



# Daniel

## Part 2

### The 49 years

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# Daniel - Part 2

## The 49 Years

Philip Wren

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## **Chapter 8**

### **The Failed Kingdom**

#### **Daniel Chapter 9: 1 - 2**

Daniel remembered the days long ago when Jerusalem had fallen to the King of Babylon. He had been taken away with the first group of exiles and forced to march hundreds of miles to their new home. He remembered seeing for the first time the vast city of Babylon under construction. Thousands of slaves had been put to work constructing the walls, palaces and temples. The river Euphrates ran through the city like a golden thread. How small and insignificant Jerusalem appeared compared to the greatness of Babylon.

In the distance could be seen the tower of Babel described in the Torah. The building of that tower had provoked God's judgement on the world. It was a sad day when he arrived in Babylon for he had now experienced the judgement of God on his own sinful nation.

Even after Jerusalem had been conquered there were those who had not learnt the lesson. They boldly prophesied that the exile would not be long; God would soon restore them to their homes. Then came the time when leaders of the people read out a letter from Jeremiah. He wrote that they were not to be deceived by the false prophets. Jeremiah warned that their exile would be long and last 70 years. They should settle in their new land, build houses and marry. They were to seek the welfare of the city to which they had been taken.

Then again Daniel could look back on that sad day 20 years later when news spread round the city; 'Jerusalem had fallen'. He grieved that day, for his home and his people. Had there ever been a calamity such as that which had befallen Jerusalem?

By the first year of Darius, Daniel had been in exile 67 years. He would have been over eighty years old. Memories of his home city belonged to the distant past. Jerusalem was now in ruins and

desolate. What was to become of her? Jeremiah the great prophet, who had tirelessly warned of all the destruction that would come on the nation, was also a prophet of hope. Repeatedly he had taught that if the nation would turn from their sin, God would turn away His anger. God's anger would not last forever. In fact Jeremiah had said how long Jerusalem would lie in ruins. Daniel had a copy of the scroll on which the words were recorded. In our Bible they can be found at the end of 2 Chronicles:

*“And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept Sabbath until seventy years were complete.”*

*2 Chronicles 36: 20-21*

The judgement of God on Jerusalem would last 70 years. These words of Jeremiah relate to the events of 586 BC. Twenty years after the first group of exiles had been taken into captivity Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem a third time and destroyed it. The walls were pulled down and many buildings burnt. All the remaining treasures of the Temple and the king's palace were taken away to Babylon together with most of the survivors. The Temple was destroyed and lay desolate 70 years until it was rededicated in the year 516 BC. We know from the book of Ezra that when the first exiles were allowed to return in 536 BC an early attempt was made to reconstruct the Temple, but that was not God's time. The reconstruction and dedication of the Temple was delayed 20 years until the 70 years of desolation were fulfilled.

### **The Sabbath Year**

Jeremiah had passed on the word of the Lord that the land would be allowed to rest until it had enjoyed its Sabbaths. To any who are unfamiliar with the Old Testament Law, this may seem a strange

concept. It certainly does not relate to present day farming methods, which year after year extract from the land everything it can give.

*“When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard.”*

*Leviticus 25: 2*

The Lord had said that the land was entitled to a rest every seventh year. It was to be a time when it was not cultivated. God had instituted the Sabbath year to teach both respect for His creation and faith in God for their daily provision. Through Jeremiah, God now decrees that the land is entitled to 70 years of rest to compensate for the previous 420 years when this law had been ignored. To allow the land to rest, God removed the people from the land.

Daniel knew the history of his people. By the year 586 BC Jerusalem had been the capital city of the nation for 420 years, since the time of King David. He had captured it from the Jebusites in 1006/5 BC and made it the capital of all Israel. David’s kingdom had been chosen to be an example to the world. It was to set the standards of righteousness to guide other nations. It would be the kingdom of God on earth. Under David’s descendants the kingdom deteriorated to become like all the nations around. It was worthless to God. For 420 years the nation had sinned and not kept the laws of God

If we add 420 years and 70 years we come to a total of 490 years. This will prove a help to understanding the prophecy at the end of this passage, which also covers a period of 490 years. Through the prophecy of Jeremiah, God is pointing to a period of 490 years in which the kingdom of Israel had failed. This chapter contrasts a failed kingdom with another kingdom, which will never fail.

**Intercession for the sins of his nation; Daniel 9: 3 - 19**

Daniel recognises that it is sin that had brought judgement on his nation. He also remembers that Jeremiah had taught that if the people are truly sorry for their sin, God will relent and turn away further judgement. So in humility he comes before the throne of God to repent of the sins of the nation. Sackcloth and ashes demonstrate his grief over all that has happened. Fasting is a sign that he means business with God. It is not a casual prayer which is being offered but one which he is determined that God will hear and answer.

There is neither blame nor presumption in this prayer. Daniel could have regarded himself as the innocent victim of the sins of others. Instead he recognises that God keeps covenants and is merciful to those who love him. It is not God who has failed but the nation that has failed to keep their side of the covenant. He confesses that the nation has sinned and committed iniquity. It has done evil and rebelled, departing from the commandments of God. They have not listened to the prophets. The people of Judah and citizens of Jerusalem must hang their heads in shame wherever they have been scattered. God is righteous. The judgement on the nation is no more than they deserve and is all in accordance with the warnings written in the Law of Moses.

Throughout the prayer and prophecy that follows, the focus is on Jerusalem. In his prayer Daniel confesses the shame that is on the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He recognises that there has never before been a calamity like that which has befallen Jerusalem. Daniel prays that God will turn away His anger from the city and that once again the face of God will shine on the sanctuary. In the answer Gabriel brings to Daniel's prayer, the focus remains on Jerusalem.

If we are to understand the prophecy which follows we need to recognise that it is primarily about the destiny of Jerusalem and what Jerusalem represents. The events described will impact on a wider world but they are centred on Jerusalem.

## Chapter 9

### The Seventy Weeks

#### Daniel Chapter 9: 20 – 27

The intensity of Daniel's prayer left him weary. He had been crying out to the Lord on behalf of his people Israel and for City of Jerusalem, the holy mountain of God. He had put everything into the prayer and was left in a state of severe exhaustion. The prayer had not been in vain. From the start of Daniel's time of intercession, God had been listening to his prayer. In response God has issued a command which Gabriel is now sent to explain. He comes to enable Daniel to understand the future destiny of his people and the city.

