

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

In the Light of
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE EVENTS

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D., F.R.G.S.
Chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles

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INTRODUCTION

TWENTY-FIVE centuries ago, through the prophet Daniel, God outlined the course of Gentile world power, from its beginning to its end. In so doing, He told us that such changes had to take place before **“the times of the Gentiles”** could **“be fulfilled.”** How important it is for us to **“search the Scriptures,”** even the Book of Daniel, just now, when we see **“upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth”** (Luke 21:25, 26)!

May the Holy Spirit teach us this marvelous prophecy, so timely in this present day. Then, in spite of the wars and persecutions and tragedies and bloodshed, of which we read in bold headlines from day to day, we shall **“look up,”** for our **“redemption draweth nigh,”** even the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to rule in righteousness and peace.

It is a remarkable and significant fact that even men of the world, who have no personal interest whatever in Christianity, are convinced that this is a crisis period and that vast changes are impending. All students of prophecy have the same feeling which is intensified by their increased study of the Word of God and the knowledge it affords concerning the course of human and divine events.

We sometimes listen to men who question the authority of the Bible, and we wonder why it is that they do not study the Bible carefully and accurately. If they had any spiritual insight at all, they would see on its pages an accurate outline of the march of the ages and the trend of the times. They would see that prophecy is rapidly becoming history. God has written aforetime many prophecies concerning Christ, the Gentile nations, and the Jewish people.

Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled, and it would seem that the remainder are about to be realized, for *“coming events cast their shadows before.”*

The only way one can understand conditions in the world today is by bringing them under the lens of Holy Writ. The Book of Daniel throws a great deal of light on the chaotic conditions of Europe, Asia, and the world at large.

DANIEL—THE INSPIRED WRITER

It seems hardly necessary to take time to prove that Daniel was the divinely-inspired author of the book which bears his name, and that he lived in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, and Cyrus.

We are living in a day, however, when this fact is denied.

Destructive critics and so-called modernists would have us believe that this book was written by a pious Jew hundreds of years after Nebuchadnezzar's death, after these things had become history, and that the writer was a historian rather than a prophet.

They place the date of the book at the time of the Maccabees several hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar's time, and claim that it was written after the events narrated therein had become history. They say that the language used was prophetic to make it more interesting.

However, there are many infallible proofs that the Book of Daniel was written by Daniel, and that its record is authentic. If you would like to make a study of those proofs, I would recommend that you read Sir Robert Anderson's work, "*Daniel in the Critics' Den*." That is a good title, for Daniel is being assailed more in the "critics' den" than he was in the lions' den!

Dr. A. C. Gaebelein once compared the destructive critics of God's infallible Word to crickets. He said, like the crickets, they are little creatures, black, living in the dark, and making a loud noise. And so they are!

When I was a student in a theological seminary in Chicago, I listened for an hour to one of these destructive critics as he argued that Daniel could never have lived before these prophecies came to pass. Before that professor sat some three hundred young men who were to fill pulpits in our churches! May God soon bring to naught such blasphemous apostasy! He will one day, when Jesus comes again.

The Jews of Christ's day recognized the Book of Daniel as a part of the Old Testament canon, as stated by Josephus, the historian. They accepted all its claims to be a prophecy, as well as Daniel's own repeated statement of its authorship, under divine guidance.

And the most convincing proof to a child of God in regard to this matter is the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ referred to the author as "**Daniel the prophet**" (Matthew 24:15). Christ did not say, "Daniel the historian."

That statement satisfies every believing heart that the Book of Daniel is authentic, a prophecy inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

Daniel could look down the centuries and see the things that were to come to pass because God, as it were, put a telescope to his eye and let him see His great plan and purpose through the years.

THE THEME OF DANIEL

In the Book of Daniel God has been pleased to reveal, in a broad, sweeping outline, this prophecy: The Commencement, the Character, the Course, and the Consummation of **“the Times of the Gentiles.”**

Now we must distinguish between the two expressions, **“the times of the Gentiles,”** and **“the fulness of the Gentiles.”**

Our Lord used the former to designate Gentile world dominion when He said in Luke 21:24,

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

But the words, **“the fulness of the Gentiles”** (Romans 11:25), refer to the full number of the Gentiles to be a part of the church, which is **“the body”** or **“bride”** of Christ. Therefore, Paul in Romans 11:13-25 was warning the Gentiles not to be high minded. He said that **“blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”**

James, likewise, at the first church council in Jerusalem, said the same thing, that **“God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name”**; and that afterward He would **“return, and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down”** (Acts 15:14-18).

“The tabernacle of David” speaks of Israel, and after the church is complete, when **“the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,”** then it is that God will deal once more with Israel.

