, we can conclude that the "time of the end" and the "final period of the indignation" apply to the Tribulation period.

- Since the first part of the vision has already been fulfilled, it is the second part of the vision that applies to the end times, including the four horns, the small horn, the 2,300 mornings and evenings, the regular sacrifice and the holy place. These elements of the vision are all closely tied together. When Gabriel explained the vision to Daniel he actually called it "the vision of the evenings and mornings", which could be stated as "the vision of the 2,300 days" (8:14, 26). This reveals the significance of the 2,300 days. He also explained that the vision is about the "regular sacrifice" (8:13) and that the vision should be kept secret, "for it pertains to many days in the future" (8:26). In a similar fashion, Daniel's words describing the Tribulation period in chapter 12 were to be concealed and sealed up until the end time (12:4, 9). We can therefore conclude that the small horn is the antichrist, not Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as many writers have concluded. Antiochus came to power in 175 B.C., desecrated the second temple and persecuted the Jews. The desecration of the holy place for 2,300 days, therefore, takes place during the Great Tribulation, not during the rule of Antiochus. Since the antichrist comes out of one of the four horns, these horns must represent end-time nations or Gentile powers. Now we will look at each of these end-time elements in more detail.

- The "four conspicuous horns" (8:8) represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation (the kingdom of Greece), although not with his power (8:21-22). This probably means that these kingdoms will be established many years later by people that are descendents of the kingdom of Greece. These four kingdoms will rule at approximately the same time, and "in the latter period of their rule... a king will arise" (8:23), the antichrist. They will exist in the same end-time period as the antichrist because, "out of one of them came forth a rather small horn" (8:9). The four horns are probably the same horns from Zechariah's second vision (Zechariah 1:18-21), which may represent the modern-day Quartet, comprised of the United States of America, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. The Quartet was established in 2002 to mediate the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Of these four Gentile powers, it would make the most sense for the antichrist to come out of the United States

because he will grow "exceedingly great toward the south" (represents South America), "toward the east" (represents Europe), "and toward the Beautiful Land" (represents Israel; 8:9). These regions would represent the primary power base for the antichrist. For additional information, refer to section 50 (What About the United States of America?).

- How are the four end-time horns of Daniel 8 related to the 10 end-time horns of Daniel 7? The four kingdoms represented by the four horns will exist for many years before the Great Tribulation begins because the antichrist will come out of one of them in "the latter period of their rule" (8:23). The 10 horns represent 10 kings (7:24) who will rule over a global empire called Babylon the Great, composed of 10 kingdoms or regions. A little horn (the antichrist) will come up among them and will arise after them (7:8, 20). Babylon the Great will probably be established soon after the rapture, but before the Great Tribulation starts. She will only exist for a little more than seven years because Babylon the Great will be judged and destroyed at Jesus' second coming. Therefore, the United State of America and Russia will be part of one of the 10 regions. The European Union may become one of the 10 regions. The United Nations already represents the nations of the world, and may provide the foundation for a one-world government that will become Babylon the Great. For additional information, refer to section 44 (Babylon the Great).

- The antichrist will magnify himself, trying to be equal with God (8:11) and "will even oppose the Prince of princes" (8:25). The source of his power will be Satan, since his "power will be mighty, but not by his own power" (8:24). He will "destroy to an extraordinary degree" and will persecute and kill God's people (8:24). Ultimately, he will be "broken without human agency" (8:25), which is probably a reference to his final judgment at Jesus' second coming. The antichrist will remove the regular sacrifice from God, and the place of His sanctuary will be thrown down (8:11). On account of transgression, the Jewish people (host) "will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice" (8:12). The holy place will be trampled for "2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored" (8:13-14). We know from Daniel 9:27 that in the middle of the Tribulation period, the antichrist "will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" and then the "abomination of desolation" will be seen "standing in the holy place" (Matthew 24:15). He will take "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). This will occur exactly at the Tribulation midpoint, 1,260 days from the start. Apparently the holy place will be defiled in such a way that the regular sacrifice will not be acceptable to God, and then it will be abolished at the Tribulation midpoint (12:11). This period of defilement will last for 2,300 days and then "the holy place will be properly restored" (8:14). This restoration is probably a reference to Jesus Christ's second coming, when the "most holy place" will be anointed (Daniel 9:24).