In the last chapter we explained that the background to this prophecy was a period of 490 years. It covered the time during which David's Kingdom had failed to fulfil the will of God. Gabriel gladly comes to Daniel to bring him the good news. In response to Daniel's prayer, God has granted Israel another period of 490 years.

#### The Seventy Weeks

*"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. Daniel 9:24*

The nation will be given another chance. God will grant them a period of seventy times seven weeks in which to achieve the things set out in the verse above. The word translated weeks literally means a period of seven, usually years. They will be granted another period of 490 (70x7) years in which to correct their previous failure. The period is expressed as seventy times seven in order to tie it in with Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 Sabbath years (2 Chronicles 36: 21). From the time of the institution of the Sabbath year, it was as natural for the Jew to



think in terms of periods of seven years as it is for us to think in decades.

The question arises how, after all their previous failure, will they be able to live up to the things God expects of them? They are to cease their transgression, which could also be translated rebellion and to end their habitual tendency to sin. It may be possible for the nation to reform and act in submission to the laws of God but, given the past, it is asking a lot. The next two expectations are surely outside their capacity. Can full atonement ever be made for sin? Can a nation live in everlasting righteousness? The final two phrases speak of the completion of the work of God and not the work of man. As Daniel hears the command explained, he must have wondered how this could ever come about. Could the nation be so completely reformed in its relationship to God that all past rebellion comes to an end? The answer comes in the next verse.

*"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. Daniel 9:25*

The answer is the Messiah. The scriptures, which had been written by the time of Daniel, are full of promises of the coming of a King who will reign in righteousness, a King whose kingdom will be established over all the earth. Promises that one day many nations will stream to Jerusalem to learn the ways of God. There will be a time of universal peace and plenty. All these promises centre on the righteous descendant of David called Messiah who will establish a kingdom that will never fail. Daniel has already seen an image of this kingdom in the vision of the rock that strikes the statue. It is in the Messiah that all this will be accomplished. Time scales are set in which these events will take place. We will look at these in the next chapter.

*"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. Daniel 9:26*

Daniel now is warned that his people are destined to fail once again. The Messiah for whom they long “will be cut off and have nothing”. He will be rejected. The very person who could lead the nation to accomplish all that God has destined for them will be cut off from His own people. Following the rejection of the Messiah the Prince by His own people, He will become the Prince of another people, the Gentiles (Matthew 22: 7). For 2000 years the gospel and the kingdom will pass to the Gentiles instead of the Jews. The Gentiles become the people of the Prince in the general sense of being entrusted with the gospel. This is in contrast to the Jews who are His chosen people in a special relationship. For a time the branches of the olive tree are broken off and branches from a wild olive are grafted in, taking their place (Rom 11). The Gentiles will turn against Israel and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. From then on Israel, the rightful heirs of the kingdom, will experience unrelenting war and desolation at the hands of the Gentiles right up to the end of the age. Often these same Gentiles will be misguided into thinking that they are serving God by persecuting the Jews.

### **He?**

*"And He will confirm a firm covenant with the many for one week, and in the middle of the week he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease; 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." Daniel 9:27*

Who is the ‘He’, at the beginning of this verse? How you answer that question determines the interpretation of this passage. Many say that ‘he’ refers to the one who makes desolate. On this basis they teach that the one who makes desolate will make a covenant with Israel for seven years. In that time the Temple will be rebuilt and the sacrificial system reintroduced. At the end of the three and a half

years he will break his covenant and turn against the Jews. The he is the same as the little horn of Daniel chapter 7. I am fully aware of this school of interpretation and once went along with it. I now believe that to interpret the 'he' as the little horn is a mistake.

In terms of grammar it makes more sense if the 'he' as the subject of this sentence relates to the Messiah, the subject of the pair of sentences before. Jesus came to Israel not to the Gentiles. His presence confirmed the covenant that God had made with them. They were His people to whom He sent the Messiah. After three and a half years of ministry Jesus was rejected and crucified. His death was a sacrifice made once for all. Therefore he put a stop to the need for sacrifice and grain offering in fulfilment of this verse.

This verse intentionally presents a stark contrast. The first half is about the true Messiah who willingly gives His life as a sacrifice for the sins of Israel and the whole world. The second part speaks of one who makes desolate and destroys. Jesus said; *"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name you will receive him," John 5:43.* Jesus knew that rejection of Himself would one day inevitably lead to Israel accepting Satan as their saviour.

I cannot imagine a more tragic anticlimax. God has listened to and answered Daniel's intercession for Israel. Yes, He will give them another chance, but it will end in failure. The one they claim to long for will be rejected and instead their enemy will be accepted. Fortunately that is not the end of the story. The end is given elsewhere in scripture. At the end of the age the Jews will be allowed to return to the land. There they will be brought down to their lowest point ever. At that time they will at last turn to the one they crucified. In repentance they will accept their King. But that eventual happy ending is not revealed here. At this time we have to come to terms with tragedy.

We have been told that God highly esteemed Daniel. He was a person to whom God could open His heart. In his intercession Daniel had voiced the longing on the heart of God for Israel and Jerusalem. Now God shares His own heartbreak over a nation which stubbornly goes its own way. It is a nation which will crucify His beloved Son and bring on itself endless suffering. It is as if God ends the prophecy on this down note so that He and Daniel could weep together over the nation which they both love. Nearly six hundred years later Jesus looked out over Jerusalem and also wept. He shared their heartbreak.

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Please pause here a while. Pray for that nation, that they will turn to the Lord and be spared before even greater suffering comes on them.

## Chapter 10

### The Seventy Weeks– 490 years

#### Daniel Chapter 9: 24 – 27

The last chapter outlined the content of the prophecy. Now we will consider the time set for it to be fulfilled. In the prophecy there are three periods mentioned and one that is not. We will look at the first period of seventy sevens (490 years) in this chapter.

It is a period of 490 years in which Israel will be allowed another chance to fulfill the purposes of God. When did this period start and when did it end? I don't think that there is any justification for breaking the period up as some interpreters are inclined to do. We will accept the simple interpretation that it is one continuous period.

The first period of the failed kingdom started when King David established Jerusalem as the capital of the nation. It seems reasonable to suppose that the second period would begin at the time Jerusalem is re-established as the administrative centre of Israel. Ezra went back to Israel with the king's authority to appoint magistrates and judges. He re-established its status as a city. The date of his return was 458/7 BC. If we add 490 years to 457 BC we come to 34 AD. Does that fit?

[Note: There is often confusion over this due to there being no year 0. Therefore in effect there is a year missing. The above arithmetic is correct.]

