

This Page Still Under Construction!

In This Issue

- Bible Study: "Introduction to the Book of Acts" — Page 2
- Prophecy Study: "Introduction to the Book of Daniel" — Page 4
- ♦ Prophecy in the News Page 8

Prayer and Care Corner

- Prayer Requests
- ♦ WVM Care Projects

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Acts 1

Prologue

1 The former account I made, **O** Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit Promised

4 And being assembled together with *them,* He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said,* "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 **But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

Jesus Ascends to Heaven

(Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50–53)

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

The Upper Room Prayer Meeting

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were

staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Matthias Chosen

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 "Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17 for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry."

18 (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. 19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

'Let his dwelling place be desolate,

And let no one live in it';

and, 'Let another take his office.'

21 "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen 25 to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL'S PROPHECIES

A Personal Note

Because I believe "we are truly living in the season of Christ's return," it has been important to me to make certain my readers have at their disposal a reasonably thorough exposure to the prophecies of Revelation – the most complete discourse of Scripture on the events which lead up to the coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven. The Book of Revelation was given to us by God "to show His servants [us, His followers] the things which must soon take place" Revelation 1:1. And lest time be shorter than we might anticipate, it has been my priority to address the prophecies of Revelation first, before examining the prophecies of Daniel – the very prophecies which in reality provide the needed foundation on which all prophecy is to be understood. Now I wish to return to the logical beginning of the study of Bible prophecy, the templates of Matthew 24 and Daniel 2-12 upon which the clearest understanding of Revelation is built.

Jesus' Discourse on the End of Time - Matthew 24:1-44

Three days before Jesus offered His life on Calvary for our sin, He gave His disciples a view of the centuries ahead which would precede His promised return. The night before His death, Jesus told His disciples that He was going to His Father where He would prepare a place for them and then return to take them to their new home. That promise is for all who place their faith in Him — every believer who trusts in the merits of Christ alone! Having told us that He would return, He then told us how we would know His coming was near and what would take place just before He came back. Matthew 24 gives us that template upon which Daniel had, and John would, build their more detailed account of the end of time, and all that would lead up to Jesus' return. In Matthew 24, Jesus told us:

- 1) False prophets would come in His name and deceive many John tells of the false teachers who were infiltrating the Church even in his day the First Century Church!
- 2) Throughout the centuries ahead, there would be wars and rumors of wars "but the end is not yet," Jesus said.

(Such is the brief summary of life as it has been for the past two thousand years)

- 3) Then He told us **when** the last days begin, certain events will take place Jesus called them **"the beginning of sorrows"**
 - Sword (in Revelation, the rider on the red horse)
 - Famine (in Revelation, the rider on the black horse)
 - Pestilence (in Revelation, the rider on the pale horse)

(John repeats these three judgments in Revelation 6 and tells us one-fourth of the earth will be impacted by these three judgments!)

- 4) The followers of Christ will be hated, persecuted, and betrayed John indicates that the followers of Christ will be persecuted for 3 ½ years by Antichrist and many will finally be martyred
- 5) The Gospel will be preached with power in all the world and **then the end will come** John says the two witnesses will preach with unstoppable power over the same period of 3 ½ years and then they will be martyred
- 6) In Matthew 24:15, 21, Jesus gives us the beginning point of the 3 1/2 year Time of Great Tribulation when He says, "When you see the 'Abomination of Desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."

 Both Daniel and John tell us of this same period of time and of the judgments which will fall upon the earth of such magnitude that millions will die again, during the same 3 ½ year period during which the Gospel goes to the world in #5 above
- 7) Jesus says that false prophets will rise up and deceive many John speaks of <u>the False</u>

 Prophet who will demand that the world to worship Antichrist
- 8) At the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus will come; Jesus describes all the cataclysmic events which will accompany the coming of Christ John tells the same story and describes the same cataclysmic events as Jesus

Thus, Jesus briefly tells us in one chapter (Matthew 24) what John takes twenty-two chapters to describe in much greater detail in the Book of Revelation. Daniel's prophecies prepare us to understand who the characters in Revelation are, how, when, and in what sequence they arise on the world stage, and the roles they play in the drama of the ages! Daniel actually names by name kingdoms which are identified in Revelation only as "heads" and "horns" of power. Daniel also identifies the 3 ½ year timeline, with the beginning and ending points, which John also speaks of several times!

