

A PREQUEL TO THE STUDY OF THE REVELATION TO JOHN

A. Introductory comments

Biblical prophecy is not solely found in the *Revelation to John*. Jesus' Olivet discourse in Matthew 24 and the book of Daniel are key areas of prophetic discourse. This prequel will focus on the book of Daniel as a means of better understanding the time-line of the book of Revelation.

The focus in Daniel will be on chapters 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10-12. Chapter 2 covers a period called *the times of the Gentiles* by means of a great statue. Chapter 7 has been described by prophecy scholar John Walvoord as *the most complete outline of future prophecy* by means of a dream containing four beasts. Chapter 8 is a vision pertaining to Persia and Greece with a prefiguring of the Antichrist. Chapter 9 contains the prophetic clock concerning the 70 weeks. Finally, chapters 10-12:3 is Daniel's final vision from Cyrus in 536 BC to the final resurrection.

I had the privilege of attending an intensive Bible Study taught by Dr. Mark Bailey, Chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Mark Yarbrough, President of Dallas Theological Seminary and Dr. Mark Hitchcock, Adjunct Professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, pastor and Biblical prophecy scholar. The following *End Time Overview* outlines the pretribulation premillennial position of this introduction to Daniel and the study of Revelation. Pretribulation premillennialism is the position that Christ will return at the end of the church age and set up His kingdom on earth for a literal thousand years. His return will be preceded by the rapture of Christians prior to the Tribulation.

1. A resurrection of believers before a time of trouble (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58).
2. A seven-year time of trouble begins (Revelation 6-19; seventieth week of Daniel; cf. Daniel 9:24-27).
3. Israel, nationally, turns to Christ in the time of trouble.
4. Return of Christ to earth (Revelation 19:11-21).
5. A physical reign of Christ (Revelation 20; Isaiah 65:17-25)
6. New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21-22).

B. The Book of Daniel

1. Chapter 2

- a. This chapter along with chapter 7 are an era called by Jesus *the times of the Gentiles*. It commenced when King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem (605 BC), the first time Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Gentiles. This era continues today and will end at the coming of Messiah, King Jesus.

Daniel interprets the dream of Nebuchadnezzar who saw a great statue of a man composed of four different metals. A great stone cut out of a mountain crashes into the image and smashes it to pieces. As noted below, the metals represented four world empires that would rule over Israel in succession. The stone represents Jesus Christ at His second coming when He will destroy Gentile rule. Mark Hitchcock, *The stone's becoming a mountain and filling the earth is a picture of the Messiah's worldwide kingdom that will forever replace the kingdom of man.*

- b. The Statue (Daniel 2:36-43)
 - 1) The head of gold - Babylon (626-539 BC)
 - 2) Breast and arms of silver - Medo-Persia (539-334 BC)
 - 3) Belly and thigh of bronze - Greece (334-146 BC)
 - 4) Legs of iron - Rome (146 BC -476 AD)
 - 5) Feet/toes of iron and clay - Rome II (future - final form of Roman Empire in a 10 nation confederacy)
- c. The Stone (Daniel 2:44-45)
 - 1) Jesus Christ is the Stone.
 - 2) The Kingdom is the mountain.
 - 3) This is at the second coming of Christ.



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2. Chapter 7

- a. Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Whereas in Daniel 2 the course of the world empire is viewed from man's perspective, in Daniel 7 the same course of empire is viewed from the Divine viewpoint, where the empires are seen, not as an attractive glorious image, but as four wild voracious beasts, which devour and destroy all before them and, consequently, are worthy of judgment.*

Mark Hitchcock, *Daniel 2 and 7 clearly refer to the Roman Empire. But the ten horns of Daniel 7 do not seem to match the historic Roman Empire. Daniel says, "Its ten horns are ten kings" (7:24), but those ten leaders have never existed. This absence indicates that the Roman Empire will be revived or reunited in the end times and will ultimately be headed by the "little horn," which is another title for the final Antichrist.*

The *little horn* was Antiochus Epiphanes who brought about the *abomination of desolation* as noted in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11. The future *little horn* is the Antichrist who will be observed in Revelation. Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost described him as *Satan's great masterpiece in the imitation of the program of God.*

- b. The description of the four beasts (Daniel 7:1-8)

- 1) The Lion with eagle wings - Babylon (4)
- 2) The Bear with three ribs in its mouth - Medo-Persia (5)
- 3) The Leopard with four wings and four heads - Greece (6)
- 4) The strong and dreadful Beast with iron teeth and ten horns - Rome (7-8)

- c. The reign of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9-12)

- 1) His appearance was white as snow with hair like pure wool representing purity and wisdom.
- 2) His throne was fiery flames with a stream of fire coming out from before Him.
- 3) A multitude of beings served Him.
- 4) He was prepared to judge and the books were opened (note Revelation 20:12).
- 5) The beast was killed (note Revelation 19:20).
- 6) The other beasts lose their power but exist for a while.