The chapter started with Daniel repenting on behalf of his nation following his study of the prophecies of Jeremiah. We have seen that Jeremiah connected the desolation of Jerusalem with a period of sabbatical years. In expressing the prophecy in terms of sevens we conclude that it also relates to sabbatical years.

I would emphasize that the sabbatical cycle comprised normal solar years. To introduce lunar years or special prophetic years, as

some try to do, has no justification in the text and only serves to complicate and confuse.

When Ezra returned from the exile he re-instituted the sabbatical cycle. In 1856 The German scientist Benedict Zuckermann published a table of sabbatical years in ancient times, which have become the accepted basis for calculating the sabbatical years. According to Zuckerman's table both 457 BC and 34 AD were Sabbatical years. Therefore 457 BC and 34 AD fit with the sabbatical cycle.

### **The Cross**

In verse 27 we read that *"... 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;"* the 'He' referring to Jesus. On the cross Jesus brought the need for the sacrificial system of the Old Testament to an end. He ended the need for sacrifice and grain offering. The prophecy states that this will occur in the middle of a period of seven years, a week. This verse points to Jesus being crucified in the middle of a sabbatical cycle. The seventieth cycle of seven years from the re-establishing of Jerusalem as a city began in 27 AD and ended in 34 AD. The middle of the final cycle was Passover 31 AD. It was at Passover 31 AD that Jesus was crucified. [My reasons for establishing 31 AD as the year of the crucifixion are set out in a separate booklet]. This word from God leads us to the cross. On the cross Jesus fulfilled all that is written in the opening words of the prophecy:

- By perfect submission to the Father's will He finished transgression
  - By obedience he proved that it was possible to live a life without sin
  - On the cross He paid the price for our sin atoning for our iniquity
  - He is forever righteous; in Him there is everlasting righteousness for us all

- He sealed up prophecy fulfilling all that had been written about His first coming.

- He was the Holy One of God who is anointed King of Kings

Centuries before God had specified the date when the Messiah would be crucified. That it took place, as specified, 487½ years from the start date, given in the prophecy, stands as absolute proof that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. He is the focus and fulfillment of what is written here.

With the crucifixion of Jesus in 31 AD, three and a half years out of the 490 years remained. In the parable of the fig tree, Luke 13; 6-9, the owner wants it cut down when it is found to be unfruitful. The keeper of the vineyard asks for just one more year. So it seems that God, even after the rejection of His beloved Son, was prepared to give the Jews a little longer. They had rejected the messenger would they receive the message? The 490 years ends in 34 AD with the stoning of Stephen. In that act Israel gave its answer: both messenger and message were scorned.

For the world, Jesus has opened the way to enter in to all that is promised in this prophecy. But for the nation of Israel the 490 years ended once again in failure. They rejected the one who could lead them back to God. The gospel was destined to become the property of the Gentiles. In time they will see themselves as the people of the Messiah and persecute Israel for rejecting Him. I do not in any way condone the persecution of the Jews. Although they have been set to one side for a time, they are still the chosen people of God. But I believe that in Daniel 9: 26, this prophecy recognises the enmity that will exist between Gentile and Jew until the end of this age.

Some leave the prophecy at this point. They are right in centring the interpretation on the Messiah but wrong in thinking that it has exhausted all we will learn from it. That the intention of the prophecy is to cover a longer period than the 490 years is clear from it extending to the second destruction of Jerusalem still 36 years in the future in 34 AD. If the destruction of Jerusalem falls outside the initial time frame we need to ask what else is covered by the prophecy.

Daniel's prayer was for his nation and his city. To only see a fulfilment of the prophecy in the gospel being taken to the Gentiles will not do. God has not finished with the Jews as many scriptures make clear. They have not been set aside for ever. One day Israel will be grafted back into the olive tree (Romans 11: 11-26). A time will come when Jerusalem is restored and becomes the centre of the Messiah's kingdom. When that day will be is the subject of the following chapters.



## Chapter 11

### The 62 Weeks – 434 years

#### Daniel Chapter 9: 25 – 27

The list of things to be accomplished during the time of this prophecy was in one sense fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus. But the focus of Daniel's prayer was for his nation and for Jerusalem. The Jews have not yet entered into the things that are promised. That will happen when Jesus comes again. For this prophecy to be completely fulfilled, it must cover both the first and second comings of Christ.

*"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".*  
Daniel 9:25.

In verse 25 two more periods of seven sevens (49 years) and sixty two sevens (434 years) are specified. These are to be taken as two separate periods as I have explained in the note at the end of this chapter.

Of the two periods, the sixty two (434 years) weeks comes first. The prophecy states that it is after them that the Messiah is cut off and has nothing. His cutting off refers to the cross, which is now history. The sixty-two weeks have been fulfilled. This period of 434 years falls within the overall period of 490 years which we looked at in the previous chapter.

The period started with the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and ended with the coming of the Messiah. It is widely agreed that the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given in 445/4 BC when Nehemiah received a commission to return and restore Jerusalem. Moving forward in time 434 years brings us to 10 BC. At first this may seem a meaningless date that has no relationship to the

first coming of Christ. But that is the point. The prophecy is not revealing when the Messiah will come. It is stating that a period of 434 years will elapse before the Messiah comes. He will come towards the end of the time during which the nation has been given its second chance.

The purpose is to warn that the Messiah was not to be expected before the completion of this period. It is given to guard against the acceptance of a false claimant to the title and to enable the nation to prepare. The Father would not reveal the exact time of the birth of His beloved Son. At His birth the Son was vulnerable. The radiance of the Father's glory was contained within one tiny baby. It is interesting that to this day we do not know the date of Jesus' birth. There are those who put forward arguments for dating His birth in each year of the decade spanning 10 BC to 1 BC.

From 10 BC onwards the Jews, if they had understood the prophecies of Daniel, should have been in a state of heightened expectation. The time had come for the Messiah to appear. From scripture we know that the nation was far from expectant. The city of Jerusalem was thrown into panic when some mysterious wise men arrived from the East. They announced that they were looking for the one born king of the Jews. The religious leaders certainly did not want to go with the wise men to see for themselves if it was true. They thought it better to conspire with King Herod on how to do away with someone as inconvenient as the Messiah.

Not all were so blind. One man understood that the time had come. The Holy Spirit had answered his prayers that he would live to see the Saviour. I believe that Simeon had recognised the times by studying the book of Daniel. This knowledge enabled him to be a blessing and encouragement to Joseph and Mary when they presented Jesus in the Temple. May we be as vigilant.