The prophetic chapters of Daniel are specifically chapters 2 and 7-12. The other chapters give us the context of the story of Daniel and how God uses him six hundred years before Jesus is born to foretell the birth and decline of all the world powers which play a role in prophecy, even to the end of time. Daniel 9 even gives the specific time of Jesus' 3 ½ years of ministry, His death and the birth of the Christian Church. We will study this chapter and show how false teachers have twisted the truths of Daniel 9, naming Jesus Christ as Antichrist and deceiving millions of Christians with a whole package of lies intended to take their eyes off of the real Antichrist! More on this when we study Daniel 9....

Daniel 2 - Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

The Book of Daniel begins with the story of Daniel and many of his people having been taken captive by the world kingdom of that era — Babylon. It is about 600 years before the birth of Jesus, and

Nebuchadnezzar is the king of Babylon. Daniel and three of his friends have been given a place of honor in the court of the king, and they are being trained to be "wise men" – counselors to the king. One night, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which was so disturbing to him that he felt compelled to know what its meaning was. However, in spite of the impact of the dream, he couldn't remember what he had dreamed. So he went to his counselors, wise men who claimed to be able to communicate with the gods, to find out what he had dreamed and what it meant. But they couldn't tell Nebuchadnezzar what he demanded to know. Finally, Daniel was called before the king, and he told the king that though his wise men could not reveal the secret of the king's dream, "There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days" Daniel 2:28. What follows in the remainder of this chapter is the story of how God gave Daniel the same dream Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed and told him what it meant so he could tell the king – and us!

The Dream and Its Meaning – Daniel 2:31-45

The Dream

"You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king."

The Interpretation

"You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all — you are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the of

men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Inasmuch as you saw the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

The History of Five World Empires

History has born out the truth of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as illustrated in the graphic below. Further, in the chapters to come, we will find new detail and actual names of the kingdoms which followed as the world empires that lead us to this very day. What is prophesied in Daniel 2 becomes integral to the understanding of all Bible prophecy, and as it is God's intent that the serious of heart understand those "things which must shortly take place," He has made certain that His followers understand clearly that which is a "mystery" to the unconverted, worldly mind.

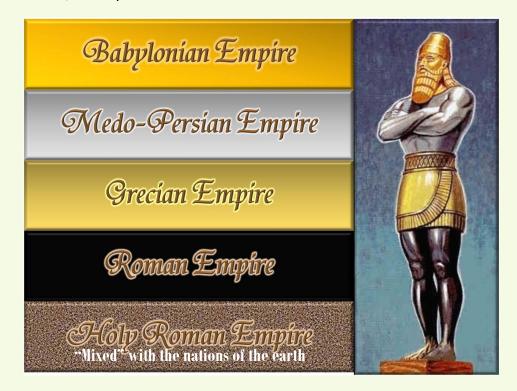
605-539 B.C.

539-331 B.C.

331-168 B.C.

168 B.C.—476 A.D

476 A.D.—Present



In the next prophecy, Daniel 7, new symbols will be used to tell the same story in greater detail. Through repetition and the use of new symbols, each account adds to the clarity of the prophecy before and provides new information which will be critical to the more complex prophecies of Revelation which concentrate on the events of the very end of time.

Stay tuned!

PROPHECY IN THE NEWS

The Purpose of This Page

Every day we are one day closer to the coming of Jesus Christ. Prophecy is being fulfilled daily. And while the events in the news indicate what may seem to be a slow progression toward that Great Day, in fact, each day the eschatological clock of time is ticking, and things are happening in our nation and in our world that remind us that "the appointed time" is rapidly approaching. The intent of this page is to report those events and circumstances which tell of the movement of life toward the return of Jesus, giving every believer the continuing hope and certainty that Jesus is coming soon.

