INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

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A. OVERVIEW OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE NATIONS[1]

God's sovereign will uses unbelievers and wicked people to accomplish his purpose!

The Lord says, "I bring prosperity and create disaster"[2]. God uses the kings in the world to accomplish his purpose![3]

1. Pharaoh (about 1447 B.C.). Although the sovereign God hardened the Egyptian king Pharaoh's heart, he can still use him for his purpose. ***God raised up Pharaoh on the scene of history for the very purpose to show God's power at work in his own people and to proclaim the name of the God of the Bible in all the earth***[4].

[1] Romans 9:22-23.
[2] Isaiah 45:7
[3] Think of the Napoleonic wars, the first and second world war and the recent war between Russia and Ukraine.
[4] Exodus 15:11-15; Joshua 2:9-10; 9:9; Psalm 78:12-13; 105:26-38; 106:9-11; 136:10-15

2. Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 B.C.). Likewise, the God of the Bible raised up the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser ***to punish the northern kingdom of Israel*** (Samaria) in 734 B.C.[5] and also the kingdom of Aram (Damascus) in 732 B.C.[6]. "In that day the LORD will use ***a razor*** hired from beyond the River (Euphrates) – the king of Assyria – *to shave your head and the hair of your legs, and to take of your beards also*"[7].

3. Shalmaneser V (726-722 B.C.). God used the Assyrian king Shalmaneser to finally punish the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel had sinned against the LORD, had rejected the covenant, had imitated the nations around them, had made and worshipped idols and had refused to listen to the prophets through whom the LORD had warned them. Therefore ***the LORD rejected Israel, tore them away from the house of David and removed them from his presence. He carried the northern kingdom of Israel into exile to Assyria in 722 B.C. and resettled its territory with foreigners from the area of Babylon***[8].

4. Sargon (721-705 B.C.). Besides punishing Samaria and Damascus, God would send another Assyrian king, Sargon, to punish the great countries like the mighty Hittites on the West side of the Euphrates in the battle at Carchemish (717 B.C.).

5. Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.). And God would send yet another Assyrian king, Sennacherib, to ***punish the southern kingdom of Judah***. But instead of only punishing Judah, Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem and intended to destroy Judah. Because he failed to execute God's plan, God prophesied that he would also punish and destroy the Assyrian Empire. "Woe to the Assyrian, ***the rod of my anger***, in whose hand is ***the club of my wrath*** (the Assyrian king is the instrument of God's present judgement)! I send him against a godless nation; I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets." But this is not what he (the Assyrian) intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations"[9]. Therefore, when the LORD has finished all his work against Judah he would also punish the king of Assyria for his wilful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes.

It was the LORD who had punished all the above nations, but the instrument of his punishment claimed the honour for himself[10]. ***"Does the axe (the Assyrian king) raise itself above him who swings it (the LORD), or the saw boast against him who uses it?***

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[5] 2 Kings 15:29

[6] 2 Kings 16:9) (2 Kings 15:19; 16:1-20; Isaiah 7:17-20; 8:4-8; 10:5-6

[7] Isaiah 7:20

[8] 2 Kings 17:1-41

[9] Isaiah 10:5-11

[10] Isaiah 10:12-15; cf. 36:1-22; 37:1-35

As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood! Therefore the LORD Almighty will send a wasting disease" and a blazing fire upon them that would consume and completely destroy them"[11]. "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand. I will crush the Assyrian in my land; on my mountains I will trample him down. His yoke will be taken from my people, and his burden removed from their shoulders. ***This is the plan (God) determined for the whole world; this is the (God's) hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back***[12]?" "Have you not heard? ***Long ago I ordained it. In the days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass***"[13]. So, in 701 B.C. the angel of the LORD went out and put to death 185000 men in the Assyrian camp. Sennacherib broke camp and withdrew from Jerusalem back to Nineveh where his sons murdered him[14].

6. Nebuchadnezzar (605-563 B.C.). Likewise God used the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, ***the LORD's servant***[15], ***to punish the southern kingdom of Judah*** in 605, 597 and 587 B.C.[16]

7. Cyrus (559-530 B.C.). The LORD stirred up one from the east (Persia) and the north (Media), the Medo-Persian king Cyrus, ***to punish the Babylonian Empire*** in 539 B.C. (5:30-31)[17]. Cyrus is '***the LORD's shepherd***' and will accomplish all that the LORD pleases[18]. He is '***the LORD's anointed***' to subdue nations before him[19]. "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. ***From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfil my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do"***[20]**.**

8. Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.). And God raised up the Greek king Alexander ***to punish the Medo-Persian Empire*** (the ram with two horns) (8:1-8,19-22; cf. 10:20)[21]. The shaggy goat is the kingdom of Greece and the large horn between his eyes is the first king, Alexander the Great (8:21).

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[11] Isaiah 10:15-19,33-34
[12] Isaiah 14:24-27
[13] Isaiah 37:26
[14] Isaiah 37:36-38
[15] Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6
[16] Habakkuk 1:2-12; 2 Kings 25:1-30; Jeremiah 25:8-11; 27:1-11; 29:10,15-19
[17] Isaiah 13:1-3,17-22; 41:2-4,25; 43:14
[18] Isaiah 44:28
[19] Isaiah 45:1
[20] Isaiah 46:10-11
[21] Zechariah 11:16

Conclusion. ***"God works out everything for his own ends – even the wicked for a day of disaster"[22]. "God works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will"[23]. God reveals his patience and power in the objects of his wrath, but also reveals his glory in the objects of his mercy[24].***

B. THE DIVISION OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The book of Daniel may be divided into two parts:

1. Either: Daniel 2-7 (Aramaic) and Daniel 1,8-12 (Hebrew)

The main part of the book is written in the Aramaic language and the rest is written in the Hebrew language. Aramaic was ***the main world language in the Near East*** from the 7th to the 3rd centuries B.C. Daniel 2:1 to 7:28 was written in Aramaic, because it was not only written for Jews but also for all the kings, emperors and people in the world.

The word-order of the Aramaic in Daniel has been influenced by the Babylonian language. The Persian words used in Daniel belong to the old Persian language from before 300 B.C. But most remarkable is the fact that there are only three Greek words in the whole book. If the book had been written during the height of the Greek Empire in the 2nd century B.C., one would have noticed more influence from the Greek.

The Aramaic part, Daniel 2 to 7 is arranged *cyclically in ascending and descending themes* as follows:

(a) Three ascending themes

Daniel 2:1-49. Nebuchadnezzar dreams about a large statue made of 4 metals and a rock that struck and smashed the statue.

Daniel 3:1-30. The tyrant Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless sees God's servants being rescued from the fiery furnace.

Daniel 4:1-37. God humbles the proud ruler, Nebuchadnezzar.

(b) Three descending themes

Daniel 5:1-31. God's judgement strikes the arrogant Belshazzar.

Daniel 6:1-28. Darius the Mede sees God's servant being rescued from the lion's den.

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[22] Proverbs 16:4

[23] Ephesians 1:11b

[24] Romans 9:22-23; Ephesians 1:11a,12

Daniel 7:1-28. Daniel has a vision of the 4 kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God.

The central two chapters or the climax of Daniel's message are Daniel 4 and 5: God wants to be acknowledged as the God of heaven by the mighty rulers of the world. That is why it was written in the international language, Aramaic!

The title of the Aramaic part of the book of Daniel may then be: ***"God wants the rulers of the world to acknowledge Him as the sovereign God of heaven."***

2. Or: Daniel 1-6 (stories/history) and Daniel 7-12 (visions/revelation)

The book of Daniel may also be divided in another way. Daniel 1-6 relate incidents that happened to Daniel and his friends and to the regimes in the Babylonian empire. Daniel 7-12, which overlap chronologically, recount 4 visions that came to Daniel in his old age.

(a) Daniel 1:1 to 6:28. Historical events.

Daniel 1:1-21. Introduction and setting of the stories.

Daniel 2:1 to 6:28. The acts of the Most High God within the history of nations.

(b) Daniel 7:1 to 12:13. Visions that reveal the significance of these historical events.

Daniel 7:1-28. The first vision is about the scheme of 4 kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God.

Daniel 8:1-27. The second vision is about identification of the second and third kingdoms of the world.

Daniel 9:1-27. The third vision is about the 70 weeks for Daniel's people and the holy city.

Daniel 10:1 to 12:13. The fourth vision is about the heavenly messenger and his final revelation.

The title of the book of Daniel may then be: ***A theology of history addressed to the rulers of the world:***

"God sovereignly controls human history in the present and will bring human history in the future to its appointed goal".

C. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL (please read the book).

Daniel 1.

In the history of the world God himself is the sovereign King. It is not king Nebuchadnezzar[25] who plays the most significant role in international affairs, but the God of the Bible who delivered the exiles from Judea to him (1:2a) and who equipped Daniel and his three friends with knowledge and understanding without loss of holiness in order to serve in a foreign kingdom in the world. "To these four men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds" (1:17).

A possible application: ***Christians may participate and have much influence in the government of a country.*** Joseph served in Egypt[26]. Daniel and his three friends served in the Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires (1:19-20). Nehemiah served in the Persian Empire[27].

Daniel 2.

In the history of the world it is God who "changes times and seasons and sets up kings (governments) and deposes them (2:21)! ***When God's time has come to act, then the kingship or kingdom of God demands the destruction of the regimes or kingdoms of the world rather than acting through them.*** "In the time of those kings (the kings of the Babylonian Empire representing the kingdom of the world), the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. Nor will it be left to another people (than the Son he loves and his saints)[28]. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to the end[29], but it will itself endure forever (2:44)[30]."

Daniel 3.

In the history of the world, believers who refuse to make compromises with the kingdom of the world are persecuted (3:17-18)[31]. "They trusted in him (God) and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than to serve or worship any god except their own God" (3:28). In chapter 2 and 3 it was the religious astrologers and in chapter 6 it was the jealous politicians that caused trouble for Daniel and his friends. ***The devotion of Daniel and his friends to principles kept them apart from their contemporaries***, but also caused the hatred and jealousy of their enemies.

[25] Or any modern political or military leader
[26] Genesis 41:41-45
[27] Nehemiah 2:7-10
[28] cf. Colossians 1:13
[29] cf. Revelation 17:14
[30] cf. Psalm 145:13
[31] cf. 2 Timothy 3:12

A possible application: *Christians should take an uncompromising stand on Biblical principles, but it may cause suffering.*

Daniel 4.

In the history of the world it is God who humbles proud kings (4:33,37). In pride Nebuchadnezzar said, “Is this not the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty” (4:30). For ‘seven times’ he was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird (4:33).” At the end of that time, he humbled himself before God and said, “His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation… He does what he pleases with the powers of heaven (the powers in creation) and with the peoples of the earth … Everything he does is right and all his ways are just” (4:34-37).

A possible application: ***Christians should hold to the conviction that the God of the Bible is sovereign in all the affairs of man.***

The fact that the people of God were conquered by the Babylonians does not mean that the gods of the Babylonians were superior to the God of the Bible! Daniel’s purpose throughout the main part of the book was to exalt the greatness and absolute sovereignty of the God of the Bible. His message is that there can never be a king or emperor so mighty that he is not under the sovereign control of the only God. During their lives, the kings and emperors will (willingly or unwillingly) serve God’s purposes, and if they persist in their arrogance, they will be brought low by God’s intervention (4:28; 5:30).