**Note**

It is common practice for interpreters to add the seven times seven years and the sixty two times seven years together. Having come up with a period of sixty nine times seven years (483 years) they then look for the missing seven-year period. Volumes have been written on the significance of this missing seventieth seven of Daniel.

I doubt that it was ever the intention of this passage to focus on what is not there. There is no seven year period mentioned and no seven year period to be considered. It is interesting to note that with all the sevens in the Book of Revelation, there is one seven missing, a period of seven years. Three and a half years are mentioned three times, but there is not one mention of seven years in the entire book. In fact there is not a single reference to a final seven year period anywhere in Scripture. Sound interpretation of the Bible keeps to what it says, and does not speculate on those things that are not mentioned.

The interpretations, which focus on what is not there usually, ignore what scripture actually says. In this very concise prophecy there are no throwaway statements. Both the seven sevens (49 years) and the sixty two sevens (434 years) must be significant. If sixty nine sevens were in mind, the only justification for dividing the period would be that there was a distinct, recognisable and meaningful division of history into two periods one following immediately after the other. Although I have read various attempted explanations none is satisfactory. In reality history does not divide in this way.

The verse as printed at the start of this chapter has the punctuation as found in the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew treats these as two separate periods. After the Jews were expelled from the land of Israel, Hebrew fell out of use as spoken language. In order to preserve the traditionally understood meaning of the scriptures, the Rabbis added punctuation and vowel points to the text. In this instance they added a punctuation mark between the seven sevens and the sixty-

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two sevens. This is the equivalent of a semicolon in English punctuation. The punctuation confirms that the Jews understood that two separate periods were in mind. Sir Isaac Newton, who as a mathematician, could not think of any reason for adding these two periods together also promoted this view. He believed that they must be understood as two separate periods.

## **Chapter 12**

### **The Seven Weeks – 49 years**

#### **Daniel Chapter 9: 25 – 27**

We have identified the 490 years, and 434 years, there is now one period of 49 years or seven weeks remaining. As with the 434 years we looked at in the previous chapter, it runs from a decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah. This time it is the Second Coming of Christ that is in view. At His coming Israel will repent. In mourning they will turn to Him. They will be cleansed from their sins and given a new heart. Never again will they turn to their own ways. At that time they will receive all that is promised to them at the beginning of this prophecy.

- They will be given a new heart and their transgression will be ended
- God will write His laws on their hearts so that they no longer sin
- They will accept the atonement made on their behalf by their Prince.
- They will live with God in a relationship of everlasting righteousness.
- At the return of Christ all prophecy will be finally fulfilled.
- Jesus the anointed King will anoint Jerusalem as His dwelling place.

With such breath-taking promises in view, we long to know when this time will be. The promises to the Jews will also apply to the church for both will be grafted into the one olive tree (Rom 11: 24). Then we ask; are we actually living in this final period of 49 years when all our dreams, hopes and prayers are to be fulfilled? Has a second decree been issued to restore Jerusalem? In 1967 after the six-

day war, the Jews regained sovereignty over Jerusalem. Was this the second return? That is the question this chapter seeks to answer.

First a comment on the decree to restore Jerusalem. Who will issue it? In verse 23, Daniel is told that a command was issued from the throne. It is unfortunate that translators then use a different word in verse 25 for the decree, by doing so they change the focus of the two events. A literal translation for both phrases would be 'the word was issued' and 'issuing of a word'. It is the same wording in Hebrew and I believe that the decree is ultimately issued from the same source. The authority for both commands comes from the throne of God.

I read recently that when Dr Martin Lloyd Jones was asked what he considered to be the greatest single event in Church history since the day of Pentecost he replied unhesitatingly: "the repossession of Jerusalem in its entirety by the Jewish people. It signifies the last phase of world history". Without any doubt he was correct. We are living in the final closing years of the present age. But are we in the final 49 years?

The UN resolution of 1947 had specifically excluded Jerusalem from Jewish sovereignty. With the passing of the years it is now inconceivable that the world would ever agree to accept Jewish claims to Jerusalem. The nations are more inclined to appease the Arabs and concede Jerusalem to them. Increasingly the Jews are being treated as squatters with no right to the land. Therefore it is very improbable that we will see another human decree granting Jerusalem to the Jews.

It was a divine decree that brought the Jews back to Jerusalem in 1967. The remarkable events, which surrounded that return, bear witness to this. God had decided that it was time for the closing years of this age to begin. The years following 1967 have certainly been a time of distress. It has even been necessary to build a wall around the city.

1967 was very significant and could be the start date of the final period, but there is another possible date. It is a date that seems most notable by its lack of apparent significance. Although Israel took Jerusalem in 1967, they did not declare the city to be the capital of Israel for another 13 years. When it did happen it almost came in as an afterthought through a private members bill introduced into the Knesset. The Act when it was passed declared "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel." In many ways this Act did nothing to change anything. Most legal experts considered that the Act did not change the effective legal status of the city. It would be an easy date to pass over but for three reasons.

First is the coincidence that the declaration of the Jerusalem as the Capital followed 13 years after the return. In the interpretation of the earlier 434 years we look to a start date when Nehemiah returned. This was 13 years after Ezra's return to Jerusalem. This is an interesting coincidence but not over persuasive.

The second reason is of more importance. My initial conviction that the 49 years represented a separate period leading up to the Second Coming came from studying the work of Sir Isaac Newton. But he also stipulated that the 49 years represented a Jubilee. The period of the Jubilee always starts with a Sabbatical year. According to Zuckerman's chart 1967 was not a sabbatical year but 1979 – 1980 was. Therefore this decree by the Israeli parliament came during a sabbatical year. If this period began with the Sabbatical year 1979-1980 it will end on Rosh Hashanah 2029 when the 50<sup>th</sup> year will begin.

A third reason for taking an interest in this date is the affect it had on the rest of the world. Following the passing of the Act there was a resounding rebuff from the United Nations. Under resolution 478 they declared that the Act was null and void. As a response every member state was asked to remove their embassies from Jerusalem, which they promptly did. This global response was prophetic of the final rallying of every nation against Israel. It is the response of all the

nations of the world that most strongly points to the significance of 1980.

**It is my conviction and motivation for writing this book that we are now living in the final period of 49 years.**

I am not predicting that Jesus will return in either 2016 or 2029. The Bible states that God has not revealed the time just as He did not reveal in advance the time of His Son's birth. But the return of Jesus is very close. There are only a few years left in which to prepare.