- d. The Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14)

- 1) He comes from heaven in the clouds.
- 2) He receives the right to rule from the Ancient of Days.
- 3) He rules in a kingdom that lasts forever.

- e. The interpretation of the dream (Daniel 7:15-28)

- 1) The four great beasts are four kings representing four kingdoms as picture in the graphic.
- 2) The saints of God shall receive and possess the kingdom forever.
- 3) The fourth beast was different from the others.
 - a) He has teeth of iron and claws of bronze.
 - b) He has ten horns on his head which represent 10 kingdoms which arise from the fourth.
 - c) Another king arises and overtakes three of the ten.
 - 1] This little horn will be arrogant against God and persecute God's people.
 - 2] He will seek to change laws and calendars.
 - 3] His time will be limited to 3.5 years.
- 4) God's judgment
 - a) Gentile domination will be lost.
 - b) The saints of God will receive and possess an everlasting kingdom.



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3. Chapter 8

a. Of key importance in chapter 8 is the appearance of the ram, the goat, the big horn, and the little horn. The historical accuracy and prophetic significance provide great eschatological insights. There are differences of opinion concerning Antiochus Epiphanes as the Little Horn. Was the revelation strictly fulfilled in him or does he prefigure the Antichrist? Also, the time frame given as *2300 evenings and mornings* is understood in more than one way. It is best to search Scriptures diligently and humbly, knowing God has given us these prophecies for our benefit.

b. The images of Daniel's vision (Daniel 8:1-14)

1) The Ram

- a) The ram has 2 horns
- b) He represents the kings of Media and Persia.
- c) The higher horn came up last and it represents Persia.

2) The Goat

- a) The goat represents Greece.
- b) The goat was defeated by the Big Horn.

3) The Big Horn

- a) This represents Alexander the Great of Greece.
 - 1] He fulfilled the prophecies in Daniel and foreshadows the final world ruler.
 - 2] The rise of Greece allowed the spread of the Greek language with the translation of the Old Testament into Greek and the writing of the New Testament into Greek.



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- b) He was broken and replaced by four horns not as powerful.
 - 1] Ptolemy ruled Egypt and parts of Asia Minor.
 - 2] Cassander ruled the territory of Macedonia and Greece.
 - 3] Lysimachus ruled Thrace and parts of Asia Minor (western Bithynia, Phrygia, Mycia, and Lydia).
 - 4] Seleucus ruled Syria, Israel, and Mesopotamia.

4) The Little Horn

- a) Historically, this represents Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Seleucid Empire who came out of the four horns.
 - 1] He defiled the Temple; put pork in the mouths of priests; outlawed Judaism and banned the Sabbath.
 - 2] The time frame of desolation noted in Daniel is *2300 evenings and mornings*.
 - a] The period represents days not years.
 - b] J. Dwight Pentecost, *Some take the 2,300 evenings and mornings to mean 2,300 days, that is, a little more than six years. In this interpretation, the six years were from Antiochus' first incursion into Jerusalem (170 B.C.) to the refurbishing and restoring of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in late 164. A second interpretation seems preferable. Rather than each evening and each morning representing a day, the reference may be to evening and morning sacrifices, which were interrupted by Antiochus' desecration (cf. "the daily sacrifice," vv. 11–21). With two sacrifices made daily, the 2,300 offerings would cover 1,150 days or three years (of 360 days each) plus 70 days. This is the time from Antiochus' desecration of the temple (December 16, 167 B.C.) to the refurbishing and restoring of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in late 164 and on into 163 B.C. when all the Jewish sacrifices were fully restored and religious independence gained for Judah. Whichever interpretation it is that one accepts, the figure of 2,300 was a literal one and so the time period was literally fulfilled.*
 - c] John Walvoord, *By far the most simple and most honoring to the Scriptures is the solution that the twenty-three hundred days date from 171 B.C. to 164 B.C. This prophecy may safely be said now to have been fulfilled and does not have any further eschatological significance in the sense of anticipating a future fulfillment.*
- b) Future, the Little Horn prefigures the Antichrist.
 - 1] J. Dwight Pentecost, *There is no question among expositors that Antiochus is in view in this prophecy. What was prophesied was fulfilled literally through him. However, the prophecy looks beyond Antiochus to a future person (the Antichrist) of whom Antiochus is only a foreshadowing. This coming one is said to "stand against the Prince of princes" (v. 25). This can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the prophecy must go beyond Antiochus and look forward to the coming of one whose ministry will parallel that of Antiochus.*

- 2] A glimpse of Antichrist in Daniel 8.
- a] He will appear on the scene in the latter times of Israel's history (23).
 - b] He will be marked by intelligence and persuasiveness (23).
 - c] His power will be great and destructive (24).
 - d] He will deceive others and himself (25).
 - e] He will rise up against the Prince of princes (25).
 - f] He shall be destroyed but not by human hand (25).

TO BE CONTINUED, LORD WILLING!

- 4. Chapter 9
- 5. Chapters 10-12