

NOTES ON DANIEL¹

I. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

The book of Daniel is perhaps the most attacked book in the Old Testament. Liberal critics simply cannot accept the idea that God could reveal the future to Daniel. So since the book contains the amazingly accurate predictions of the four world empires in chapters 2 & 7, they dismiss the veracity of the book out of hand. Skeptics have also tried to discredit the book of Daniel by questioning its historical accuracy, the languages contained in it, etc. But we unapologetically believe in the absolute integrity, authenticity and inspiration of the book, and reject all such spurious attacks. Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, one of the greatest Old Testament scholars in history (a man who knew 45 languages and dialects), ably defended the book of Daniel, answering many of the objections of the critics of Daniel in arguments that remain largely unanswered to this present day.² Subsequent archaeological discoveries in more recent times have also established the incredible accuracy of people and places described in the book of Daniel, providing an additional powerful testimony to its inerrancy and inspiration.³

Daniel is also the most important book on the subject of prophecy in the entire Old Testament. Consequently it is vitally important that it be studied and understood if one is to understand and interpret correctly the book of Revelation. The two books go hand in hand, and any attempt to understand Revelation must be coupled with an equally diligent study of Daniel. Furthermore, a proper understanding of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and the material contained in II Thessalonians 2, likewise require that one correctly understand and interpret Daniel, particularly the sections that refer to the “*abomination of desolation*,” the “*seventy weeks*,” the images in chapters 2 & 7, and other prophetic concepts mentioned in Daniel. Walvoord writes:

“Of the three prophetic programs revealed in Scripture, outlining the course of the nations, Israel, and the church, Daniel alone reveals the details of God’s plan for both the nations and Israel...and is the key to the entire Old Testament prophetic revelation. A study of this book is, therefore, not only important from the standpoint of determining the revelation of one of the great books of the Old Testament but is an indispensable preliminary investigation to any complete eschatological system.”⁴

II. AUTHORSHIP: “Although Daniel does not speak of himself in the first person until chapter 7, there is little question that the book presents Daniel as its author. This is assumed in the latter portion of the book and mentioned especially in 12:4. The use of the first person with the name Daniel is found repeatedly in the last half of the book (7:2, 15, 28; 8:1, 15, 27; 9:2, 22; 10:2, 7, 11, 12; 12:5) ...the claim of Daniel to have written this book is recognized even by those who reject it.”⁵

III. DATE: “Except for the attack of the pagan **Porphyry** (third century A.D.), no question was raised concerning the traditional sixth century B.C. date, the authorship of Daniel the prophet, or the genuineness of the book until the rise of higher criticism in the seventeenth century, more than two thousand years after the book was written. **Important confirmation of the historicity of Daniel himself is found in three passages in Ezekiel (Ezek. 14:14, 20; 28:3)**, written after Daniel had assumed an important post in the king’s court at Babylon. Convincing also to conservative scholars is the reference to ‘*Daniel the prophet*’ by Christ in the Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14). [Not surprisingly] Higher critics normally question the traditional authorship and dates of books in both the Old and New Testaments, and therefore disallow the testimony of the book of Daniel itself, dispute the mention of Daniel by Ezekiel, and discount the support by Christ in the New Testament. But conservative scholars have given almost universal recognition to the book of Daniel as an authentic sixth century B.C. composition of Daniel, the captive of Nebuchadnezzar.”⁶

Walvoord observes, “The denial that the book was in existence in the sixth century B.C. disregards the three citations referring to Daniel in Ezekiel (Eze 14:14, 20; 28:3), as well as all the evidence in the book of Daniel itself. Liberal critics tend to disregard the references to Daniel in Ezekiel. James Montgomery [a liberal], for instance, states, ‘*There is then no reference to our Daniel as an historic person in the Heb. O.T.*’ [sic] Montgomery holds that Ezekiel’s reference is to another character whom he describes as ‘the name of an evidently traditional saint.’ **[However] the ‘traditional saint’ mentioned by**

¹ Notes compiled by Rev. Mike Edwards, Baptist Bible College of the Caribbean, P.O. Box 127, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, West Indies, February, 2008, revised Jan, 2012. **Explanatory note:** All statements inside quotations that are found in parentheses () appear as such in the texts cited. Words & comments in brackets [], as well as all bolding and much of the italicizing has been added by me. -mwe

² See Robert Dick Wilson “*Studies in the Book of Daniel*”, “*Book of Daniel*” in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, “*The Aramaic of Daniel*” in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, & “*Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?*” (The Sunday School Times Company: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1922 and 1950); see also Josh McDowell “*Evidence that Demands a Verdict*” (Thomas Nelson Publishers: Nashville, Tennessee, 1999), pp. 511-517 which has a very helpful section & quotes by Wilson.