Even without the specific sign of the return of Jerusalem to the Jews I would ask, how can God allow this present age to continue for much longer? The twentieth century was a time of unparalleled violence and war. Man has acquired the means to instantly annihilate himself with nuclear weapons. Boundaries in scientific research such as the cloning of human embryos have been crossed which pose huge ethical questions. Society has abandoned the restraint of God's laws, choosing to follow what seems right in their own eyes. Millions of babies die because bearing them would be inconvenient. And many more starve while the rich get richer. Is this a world to which God can turn a blind eye?

### **Do not be deceived**

The book of Daniel warns of two evil people who will cause immense suffering to the Jews. The first of these people is described in Daniel 8 and also 11 verses 21 to 36. We recognise Antiochus Epiphanes as the fulfilment of the first of these prophecies. Antiochus arose during the first period of 434 years. It seems that the second person of which the prophecies of Daniel warn could arise during the second period of 49 years. The little horn of Daniel 7, and 11: 36 to 45, who utters boastful and blasphemous words and makes desolate, will come. It is important to keep in focus that the later prophecies of Daniel were given primarily to the Jews. Jesus confirmed this by warning the people to flee Jerusalem when this evil man comes. He



also filled His teaching on the end of the age with warnings to be vigilant and not be deceived.

The greatest concern that Jesus had for the Church was not that we will be hated by all the nations, not that we will be outcasts of society or that those who kill us will think that they are serving God. He will give us strength to endure such things. It is the danger of being deceived that most concerned Him. The church today is asleep. It is riddled with false teaching that has left it totally unprepared and open to deception. There are very few Simeons who are looking for the 'blessed hope' of the return of Jesus.

According to 2 Thessalonians, the man of sin will come with all the power and signs and false wonders of Satan. He will come with all the deception of wickedness to deceive those who perish. Recognising the signs of the times and the lateness of the hour we will be prepared for this deception and not in danger of being deceived.

### **Do not give up**

In Britain leading evangelicals had for centuries been teaching that the rebirth of Israel was a necessary sign of the soon return of Jesus Christ. It is fair to say that most expected the Second Coming to follow very soon after the return of the Jews. Some, responding to the words of Jesus in Matthew 24: 34 about a generation would not pass away, thought that there might be a delay of up to 40 years a Biblical generation. (Note a Biblical generation is in fact 50 years and is defined by the time between the Jubilees). As I am writing, 60 years have passed and the Lord has not returned. With the disappointment of prophecy seemingly coming to a stop, many may be discouraged and start to lose hope. They will ask if perhaps the scholars who insist that the rebirth of Israel has no prophetic significance, are correct.

The 49 year period warns us that there will be a significant time gap between the initial fulfilment of the prophecies and the return of Christ. Despite the delay we are not to go to sleep like the 10 virgins.

We should be trimming our lamps and putting on our wedding garments in expectation of the Bridegroom's return.

The central focus of the final events will be the land of Israel. But the hatred of the followers of Christ will spread to all nations. Persecutions will arise wherever there are Christians. In these final years the world will go from bad to worse. Satan will do all he can to eradicate faith in Jesus Christ, whether it is by deception, persecution, apathy or false teaching. We are to keep watching and not give up. He will come, but not yet.

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*“And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved”.*

*2Thessalonians 2: 8 – 10*

We should not underestimate the power of Satan's deception when it comes. Jesus will stand with those whose faith is in Him. In these days we are to draw near to God so that His Spirit is able to fill and mould our lives. He alone will enable us to discern the workings of Satan and to stand in these last days.

## Chapter 13

### The King

#### Daniel Chapter 10

This chapter is for me the most striking in the whole book. The central character behind all that has happened now takes centre stage. He has been there all along but perhaps we have been too focused on the prophetic events which will come on the world to have noticed Him. He was the one who at the start of this book brought the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem. He was the one who in chapter 2 formed the stone that will smash the kingdoms of the world. He will establish the eternal kingdom. He was there with the faithful three in the furnace. He humbled Nebuchadnezzar and condemned Belshazzar. When Daniel was in the lion's den He sent an angel to protect him. He stood before the Ancient of Days and was given the kingdom. At the end of this age He will break the little horn and bring the reign of destruction to an end. Greater than all those things He became a sacrifice for our sin and took our guilt on Himself. Who is that character?

*"I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, 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".*

*Daniel 10:5, 6*

In a vision by the bank of the Tigris, Daniel is allowed to look on this person face to face. So dazzling and awe-inspiring is the sight that Daniel falls to the ground in fear. Hundreds of years later, another man exiled to a prison cell will see a similar vision and likewise fall down as if dead. The apostle John who had seen Jesus in the flesh now looks on Him in glory.

*“one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters”.*

*Revelation 1:13,14,15*

This is the real living Jesus. One day each one of us will appear before Him and fall on our faces in worship. The sight will be glorious for His followers but terrifying for the wicked. Before those eyes of blazing fire nothing is hidden. Now is the time to repent and seek forgiveness. When we stand before Him, judgement will have been passed.

The sight was awe-inspiring and terrifying, but to His servants, Jesus is gentle. He tells Daniel not to be afraid. Once again we have a word from the throne of God that Daniel’s prayers have been heard. Daniel never presumed upon God. He never demanded or complained. His approach towards God was always in humility. To such people God listens.

### **Conflict in the Heavens**

Behind the events of this world a spiritual battle rages. It is a battle in which the glorious Son of Man stands, on our behalf, before our accusers. Satan and his angelic host, one of which is called here the prince of the kingdom of Persia, are quick to accuse. Israel stands condemned. Their perpetual sin demands justice and punishment. Our Lord stands alone because there is no one else who can answer the accusations made against Israel or against each one of us. Justice demands that Jesus stays and answers the demands of this angelic accuser the Prince of Persia. The Jews were in his power now. Why should he not punish them as they deserve? It is only the blood of Jesus to be shed for the sins of Israel and the entire world that can answer those accusations. He was going to enter this world and take our punishment on himself.

We all stand condemned by our own sin. Our only plea is that the Son of Man has taken our guilt on Himself and suffered our punishment. People think that somehow they will be good enough to warrant the forgiveness of God. Satan stands there to condemn. Justice demands that if we are forgiven for our acts of rebellion then why not he and all his angels. There is no other way in which justice and mercy can meet other than the perfect Son of God being willing to be punished on our behalf.