Daniel 5.

In the history of the world it is God who deposes arrogant kings that are hardened with pride and strips them of their glory (5:20).

Daniel 6.

In the history of the world it is God who promotes dedicated believers. “Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps (provincial governors) by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom… They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent” (6:3-4,28).

Daniel 7.

In every segment of the history of the world* '*the 4-regime/kingdom/empire scheme' represents 'the kingdom of the world'. God eventually dooms the anti-Christian tyrants (dictators) of the kingdom of the world (7:11,26) and gives the kingdom to one like a son of man (7:14,27). This man "was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all people, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed" (7:14,17-18)[32]. "Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High" (7:27).

Daniel 8.

In the history of the world all events have a definite end. ***Every human power in the world is ultimately destroyed, but not by human hand*** (8:23-26).

Daniel 9.

The symbols in the book of Daniel have repeated application in the history of the world: like

(i) 'the cutting off of an Anointed One',

(ii) 'the destruction and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the sanctuary',

(iii) 'the setting up of an abomination that causes desolation'

(iv) and 'the bringing of a sudden, unexpected end at the halfway mark'.

However, the definite end of all history that is decreed by God has not yet dawned (9:24-27)! "Such things must happen, but the end (of the world) is still to come"[33].

Daniel 10-11.

In the history of the world the people of God suffer due to the political and military successes and set-backs of ambitious rulers like 'the king of the South' (e.g. the Egyptian kingdom) and 'the king of the North' (e.g. the Syrian kingdom) (10:14; 11:31-35). But regardless of the desecration and corruption of these rulers, "they will stumble and fall, to be seen no more" (11:19b)! "The time of the end" (of the history of the 4 empires/kingdoms, even of the ultimate end of this world) will come at the appointed time (11:35).

Daniel 12.

[32] cf. Matthew 28:19; Philippians 2:9-11

[33] cf. Matthew 24:6

The backward-looking prophecy of Daniel remains “closed up and sealed (hidden) until the time of the end” (12:9-10).

D. THE WRITER AND TIME THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

There are people who hold the view that the book of Daniel was written by an unknown writer in Palestine at the end of the Greek Empire, during the reign of the tyrant Antiochus IV in the second century B.C.

They base their view on the assumption that ***revelation of future events are scientifically impossible*** and also that ***the Aramaic language of the book proves a later date***. However, there is enough evidence that the writer of the first 6 chapters of the book of Daniel was the historical Daniel, an administrator in Babylon during the ***6th century B.C***. (6:2)

There is also evidence that the writer of the last 6 chapters of the book of Daniel lived during the great tribulation of believers in Jerusalem under the dictator, Antiochus IV of Syria in the ***2nd century B.C***. The unknown writer relates contemporary history as if it is prophecy (thus quasi-prophecy) or he teaches a theology of history (chapter 11).

Thus the most plausible argument is that ***the first 6 chapters of Daniel were written by the administrator Daniel in the 6th century B.C. in Babylon*** and that ***the last 6 chapters of the book of Daniel was written by an unknown writer in the 2nd century B.C. who recorded history as if it were prophecy.***

1. Evidence within the book of Daniel for an earlier date.

Daniel was taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 605 B.C. (1:1,6). He lived to at least 537 B.C. under Cyrus of Persia (10:1), by which time he must have been well over 80 years of age. He was an eye-witness of the events in these kingdoms, a well-educated person and a very capable high official serving in these kingdoms. According to the early Jewish and Christians traditions, he wrote his own book.

2. A cultural argument for an earlier date.

Daniel chapter 1 raises a cultural problem: “How far should a loyal Jew accept the alien culture of the conqueror?” Whereas Daniel and his friends in the 6th century B.C. accepted and adapted to the language, culture and customs of the Babylonians, taking a stand only on the matter of ceremonial ‘clean food’ against the gifts from the royal table, the 2nd century orthodox Jews during the Greek Empire, rejected outright the culture (language, literature and customs) of the Greeks.

Also in Daniel 4, the gradual capitulation of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.) before the God of his captives, and in Daniel 5-6, the favour Nebuchadnezzar, Belshassar and especially Darius (521-486 B.C.) showed towards Daniel, show that these kings do not function as types of the arrogant tyrant Antiochus IV, who lived in the second century B.C., defied God and showed no favour whatsoever to the people of God! However, Nebuchadnezzar publicly praised God (4:34-37).

Belshassar does not even appear as the destroyer of the Jewish religion, but only as a typical spoiled and frivolous king. And Darius made a decree in his whole empire that the God of Daniel should be feared and revered (6:25-27).

3. Evidence from the earlier prophets for a later date.

The earlier prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel ***proclaimed prophecies with respect to the past, the present and the future***. They ***explained the past***[34], ***threw light on the present***[35] and ***revealed the future***[36]. Thus some of their prophecies were backward-looking prophecies (preaching) and others were forward-looking prophecies.

4. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation.

(a) The book of Daniel contains Old Testament history with apocalyptic characteristics. It relates ***God's view of 'the kingdoms of the world'***, especially the four kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Syria and their opposition against ***believers in the Triune God who are viewed as 'the Kingdom of God'***.

The theme of the book of Daniel is: "The triumph of the Kingdom of God over the kingdoms of the world" without making any explicit reference to Jesus Christ.

(b) The book of Revelation was written at the end of the 1st century A.D. It is an apocalypse in the New Testament period, about 250 years after the Book of Daniel. ***By means of visions, symbols and numbers the book relates God's history of salvation from the First Coming of Christ to beyond the Second Coming of Christ***[37]**.**

The theme of the Book of Revelation is: "The believers in Jesus Christ are more than conquerors over the kingdom of the world through Jesus Christ"[38]**.**

E. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

1. The book of Daniel is a book of revelation in apocalyptic terms.

[34] Isaiah 48:3-6a; Jeremiah 2:11-13
[35] Isaiah 48:17-18
[36] Isaiah 48:6b-8a; Jeremiah 2:36-37
[37] cf. Revelation 12:1-6
[38] Romans 8:37

The book of Daniel is unique in the whole Old Testament. It reveals the course and significance of history from God's point of view. *It proclaims prophecies, but not after the manner of the other prophetic books of the Old Testament* and *it also relates history, but not after the manner of the other historical books of the Old Testament.*

The book of Daniel is a book of revelation! It is concerned, not with describing history of the past, but with revealing what may be expected to take place in 'the four kingdoms segment of world history' (e.g. the segment of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Syrian kingdoms) and what may be expected to re-occur in any segment of world history during the whole future history of mankind on earth. By making use of dreams and visions, symbols and numbers the book of Daniel appears to map out the course of history in this world and ***to show the significance of history in this world***. God's purpose for this world is revealed to Daniel by means of a series of special visions.

2. The book of Daniel reveals future world-history in the form of 'four kingdoms of the world' that followed the demise of 'the kingdom of Israel'.

Daniel unveiled the history from 'the demise of the royal house of David and the exile to Babylon' to 'the end' in the form of four kingdoms that represent 'the kingdom of the world'.

(i) The first kingdom was identified as the Babylonian empire (2:38).

(ii) The second kingdom was identified as the Medo-Persian Empire (8:20).

(iii) The third kingdom was identified as the Greek Empire (8:21).

(iv) ***The fourth kingdom was not identified at all*** (7:7)!

The four-kingdom scheme first of all had its significance for people living in the period between the exile and the first coming of Christ (the intertestamental period). The fact that 'God is sovereign over all people and all events of history' is a marvellous revelation for believers! Because the explaining angel in Daniel did not give the fourth kingdom a name, the book of Daniel may still have symbolic meaning, representing the relationship between the kingdoms and rulers of the world on the one hand and the people of God throughout the history of this world on the other hand.

3. The contents of the chapters in the book of Daniel are to some extent parallel[39].

[39] The seven sections of the book of Revelation (chapter 1-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12-14, 15-16, 17-19, 20-22) are also ***parallel***!

(a) Chapter 2 spans the history of 'the four regimes in the Babylonian Empire ' and ***alludes*** to the history of four empires representing 'the kingdom of the world' between the exile in the 6th century to the crisis in the 2nd century B.C. (the intertestamental period)(2:36-43) and ***alludes*** to the kingdom of God (2:22,44).

(b) Chapter 7 ***alludes*** to 'four kingdoms' (7:2-8,17) and to 'one like the son of man' (7:13-14).

(c) Chapter 8 has a later starting point and only deals with the second and third kingdoms (the Medo-Persian and Greek Empires).

(d) Chapter 11 has an even later starting point and especially ***alludes*** to a particular wicked king, the Old Testament type of the antichrist.

4. <u>The contents of the chapters in the book of Daniel are to some extent progressive[40]</u>.

(a) Daniel 2 reveals that God is ultimately going to have his way in the affairs of nations by setting up an everlasting kingdom (2:44)

(b) Daniel 7 reveals more, namely that the saints would be oppressed and defeated (7:21,25), that God would judge the human kingdoms and their arrogant rulers (7:22,26) and give the kingdom of God to God's people, who will possess it forever (7:18,27)!

(c) Daniel 8 concentrates on ***the defilement*** of the earthly sanctuary by Antiochus (8:9-14), which happened earlier in 167 B.C.

(d) Daniel 9 goes further and speaks of ***the destruction*** of the earthly sanctuary (9:24-27), which happened later in 167 B.C by Antiochus (9:27) and in A.D. 70[41] by Titus. Daniel 9:25-27 speaks of persecution and sacrilege during the first half of the final 70th week (of years), but says nothing about the final half of the 70th week.

(e) Daniel 11 goes even further and speaks of unprecedented persecution (11:33-35) and of a king who does what he pleases (11:36-39).

(f) Daniel 12 goes the furthest and reveals ***the replacement*** of an earthly sanctuary by 'the holy people'. The holy people would be delivered, purified, registered in the book of life, leading many to righteousness, resurrected from the dead and shine like

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[40] The seven sections of the book of Revelation are also ***progressive***! Every section of the Book of Revelation reveals more and more of God's history of salvation.

[41] Luke 21:20-24

stars for ever and ever (12:1-3,10). Thus, history in the Old Testament is brought to its completion (12:13).

The New Testament, however, reveals the whole truth: The sanctuary will not be a lifeless monument anymore, but would be 'the Church'[42]. The Church[43], consists of living believers, 'the assembly of God's called out people'[44].

5. <u>The book of Daniel is concerned with the history of the whole world and not just of Israel</u>.

Like the author of Genesis chapter 1-11, Daniel is concerned not only with the history of Israel, but with the history of all the nations, kingdoms and rulers of the world. ***While the other prophets of the Old Testament looked towards the fulfilment of God's promises in the history of Israel, Daniel looked towards to the fulfilment of God's promises in the history of all the nations of the world!*** Genesis 12:3 says, "All peoples (nations) will be blessed through you" (Abraham's seed = Jesus Christ)[45]. Likewise Daniel looked to the end-time completion of God's purpose for the whole world which he created.

6. <u>The main message of the book of Daniel is that the God of the Bible is sovereign</u>.

God is sovereign over all the nations and their kings, sovereign over all the empires and their emperors (dictators), at all times in history right up to the end! The God of the Bible created human life, controls human life, human time and human history on earth. He will bring human history to its appointed goal! Whatever the threat against God's people may be, God's purpose cannot be thwarted!