- If the 2,300 days ends at Jesus' second coming, then one must count backwards to determine the start of this period. Since the Great Tribulation is exactly 2,520 days long (refer to section 38, The Great Tribulation), the 2,300-day period would begin 220 days (approximately seven and a half months; 2,520 minus 2,300) after the start of the Great Tribulation. A time period as precise as 2,300 days would probably begin with an important event that is easy to identify. In this way, the fulfillment of the prophecy would have the greatest impact. Since Daniel's vision

requires the existence of the Tribulation temple, the most likely event that would mark the beginning of the 2,300 days would be the dedication of the Tribulation temple.

- The completion and dedication of the Tribulation temple is an extremely significant end-time event for a number of reasons. First, it shows God's compassion toward His people (Zechariah 1:16). Second, the temple is necessary for the fulfillment of many end-time prophecies. Third, the long-awaited third temple will be completed quickly. When it is dedicated 220 days after the Israel-antichrist peace treaty, God will be glorified through the witness of fulfilled prophecy. Fourth, the temple will be a sign and a warning that Jesus Christ will return 2,300 days later to judge the wicked, to rescue His people and to rule His earthly kingdom. The second warning is that 1,040 days later (approximately 34 months; 1,260 minus 220), Israel will be invaded, the antichrist will "put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" (Daniel 9:27), and the Jews will be driven from the land, killed and "led captive into all the nations" (Luke 21:20-24).

- Apparently, the temple and the holy place will be desecrated ("trampled"; 8:13) during the dedication, and will probably, in some way, involve the antichrist. The dedication of the temple will occur after the cleansing of the land. Following the Ezekiel 38 battle, for "seven months the house of Israel will be burying" the dead "in order to cleanse the land" (Ezekiel 39:12). Since the Great Tribulation will probably start shortly after the Ezekiel 38 battle, seven months would be just enough time to cleanse the land before the temple is dedicated.

*Daniel 9; 70-year prophecy, Jerusalem's desolations (9:1-2); 70-weeks prophecy (9:20-27)

- "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans - in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years" (9:1-2). This was approximately 539 B.C., 66 years after Daniel had been taken to Babylon. The 70-year period is the same period that is mentioned in the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 (see also 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Zechariah 1:12). Daniel brings out a unique aspect of this 70-year period compared to the other 70-year prophecies. Jeremiah 25:11-12 emphasizes judgment on the king of Babylon and his people. In the Jeremiah 29:10 prophecy, God visits His people and leads them back to Jerusalem and 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 describes God's judgment on His people because of their disobedience. Daniel observes that after 70 years the desolations of Jerusalem would be complete. Notice that "desolations" is plural, indicating that several desolations are meant. Isaiah prophetically wrote that Jerusalem would become a desolation (Isaiah 64:10). Jeremiah warned the nation that Jerusalem and the cities of Judah would become a desolation, without inhabitant (Jeremiah 6:8, 9:11, 33:10, 44:6).

- Apparently, the Daniel 9:2 prophecy will be fulfilled in two phases, totaling 70 years. The Babylonian captivity began in 605 B.C. (refer to Jeremiah 25:11-12 commentary) and marked the beginning of phase one. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem and took some of the vessels from the house of God (temple) to place them in a Babylonian temple (Daniel 1:1-2). He also took captive some of the sons of Israel, including Daniel (Daniel

1:3-7). Phase one began with the desolation of Jerusalem and the land (2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 25:11) and would end when the Jewish people returned to Jerusalem more than 66 years later (538 B.C.). Phase two will occur during the second half of the Tribulation, ending with the second coming of Christ. Since phase two is exactly three and a half prophetic years long (1,260 days; Revelation 12:6), phase one must be 66 and a half years long to total 70 years. Just as phase one began with the desolation of Jerusalem, the desecration of the temple and the captivity of the Jewish people, so will phase two. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation the antichrist will desecrate the temple and declare war on the Jewish people (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 13:7). Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies, indicating that "her desolation is near" (Luke 21:20). Those who are in Judea and Jerusalem must flee to the mountains. Many Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). Some Jews will escape and God will miraculously provide a safe haven for them during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14; Isaiah 34:5-6, 63:1-6; Matthew 24:15-22). During the war of Armageddon, all the nations of the earth will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2). When Jesus Christ returns, He will bring His people back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10), restore His holy city, build His temple and reign as king over all the earth (Zechariah 14:9-11). For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place" (9:24). "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress" (9:25). "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined" (9:26). "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (9:27).