Through the centuries Satan has tried to destroy Israel. Satan stirred up one empire after another to destroy the Jews. His many attempts have failed because of the Son of Man. The Archangel Michael stands with Jesus to strengthen and encourage. The next prophecy reveals that Jesus knows the whole of history from beginning to end. He is in control of the future.

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Before we move on, a comment is needed on chapter 11 verse 1. Why is mention made of the Lord encouraging and protecting Darius the Mede? We have just read of how Jesus is at war with the Prince of the kingdom of Persia but now Jesus is standing with the king.

The two things go together. Jesus is protecting the earthly king from the spiritual forces that would attack and undermine his authority. Forces which will try to deceive him into working against the will of God. This brief word is for Daniel. Our Lord assures him that his prayers for his friend the king have been answered. Jesus has personally protected Darius. Prayer for rulers and governing authorities is important. This verse gives an insight into the battles, which will be fought on our behalf, when we pray for those who rule over us. Rulers are the especial targets of Satan's attacks. When they fall under Satan's power they can do great damage to the people of God.

## **Chapter 14**

### **The Kings**

#### **Daniel Chapter 11: 1 - 35**

The final prophecy of this book starts at the time of Daniel and ends with the resurrection of the Dead. At some point, which we have to determine, it jumps from a continuous chain of events to the end of the age. We will follow the history until it takes us no further.

The numbers at the side refer to the verses:

2: The three kings who followed Cyrus were: Cambyses II 527 – 522, Smerdis ( the Pretender ) 522, Darius I Hystaspis 522 – 485. The fourth king was Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of Esther) 486 – 465. He aroused the whole empire against Greece in the Greco – Persian war 480 –479.

#### **Alexander The Great**

3,4: The mighty King is Alexander the Great (b.356 – 323). We have mentioned Alexander before in our study of chapter 8. He had no sooner conquered his vast empire than he died at 33 years old. His son was murdered. The Empire was then divided into four, each part ruled by one of his generals. Cassander ruled Macedonia, Lysimachus - Asia Minor, Seleucus - Syria and the East and Ptolemy -Egypt. We now start the succession of events that will lead to the despicable little horn.

#### **The King of the South**

5: The king of the South denotes Egypt, Ptolemy I (323 – 285). Ptolemy's leading general, Seleucus I Nicator, became an independent ruler of Syria and Babylon in 311. He went on to conquer as far as the Indus River in the next decade. As ruler of Syria and the former territories of the Medes and Persians his empire is referred to as the king of the North.

6: In 252 Antiochus II of Syria divorced his wife Loadice and married Bernice daughter of Ptolemy II (285-246) of Egypt. The intention, which failed, was to unite the two royal families. Antiochus, Bernice and their son were murdered by Loadice.

7,8,9: Bernice's, brother Ptolemy III ( 246-226) plundered the North. In revenge he murdered Loadice. The latter, ie: Seleucus II (247-226) the King of the North, was defeated by Ptolemy III in 240 BC. Ptolemy returned to Egypt with much plunder including Egyptian idols which had been captured by the Assyrians centuries earlier.

10: The sons of Seleucus II were: Seleucus III (226 – 223) and Antiochus the Great (223 – 187). Antiochus took the war against Egypt as far as Gaza on the Egyptian border.

11,12: The king of the South, Ptolemy IV, defeated Antiochus at Raphia in 217. Antiochus lost over 10,000 troops and 4,000 were taken prisoner. Ptolemy failed to follow up his advantage, allowing Antiochus to recover his strength.

13: Antiochus III returned with a great army in 202. He won a victory over the Egyptian army at Panias near the source of the River Jordan.

14: The land of Israel suffered under the conflicting Greek kings. Jews joined different sides in the conflict and so fell.

15: Philip V of Macedon came against the boy king Ptolemy V (203-181). Sidon was besieged and taken despite an unsuccessful attempt by Egypt to break the siege.

16: Antiochus used Israel as a military base. He ravaged the land in order to support his army.

17: To counter the growing power of Rome, Antiochus tried to form an alliance with Egypt. He gave his daughter in marriage to Ptolemy. She turned against her father and sided with Ptolemy.

18: Antiochus turned his attention to the coastlands of Asia Minor. But a commander, Lucius Scipio Asiaticus representing Rome defeated him at Magnesia in 190. Following their victory Rome

exacted huge financial penalties from the Seleucides. This led to the need to raise tribute from their territories.

19: Defeated Antiochus returned home and died in the course of an expedition 3 years later.

20: Antiochus was succeeded by Seleucus IV (187 – 175). The oppressor refers to an exactor of tribute. The jewel of his kingdom is Israel. The king attempted to rob the Temple in Jerusalem. His treasurer, Heliodorus, later assassinated him.

### **Antiochus Epiphanes**

21: Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164) He usurped the kingdom from his brother's son. We have already commented on him as the partial fulfilment of the little horn in Daniel 8. He was truly despicable in his lies, deceit and public behaviour.

22,23,24: Antiochus overwhelmed and broke Ptolemy VII of Egypt in 170 – 169. On his return he plundered the Temple removing all the gold and treasure he could find. Two years later he sent a tax collector to Jerusalem who came at first in peace but then turned on the population, plundering the city and taking many prisoners.

25,26: Antiochus made a second attack on Egypt in 168. He used bribes and corruption to undermine Ptolemy leading to Egypt's defeat.

27: Antiochus and Ptolemy professed friendship. They met to create a treaty but in reality were trying to get the better of the other.

28: On his return through the Holy Land, Antiochus massacred many Jews and took others prisoner to be sold as slaves.

29,30: Cyprus (Kittim) in the West is in the direction of Rome. The Roman Ambassador, Poplicius Laenas, forced Antiochus to withdraw from Egypt.

31,32: In frustration Antiochus turned his anger against Israel. He desecrated the sanctuary and did away with the daily sacrifice in December 168 to December 165. He erected an altar to Zeus over the site of the altar in the Temple and sacrificed a pig on the altar. Antiochus issued a decree throughout his empire that his subjects



were to become one people, abandoning their own laws and religion. Many in Israel went over to the foreign worship. They abandoned the law, sacrificed unclean animals, ceased celebrating the feasts and no longer circumcised their children. All scrolls of the law, which were found, were torn up and burnt. The penalty of disobedience was death.

33,34,35: "Yet many in Israel found strength to resist, taking a determined stand against eating any unclean food. They welcomed death rather than profane the holy covenant, and so they died". 1 Maccabees 1:62,63. The first book of Maccabees gives a graphic account of the cruelty to which Antiochus subjected the Jews and also the courage with which Mattathias Modin and his sons resisted. The persecution resulted in a purifying of the nation by separating the true and false believers.