A possible application. The reason why certain governments today forbid the preaching from the books of Daniel and Revelation is that these books undermine confidence in human governments in general and undermine supporting dictators/tyrants in particular!

7. <u>The book of Daniel reveals what may be expected throughout the history of the world</u>.

(a) God will sovereignly set up kingdoms and empires with their rulers, but also depose them again (2:21).

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[42] The word 'church' is derived from the Greek word 'kuriakon' which means 'belonging to the Lord' (G: kurios)
[43] Hebrew: qahal; Greek: ekklésia > ek + kaleó = called out, English: church/assembly
[44] cf. Psalm 107:32; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 12:22-24
[45] Galatians 3:16

(b) The kingdoms of the world together with their tyrants will persecute God's people and God's people will suffer

(7:25; 12:1).

(c) After death and the resurrection of the dead God will vindicate his people. Only they will inherit the future new

earth (7:26-27; 12:1-3).

8. <u>The book of Daniel alludes to events at the end of the history of the world</u>.

(a) All people who have ever lived will be resurrected from the dead (12:2)[46].

(b) All people and nations will be judged at the Final Judgement before God's throne. God's court will be seated and

the books will be opened (12:3; 7:10)[47].

(c) God will give the authority, glory and sovereign power to one like the son of man (7:13-14)[48] and to his people (7:18,27)[49] and they will possess it forever!

9. <u>The fourth kingdom in the perspective of the New Testament period</u>.

The early Christians (in the 1st century A.D.) were not wrong when they gave 'the fourth kingdom' a name, saw the fourth kingdom as 'the Roman Empire' (from 27 B.C. to 476 A.D in the West and to 1453 A.D. in the East) and regarded the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the focal point to which Daniel chapters 2 and 7 were looking.

Christians in the New Testament period possessed the Gospels and the Letters of Paul to teach them that during the first coming of Christ long after the book of Daniel was written a cosmic battle had been won on the cross[50]. The first coming of Jesus Christ marked the powerful coming (inauguration) of the kingdom of God onto the earth[51].

However, the fact that in Matthew chapter 24, ***Jesus applied Daniel 9:27*** concerning 'the abomination that causes desolation' ***to a time still in the future***, shows that the book of Daniel still has relevance for the Christian Church right up to the second coming of Christ, namely that: ***"the Kingdom of God triumphs over the kingdoms of the world!"*** According to Matthew 24:6, the "end (of the world) was not yet", because the task of

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[46] John 5:28

[47] cf. Revelation 20:12-13

[48] cf. Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 11:15

[49] cf. Matthew 25:34

[50] Matthew 12:28-29; Luke 10:18; John 12:31-32; 16:11; Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Colossians 1:13; 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8

[51] Mark 1:14-15

proclaiming the gospel throughout the world had not yet been completed[52]. ***The last book in the New Testament, the book of Revelation, takes up the theme of the book of Daniel.***

Daniel chapter 2 and chapter 7.

F. FORWARD-LOOKING AND BACKWARD-LOOKING PROPHECIES.

The stylistic scheme of 'the four kingdoms/regimes (Aramaic: malkuth)' in the book of Daniel

represents 'the kingdom of the world' and every government within it in every period of history of the world.

1. Daniel chapter 2 is a forward-looking prophecy.

(i) The first regime is represented by king Nebuchadnezzar (2:36-38).

(ii + iii) ***The second and third regimes are not specified*** (2:39).

(iv) The fourth regime is represented as a crushing regime, but inherent divided and weak (2:40-43)!

Not by any human hand, but by the God of heaven a definite crushing end is made of this 'four regimes section of human history' in Daniel 2, that represents 'the kingdom of the world'. The kingdom of God (the rock) will endure forever (2:44-45).

The specific details in Daniel chapter 2 are not identified and the revelation remains deliberately allusive! The four regimes of the colossus (2:36-43) stand model for what will happen to 'the kingdom of the world' throughout the history of the world. The kingdom of the world will ultimately be replaced by the Kingdom (sovereign reign, kingship) of the Triune God who reveals himself in the Bible (2:44)!

2. Daniel chapters 3-6 identifies the third and fourth regime of the Babylonian Empire. The first regime was that of Nebuchadnezzar. The third regime was that of Belshazzar, the second highest ruler in the kingdom of Babylon (5:29) after his father Nabopolassar. The fourth regime was that of Darius the Mede (539-538)(5:31) and Cyrus the Persian (537-530 B.C.)(6:28).

3. Daniel chapter 7 is a backward-looking prophecy.

(i) The first beast is like a lion with eagle wings (7:4).

(ii) The second beast is like a bear with three ribs in its mouth (7:5).

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[52] Matthew 24:14

(iii) The third beast is like a leopard with 4 birdwings and 4 heads (7:6).

(iv) The fourth beast is like a terrifying, frightening and very powerful beast. He had large iron teeth that crushed and devoured its victims and he had bronze claws that trampled what was left underfoot. He also had 10 horns on its head (7:7).

A little but more imposing horn came up amongst the 10 horns and uprooted 3 of them. That little horn had eyes like a man and a boastful mouth (7:8). He waged war against the saints and defeated them (7:21) until the judgement is pronounced in favour of the saints and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom (7:22). The little horn represents a human king who speaks against the Most High God (of the Bible) and oppresses the saints (the believers in the Most High God). The believers are delivered over to him for a symbolic period of 3½ times (a period of tribulation and persecution). He will try to change the times set by God and the laws of God and of the governments in the world) (7:25).

Ultimately his power will be taken away and he will be completely destroyed forever (7:26). Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven (i.e. of the present earth and ultimately of the new earth) will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. The kingdom of the Most High will be an everlasting kingdom. All earthly rulers will ultimately worship and obey him. (7:27; cf. 4:34)[53]

Because 'the four beasts' in chapter 7 are not specified/explained (7:2-8), we must not try to identify them with the explanation in chapter 8-11! Also because 'the one like a son of man' is not specified (7:13-14), we must not identify him with the revelation in the New Testament. The book of Daniel is a part of the Old Testament revelation of shadows. The reality comes in the New Testament revelation[54].

The vision in chapter 7 is deliberately allusive and does not refer to the four regimes in chapter 2 and also not to the four kingdoms in the other chapters! The vision also does not refer to Jesus Christ! Chapter 7 is a stylistic scheme of four kingdoms that rise from the earth/world and represent 'the kingdom of the world' in every segment of world history (7:17). The kingdom of the world makes war against the kingdom of God represented by 'the saints'. It wages war against them and defeats them (7:21).

[53] cf. 1 Samuel 7:13; Psalm 22:27; 72:11; 86:9; 145:13; Luke 1:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 11:15; 22:5.
[54] Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 10:1 and 2 Corinthians 3:14-16

This king of the kingdom of the world waged war against 'the saints' (God's people, the people who believe in the God of the Bible) and defeated them for a symbolic period of time, until 'the Ancient of Days' (the God of the Bible) came and pronounced judgement in favour of the saints of the Most High and the time came when they possessed the Kingdom (7:21-22)!

The readers of the book of Daniel lived during the 2nd century B.C. under the terrible oppression of a king other than Cyrus of the 6th century B.C., namely, king Antiochus IV of the 2nd century B.C. (175–164 B.C.). The book of Daniel was God's message of encouragement for his people (the believers in the God of the Bible) who lived in that period of crisis in the 2nd century B.C. King Antiochus had forbidden them to worship the God of the Bible, had desecrated the temple of Jerusalem and had burned the books of the Law (the Old Testament)! *Read* this history in the apocryphal books of 1 Maccabees 1:1-64 and 2 Maccabees 5:11-26 (at the end of this study).

4. The direct rule of the kingdom of the world over the people of God.

The book of Daniel describes in one sweep the history of 'the kingdom of the world' from the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia in the 6th century B.C. to the reign of king Antiochus IV of Syria in the 2nd century B.C.. That was the period of the direct rule or reign of the kingdom of the world over the people of God. It began when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea in 605 B.C., 597 B.C. and 586 B.C. and ended and destroyed the royal house of David (the kings of Judah). However, the suppression of the people of God did not stop with king Nebuchadnezzar or his successors in the kingdom of the world, but was continued for many years (about 440 years) until the time of king Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.).

At the beginning the reign or kingdom of the world is still described in positive terms. The power and glory that God gives to the regime or kingdom of the world is impressive and deserves admiration (a very large statue made with precious metals). The God of heaven had given Nebuchadnezzar dominion, and power and might and glory. He "had placed mankind and the animal world in his hands" (2:37-38)[55]. But in its final appearance the power of this kingdom of the world is depicted as hard iron[56] with brittle baked clay sticking to it (2:40-43)!

The governments of this world may evoke admiration, but they are as hard as iron and simultaneously as brittle and vulnerable as baked clay! The governments of the world always have a weak spot, which they desperately try to prop up by worldly means (e.g.

[55] cf. Romans 13:1-7

[56] cf. Revelation 13:1-2

with many promises and political and economic power and also with military power or even with religious terrorism within home affairs and in foreign affairs). But the kingdom of the world and its worldly means are doomed to fail!

Every kingdom of the world (i.e. government of the world) is ultimately and finally smashed by this 'rock' (the power and Kingdom of God) (2:44; 7:21-22,26; 8:25)! ***While the prophecy of Jeremiah did not look further than the destruction*** *of the Babylonian Empire representing 'the kingdom of the world'*[57]*,* ***the message of Daniel proclaims the establishment of a completely different Kingdom, namely, 'the Kingdom of God' (2:44).*** 'The rock' symbolises God's power and sovereignty in establishing his everlasting Kingdom, namely, the Kingdom of God[58].

Thus, within the history of the world, the Kingdom of God ultimately and finally smashes all the governments (regimes or kingdoms) of the world and grows to become a huge mountain (rock) that fills the earth (2:35)[59]!

5. The application of the book of Daniel by Christians. Christians miss the message of the book of Daniel when they waste their time in arguing about *the identity* of the four regimes in Daniel chapter 2. What was important for the readers of the book of Daniel was:

(a) that they lived during 'the fourth regime of the kingdom of the world' (during the crisis represented by Antiochus IV) and

(b) that 'this kingdom of the world' would be followed by 'the Kingdom of God'!

When later generations of the people of God (e.g. Christians today) apply 'this scheme of four regimes' in the book of Daniel to the history of the world in which they live, they respond to the message of Daniel in the way God desires! *The message of Daniel is very encouraging for the people of God, because 'the kingdom of the world' in which you live will definitely be followed by the kingdom of God!*

Daniel chapter 7.

[57] Jeremiah 25:12-14

[58] cf. Matthew 21:42-44

[59] cf. Isaiah 11:9

G. THE BOOK OF DANIEL IS NOT AN EXPLANATION OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

1. The book of Daniel is not a commentary. ***Both the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation are both inspired by the Real Author, the Lord Jesus Christ[60], but the earlier Book of Daniel is NOT a commentary explaining the later Book of Revelation! Rather the Book of Revelation makes use of the theme and symbolism in the Book of Daniel.***

2. The book of Daniel does not speak about or allude to the New Testament period.

but ***the New Testament realities*** show that the New Testament made use of ***the Old Testament shadows***[61].