- The 70-weeks prophecy is a three-phase prophecy and an important end-time revelation given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel (9:20-27). Seventy weeks is literally 70 sevens, which represents 490 prophetic years (360 days per year). During this time period, the Messiah will "make atonement for iniquity" through His sacrifice and the "most holy place" will be anointed when He returns (9:24). At the second coming of Jesus Christ, this anointing probably represents the consecration of the Temple Mount in preparation for the construction of Messiah's millennial temple (refer to Ezekiel 43:12, 45:2-3) and concludes the 70-weeks period. This is likely the same event that occurs in Daniel 8 at the end of the vision of the 2,300 days when "the holy place will be properly restored" after it is trampled by the antichrist (8:13-14). The conclusion of the 70 weeks coincides with the "completion of the desolations of Jerusalem" (9:2) and the

return of the Jewish people to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10) at the end of the two-phase, 70-year period.

- Two phases of the 70-weeks prophecy have already been completed, the first 69 weeks (seven plus 62; fulfilled consecutively), and the third phase, the seventieth week, represents the seven-year Great Tribulation. Several verses confirm that the Great Tribulation is seven prophetic years long, or 2,520 days (7 years x 360 days per year; Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6, 13:5; Daniel 7:25), implying that the first two phases were fulfilled just as precisely.

- The 70 sevens begin with a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, given by the Persian king, Artaxerxes Longimanus (approximately 444 B.C.; Nehemiah 2:1-8). The public square and moat of Jerusalem were rebuilt, even in times of distress by the time the first seven weeks (49 years) were completed (9:25). After 69 weeks, "the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing", which is probably a reference to His sacrifice on the cross (9:26). Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be "cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people" (Isaiah 53:8), describing His crucifixion. Although the exact date of Jesus' crucifixion is not known, the end of the sixty-ninth week appears to fall in 33 A.D. (add 476 years to 444 B.C.; accounts for 1 transition years from B.C. to A.D.). Sixty-nine sevens is 483 prophetic years, but really represents 476 actual years (multiply 483 by the ratio 360 to 365.2425 days per year; about five days lost per year).

- There is a long span of time between the conclusion of the sixty-ninth week and the beginning of the seventieth. The "prince who is to come", also known as the antichrist, "will make a firm covenant with the many for one week", which marks the beginning of the seven-year Great Tribulation (9:26-27). This peace treaty with Israel will be broken after three and a half years, for "in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" and will desecrate the temple. It is very interesting that the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, yet he has the authority to make a firm covenant with Israel at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:19-25; Revelation 17:8-18). This suggests that he is a man of influence and power well before the start of the Tribulation period. The antichrist's "abomination" is often referred to as the "abomination of desolation" (Daniel 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). "Abomination" refers to an idol or detestable thing (Jeremiah 13:27; Deuteronomy 29:17). The antichrist is the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, "who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). After the antichrist claims to be God in the newly built Tribulation temple, he will apparently set up an image of himself in the temple. Daniel says, "the abomination of desolation is set up" (Daniel 12:11). Matthew says the abomination of desolation will be "standing in the holy place", speaking of the temple in Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15). Mark says the abomination of desolation will be "standing where it should not be" (Mark 13:14). The false prophet will require everyone to worship the beast and the beast's image (Revelation 13:11-15). Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), the Seleucid (Syrian) king, set up an abomination of desolation (Daniel 11:31) in the second temple (167 B.C.). When he conquered the city of Jerusalem, the temple was defiled by offering a pig

on the altar. He stopped Jewish sacrifices and offerings and erected a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies.

- "The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary" is probably describing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Tribulation temple during the war of Armageddon (9:26). The antichrist will rule a global empire; therefore "the people of the prince" would represent Babylon the Great. Jesus indicates that the Tribulation temple will be torn down when He returns at the end of the Great Tribulation (Luke 21). "And its end will come with a flood" (9:26) probably indicates that an actual flood will occur, perhaps in a similar fashion to the flood that will originate from the dragon's (Satan) mouth to destroy the fleeing Jewish remnant at the Tribulation midpoint (Revelation 12:15-16). This flood would serve the same purpose; to destroy the Jewish remnant as they flee from Jerusalem and into the newly formed valley that Jesus creates when His feet touch the Mount of Olives at His second coming (Zechariah 14:4-5). "Desolations are determined" (9:26) likely indicates the end-time desolation of the Tribulation temple, Jerusalem and the land of Israel (Daniel 9:2; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Jeremiah 25:11). Some writers attribute this event to the destruction of the second temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans. This seems unlikely because it did not occur during any of the three phases and the second temple's destruction did not come with a flood. This chapter ends with a prophecy of judgment on "the one who makes desolate" (9:27). At the second coming of Christ, the antichrist will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