³ See, for example, Peter Masters “*Heritage of Evidence in the British Museum*” (The Wakeman Trust: London, England, 2004), pp. 90-97, which includes some excellent photos of archaeological discoveries that support the accounts in such books as Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther, which bear directly on the prophecies in Daniel.

⁴ John F. Walvoord, “*Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*” (Moody Press: Chicago, Illinois, 1971), p. 7

⁵ Walvoord, p. 11

⁶ Walvoord, p. 11

Montgomery refers to a ‘Daniel’ who apparently lived about 1400 B.C. In 1930, several years after Montgomery wrote his commentary, archeologists digging at ancient Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) found some clay tablets detailing a legend of a Canaanite by the name of Aqhat who was the father of a man called Daniel. In the tablet Daniel is portrayed as being a friend of widows and orphans, and as a man who was unusually wise and righteous in his judgments. This is the one who Montgomery asserts is referred to in Ezekiel 14:14, 20 as a worthy character on the same plane as Noah and Job. Daniel, the son of Aqhat, however, was a Baal worshiper who prayed to Baal and partook of food in the house of Baal. He is pictured as worshipping his ancestral gods and offering oblations to idols. He was also guilty of cursing his enemies and living without a real hope in God. It is hard to imagine that Ezekiel, writing by inspiration, would hold up such a character as an example of a godly man. Such judgment is hardly in keeping with the facts.”⁷

IV. GENERAL OUTLINE, OVERVIEW & COMMENTS ABOUT THE BOOK:

a) There are several ways of outlining the book of Daniel. The two most obvious ones are:

By content:

Daniel 1-6 – Historical

Daniel 7-12 – Predictive (apocalyptic), or

By language:

Daniel 1 – Introduction (in Hebrew)

Daniel 2-7 – Emphasis on Gentiles (in Aramaic)

Daniel 8-12 – Emphasis on Israel in relation to Gentiles (in Hebrew).

Walvoord states:

*“The traditional division of the book of Daniel into two halves (1-6; 7-12) has usually been justified on the basis that the first six chapters are historical and the last six chapters are apocalyptic or predictive. There is much to commend this division which often also regards chapter 1 as introductory...An alternative approach, recognizing the Aramaic section as being significant, divides the book into three major divisions: (1) Introduction, Daniel 1; (2) The Times of the Gentiles, presented in Aramaic, Daniel 2-7; (3) Israel in Relation to the Gentiles, in Hebrew, Daniel 8-12. This view is advanced by Robert Culver following Carl A. Auberlen. Although this has not attracted the majority of conservative scholars, it has the advantage of distinguishing the program of God for the Gentiles and His program for Israel, with the break coming at the end of chapter 7. Robert Dick Wilson recognizes both principles of division.”*⁸

b) The use of different languages in Daniel: Walvoord’s statement quoted earlier, addresses well this issue: “An unusual feature of the book of Daniel is the fact that the central portion (2:4-7:28) is written in biblical Aramaic also called Chaldee (AV, ‘Syriack’). A similar use of Aramaic is found in Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jer. 10:11; and the two words of the compound name Jegar-Sahadutha in Genesis 31:47. The use of the Aramaic, which was the lingua franca of the period, was related to the fact that the material concerned the Gentile world rather than Israel directly. The fact that there are similar portions elsewhere in the bible should make clear that there is nothing unusual or questionable about the Aramaic section in Daniel. As pointed out by Brownlee, the shifts from Hebrew to Aramaic and back again in Daniel are found in the scrolls of Daniel at Qumran, supporting the legitimacy of this feature of the Massoretic text commonly used in English translations.”⁹

Archer gives a simple, but very plausible explanation for the different languages found in Daniel:

“As to the question of why half the book was written in Aramaic and half in Hebrew, the reason for the choice is fairly obvious. Those portions of Daniel’s prophecy which deal generally with Gentile affairs (the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the humiliation of that king in the episode of the fiery furnace and by his seven years of insanity, and also the experiences of Belshazzar and Darius the Mede) were put into a linguistic medium which all the public could appreciate whether Jew or Gentile. But those portions which were of particularly Jewish interest (chaps. 1, 8-12) were put into Hebrew in order that they might be understood by the Jews alone. This was peculiarly appropriate because of the command in chapter 12 to keep these later predictions more or less secret and seal them up until the time of fulfillment (12:9).”¹⁰

c) The apocalyptic nature of the book of Daniel. “The book of Daniel is rightly classified as an apocalyptic writing, because of its series of supernatural visions which by their character fulfilled what is intimated by the Greek word *apokalypsis*, which means **unveiling of truth** which would otherwise be concealed. Although apocalyptic works abound outside the Bible, relatively few are found in Scripture. **In the New Testament only the book of Revelation can be**