(a) Daniel 7:1-8 does NOT speak about the New Testament period after 'the period of the four kingdoms' of

Babylon, Persia, Greece and Syria.

(b) Daniel 7:13-14 does NOT speak about the coming of Jesus Christ or when he comes[62]. The 'manlike being'

remains unidentified!

(c) Daniel 7:20 does NOT speak about the antichrist of the New Testament[63]. The 'little horn king' is not identified.

(d) Daniel 7:21-27 does NOT speak about the New Testament people/saints of God (the New Jerusalem, the

Church)[64]. The 'saints' are not identified.

(e) Daniel 7:25 does NOT speak about the Great Tribulation in the New Testament period[65]. The '3½ times' are

not identified. Only the symbol 3½ in Daniel and in Revelation point to a period of tribulation.

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[60] The book of Daniel (1 Peter 1:10-12) and the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:1).

[61] cf. Colossians 2:17

[62] cf. Revelation 12:5

[63] Revelation 11:7; 13:1-8; 17:3,8; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10

[64] The New Jerusalem is the Church of the born-again people (Revelation 12:6,11,17; 21:2; cf. Hebrews 12:22-24)

[65] The 3½ days are a symbol of the Great Tribulation (Revelation 11:7-10; cf. Matthew 24:15-25)

(f) Daniel 9:26 does NOT speak about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ or when he is crucified[66]. The 'anointed one

cut off' alludes to the murder of the high priest Onias in 171 B.C.

3. <u>The book of Daniel is NOT a prophesy about chronology (the dates of events)</u>. *<u>It is a stylized scheme of history (chronography) used to interpret historical data.</u>*

Daniel chapter 7:2-8.

H. A THEOLOGY OF HISTORY.

1. <u>The four traditional empires</u>.

Traditionally the four 'regimes or kingdoms' have been interpreted as ***four large empires***:

(a) the Babylonian Empire

(b) the Medo-Persian Empire

(c) the Greek Empire and

(d) the Roman Empire.

However, ***biblically*** they point to a 'stylistic scheme of four kingdoms/regimes' that represent ***'one kingdom of the world'***.

2. <u>The four regimes in Daniel 2:36-45</u>.

Because Nebuchadnezzar himself is the head of the whole statue, ***the four 'regimes' refer to the reign of four kings over a single Babylonian empire rather than to four kingdoms!*** The statue represents the Babylonian Empire that passes from king Nebuchadnezzar to other Babylonian kings. The administrator Daniel puts the emphasis on the fact that Nebuchadnezzar only rules because the God of heaven had given him this dominion, power, might and glory (2:37)! God himself is the real 'Lord of kings' (2:47)[67]! ***In Daniel 2:39-40 the three other regimes are not identified*** and remain indirect references that must not be interpreted[68].

3. <u>The four regimes in Daniel chapters 2 to 6</u>.

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[66] cf. The blood of the Lamb in Revelation 12:11.

[67] cf. Revelation 1:5; Revelation 19:16

[68] Paul warns: "Do not go beyond what is written" (in the Bible) (1 Corinthians 4:6). Do not read more meaning (your own interpretation) into the Bible!

The prophet Jeremiah prophesies about ***the history*** of Babylon and says, "These nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years"[69]. "All nations will serve him (Nebuchadnezzar) and his son and his grandson until (70 years later) the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him"[70]. But the historical Daniel refers to four specific regimes in Daniel 2-6.

(a) The powerful regime of Nebuchadnezzar *over the whole earth* (605–562 B.C.) (2:36-38; 5:18-19). \

(b) The weak and divided regime of Belshazzar (550–539 B.C.), the son of Nabonidus (556–539 B.C.). He was "the second highest ruler" in the kingdom after his father Nabonidus (5:1,25-30).

(c) The regime of Darius the Mede *over the whole earth* (539–538 B.C.)(5:31; 6:1-2). His regime was simultaneous with the regime of Cyrus the Persian. After the defeat of Babylon in 539 B.C., Darius the Mede took over the Babylonian regime at the age of 62 (5:31). Daniel speaks of "the ***first*** year of Darius the Mede" (9:1; 11:1) and then of "the ***third*** year of Cyrus, king of Persia" (10:1). Apparently Darius the Mede only ruled over Babylon for two years by the grace of Cyrus and simultaneously with Cyrus (6:28).

(d) The regime of Cyrus the Persian (559–530 B.C.)(6:28; 10:1). Cyrus reigned from 539 B.C. over the Babylonian Empire. He was known for his victories in military campaigns and his irresistible power[71]. The fourth regime is said to be divided (iron and clay) and will not remain united. Apparently Cyrus was half Mede and half Persian and he was married to a Persian. All the above facts show that ***the Medes and Persians did not establish a new empire in the world, but only brought a new dynasty to the history of the empire of the world which already existed***. The Medes and Persians terminated the regime of Belshazzar within the Babylonian Empire, but *did not terminate the Babylonian Empire, because the Babylonian Empire was continued as the Medo-Persian Empire*. ***The four regimes in Daniel 2 to 6 span the period from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus.***

4. <u>The stylistic scheme of 4 regimes/kingdoms and 70 sevens</u>.

Daniel adapts Jeremiah's words about 'the history of the world' (9:2)[72] to 'the theological form of four regimes/kingdoms' and a period of '70 sevens' (9:24). The coming of the Medes and Persians during this period did not terminate the dominion of

[69] Jeremiah 25:11
[70] Jeremiah 27:7
[71] Isaiah 41:2-3,25; Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 45:1-4,13
[72] Jeremiah 25:11-14

'the kingdom of the world' over the people of God, as the prophet Jeremiah and the prophet Isaiah[73] had promised. 'The kingdom of the world' is here represented by the Babylonian Empire that continued as the Medo-Persian Empire and 'the people of God' are here represented by the (believing) Jewish exiles in that Empire.

Daniel urged the people of God to ***hold on to the conviction that this colossus of 'the kingdom of the world' would not stand forever! It has feet of clay! This is the message of Daniel chapter 2*** however the parts of the statue are identified.

The four regimes (2:36-45) show no logical order of degeneration and do not point to historical demonstrable regimes. The last three regimes do not refer to the three Babylonian successors of Nebuchadnezzar, because then 'the rock' would have to represent Cyrus the Persian[74]. Daniel does not describe the coming of Cyrus as 'the end of the Babylonian Empire' or 'the end of the Babylonian exile' of Judah in Babylon.

The coming of Cyrus makes no difference for the Babylonian Empire or for the exiles. ***'The four regimes' point to completeness of earthly regimes together with their political, economic, military and religious systems within one kingdom of the world within the history of the world.*** The political and military might of kings and the kingdoms in the world is like this huge statue. It always has a weak spot – "feet of clay" - that threatens the stability and durability of the kings and their kingdoms. Only one rock needs to strike the statue on its weak spot and it collapses!

Daniel 7:7,23 or 7:14,27.

I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

1. <u>The coming kingdom of God is a completely different kingdom on earth</u>.

Daniel 2:41-43 does NOT say that the fourth regime consists of a dynasty of several kings (e.g. traditionally interpreted as the Roman Empire). The words: "In the time (days) of those kings" (2:44) rather alludes to three Babylonian successors of king Nebuchadnezzar. Otherwise the fourth king would have to be Cyrus.

Daniel also does NOT say that the fourth regime is followed by a fifth regime. ***<u>The four regimes of the kingdom of the world are followed by something completely different, namely, by 'the kingdom of God'</u>***.

Daniel does NOT predict the prolonging of the current time and events, but promises a complete new future. His notion about 'the kingdom of God' approaches that of 'the Day

[73] Isaiah 13:19-22; Isaiah 43:14; Isaiah 44:27 – 45:4

[74] cf. Isaiah 41:2; Isaiah 45:1-2

of the Lord' in the other prophets when God terminates earthly kingdoms. The kingdom of God has a supernatural, divine origin. Nevertheless it is localized on earth and not in heaven.

Daniel does NOT envision the disintegration of the universe and also NOT the creation of a new universe.

The problems accompanying 'the kingdom of the world' on earth (authoritarian tyrants, oppression of people and especially God's people, war, destruction of nations, destruction of the earth and destruction of the climate, etc.) can NOT be solved by worldly politics, but only by ***a supernatural intervention of God when he establishes a new kingship or kingdom, namely, 'the kingdom of God'! This does NOT require the dissolution of this world, but rather changing the reign over this world!*** The political, economic, military and false religious powers of the kingdoms of the world are destroyed, but the world and its history is not destroyed! "The beast (the little horn) was slain and thrown into the blazing fire, *but the other beasts that had been stripped of their authority, were allowed to live for a period of time"* (7:11-12)[75]!

2. <u>The coming kingdom of God is not an Israelite kingdom</u>.

Daniel views 'the rock' not as representing the kingdom of Israel. Daniel chapter 2 contains NO reference to Israel as the people of God and also NO reference that the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem or the temple in Jerusalem has any special significance.

Daniel does NOT speak about 'the remnant' of the people of God as the prophet Isaiah does[76]. He does NOT speak about the coming Messiah and also NOT about the eternal destiny of humanity. ***<u>The whole focus of Daniel is directed on the kingdom of God, e.g. the sovereign reign or kingship of God within the history of the world</u>!*** It is God who changes times and seasons, who sets up kings and deposes kings and who reveals hidden things and gives wisdom to discern things (2:20-22).

3. <u>The coming kingdom of God is not a kingdom limited to an individual (a believer)</u>

<u>or limited to a nation (Israel) or limited to heaven (a super-mundane kingdom)</u>.

The kingdom of God is NOT realised in the life of an individual believer[77]. After the return from exile the kingdom of Israel NEVER materialised[78]. It did NOT change into a

[75] cf. John 17:14-18; 18:36-37. The kingdom of God is ***in*** the world, but not ***of*** the world!
[76] Isaiah 1:9; Isaiah 10:20-23
[77] cf. Luke 17:20-21)
[78] cf. Amos 9:11

kingdom only in heaven, something above and beyond this world[79]. The kingdom of God is realised within the created world and within human history. Daniel proclaims that the kingship or kingdom of God concerns human beings living here and now on earth, just as the prophecies of Isaiah chapter 40 to 55 also proclaim.

4. The coming Kingdom of God in the Old Testament is more a matter of expectation than fact.

In the Old Testament the realizing of the kingdom of God is NOT yet revealed. The realizing of 'the Kingdom of God' or 'the rule/reign of Jesus Christ in the heart of believers[80] is only revealed during the New Testament period[81].

(a) What the kingdoms of the world (their governments and power) really are (namely completely evil) has NOT yet been fully exposed. The book of Daniel does not yet fully unveil the true character of the kingdoms in the world (as they are viewed from the perspective from God in heaven[82]. The book of Daniel only shows the point of view of man on earth (what the kingdoms seem to be and how they are reported by the mass media).

The kingdoms of the world may seem attractive, strong and sometimes even invincible (7:19,23). In the kingdom of the world the kings do what they like, magnify themselves above God and say unheard of things against God (11:36). But in reality the kingdoms in the world are evil and weak. The kingdoms of the world "will certainly stumble and fall, to be seen no more" (11:19)!