*Daniel 10; Daniel's terrifying vision (10:1-9); Daniel's strengthening (10:10-21)

- "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision" (10:1). Daniel's final vision occurred two years after Cyrus' proclamation allowing the Jewish people to "go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the LORD" (Ezra 1:3; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; 538 B.C. proclamation). This vision is explained in great detail in chapters 10, 11 and 12. While many returned to Jerusalem, Daniel remained in Babylon, perhaps because of his age. When Daniel was by the bank of the Tigris River, "there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult" (10:5-6). After the vision, Daniel's color turned to a deathly pallor (pale), he lost his strength and fell into a deep sleep. The men who were with Daniel did not see the vision and yet a great dread fell on them and they ran away to hide themselves (10:7-9). Similar wording is used by Jeremiah to describe the Great Tribulation, where the sound of terror and dread is heard and faces turn pale (Jeremiah 30:4-7). John had a similar reaction when he was "in the Spirit" and Jesus appeared to him. He fell at Jesus' feet "like a dead man" (Revelation 1:9-18).

- An angel (perhaps Gabriel; 8:16) woke Daniel from his "deep sleep" and said to him, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you" (10:10-11). The angel explained that he would have come sooner,

"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia" (10:13). This satanic adversary was probably a demon (evil angel), seeking to influence the affairs of the nation of Persia. Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help the angel. The archangel Michael (Jude 1:9) is the special guardian of God's people (12:1). This passage gives insight into the nature of warfare fought in the spiritual realm between God's angels and Satan's demons (Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7). The prince of Greece is mentioned (10:20) which reinforces the idea that the battle between good and evil angels over the control of nations continues. The angel told Daniel, "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future" (10:14). The "latter days" are future days culminating in the eternal kingdom (Daniel 2:28, 44).

*Daniel 11; Prophecies concerning Persia, Greece, Egypt and Syria (11:1-20); Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21-35); the antichrist (11:36-45)

- This remarkable passage contains detailed prophecies concerning Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria (11:1-20) and Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21-35) and is part of Daniel's final vision which spans chapters 10 through 12. These prophecies have already been accurately fulfilled. The final section of this chapter (11:36-45) describes the end-time activities of the antichrist (not Antiochus Epiphanes) because his activities occur "until the indignation is finished" (11:36; see also 8:19), "at the end time" (11:40), and are directly tied to the Tribulation events of chapter 12.

- "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all" (11:36-37). "But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price" (11:38-39). The antichrist is called "king" and will do as he pleases (11:36). This passage is describing the antichrist during the last portion of the Tribulation when he has total control of Babylon the Great (refer to Revelation 17-18). Jeremiah prophesied that the "king of Babylon" would be judged by God at the end of the Tribulation, "When seventy years are completed, God will punish the king of Babylon" (Jeremiah 25:12). The antichrist is the little horn of Daniel 8 that "magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host" (8:11) and will "prosper" and "will destroy mighty men and the holy people" and "will even oppose the Prince of princes" (8:24-25). He is the "man of lawlessness", the "son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The king "will prosper until the indignation is finished" (11:36). This is probably a reference to the "final period of the indignation" which occurs at the "time of the end" (8:19)

and will conclude with the second coming of Jesus Christ. The antichrist will honor a god of fortresses and will be helped by a foreign god (11:38-39). This "god" is probably a reference to Satan, who will give the antichrist great power and authority (Revelation 13:2). Those who are loyal to the antichrist will help him rule the world as king of Babylon the Great during the last portion of the Tribulation (Revelation 17:12-13).

- "At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him" (11:40). The phrases "end time" and "end of time" are used several times by Daniel (11:35, 40, 12:4, 9) and include the Tribulation period and beyond. Toward the end of the Tribulation, some nations will rebel against the antichrist, who is apparently in Israel at the time. Some people will be "rescued out of his hand; Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon" (11:41). This territory probably represents the western side of modern Jordan. This is most likely the location of the safe haven that God will provide for the Jewish remnant during the second half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:6, 14). Many countries will fall at the hands of the beast (antichrist), but the Jewish remnant will be "rescued out of his hand" by the Lord (11:41). The king of the South may refer to Egypt (11:42-43). In this invasion, Egypt may be joined by the "Libyans and Ethiopians" (11:43). The king of the North may refer to Gog (probably Russia), Turkey (Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, Gomer) or Beth-togarmah (probably Syria; Ezekiel 38:3, 6, 15). Several of these nations (except for Egypt) that will rebel against the antichrist are also mentioned in the Ezekiel 38 battle, which probably occurs just before the Great Tribulation begins. In the Ezekiel 38 battle, these nations attack Israel and are severely judged by God. Apparently toward the end of the Great Tribulation, some of these nations have regained sufficient military strength to try and defeat the beast. "But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many" (11:44). Rumors from the east may be a reference to the "kings from the east" (Revelation 16:12). Empowered by Satan, the beast will defeat all the forces that come against him. This makes sense, for it is Jesus who will judge the beast and Babylon the Great at His second coming (Revelation 16:19, 19:19-21).