“The times of the Gentiles” began with Nebuchadnezzar, and will end with the return of Christ in glory. It is this vast sweep of Gentile world power that God outlined to Daniel before any of it had become history. It was to this period that our Lord referred when He said that Jerusalem should be **“trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”**

During that period, God said through Daniel, the Gentile nations were, to exercise lordship over the earth, and especially over the Jewish nation and the land of Palestine. From Nebuchadnezzar unto the last Caesar of the revived Roman Empire this period extends, even unto the personal, visible, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

“The times of the Gentiles,” therefore, occur during the interval which marks the interruption of the times of the Jews. Now the times of the Jews were interrupted when they were carried away captive to Babylon, and will resume when **“the times of the Gentiles”** have been fulfilled. God permitted the Babylonian captivity because of Israel's sin. He had sent Jeremiah to warn His people of this impending judgment, but they would not listen to His pleading. Of this we shall have more to say later. But Israel will listen to God's voice once more when the Son of God shall sit upon **“the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever”** (Luke 1:32, 33).

As we pursue our study of this fascinating book, we shall see how marvelously events—many of which have now become history—verify the prophecies which God gave through Daniel hundreds of years before the events transpired.

We must bear in mind that at the time Daniel wrote, very little of the record contained in the Book of Daniel had been fulfilled. The greater part of it was still future and much of it had reference to events that were to come to pass hundreds of years after Daniel had passed away.

Our study, therefore, will not only give us an intelligent understanding of what may be expected of the Gentile nations in the future, but it will also confirm our faith in the Bible as the Word of God. God is the only Being who knows the end from the beginning; and any book that portrays events hundreds of years before they take place, must have as its Author the only One who knows the future. That One is the living God!

OUR CHART—AN OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

We need to urge you, my friend, to read the Book of Daniel through, from beginning to end, repeatedly, prayerfully, if you would get a bird's-eye view of this prophecy. And in this continued reading, we believe that a study of the chart in the front of this book will be helpful.

For example, you will note that we have stated the theme at the top of the chart, underneath the title. And God's word to Nebuchadnezzar, “**Thou . . . art a king of kings**” (Daniel 2:37) introduces the period of “The Commencement, Character, Course, and Consummation of **'the Times of the Gentiles,'**” even as the return in glory of Christ, the “**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**” (Revelation 19:16) brings to an abrupt close this period of Gentile world dominion. (See top of chart).

Then you will note that, on our chart, we have outlined the Book of Daniel by chapters, indicated by the parallel columns running up and down the page. Each chapter is complete in itself; and each chapter culminates in a foreview of events to occur “**in the latter time,**” that is, in the end of this age. Please note these words on the chart—“**in the latter time.**” They are important, for they indicate events to transpire after the translation of the church.

This present age, or church period—from the cross to the rapture—is represented on the chart by the horizontal strip of blue. It was not revealed to Daniel, and is to be kept in mind in our study of this prophecy as a long parenthesis in God's great plan, not revealed to the Old Testament saints.

We put it in the chart to make clear to us in this age just where the church comes in. If you will fold the chart so the two black, horizontal lines which border the strip of blue will meet, then you will see the outline of what God told Daniel concerning things to come.

Every careful student of New Testament teaching knows that the church began on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and will be translated, caught up to be with Christ (I Thessalonians 4:13-18), before the events of “**the latter time**” (see bottom of chart) begin to run their course.

Moreover, every careful student of New Testament teaching knows that the calling out of the church, **“the bride of Christ,”** was not revealed to the Old Testament saints. It was made known to Paul, by special revelation, but **“in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men”** (Ephesians 3:5). Yet **“from the beginning of the world”** it was **“hid in God”**—this **“eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,”** that **“unto him”** should **“be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”** (See Ephesians 3:1-21).

The twelve apostles did not understand about this church age. They expected the Lord to establish His kingdom immediately, while He was on earth. It was as though they and Daniel and all the Old Testament prophets were standing in the distance, viewing two mountain peaks which seemed close together. One represented Christ's first coming as the suffering Saviour; the other, His second coming as the reigning King. But what they could not see, from the distance, was the great valley between the mountain peaks. That valley might well represent this church age, not seen by man until God gave the vision to Paul.

So you see, my friend, it is a great parenthesis separating the part of Daniel's vision which has already been fulfilled from that part which yet remains to be fulfilled, after the church has been translated, forever to be **“with the Lord.”** This church age, then, comes in between **“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”** (I Peter 1:11).

Now, with our open Bibles before us, let us follow the chart, chapter by chapter, for an outline view of this book. This is important, if we are to get the most from our detailed study later.