(b) What the kingdom of God is destined to be (namely completely righteous) is NOT yet fully unveiled. What the kingdom of God in reality already is (namely 'completely righteous'), is not yet fully visible on earth. Things still remain hidden and sealed until 'the time of the end' (12:9). ***The kingship or kingdom of God has NOT yet made a definite end to all these other kingdoms in the world (2:44)[83] and has NOT yet filled the whole earth (2:35)[84]. 'The Gospel/good news of the kingdom'[85] must first be***

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[79] When Matthew speaks about 'the kingdom of heaven' (e.g. Matthew 13:31-33) the other Gospels speak of 'the kingdom of God' (who dwells in heaven)(Luke 13:18-20). Matthew wrote to Jews who were afraid to mention the name of God. So they rather used the place where God dwells.

[80] The ruling/reigning of Jesus Christ. Matthew 12:28; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 17:20-21

[81] Only Jesus Christ breaks the seals, that is, reveals the important events in history and salvation history and sets them in motion (Revelation 5:1-5)

[82] Only when the Psalmist entered the sanctuary of God he understood the final end of the wicked (Psalm 73:16-17)

[83] cf. Matthew 13:41

[84] "To bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, even Christ" (Ephesians 1:10)

[85] Acts 8:12

preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations[86]! When the kingdom of the world will be fully exposed and the Kingdom of God will be fully revealed, the wicked people will only be wicked and the righteous people will only be righteous (enlightened, purified, spotless and refined)(12:10)[87]!

The New Testament revelation says that only 'at the end of the (present) age', that is, at the second coming of Jesus Christ, "he will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil." They will be thrown into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then "the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father"[88].

(c) The historic events in the kingdom of the world are already taking place in Daniel's time (and they are also taking place in our time). Therefore the book of Daniel is NOT a prophecy in the sense of a prediction about future events. If the book of Daniel was merely a prophecy about what and when future events would take place (a chronology of history instead of a chronography of history), one might ask: "So what! What is then the real message of the book of Daniel? The book of Daniel is an apocalypse: it unveils or reveals the true character of the history of the world! *But while the book of Daniel was still a sealed apocalypse (12:9), the book of Revelation is an unlocked apocalypse[89]!*

In the book of Revelation, at the ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ[90], when the seals of the scroll in heaven are broken[91], these realities about the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God are revealed and are set in motion[92]. Then what already existed in principle becomes reality.

From the time of the beginning of the New Testament we can no longer view the history of the present world by itself (secularly, without taking God into account)[93]! We must view the history of the world against the background of what God in heaven is doing in heaven and on earth[94]! Therefore, read your Bible and not only your newspaper! Evaluate the events in your country and in the kingdom of the world in the light of the kingdom of God!

In the New Testament the Kingdom of God (the Kingship of Christ) begins at the first coming of Jesus Christ[95]. It will continue to grow[96] and come in all its completeness and perfection only at the second coming of Christ[97]. Also in our present time the kingdom

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[86] Matthew 24:14!
[87] cf. Revelation 22:10-11
[88] Matthew 13:41-43
[89] Revelation 22:10-11
[90] Ephesians 1:20-22; Matthew 22:44; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26
[91] Revelation 5:1-5
[92] Revelation chapters 5 and 6.
[93] As all secular history books do.
[94] As the Bible does.
[95] Mark 1:15; Matthew 12:28; Ephesians 1:20-22
[96] Matthew 13:31-33
[97] Matthew 25:34; Revelation 11:15

(kingship) of God/Christ has not yet been fully or perfectly manifested. That is why Christians continue to pray: "Let your kingdom (kingship over everyone and everything) come! It must come and it will come![98]!

5. The coming kingdom of God comes after the end of the four temporary kingdoms in Daniel.

The coming kingdom of God will come during the New Testament period and it will be an everlasting Kingdom!

The characteristics and qualities of the coming kingdom are not described in the book of Daniel. Daniel only says that the coming kingdom will be *the kingdom of the God of the Bible and that it will endure forever*!

The characteristics of the kingdom of God form a contrast with those of the foregoing temporary kingdoms of the world. For a short period of time dominion, power, might and glory were given (by God) to the kingdom of the world, to king Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonian empire (2:37-38). Then it was given to Darius and Cyrus of the Medo-Persian empire (5:31-6:2). After that it was given to Alexander of the Greek empire (8:5-7). Finally it was given to Antiochus IV of the Greek-Syrian empire (8:8-11) during the time the writer of Daniel chapter 7-12 lived. The characteristics of dominion, power, might and glory on earth are today manifested in other dictators/antichrists[99] and other places on earth, but ***never forever!***

The characteristics of the kingdom of God are clearly described in the New Testament revelation, especially in the Sermon on the Mount[100], the Lord's Prayer: "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen"[101], in the about 54 parables of Jesus about the Kingdom of God[102] and in the book of Revelation[103].

The kingdom of God is not a kingdom of any god of another religion. It is also not a kingdom of any political-, economic- military or religious system on earth. ***These kingdoms on earth are very limited and very temporary!***

This dominant thought with respect to 'the time' appears again and again in the book of Daniel. The kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar cannot endure forever (2:39-41), because ***God "sets up kings and deposes them"*** (2:21a). However, the coming Kingdom of the

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[98] Matthew 6:10 The verb is an imperative, aorist, active.

[99] 1 John 2:18. Think of modern dictators of countries. They often are narcistic, egotistic, proud, arrogant, even liars with fake-news and murderers.

[100] Matthew chapter 5-7

[101] Matthew 6:13; cf. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

[102] The parables of Jesus are explained in www.dota.net Manual 9 to 12.

[103] The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are explained in www.betacursus.nl – Dutch, English, Chinese

God of the Bible will certainly endure forever (2:44; 4:34-35; 7:14,27)[104]! "Your Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations"[105]. "The LORD reigns forever"[106]. The genuine kingdom, power and glory is forever only God's[107].

6. The coming kingdom of God was not established in the time of Daniel.

The vision of Daniel was not fulfilled in the historical period to which the book of Daniel refers (i.e. the second century B.C.). Just as in the prophetical books, 'the Day of the Lord' seems to be near; but then the years move along and people ask: "Where is the coming he promised?"[108] Likewise in Daniel's vision. The kingdoms or empires of the world, which the writer of the book of Daniel and his readers during the second century B.C. knew from history (the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire and the Greek Empire), had already passed away. The reign of God in Jerusalem had been restored, partly when the temple was rebuilt in 516 B.C. (after the return from exile)[109] and partly when the temple was cleansed in 164 B.C. (after Antiochus had defiled it) (8:14)[110].

Thus, ***the readers of the book of Daniel were aware that they had witnessed only the partial fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies, namely: the return from exile to Babylon, the restoration of the land and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. They were convinced that in God's perfect time all the words of the prophets would be fulfilled fully. The book of Hebrews in the New Testament says, "The believers in the Old Testament period were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us (the believers in the New Testament period) so that only together with us would they be made perfect!"***[111]

7. The coming Kingdom of God began to be fulfilled at the first coming of Christ

(and *not at his second coming*). At the beginning of the New Testament period 'the rock' in Daniel 2:44 was associated with the other 'rock' passages in the Bible. Jesus Christ,

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[104] cf. Isaiah 9:7
[105] Psalm 145:13
[106] Psalm 146:10
[107] Matthew 6:13; cf. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12
[108] 2 Peter 3:4; Ezekiel 12:22; Matthew 24:48
[109] Ezra 6:13-15
[110] 1 Maccabees 4:36-60
[111] Hebrews 11:39-40

'the stone' which the builders (i.e. the leaders) of Israel rejected[112], has become the capstone[113].

(a) The view of Isaiah during the Old Testament period about 'the rock'. The prophet Isaiah, in referring to Tiglathpileser, the king of Assyria (745-726 B.C.) preaches/teaches that the God of the Bible is himself ***'the Sanctuary'*** (i.e. place of protection) for his own people (the believers). He is also ***'the Stone'*** that causes his enemies to stumble and 'the Rock' that makes people (the unbelievers) in both houses of Israel fall[114]. ***The Triune God of the Bible is himself the Rock, the Great Threat of kings, governments and kingdoms in the world that build their own empires and fortresses***. He is the Rock that will cause their stumbling, fall and destruction. All nations that trust in the kings or governments of this world will certainly stumble, fall and be destroyed! The people who stumble and fall are also those who formally belong to Israel, but fear the king of Assyria (the kingdom of the world) more than they fear the LORD[115].

Isaiah also says, "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed"[116]. God has laid a foundation stone on Mount Zion and this can only refer to the royal house of David, who carries the promise of God[117]. In its deepest sense, this word speaks not of the royal house of David, but of the Promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, in whom this promise is fulfilled[118].

(b) The view of Daniel during the Old Testament period about 'the rock'. The rock, which was cut out of a mountain without any human assistance (2:45), smashed the regimes or dynasties of the kingdom of the world and grew until it became a huge mountain that filled the whole earth (2:35).

In the book of Daniel ***'the rock' symbolises God's power and sovereignty in establishing his everlasting kingdom***, just as "the mountain of the LORD's temple to which all nations will stream to"[119]! The explanation clearly says that ***the new regime or kingdom is of divine origin (2:44)!***

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[112] Psalm 118:22
[113] Matthew 21:42
[114] Isaiah 8:6-15
[115] cf. Isaiah 8:6-8
[116] Isaiah 28:16
[117] 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 refers to the Promised Messiah, Jesus Christ
[118] Romans 9:33; Galatians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:6-8
[119] Isaiah 2:2-3; Ezekiel 17:23; Psalm 2:6; Psalm 48:2-3; cf. Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 14:1

Although Christ[120], Luke[121], Peter[122] and Christians regarded Jesus Christ as this 'rock', there is nevertheless ***NO indication in the book of Daniel that Daniel understood 'the rock' to represent the kingship and Kingdom of the Messiah/Christ himself.***

(c) The view of Jesus Christ during the New Testament period about 'the rock'. In the New Testament Jesus Christ came to fulfil the Old Testament revelation[123]. ***Jesus sees himself as this 'Rock'*** over which some people stumble and are broken to pieces. They and their human kingdoms in the world will be crushed[124]. Jesus is the real embodiment of the kingship (sovereign reign) or Kingdom of God! He says, "The Kingdom of God is near (i.e. I am near). Repent and believe the good news"[125]! He says, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is!' or 'There it is', because the kingdom of God is within you"[126].

Jesus Christ is the Rock, the chosen and precious Cornerstone (the most important foundation stone of a building). The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. He is also ***the Capstone*** (the final large stone at the top of an arch) which the political and religious leaders of the world have rejected. Their disobedience to him will cause them to stumble and fall, to be broken to pieces and crushed[127].

(d) The view of Christians during the New Testament period about 'the rock'. According to the conviction of Christians after the first coming of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ appeared to be the One who caused the ultimate fall of the kingdom of the world and set the establishment of the Kingdom of God in motion. ***The kingdom is inaugurated visibly at the first coming of Christ[128], grows and grows throughout the New Testament period[129] and will be completed and perfected at the second coming of Christ[130].*** The kings of the kingdom of the world "will make war against the Lamb (i.e.

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[120] Matthew 21:42

[121] Acts 4:11

[122] 1 Peter 2:6

[123] "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets (the Old Testament revelation) I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them" (Matthew 5:17).