Act I of the Final Drama

On November 5, 2024, the curtains were lifted on the world stage and **Act I** began. Until that day, America was in decline, and her standing in the world was both weak and a mockery of what America stood for when her founders established the principles upon which she would become a beacon of honor and power in the world. But with a new determined and powerful president, and what would become his determined and powerful administrative team, came a new birth of our Republic, and with it an unstoppable force in the world that would lead to world dominance.

Today America literally is in charge in the world. Nations are no longer taking advantage of our once weak standing in the world, and our adversaries are on notice. Hamas is and has been bending to the threats and strength of America. Israel is exercising its national greatness even more than before, because is has an ally that is committed to its intent on decimating Hamas and terrorism in that region. Russia and Ukraine are closer to the end of a senseless war that has claimed the lives of millions. The aggression of China, Iran and North Korea are in check, and the world is moving toward a peace unprecedented in recent history. Prophecy indicates that Act I of the final drama will be the strength of America, the two-horned beast of Revelation 13. America must become world dominant in order for her to play her prophetic role just before Jesus returns. And while it's going to take a little time for America to overcome legal and economic challenges to her rise to world dominance, that process will continue to go forward, undaunted by political challenges and international resistance. Remember, this phase of the final showdown is only a few months in the making!

Act II of the Final Drama

Act II is next, and we can expect the events of this phase to occur **in part** at any moment. Right now, we as Christians are still enjoying some of our constitutional liberties which enable us to worship and live according to the dictates of our conscience, in spite of current anti-Christian sentiment in our nation that would restrict and suppress our liberties. But we will not always have the protection of the constitution. There will be a change one day soon to our rights to freedom of expression and our religious convictions. Prophecy tells us that before Jesus comes, we will have none of the freedoms we currently have. Sounds impossible in America, right? But the Word of God is sure. Before Jesus returns, God's people will be expected to comply with the mandate of government to "worship the beast" or suffer the consequences

of economic poverty, and ultimately the loss of their personal safety. How can this possibly occur in "Christian America"? Act II is the part of the final drama in which our personal and religious constitutional protections will be removed.

And there are two parts to Act II —

- First of all, there must be, and already is, a relinquishment of biblical authority among the leaders of churches of America in favor of Christian unity and ecumenism. Protestants used to "protest," and in the past did so at the expense of their lives, the evils of the Church of Rome. Now everyone wants to "just be friends" and embrace one another in Christian love and mission. Protestants and Evangelicals have abdicated the biblical Gospel of "salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone," and they have dispensed with the of the authority of the Law of God specifically the fourth commandment, which calls the Church of Jesus Christ to "worship Him who made the heavens and the earth, the sea and the fountains of water" on the Sabbath of the Bible the seventh day of the week a day made holy by God at the end of creation week, and made a perpetual day of worship by the finger of God, written in stone! These compromises, made to create a bond between Christians and Antichrist, set the stage for how America does and will view Christian faith when the crisis of part two comes upon our nation and world.
- Secondly, the Bible indicates that crisis of an unprecedented magnitude is just before us! Crisis is will be the catalyst which causes a unified national sacrifice of liberties for safety, and religion in America will lead the charge toward a "spiritual" solution to the judgments of God which will be pummeling the world and resulting in disaster and death. Don't forget "9-11" when our nation all of a sudden became very "religious", and don't forget COVID when liberties were stripped of the citizens of our nation in the interest of "safety"!

Act III of the Final Drama

Act III will begin when the leaders of our nation enact laws and policies meant to protect Americans from those who would harm them, from within and from without, and to establish systems which identify patriotic citizens and distinguish them from those who would threaten our safety and security. The efforts of our government will, on the surface, be for the good of Americans, but the result will ultimately be a forfeiture of the freedoms we are guaranteed by our Constitution and Bill of Rights in exchange for the safety and security of Americans — among them, freedom of speech and freedom to worship according to the dictates of our conscience. And for those whose allegiance to Jesus Christ supersedes their allegiance to their country, they will be marked as dangerous and will ultimately be branded as traitors and unfit to enjoy the privileges of citizenship. We will continue to monitor the events and circumstances which point to the fulfillment of the sure word of prophecy!