Chapter 1 tells the story of Daniel and his friends separated unto God from the evils of Babylon.

And these Hebrew youths are a remarkable type of the faithful remnant in Israel who will refuse to worship the Antichrist “in the latter time,” after the church has been translated.

Chapter 2 tells the story of Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dream, which God revealed to Daniel with the interpretation thereof.

It is a remarkably complete picture of all Gentile world power, from Nebuchadnezzar unto the return of Christ in glory, the **“Stone”** which will smite **“the image”** on the **“ten toes.”** Comparing chapter two with the chart, we note that all of this prophecy has been fulfilled except that of the revived Roman Empire, represented by the ten toes. This will be completely fulfilled **“in the latter time,”** when the Antichrist rules.

Chapter 3 tells of the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up; of the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship the image; and of their deliverance from the burning fiery furnace.

What a wonderful picture it is of the faithful Jewish remnant who will refuse to worship the image of **“the beast”** **“in the latter time”**! Indeed, chapters 3-6 foreshadow the moral conditions which will prevail at the end of the age.

Chapter 4 gives us the strange vision of Nebuchadnezzar, and the interpretation thereof.

His pride and madness foreshadow the pride and raging madness of the Gentile nations, culminating in the awful climax of pride and madness “**in the latter time.**” Nebuchadnezzar's reason was restored, and the stump of the great tree was left, a prophetic picture of the Gentile nations which will be saved and will enter into the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

*Chapter 5, with the story of Belshazzar's feast and the overthrow of Babylon, typifies the sensuality and revelry of the Gentile nations and the overthrow of the false religious system ‘**in the latter time.**’*

*Chapter 6, Daniel delivered from the lions' den, is another Picture of the faithful remnant in Israel, which will be delivered from the “beasts” described in Revelation 13, who will hold sway “**in the latter time.**”*

Chapter 7 gives us God's view of Gentile world power, depicting the nations as ravenous beasts.

Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image, in chapter 2, shows us man's view of these same world powers. To man they appear great; to God, as wild beasts. Surely we are seeing today something of God's view of the raging nations, with their poisonous gas, dive-bombers, armored tanks, machine-guns, atom and hydrogen bombs, biological warfare, horrible implements of war, death, and wholesale destruction!

Is it a mere coincidence that the coat-of-arms or emblem of almost every Gentile nation bears the image of a beast? The British lion, the Russian bear, the American and the German eagle, the Chinese dragon and serpent—these are some of the tokens of the bestial character of the vicious tendency in the Gentile world powers.

*Chapter 8 tells us of that part of the Roman Empire, out of which the Antichrist will come “**in the latter time.**”*

*Chapter 9 gives us the great prophecy of the “**seventy weeks**” of Daniel—a comprehensive, exact prophecy of God's dealings with Israel from Daniel's day until Christ returns in glory. Only one week (the literal Hebrew word is one 'seven'); only one period of seven years, of the seventy “sevens,” remains to be fulfilled. It will be the terrible seven years of the Antichrist's rule “**in the latter time.**” But Israel's Messiah-King will return to end that “reign of terror,” to deliver the faithful remnant in Israel, and to set up His righteous kingdom on earth.*

*Chapter 10 presents the angelic ministry on behalf of Daniel, and the opposing forces of Satan and his fallen angels. It all foreshadows the day, “**in the latter time,**” when Satan and all his hosts shall be “**cast down**” out of “**the heavenly places,**” shortly before our Lord's return in glory to bind Satan and finally to send him to his eternal doom. (Compare Ephesians 6:12-17 with Revelation 12:7-12; 20:1-3, 10).*

*Chapter 11 gives us a life-sized portrait of the Antichrist and his great antagonists “**at the time of the end.**”*

*Chapter 12 pictures the time of “**Jacob's trouble,**” even unto the consummation of all these things “**in the latter time**”—yea, even unto the glorious reign of Christ on earth in peace and equity and righteousness.*

There is no description of Christ's kingdom in Daniel. We find that in Isaiah and in Revelation and in other portions of the prophetic Scriptures. Daniel tells us, rather, how that kingdom will be established.

What a vast store of “**wisdom and knowledge**” God will open up before us as we study the Book of Daniel! And how this study will put the urge in our hearts to pray, “**Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**”

Do you want God-given wisdom, my friend, concerning things to come? Then you will find it as the Holy Spirit unfolds to you the Book of Daniel. Do you want to be a winner of souls, snatching them “**as brands from the burning**”? Then let the Holy Spirit put zeal into your heart through the study of this marvelous portion of His Word. It was through the prophet Daniel that the Holy Spirit said in Daniel 12:3,

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

~ end of Introduction ~

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