[124] Matthew 21:42-44; Luke 20:17-18; cf. Luke 2:34; Isaiah 8:13-15

[125] Mark 1:15

[126] Luke 17:20-21.

[127] Luke 20:18

[128] The inauguration of the kingdom takes place at the first coming of Christ (Matthew 4:17,23; 12:28-29; 21:33-44; 23:13; 24:14)

[129] The growth of the kingdom takes place throughout the New Testament period (Matthew 13:31-35; 24:14; Mark 4:8; Colossians 1:12-13)

[130] The perfect completion of the kingdom takes place at the second coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Ephesians 1:10; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 11:15,18).

Christ), but the Lamb will overcome them because he is the Lord of lords and King of kings – and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers (i.e. the born-again Christians)"[131].

(e) The view of dispensationalists in recent years about 'the rock'.

'Dispensationalism' is ***a non-Biblical teaching*** of certain Christians, which is being promoted only since the 18th century especially by John Darby, C.I. Scofield and Dallas Theological Seminary in the USA. They teach that the Bible chronology should be divided into 7 dispensations[132] , and that the last/seventh dispensation is *the so-called "Millennial (1000 year) Kingdom of peace"* which would only come at the second coming of Jesus and not at his first coming. They teach that only after the second coming of Christ, Jesus would rule in peace for 1000 years over the present (still broken and sinful) earth. They base this teaching on their assumptions in Revelation 20:1-7. Study www.dota.net, Manual 12, Supplements 18 and 19.

Daniel chapters 7 to 12.

J. HISTORY OR QUASI-PROPHECY.

1. Narrating history as if it were prophecy.

In Daniel chapters 7-12 ***the scheme of four kingdoms*** is a recurring pattern revealing the destiny of the kingdom of the world within world history.

(a) History in the Book of Daniel is cast in the form of 'quasi-prophecy', that is 'as if it were real prophecy'! Thus history becomes the means to reveal that the unfolding events in the kingdoms of the world have been under the watchful eye and complete control of God!

(b) Daniel chapter 2 is a forward-looking view of the history' of the Babylonian Empire during the 6th century B.C. (four regimes from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus).

(c) Daniel chapter 7 is 'a backward-looking view of the history' in a particular segment of history deliberately kept allusive, because it represents a recuring pattern in history.

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[131] Revelation 17:14

[132] According to dispensationalists 'a dispensation' is *a set period of time (chronology) in history with its own dominant administration*, f.e. 1st dispensation = the period of man's innocence, 2nd dispensation = the period of man's conscience, 3rd dispensation = the period of man's government, 4th dispensation = the period of God's promise, 5th dispensation = the period of God's law (Israel), 6th dispensation = the period of God's grace (the Church) and 7th dispensation = the period of God's millennial kingdom. Dispensationalism is not based on the Bible and is completely arbitrary.

(d) Also Daniel chapter 8-11 is 'a backward looking view of the history: of Persia and Greece in chapter 8; of Jerusalem in chapter 9 and of Syria in chapter 11. Thus, Daniel chapter 7 to 11 is 'quasi-prophecy', that is, history that had already happened or was still happening that becomes the means of revelation. It is narrating history as if it were prophecy. It is history cast in the form of prophecy.

2. The prospect of the book of Daniel is history from the 6th to the 2nd century B.C.

In Daniel chapter 1 to 6 the writer of the book of Daniel relates the history of the Babylonian kingdom that continued as the Medo-Persian kingdom in the 6th century B.C.. Then he sets his vision or perspective of that segment of history in the reign of Belshazzar (about 550 B.C.) in chapter 7:1. The prospect of the book of Ezekiel (593-571 B.C.) is from earlier in the 6th century B.C. to the restoration of the Jewish exiles in Babylon to their land (Ezekiel 38-39). But the prospect of the book of Daniel is from a little later in the 6th century to crises in the 2nd century, that is beyond (or long after) the restoration of the Jews to their land. ***Daniel's insight in the significance of nations and the relationship of international politics (the kingdom of the world) to the rule of God (the Kingdom of God) is received by revelation from the Spirit of Christ in the prophets[133]! His dream in the 2nd century B.C. context is in part God-given (2:19) and in part the result of his reflection on historical events (1:17) between the 6th and 2nd century B.C.. The history of this segment of history became a means of revelation cast in the form of prophecy.***

3. The message of the book of Daniel comes from the past and from the future.

The message in Daniel 2 came to Daniel's implied audience (the readers of the book Daniel in the 2nd century B.C.) from the distant past (the 6th century). ***But the message in Daniel 7 to 12 comes to the readers of the book of Daniel from a distant past (the 6th century B.C.) that anticipated/foretells their present history (the 2nd century B.C. crisis) and from their actual future (the 'end' of that crisis revealed by the angelic beings (12:5-6).*** The message speaks not only of survival under pressure, but of deliverance from pressure. It speaks not only of life in history, but of life in the end of history. It speaks not only of God's past interventions, but of God's final intervention. It speaks not only of past rebukes of human power (human kingdoms), but of a final numbering of that human power's days (2:44; 5:26)!

4. Every crisis in history deepens faith in the power of God.

History becomes revelation when it is viewed in the light of the tradition of what God has said and done in the past[134] and in the light of the word God is speaking now[135]. Daniel looks in the face of the dark realities of history since the 6th century B.C. and especially at the even darker realities of the 2nd century B.C., but insists on ***also gazing***

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[133] 1 Peter 1:10-12. "The prophets …. searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which **the Spirit of Christ** (= Jesus Christ) in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."

[134] Isaiah 14:24,26,27

[135] Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11

steadily at how the future must be, given who God is[136]! The outrages of the present (2nd century B.C. crisis) make it morally necessary for there to be judgement and reversal in the future. Otherwise all that people have believed about God and people's relationship to him is shattered. ***Every crisis in history deepens faith in the power and justice of God rather than destroying faith.*** Of course. Daniel's faith accepts the risk of being accused that his vision is the result of fantasy received in wishful human thinking instead of from angels and the Spirit of Christ.

5. Earlier prophecies in the Old Testament.

Earlier prophecies were put into writing as God's proclamations about ***future events to people that already exist***. They were evidence that they had been given before the events of which they spoke. They were indeed real prophecy, real words of God[137].

6. Later quasi-prophecies in Daniel.

The dreams and visions in the book of Daniel[138] are written down as if they were God's revelation about a crisis still centuries in the future to a people yet unborn. In the literary form of a quasi-prophecy, writing it down is the necessary link between the 'prophet' (Daniel in 6th century B.C.) and his actual audience (in the 2nd century B.C.). Speaking theologically, ***narrating history (between the 6th and 2nd century B.C.) as if it were prophecy affirms that the events that unfold have been within the purview (watchful eye) of God (cf. 2:22) and have been within the complete control of God (cf. 2:21; 4:17)!***

7. The use of symbolism communicates truth without removing all allusiveness.

Daniel 7 is the most allusive chapter in the book and speaks about animal figures and numbers. Its explanation must preserve that feature of allusiveness rather than resolving it by reference to the other chapters.

Daniel 7:2-3,7,10,17,25.

K. DANIEL USES CHRONOGRAPHY, BUT NOT CHRONOLOGY.

1. The numbers in the books of Daniel and Revelation have symbolic significance

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[136] Isaiah 2:12

[137] cf. Isaiah 8:1,16; Isaiah 30:8; Jeremiah 36:1-4; Habakkuk 2:2-3

[138] Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds (Daniel 1:17b). God in heaven is the Revealer of mysteries in which he shows what is going to happen (Daniel 2:27-30).

rather than numerical significance.

The book of Daniel (1 Peter 1:10-12) and the book of Revelation (Revelation 1:1) ***'were made known by means of symbols'*** (Greek: sémainó) by Jesus Christ. ***Symbols*** or pictures (Greek: sémaion) like "the four great beasts" (7:3) and "the Lamb looking as if it had been slain"[139] have ***symbolic meaning that surpass the meaning of the literal pictures***. Also ***numbers*** in the book of Daniel and in the book of Revelation have ***symbolic meaning that surpass the meaning of the literal numbers***.

2. The symbolic meaning/significance of numbers in Daniel and Revelation.

2 The 2 witnesses symbolise 'believers witnessing (Revelation 11:3)[140].

The 2 horns 'symbolise the beast out of the sea/the false prophet making false propaganda and spreading fake news (Revelation 13:11)

3 The number '3' symbolises 'the Triune God' (Revelation 1:4-5)[141].

The 3 parts of the godless city of Babylon the Great symbolise all the cities of the nations collapsing (Revelation 16:19)

3½ The number '3½'symbolises 'a period of tribulation sovereignly limited by God' (3:25; 9:27; 12:7).

F.e. the 3½ years refer to the severe drought in the time of Elijah[142]

The 3½ times symbolises the severe tribulation under Antiochus IV (167-164 B.C.), a type of the antichrists[143].

Throughout the whole New Testament period believers must go through much trouble (John 16:33), face many hardships (Acts 14:22) and wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14). That is why the whole New Testament Period is also called 'the Great Tribulation).

The 42 months symbolises the whole New Testament period during which unbelievers trample on the Church (Revelation 11:2; 13:5)

The 1260 days symbolises the whole New Testament period during which believers proclaim the Gospel (Revelation 11:3; Matthew 24:14)

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[139] Revelation 5:6
[140] cf. Matthew 18:16; Luke 10:1
[141] cf. Matthew 28:19
[142] Luke 4:25; James 5:17
[143] Daniel 7:23-27

The 1260 days symbolises the whole New Testament period during which Satan is bound (Revelation 12:6)

The 3½ times symbolises the whole New Testament period during which the Church is protected out of the reach of Satan (Revelation 12:14)

The 42 months symbolises the whole New Testament period during which many antichrists exercise authority on earth (Revelation 13:5)[144]

The 3½ days symbolises the period of the Great Tribulation in the end time (Matthew 24:21-25; Revelation 11:9,11).

A third does not intend to be taken literally, but symbolises an impressive great number – but not everyone/everything (Revelation 8:7-9; 9:15,18)

4 The number '4' symbolises 'the earth/world with its 4 compass directions' (Revelation 7:1; 20:8)[145]

The 4 great beasts symbolise 'the kingdom of the world' (7:3-7)

which consists of the rest of worldly mankind that do not repent of their evil works (Revelation 9:20-21).

The 4 living creatures around God's heavenly throne are 4 angelic beings surrounding God's throne (Revelation 4:6-7; 5:6)

The 4 angels standing at the 4 corners of the earth, holding back the 4 mighty winds (Revelation 7:1) that are able to destroy anything on earth. God gave them power to harm anything on earth. They symbolise Gods authority and power to judge in the present world.

The 4 angels bound at the Euphrates kept ready to destroy a third of mankind (Revelation 9:14-15)

6 The number '6' symbolises 'man with his limitations'(created on the 6th day) (Revelation 13:16-18).

7 The number '7' symbolises 'the divine completeness (of creation)[146]

The 7-fold Spirit symbolises the Holy Spirit in the doxology to the Triune God (Revelation 1:4)

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[144] 1 John 2:18

[145] cf. Jeremiah 49:36

[146] Genesis 2:1-2

The 7 lampstands represent all Gods churches in the whole world (Revelation 1:20)

The 7 letters symbolise Christ's words to all the churches in the world (Revelation 2:7)

The 7 seals symbolise all apocalyptic events determined by God in human history (Revelation 6:1)

The 7 thunders symbolise all events that are not revealed by God (Revelation 10:3)

The 7 trumpets symbolise all preliminary judgements by which God warns people (Revelation 8:6)

The 7 bowls symbolise God's final wrath over unrepentant humanity.