⁷ Walvoord, p. 19

⁸ Walvoord, p. 15

⁹ Walvoord, p. 14

¹⁰ Archer, pp. 434-435

classified as apocalyptic; but in the Old Testament, Ezekiel and Zechariah may be so classified in addition to Daniel."¹¹

Nonetheless, the fact that the book of Daniel is considered an apocalyptic writing has been used by critics as a reason to reject the credibility of the book. Even some conservative writers appear to have swallowed such liberal thinking in regard to this subject of apocalyptic writing, granting undue credibility to critics.¹² Walvoord gives a good, succinct refutation of the critical position regarding the ramifications of Daniel being an apocalyptic writing:

"A more particular attack...is made on the book of Daniel on the ground that it is apocalyptic and therefore unworthy of serious study as prophecy. That there are many spurious apocalyptic works both in the Old Testament period and in the Christian era can be readily granted. [But] [1] The existence of the spurious is not a valid argument against the possibility of genuine apocalyptic revelation anymore than a counterfeit dollar bill is proof that there is no genuine dollar bill. [2] If Daniel were the only apocalyptic work in the entire Scriptures, the argument could be taken more seriously; but the other apocalyptic sections of the Old Testament, and the crowning work of the New Testament, the book of Revelation, have usually been considered adequate evidence that the apocalyptic method is sometimes used by God to reveal prophetic truth. [3] Further, it should be observed in the book of Daniel that the apocalyptic is not left to human interpretation, but along with the revelation is given divine interpretation which delivers the biblical apocalyptic from the vague, obscure, and subjective interpretations often necessary in spurious works. [4] Actually, the problem in Daniel is not that the apocalyptic sections are obscure, but critics object to clear prophetic truth which is therein presented. [5] The argument sometimes advanced, that apocalyptic writings had not yet begun in Daniel's time in the sixth century B.C., is of course answered by the contemporary work of Ezekiel and [6] the essential weakness of such an argument from silence. [7] Actually, apocalyptic writings extended over a long period. Conservative scholarship, accordingly, while admitting the apocalyptic character of the book of Daniel, rejects this as a valid ground for questioning the sixth century authorship and therefore the genuineness of the book."

V. CRITICAL ATTACKS ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL. As mentioned above, the book of Daniel has been the recipient of an enormous number of critical attacks. **Walvoord summarizes the main areas where liberal critics have raised objections:**

"These critical objections...may be grouped under six heads: (1) rejection of its canonicity; (2) rejection of detailed prophecy; (3) rejection of miracles; (4) textual problems; (5) problems of language; & (6) alleged historical inaccuracies."¹³

I would like to present a brief synopsis of each of the six categories listed above, and include short rebuttals of each of the arguments of critics in each respective area. After that I wish to zero in on a few of the more well-known examples, giving fuller refutations to each of them by recognized scholars.

Rejection of Daniel's canonicity. Critics of Daniel maintain that since that the book of Daniel is included in the section of the Hebrew Old Testament called "*the Writings*," rather than in the third section (*the Prophets*) is because "it was not in existence when the canon of the prophets was closed, allegedly between 300-200 B.C."¹⁴ [sic]

Rebuttal: "[1] [But]...Daniel was not included [with the prophets] because his work was of a different character from that of the other prophets. Daniel was primarily a government official, and he was not commissioned to preach to the people and deliver an oral message from God as was, for instance, Isaiah or Jeremiah. It is questionable whether his writings were distributed in his lifetime. [2] Further, the Writings were not so classified because they were late in date, inasmuch as they included such works as Job and 1 and 2 Chronicles, but the division was on the classification of the material in the volumes. [3] Most important, the Writings were considered just as inspired and just as much the Word of God as the Law and the Prophets. This is brought out by the fact that Daniel is included in the Septuagint along with other inspired works, which would indicate that it was regarded as a genuine work of inspiration."¹⁵

"If the Ezekiel references were insufficient, certainly the clear attestation of Christ to the genuineness of Daniel in Matthew 24:15 should be admitted as valid. As Boutflower expresses it,

"Now, what is the witness of Christ respecting this Book of Daniel, for it is evident from His position as a teacher, His tastes, and the time at which He lived, that He must know the truth of the matter; whilst from His lofty morality we are sure that He will tell us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. How does Christ treat this Book, of which the critics form so low an estimate, regarding it as a religious romance with a pseudonymous title, and its prophetic portion as a Jewish

¹¹ Walvoord, p. 13

¹² Cf. Dillard & Longman III, pp. 342-345

¹³ Walvoord, p. 18

¹⁴ Merrill Unger (who does *not* believe this), merely describing the standard liberal/critical viewpoint, in Walvoord, p. 19

¹⁵ Walvoord, p. 19

apocalypse, a vaticinium post eventum? The answer is that this is the Book which Christ specially delights to honour. To Him its title is no pseudonym, but the name of a real person. 'Daniel the prophet'—'the prophet' in the sense of one inspired of God to foretell the future, 'what shall come to pass hereafter.' Our Saviour in His own great Advent prophecy—Matt. xxiv.—uttered on the eve of His death, quotes this Book of Daniel no less than three times (Matt. 24:15, 21; cf. Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:30 cf. Dan. 7:13).'"