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That such a detailed and accurate history could be written in advance is proof of the divine inspiration of Daniel and the Scriptures as a whole. There is no other book in this world which in anyway compares with the Bible. This chapter testifies that the Bible is a reliable and trustworthy guide for our lives.

## Chapter 15

### The Antichrist

#### Daniel Chapter 11: 36 – 45

As we have seen, it is not difficult to relate the events described in verses 3 to 35 to history. The lesson for us is that if the first part of the prophecy was fulfilled in such literal detail, the second part from verses 36 to the end of chapter 12 will also be fulfilled literally.

This prophecy starts at the time of Daniel and ends with the resurrection of the dead. It is not a continuous history. Therefore at some point there must be a jump. The most obvious point is at the start of verse 36. The last chapter followed history through up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. The person now described is far more powerful. His boasting and pride point towards the final little horn.

In chapter 8 we concluded that, although the passage pointed to Antiochus, it was giving us a key to the understanding of the character of the final ruler who will make war on the saints. This chapter is similar. We have looked at the events leading up to the coming of Antiochus. Now we see one to whom he points. We look at the characteristics of this man in turn:

#### **He will do as he pleases**

He will not be restrained by moral scruples. In some measure this is foreseen in his forerunner, Antiochus , who lied, cheated, murdered, committed lewd acts in public and intrigue against companions. He would stoop to anything to get his way.

#### **He will exalt and magnify himself above every god**

In 2 Thessalonians 2; 3, 4 Paul describes the man of sin who will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god and object of worship. Until he appears, it is difficult to comprehend the pride of a man who can think that he is above God.

#### **He will speak monstrous things (lies) against the true and living God.**

So great is his pride that he will speak lies about God. He thinks that he is beyond the reach of God's judgement. These are not just lies but monstrous blasphemes.

**He will last until the end of the indignation**

The indignation will be ended when Jesus returns after the outpouring of the wrath of God on a wicked world. At that time the Antichrist will be seized and thrown into the lake of fire.

**He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or the desire of women. He will magnify himself above them all.**

In 2 Thessalonians the man of sin is described as displaying himself as God. There is only one person who has been God in human form that is Jesus Christ. This man will claim to be Jesus returned from heaven. He considers himself greater than the god's' of his fathers. Every Jewish girl would desire to be the mother of the Messiah. He both pretends to be Christ and at the same time greater than Christ.

**He will honour the god of forces whom his fathers did not know. He will lavish treasure on this god.**

The god of forces could also be translated strongholds or strength. The identity is not clear. But this ruler, when he comes, will not put his trust in the things that his fathers trusted. He will honour a different source of power. We believe that Satan will indwell this ruler when he comes. It is perhaps in Satan that he puts his trust. It is Satan who gives him the confidence to blaspheme God and tell monstrous lies about Him. Treasure is lavished on the worship of Satan.

**He will take action against the strongest fortress with the help of a foreign god.**

The need to take action against the strongest of fortresses implies that this fortress stands in the way of his rise to power. I believe that this refers to action against the strongest power of the day. Is this 'Babylon the Great' as in Revelation 17? The foreign god, which he honours is Allah the false god of Islam.

**He will honour all who acknowledge him. They will rule over the many.**

Those who follow him will be richly rewarded. They will have wealth and power.

**He will parcel out land for a price.**

He will claim the land as his to be disposed of as he chooses.

We identify this king as the Antichrist who will appear at the end of the age. But according to Revelation 13: 4 the Antichrist is invincible. Who is the king of the South in verse 40 who dares to come against him?

**The King of the South**

If Islam is to be the final fulfilment of the Antichrist's kingdom, the solution becomes both simple and literal. Islam is divided. The two major divisions are between Sunni and Shiite. Sunni Islam has its spiritual centre in Cairo, Egypt while historically the spiritual centre for Shiite Islam was Baghdad which is to the North of ancient Babylon.

The geographical location points to the Antichrist arising out of Shiite Islam. If so the description 'king of the North' is a description which fits literally in the context of Daniel 11. Isaiah 14 refers to the Antichrist as the king of Babylon, he is also referred to as the king of Assyria. The king of the South would describe a leader of Sunni Islam coming out of Egypt.

Also to be noted is that Edom, Moab and Ammon all escape the whirlwind attack of the King of the North. The territory of these nations roughly equates to the modern kingdom of Jordan. They are spared from the Antichrist but in many other places scripture warns that these nations will be the prime recipients of God's wrath when Jesus returns. This indicates that Jordan may have a special relationship with the coming man of sin.

It is not difficult to foresee a time when a Shiite leader arises who advances the cause of Islam throughout the world. With his success he will gain the allegiance of all Muslims both Shiite and

Sunni. There is a longing throughout Islam for the return of the days of the Caliph to unite Muslims and bring the world into submission to Allah. In the past the Caliph who was based in Istanbul gave political and spiritual leadership to the entire Islamic world.

According to scripture there will come a time when the Antichrist will demand worship. To worship either a man or image is an anathema to Muslims. A prime objection they have to Christianity is the belief that we worship a man. It is probable that this demand of worship will provoke a rebellion. Many Muslims will realise that they have been deceived. At that time Sunni Islam will become the rallying point for this rebellion. Unprepared and ill equipped they will be crushed by an Antichrist. Pray that when this day comes disillusioned Muslims will see through the deception and turn to Christ.

While in Egypt the Antichrist hears rumours from the East and North. I believe that those rumours come from Israel where the people are stirred to launch a final rebellion to throw off the yoke of this evil ruler. The Antichrist will return to the Holy land where he will come to his end destroyed by the word of the Son of Man.

## Chapter 16

### The Final Time of Trouble

#### Daniel Chapter 12

The reign of this tyrant will bring the final time of trouble to Israel. He is the little horn who makes war on the saints. The prophecy of the seventy weeks ends with this person who makes desolate. He will bring desolation and destruction to the Holy Land.

Despite all that has and will happen, God has not forsaken Israel. At that time, Michael will arise to protect those of the people of Israel whose names are written in the book of life. God knows who the faithful remnant of Israel will be. That this will be the worst time in the history of that little nation there is no doubt. Jesus confirmed as much in his final message about the things to come. *“for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.” Matthew 24: 21*

Immediately after that time will come the gathering up of the saints and the resurrection of the dead. Judgment will be poured out on those who followed the Antichrist, and glory on the faithful. Those who have insight will shine like the expanse of heaven, and those who lead others to righteousness like the stars forever.