The enemy with 7 heads symbolise his claim on total omnipotence (Revelation 13:1; 17:3,9-10)

10 The number '10' symbolises 'completeness on earth among people':

f.e. The 10 commandments of God for mankind[147],

The 10 coins entrusted to people[148],

The 10 horns with which the enemy attacks people (7:7,24; Revelation 12:3),

The 10 kings symbolise people in authority among people (Revelation 17:12; 13:1).

A tenth of the city like the 7000 names are not intended to be taken literally, but symbolise greatness and completeness (Revelation 11:13)

12 The number '12'symbolises 'God's work (3) in the world (4) that results in':

(i) God's believing people during the Old Testament period: the 12 (3x4) tribes of Israel (Revelation 12:1; 21:12,21)

(ii) And God's believing people during the New Testament period: the 12 apostles of the Church (Revelation 21:14)[149]

[147] Read Exodus 20:1-17; cf. Matthew 22:36-40

[148] Luke 15:8

[149] Ephesians 2:20

The 12 precious stones and 12 pearls symbolise the dazzling beaty of the New Jerusalem, which consists of all O.T. and N.T. believers.

24 The number '24'symbolises 'the representatives in heaven of God's Old Testament and New Testament people' (12+12) (Revelation 4:4),

who worship and praise him in his heavenly temple (Revelation 4:24)[150].

666 The number '666' symbolises 'the absolute failure of the antichrist (a human) to be like God (777)'.

He fails again and again and again (Revelation 13:18)!

1000 The number '1000' symbolises 'the absolute completeness (10) determined by the Triune God (3) (=10x10x10)':

i.e. 'The Messianic Era' or the period of the 'Kingdom of God on earth' (Revelation 20:1-7) that stretches over alle generations[151]

from the first coming of Christ (Revelation 20:2)[152] to his second coming (Revelation 20:11-15).

10.000 The number '10.000 times 10.000' symbolises 'an uncountable great number' (Revelation 5:11)

12.000 The number '12.000 by 12.000 by 12.000 'symbolises 'the result of the absolute completed (1000) work of salvation

of the Triune God (3) among people in the world (4) that results in 'the new Jerusalem' (Revelation 21:9,10,16)[153].

144.000 The number '144.000' symbolises the absolute complete/full number (1000) of God's redeemed people

in the Old Testament (12) and in the New Testament (12) periods (Revelation 7:3-4; 14:1-3)[154].

3. <u>The symbolic number '3½'</u>

(which is half of the number '7') is ***<u>the symbol of 'a severe period of tribulation and persecution'!</u>*** \

[150] cf. 1 Chronicles 24:1-19
[151] Psalm 90:1-4; Psalm 105:8
[152] Matthew 12:28-29; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8
[153] cf. 1 Kings 6:20; Hebrews 12:22-24
[154] Romans 11:25-26

(a) The Israelites had never forgotten the 3½ years of severe drought in the time of the prophet Elijah (9th century B.C.)(1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17; Luke 4:5). ***Therefore the number 3½ became a symbol in the Bible for every period of severe tribulation.***

(b) It became a symbol for the severe tribulation under the Syrian Antiochus IV from 167-164 B.C. (See the parallel accounts in Daniel 7:21; Daniel 7:25; Daniel 8:11-12; Daniel 8:23-25; Daniel 9:26-27; Daniel 11:28 and the account in the First Book of the Maccabees 1:29-64) and the Second Book of the Maccabees 5:11-26).

(c) It became a symbol for the severe tribulation under the Roman Titus in 70 A.D. when the pagan Romans entered the temple with their pagan gods, destroyed the temple and Jerusalem and exile and killed many Jews (cf. Matthew 24:15-20; Luke 21:20-24).

(d) It became a symbol for the whole New Testament period as a period of great tribulation for believers (Revelation 7:14; Revelation 11:2-3; Revelation 12:6,14; cf. Revelation 20:4)[155].

(e) It became a symbol for the period of severe (the great) tribulation under the final antichrist before the second coming of Jesus (Revelation 11:11; Revelation 13:1-8,11-18; Revelation 20:8-9)[156].

4. <u>The number '4'</u>

(e.g. the four points of the compass) is the symbol for 'totality', the whole earth or world.

But Daniel is not concerned with the world as a whole or even with history as a whole. He is concerned with a particular segment of the world (the Middle East) and a particular segment of history (from the 6th to the 2nd century B.C.)! The interpreter speaks as if the four empires (the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Syrian empires) are still future. ***It represents a complete survey of the history of 'the kingdoms of the world' in that section of world history.***

Daniel 7:13-14.

L. THE HUMANLIKE BEING

1. <u>The humanlike being remains unidentified</u>. 'The humanlike being' (7:13) and its interpreter (7:16) remain unidentified. ***Daniel 7 wants the readers to focus on***

[155] John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12

[156] Matthew 24:21-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,9-12

'the humanlike being' and not on his identity! Therefore, Daniel 8-12 must not be read back into Daniel 7!

2. The humanlike being in contrast to the other animals.

(a) The beasts come up from the sea (7:4). They appeared as a result of a heavenly initiative and within heaven's control (the four winds), but they emerged ***from the sea on the earth***.

'The sea' is a symbol of the turmoil and raging of the nations[157], of the unregenerated and agitated humanity on earth, especially of the seething cauldron of nationalism and socialism out of which the great historical movements of the world emerge. Their emergence from the sea suggests their disorderly and threatening nature.

(b) But the humanlike being comes from heaven (7:13). He is given the authority taken from the beasts. His authority is greater and more lasting! As a human figure he is implicitly destined to exercise authority over the beasts (2:38)[158]. In contrast to the lion-eagle that has become human, the humanlike being is inherently humanlike. In contrast to the leopard that was given authority to rule for some time, the authority of the humanlike being is everlasting and indestructible. In contrast to the little horn who has eyes and a mouth like a human, the human likeness of the humanlike being is genuine, not contrived (not invented). Its heavenly glory is given, not seized.

3. The humanlike being fulfils the responsibility given to man at the creation and the responsibility given to the kings of Israel.

About the humanlike being's identity, besides his origin from heaven, nothing is said. The fact that "he comes with the clouds" (that keep on coming and going)[159] means that his coming brings the exercise of heavenly authority on earth and that the period of oppression on earth will not continue without end. 'The pretence to heavenly authority' by the little horn yields to 'the reality of heavenly authority' by the humanlike being. 'The grasping of earthly authority' is replaced by 'the endowment of heavenly authority'. By ruling God's world on God's behalf, the humanlike being fulfils the responsibility that

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[157] Psalm 65:7; 124:2-5; 144:7; Isaiah 8:17; 17:12-13; 27:1; Jeremiah 46: 7-8; 47:2; Daniel 7:2-8,17,23; Zechariah 10:11; Revelation 13:1; 17:15;
21:1

[158] cf. Genesis 1:28; Jeremiah 27:6

[159] cf. The continual coming of Jesus (through his Spirit) either to judge (Revelation 2:5,16) or to save (Revelation 3:20) throughout the New
Testament period until his final coming in his glorious resurrected body at his second coming (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7)!

was once given to humanity as a whole at the creation[160] and later bestowed on the kings of Israel in particular[161].

The realization of God's creation ideal does not come through the world becoming more human[162], but through God's gift of the humanlike being. Governments in the world are inclined to see themselves as the embodiments of order, but the best they can really do is to restrain disorder. They act like lawgivers and policemen, but easily end up running a police-state. ***The real order does not come from the earthly kingdoms, but from heaven, not from humans, but from God!*** Peoples and nations and men of every language acknowledged the authority of Nebuchadnezzar (5:19), but Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged the absolute authority of God (4:3, 34-35). Also Darius acknowledged the absolute authority of God (6:26-27). Now ***in Daniel 7:13-14 people from all races, nations and languages acknowledge that this absolute authority has been given to the humanlike being*** who takes the place of Nebuchadnezzar and all succeeding empires.

4. The symbol of the humanlike being can be re-applied to the period after the four kingdoms.

The humanlike being does not fight like the Messiah[163], but is simply invested with authority. Also the holy ones on high do not fight, but are simply handed over to the fourth beast for a period of 3½ times[164].

Because the vision in Daniel chapter 7 contains:

(i) no hint of the humanlike being fighting;

(ii) no exhortation to any form of resistance to Antiochus IV;

(iii) no hint that human acts on earth would bring about the everlasting kingdom,

the human like being in all these governments may be a ruler or a government that becomes either like one of the four beasts or like the humanlike being! The symbol can be re-applied to the Roman empire that followed the Greek-Syrian empire and to all consecutive and modern governments in the world! Earthly governments receive authority from God to do what is right[165] and some earthly rulers do what is right in the

[160] Genesis 1-2
[161] e.g. Deuteronomy 17:15-20
[162] By human technological inventions, human rights, human politics. Etc.
[163] Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 2:16; 17:14; 19:11-21; 20:7-10; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:8
[164] cf. Revelation 13:5-7
[165] Romans 13:1-2

eyes of the Lord[166], but many rulers and governments in the history of the world have become like the frightening fourth beast – an anti-God tyrant. Human history has shown that the Israelites (and Christians) do not make less oppressive rulers than the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks or Syrians!

5. The vision of Daniel 7 looks at the possibility of human power and arrogance

toppling the rule of heaven over the world.

The little horn "wages war against the saints (holy beings) and defeats (overcomes) them" (7:21)[167]. "He will cause astounding devastation, ... he will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. ... He will take his stand against the Prince of princes (a leader supreme)" (cf. 8:24-25). But the vision concludes affirmatively that ***although the powers of heaven and the people of God may be assailed and hurt[168], the God of the Bible will still have the last word!***[169] It is precisely the defeat of the holy ones (i.e. the believers) that brings their attacker's downfall[170]. ***The vision in Daniel 7 teaches that the anti-God tyrant does not have the last word! The one who fulfils this vision will be those individuals or governments who come from God and who can be perceived as sharing God's priorities.***

6. The humanlike being considered in the light of the coming of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. ***Jesus' birth, ministry, and death were not what people during the Old Testament period expected of God's Redeemer.*** Daniel himself does not seem to know what the giving of kingship to a holy people on high (7:27) would look like. ***The 'prophet', 'priest', 'king' and 'the son of man' are types and role models of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament revelation***. Jesus Christ fulfils a place analogous to each of these types[171].
The title 'the Son of Man'[172] is a literalistic rendering of the phrase in Daniel 7:13, though the link is more formal than substantial. Thus, ***the first coming of Christ initiates/inaugurates the reign of God on earth*** that Daniel 7 promised. The proclamation of Jesus that the Kingdom has come[173] reflects Daniel's description of "the holy ones receiving the Kingdom" (7:18).

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[166] 2 Chronicles 14:2; 17:3-4; 24:2; 29:2; 34:2.

[167] cf. Revelation 13:7

[168] Compare this with John 16:33, "In the world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

[169] Note Romans 8:35-39. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger

or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are

more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor

the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in

Christ Jesus our Lord."