- The antichrist will enter the Beautiful Land (land of Israel; 11:16) and will "pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain" (11:41, 45). The seas mentioned are probably the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) and the Mediterranean Sea. The "beautiful Holy Mountain" is probably a reference to Jerusalem (Psalm 48:1; Isaiah 56:7). Based on this description, the antichrist's royal pavilion will probably be set up at Har-Magedon (Revelation 16:16), also known as the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel Valley). If one draws a line on a map from Jerusalem to the midpoint between the two seas, that line goes through the Jezreel Valley. This is interesting because the kings and the armies of the whole world will be gathered together to the Jezreel Valley (Har-Magedon) by the antichrist at the end of the Tribulation (Revelation 16:13-16). The antichrist would certainly want to be at this location to organize and lead the final battle against Jerusalem and ultimately God (Zechariah 12:3, 14:2; Revelation 19:19). Apparently while the beast is battling the king of the North, the king of the South and others, many Jews will return to Jerusalem and will inhabit it once again (Zechariah 12:3-10). Perhaps this is the antichrist's main motivation for summoning the nations of the world to

Armageddon, to destroy the Jews. When Jesus returns, the antichrist will "come to his end, and no one will help him" (11:45).

*Daniel 12; End-time prophecies concerning Israel (12:1-13)

- "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (12:1-2). "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase" (12:4). This passage begins with "Now at that time", indicating that the events of chapter 12 are connected to the activities of the antichrist in chapter 11 (11:36-45). Michael the archangel, the special guardian of the affairs of Israel (Daniel 10:13, 21; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7), will arise during the "time of distress", the Tribulation period. Then, "at that time" God's people will be rescued, "everyone who is found written in the book", which is probably a reference to the book of life (Revelation 20:15, 21:27). When Jesus returns, believers "will awake, these to everlasting life". The resurrection of believers will occur at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) and the second coming of Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:4). For unbelievers, their resurrection of judgment and "everlasting contempt" will occur when the 1,000 year millennial kingdom is completed (Revelation 20:5; John 5:28-29). The phrase, "many will go back and forth" suggests the ease of travel, and at the same time, knowledge will increase greatly.

- "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing" on both sides of the river and "said to the man dressed in linen... 'How long will it be until the end of these wonders?'" (12:5-6). He informed them "that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed" (12:7). The phrase "time, times, and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years is used three times in the Bible to describe half of the Great Tribulation (7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14). In all three cases, the phrase describes the second half of the Tribulation. The fact that three and a half years is specified rather than seven years, reinforces the idea that Israel will be largely protected from the devastation and persecution of the first half of the Tribulation (refer to Matthew 24:21). The persecution of the "holy people" will end when Jesus Christ returns to earth at the close of the Tribulation to rescue His people, to judge the wicked and to rule His earthly kingdom. Daniel "heard but could not understand" what he had been told (12:8). Twice in this chapter, it was explained to Daniel that "these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time" (12:4, 9), when only "those who have insight will understand" (12:10).

- "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days" (12:11; 30 days added to three and a half prophetic years, which is 1,260 days; see Revelation 11:3, 12:6). At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the antichrist will "put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering" (Daniel 9:27) and will defile the temple, "displaying

himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Matthew 24:15). The 30 extra days will probably include the gathering and judging of unbelievers after Jesus returns (Matthew 25:32). "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" (12:12; 75 days after Jesus' second coming). This may be a reference to the marriage supper of the Lamb and the official start of Christ's millennial kingdom. "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age" (12:13). The "end of the age" is often associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ and judgment of the wicked (Matthew 13:49, 24:3). These comforting words are concerning the future resurrection of believers and the blessings of the millennial kingdom. David said, "The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup" (Psalm 16:5).