Daniel is joined by two other men who will be faithful witnesses like him. Jesus, who has been relating all the events, which are to take place, is still there. He is above the waters. They ask Him how long before the end of these extraordinary events. In answering Jesus lifts His right hand and swears on the name of his Father. What he declares is as certain as the existence of God. The time will end with a period of three and a half years in which time the Jews will be shattered. Once shattered Israel will at last turn to the one they rejected and cry, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” That period will draw this present age to a close.

The book ends with a few final thoughts. Daniel could not understand because the future is known to God not man. Looking back over history we can see how things have been fulfilled. Over the centuries there have been many who responded to the gospel. Through faith in Christ they were purified and refined. But the world remains in rebellion. The wicked cannot or will not understand.

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Finally I share my own understanding of the times given at the end of the book. In due time the Jews will accept the Antichrist. He is the one who comes in his own name (John 5: 43). They will have been brought so low that he appears their only hope. But he will betray them. He will set up the abomination of desolation and demand worship. From that time when the abomination of desolation is set up there will be 1290 days. Things will quickly go sour. The Antichrist will start persecuting them. The final 45 days which is the difference between 1290 and 1335 is the period when the Jews try to throw off their yoke of slavery. It will end with the coming of the Messiah.

Jesus said flee Judea when this abomination is set up (Matt 24: 16). In Revelation 12 a place of safety is prepared for those Jews who listen to the warning and flee. They will be kept safe for a period of a time, times and half a time usually understood to be three and a half years. This is the same period in which the little horn will persecute the followers of Jesus Christ, Daniel 7:25 and Revelation 12: 17.

## **Conclusion**

The coming kingdom when Jesus Christ reigns over all the earth is a major theme of scripture. In Daniel chapter 2 this kingdom is pictured as a stone cut without human hands. At the end of this present age it will strike the empires of this world. They will be shattered and replaced by a kingdom, the mountain that will stand forever.

Before that time comes there will be a period of terrible trouble. For the Jews it will be the worst that they have experienced in their history as a nation. For Christians it will be a time when the Antichrist will make war on them, seeking to obliterate faith in God. These times of persecution serve different purposes. For the Jews this time of terrible trouble will bring them to repentance. It will prepare them to finally acknowledge as their Messiah, the one they crucified. In repentance, the nation will turn to Christ. They will then be united with their brethren gathered from the Gentiles, as the bride of Christ.

The persecution of the church serves three purposes. The first purpose is as a final witness throughout all the earth of the truth of the gospel. The second purpose is to condemn the world. When Jesus comes again it will be as a judgement on a world that has rejected Him. His coming will be accompanied by the outpouring of the wrath of the Lamb. Men will be terrified and seek to hide from that wrath. God is merciful. He will not bring judgement while there is any hope of repentance. He will wait until all hope is gone. There is coming a time when, as Jesus said, His followers will be hated by all nations. The persecution of the Church will make clear that the world has rejected the gospel. Just as centuries ago the Jews gave their verdict by stoning Stephen. In rejecting the Christians, the world is rejecting the Saviour and rightful king.

The third purpose is to prepare a people to reign with Christ. When Jesus returns He will restore this world to paradise. It will



become as it was at the beginning. In this task He will need a people to rule with Him. Revelation 20: 4 says that those who were beheaded and had not worshipped the beast will live and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

When the last trumpet is blown all Christians will be raised to be with Christ forever. Some of those raised are chosen to reign and administer justice on the earth. They are the ones who when this world passed through its darkest hour remained faithful. Despite opposition, ridicule, imprisonment and death, they chose to follow their Saviour.

We think of the reign of Christ as a time of perfect bliss. It will be a time when wars will be no more. Injustice will be ended. Poverty will be replaced by plenty for all. Old age is promised and it is said that if someone dies at 100 it will be considered young.

But that is not the whole story. The kingdom will be peopled by many from the nations of the world. They will have passed through the reign of the Antichrist and experienced the wrath of God but not come to faith in Jesus. They were fearful and tried to hide when they saw the signs of the coming of the Son of Man. Only those who accepted the mark of the beast are judged at this time. The rest remain and enter into the kingdom. Some will be overjoyed, at last recognising Jesus to be truly the Son of God. Others will be furious because His coming has spoilt all their plans. Their hearts are wicked and set on wickedness. They love greed, selfishness, immorality and all types of corruption. The rebellion will still be present although restrained.

Jesus is described as ruling the nations with a rod of iron. Firm godly rule is required if the rebellion is to be controlled and the world restored to paradise. The martyrs are the ones Jesus has chosen to bring this godly rule to the earth. They have proved themselves utterly faithful to Jesus even at the cost of their lives. Their loyalty proven, they will be entrusted with this task. They are equipped, for only a

short while before they were part of the world, which they are now sent out to govern. It will be a tough job for men love wickedness. They will not rejoice when the godly take power; when corrupt laws are reversed and morality promoted; when pornography, witchcraft and all forms of immorality made illegal. When there is no longer scope to exploit the weak and profit from the powerless. The transformation of society will not please everyone.

I believe that we are living in the final period of 49 years. They are nearly over. After that time is complete, all the other things foreseen in the book of Daniel, will quickly take place. Now is the time to be prepared and vigilant. Jesus is coming soon. Are you ready?

*“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and is sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews 12: 2*

**Amen**



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### **Our Beliefs**

We believe: in one God eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ is God manifest as man, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His atoning death and bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven and His return in power and glory to judge the earth.

We believe: that salvation is only through faith in shed blood of Jesus Christ which paid the debt of our sin, that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to lead a victorious Christian life, that all people who have ever lived will be raised from the dead some to eternal judgement and some to eternal life.

We believe that the Bible does not just contain but is the uniquely inspired and inerrant word of God. The Bible is the revelation of God's truth to men, truth which has been safeguarded by the Holy Spirit. We believe that the true meaning of scripture is the natural and most obvious interpretation. We pray that the Holy Spirit may lead us into that understanding and enable us to hold firmly to the truth.

The study of the prophetic events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ has suffered from many imposed systems of interpretation which have brought about considerable confusion within the church. We pray that the simplicity of the teaching of Scripture with regard to the Second Coming will be restored.

We pray that any who read this book who have not already trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ will be challenged to make that commitment. Further help is available from the email address below:

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