[170] Compare this with God "disarming the powers and authorities" through Jesus Christ being crucified (Colossians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 2:8).

[171] Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (prophet). Hebrews 8:1-2 (priest). Revelation 19:16 (king). Daniel 7:13 (son of man).

[172] cf. Matthew 9:6; 12:8; 16:28; 19:28; 24:30

[173] Mark 1:15

Only during the New Testament period does it become clear that 'the humanlike being' is fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ! Only in the light of the New Testament revelation, is Jesus Christ indeed the One who was to come in human likeness[174] from heaven[175] during his first coming to receive a kingdom and to accept the honour of all the nations. And Jesus Christ is indeed the One still to come on the clouds of heaven during his second coming[176]. The rule of God (the Kingdom of God) on earth has been inaugurated at the first coming of Christ and will be perfected/finalised at the second coming of Christ.

Daniel 7:25.

M. DANIEL SPEAKS OF 'AN ANTI-GOD TYRANT'

WHILE REVELATION SPEAKS OF 'THE ANTI-CHRIST'.

1. In the book of Daniel during the Old Testament period there is an anti-God tyrant.

He is Antiochus IV, the ruler of Syria. He supported ***the pro-Syrian liberal Jews in Jerusalem who wanted to change the culture of Gods people (in Jerusalem) to become like the Greek-Syrian culture of the world***. So this ruler oppressed and made war for ***7 years*** between 171-164 B.C. against the conservative Jews in Jerusalem who worshipped in the second temple. Thus, ***during the Old Testament period Antiochus IV became the symbol of an anti-God tyrant***. He would "speak against the Most High (God), oppress the believers in God and try to change the set times and laws set by God" (7:25). "War would continue until the end (of that period of tribulation)". "In the middle of that period (167 B.C.) he would make a covenant (an agreement)" with the liberal Jews in Jerusalem to support them, put an end to the sacrifices in the temple and build an abominable idolatrous altar for the Greek god Zeus on top of the altar of burnt offerings. God would sovereignly hand the believers over to him, but only for a symbolic "time, times and half a time", another symbol for 3½ years between 167-164 B.C. (7:25).

2. In the book of Revelation during the New Testament period there are *many anti-Christs*[177].

They have similar anti-God characteristics. ***The final anti-Christ*** "will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple (the Christian Church)[178], proclaiming himself to be God"[179].

Daniel 9:24-27

[174] Luke 1:31-32; Revelation 1:13
[175] John 6:38
[176] Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7
[177] 1 John 2:18
[178] We (Christians) are the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16)
[179] 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:7; 13:1-8,14-17; 16:13-14; 17:3; 19:19-20.

N. STRUCTURING HISTORY WITH CHRONOGRAPHY.

1. Chronology is the science of computing dates (time) within history.

Ancient and modern interpreters have commonly taken Daniel 9:24-27 as designed to convey literal chronological information which can be confirmed by historical data.

(a) One ancient interpreter[180] calculated the 70x7 = 490 years as follows:

(i) 69x7 = 483 years between the commission of Artaxerxes in 445/444 B.C. to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in A.D. 32/33.

(ii) ***The 70th seven is postponed to represent 'the Great Tribulation' just before the second coming of Jesus Christ, thus creating a long unexplained interval or 'gap' in the New Testament period!***

This is unlikely, because it is not obvious why the word about building a restored Jerusalem should be connected with the commission of Artaxerxes to rebuild *only the walls* of Jerusalem. It is also not obvious why we must accept a 360 day instead of a 365¼ day *year*, nor why the 70th seven should be *separated* by a long 'gap' from the 69 sevens, nor why we should date *Nehemiah's commission* in 444 B.C. and *Christ's death* in A.D. 32 when the usually preferred dates are 445 B.C. and A.D. 30 or 33[181].

(b) A modern interpreter[182] calculated the 70x7 = 490 years (Daniel 9:24) by adding the following three periods together:

(i) 49 years from Jeremiah's prophecy in 605 B.C. to Cyrus' accession in 556 B.C..

(ii) 434 years from Jeremiah's prophecy in 605 B.C. to the murder of Onias III in 171 B.C.. and

(iii) 7 years of persecution by Antiochus IV (171-164 B.C.).

This is unlikely, because there is no explanation why two concurrent periods of time should be added together.

Interpreters should not try to vindicate or to fault Daniel's figures with exact historical data, because ***Daniel does not offer chronological information, but rather chronographical information.***

2. Chronography is a stylized scheme of history used to interpret historical data.

[180] Julius Africanus as reported by Eusebius of Caesarea, who lived from approximately AD 260/265 to May 30, AD 339.

[181] J. Finegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, 1964

[182] Behrmann

Chronography in the book of Judges speaks of 'periods of 40 years' of peace or oppression, which does not seem to give chronological information[183]. Chronography in the book of Kings says that the building of the first temple began 480 years or 12 generations of each 40 years after the exodus[184] and this does not look like a chronological note. This way of structuring history appears elsewhere in the writings of the Persian and Greek periods. Compare:

(a) ***chronography in history*** in the book of Daniel with:

(b) ***chronography in cosmology***: the '2' great lights[185],

(c) ***chronography in genealogy***: the '3x14 generations'[186] (because between the kings Jehoram and Uzziah the following four rulers are missing: Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash and Amaziah[187]

(d) ***chronography in numerology***: the '144000' who had the name of the Lamb and his Father's name on their foreheads[188] (cf. the 144000 sealed from all the tribes of Israel)[189].

3. Structuring history with the symbolic number '70 sevens'.

In Daniel chapter 9 the section of history is symbolically '70 sevens of years' long and its beginning lies ahead of the historical Daniel in 539 B.C., but had not yet ended for the writer Daniel in the 160s B.C.. It is a chronographical description of the 4 kingdom period in this segment of secular and divine history of the world.

(a) It denotes years. The period of '70 seventy sevens' presumably denotes '70 times seven *years*, because the original 'seventy' of Jeremiah was explicitly a period of *years* (9:2).

(b) Its beginning. The period of '70 sevens begins from Jeremiah's '70 years', which was hardly a chronological calculation, but rather a term denoting a period such as 'a human lifetime' that extended beyond the years that the hearers would see.

(c) It combines two numbers. The period of ***'70 sevens' combines the symbolical 'seventy years' of Babylonian exile (a punishment)[190] with the symbolical principle of***

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[183] Judges 8:28; Judges 13:1
[184] 1 Kings 6:1
[185] Genesis 1:16
[186] Matthew 1:1-17
[187] 1 Chronicles 3:10-14
[188] Revelation 14:1
[189] Revelation 7:4
[190] Jeremiah 25:11 or Jeremiah 29:10

'sevenfold punishment' from Leviticus[191] as the sins of the Israelites deserve, because during the period of all the kings of Israel (1032-586 B.C.)[192] the Israelites had failed to keep the sabbatical years. According to Leviticus 25:1-7 and Leviticus 26:31-35,43 the land of Israel would have 'the rest' it did not have during the sabbaths the Israelites lived in it.

(d) Its end. The period of 70 sevens ends when God's purpose with that period of history has been attained: that is, it would end when *once more* (the city of Jerusalem and) the temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed (i.e. desecrated in 171 B.C.) and rebuild (i.e. consecrated in 164 B.C.). Thus, ***the number '70 sevens' also has symbolical or theological significance***. In Daniel 9:24 the angel Gabriel explains that ***the number '70 sevens' represents God's fixed period (the full number of years) to attain his purpose in this segment of divine and secular history.***

'The end' of this symbolical period of '70 sevens' represents God's forgiveness and acceptance of his people in this segment of divine and secular history. "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand *double*[193] for all her sins"[194].

Daniel 11:30b-36

O. THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS OF THE MACCABEES.

Read a description of the tribulation under Antiochus IV in the book of Daniel and in the books of the Maccabees. The apocryphal books 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees were probably written in the late 2nd century B.C., originally in Hebrew, but survived in the Greek translation. The history of the Seleucid-Syrian Empire was calculated from its beginning in 312 B.C..

1. Canonical Daniel 11:30b-36.

30b *Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant (the conservative Jews in Jerusalem who worshipped the Triune God). He will return and show favour to those who forsake the holy covenant (the liberal Jews in Jerusalem who introduced the godless Greek civilisation).* ***31*** *His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation (the altar of*

[191] Leviticus 26:18,21,24,28

[192] 446 years

[193] 'Double' does not mean 'twice as much' punishment, but rather a punishment 'equivalent' to her sins (cf. Revelation 18:6).

[194] Isaiah 40:1-2

the Greek god Zeus). ***32*** *With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.* ***33*** *Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered.* ***34*** *When they fall they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them.* ***35*** *Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.* ***36*** *The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place."*

2. <u>Apocryphal 1 Maccabees 1:20-64</u>.

20 After subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the one hundred and forty-third year (from the beginning of the Seleucid-Syrian Empire)(169 B.C.). He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. **21** He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. **22** He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. **23** He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures which he found. **24** Taking them all, he departed to his own land. He committed deeds of murder, and spoke with great arrogance. **25** Israel mourned deeply in every community, **26** rulers and elders groaned, maidens and young men became faint, the beauty of women faded. **27** Every bridegroom took up the lament; she who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning. **28** Even the land shook for its inhabitants, and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame.

29 Two years later (167 B.C.) the king sent to the cities of Judah a chief collector of tribute, and he came to Jerusalem with a large force. **30** Deceitfully he spoke peaceable words to them, and they believed him; but he suddenly fell upon the city, dealt it a severe blow, and destroyed many people of Israel. **31** He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. **32** And they took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle.

33 Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. **34** And they stationed there a sinful people, lawless men. These strengthened their position; **35** they stored up arms and food, and collecting the spoils of Jerusalem they stored them there, and became a great snare. **36** It became an ambush against the sanctuary, an evil adversary of Israel continually. **37** On every side of the sanctuary they shed innocent blood; they even defiled the sanctuary. **38** Because of them

the residents of Jerusalem fled; she became a dwelling of strangers; she became strange to her offspring, and her children forsook her. **39** Her sanctuary became desolate as a desert; her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into a reproach, her honour into contempt. **40** Her dishonour now grew as great as her glory; her exaltation was turned into mourning.

41 Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom (the edict:) that *all should be one people*, **42** *and that each should give up his customs*. **43** *All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath*. **44** *And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land*, **45** *to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and feasts*, **46** *to defile the sanctuary and the priests*, **47** *to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and unclean animals*, **48** *and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane*, **49** *so that they should forget the law and change all the ordinances*. **50** *"And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die."*

51 In such words he wrote to his whole kingdom. And he appointed inspectors over all the people and commanded the cities of Judah to offer sacrifice, city by city. **52** Many of the people, everyone who forsook the law, joined them, and they did evil in the land; **53** they drove Israel into hiding in every place of refuge they had.

Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year (December **54** *167 B.C.), they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah,* **55** *and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets*. **56** *The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire*. **57** *Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of any one, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death.* **58** *They kept using violence against Israel, against those found month after month in the cities.*

And on the twenty-fifth day of the month (25th December 167 B.C.) they offered sacrifice **59** *on the altar which was upon the altar of burnt offering.* **60** *According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised*, **61** *and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks.*

62 But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. **63** They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. **64** And very great wrath came upon Israel.