Rejection of Daniel's detailed prophecies. Once again, this is an *a priori* objection, and one which betrays a much deeper problem: disbelief in God &/or that such a God knows the future and is able to reveal it unto men. Dillard & Longman highlight a classic example of the anti-supernatural bias of liberal critics, commenting thusly: "Towner in his comments on Daniel 8 (1984, 115) expresses an opinion that appears to be operative in much critical thinking about Daniel:

'We need to assume that the vision as a whole is a prophecy after the fact. Why? Because human beings are unable accurately to predict future events centuries in advance and to say that Daniel could do so, even on the basis of a symbolic revelation vouchsafed to him by God and interpreted by an angel, is to fly in the face of the certainties of human nature. So what we have here is in fact not a road map of the future laid down in the sixth century B.C., but an interpretation of the events of the author's own time, 167-164 B.C....[sic]'"¹⁶

Dillard and Longman rightly comment in reply: "Towner bases his distrust of Daniel's prophecy in the '*certainties of human nature.*' **This presupposition is unacceptable, not because he is wrong about human nature, but because he discounts the power of God** to speak predictively and, indeed, without error through sinful human agency."¹⁷

Rebuttal: If one believes in God—specifically the God described in the Bible—for Him to reveal future events to a human being is no problem at all! As Walvoord has well stated, "In the original objection of Porphyry to Daniel, the premise was taken that prophecy is impossible. This, of course, is based on a rejection of theism in general, a denial of the doctrine of supernatural revelation as is ordinarily assumed in the Scriptures by conservative scholars, and a disregard of the omniscience of God which includes foreknowledge of all future events. The defense of the possibility of prophecy should be unnecessary in treating the Scriptures inasmuch as it is related to the total apology for the Christian faith."¹⁸

Rejection of Daniel's miracles. Some critical scholars reject the book of Daniel merely on the basis that it contains stories that are plainly miraculous.

Rebuttal: [1] As almost anyone realizes, if you are going to reject the inspiration and authenticity of Daniel because it contains miraculous predictions, actions & deliverances, then you're going to have to throw out the entire Bible. "If the book of Daniel is to be considered spurious on the ground that it presents miracles, it would follow that most of the Scriptures would also be eliminated as valid inspired writings. [2] The objection to miracles reveals the essentially naturalistic point of view of some of the critics. Daniel's miracles are no more unusual than some of those attributed to Christ in the gospels or to Moses and Aaron in the Pentateuch. Aside from the supernatural as related to revelation in the Bible, the deliverance of Daniel's three companions in Daniel 3 and of Daniel himself in Daniel 6 is no more unusual than Christ passing through the mob that was threatening to throw Him over a cliff (Lk. 4:29-30) or Peter's deliverance from prison (Acts 12:5-11). In the biblical context, the rejection of a book because of miraculous incidents must be judged invalid."¹⁹

Alleged textual problems. Walvoord remarks: "Critics have raised textual problems almost without number in relation to the book of Daniel..."

Rebuttal: [1] "[the critics]...have also contradicted each other, testifying to the subjective character of these criticisms. Critics have especially concentrated on the Aramaic portions, alleging many redactions and various degrees of tampering with the text; but there is wide divergence in their findings... [2] Robert Dick Wilson, probably the outstanding authority on ancient languages of the Middle East, summarized his findings in these words:

'We claim, however, that the composite Aram [Aramaic] of Daniel agrees in almost every particular of orthography, etymology and syntax, with the Aram. Of the North Sem [Semitic] inscriptions of the 9th, 8th and 7th centuries B.C., and of the Egyp [Egyptian] papyri of the 5th century B.C., and that the vocabulary of Daniel has an admixture of Heb, Bab [Babylonian] and Pers [Persian] words similar to that of the papyri of the 5th century B.C.; whereas, it differs in composition from the Aram. Of the Nabateans, which is devoid of Pers, Heb, and Bab words, and is full of Arabisms, and also from that of the Palmyrenes, which is full of Gr [Greek] words, while having but one or two Pers words, and no Heb or Bab.'

¹⁶ Dillard & Longman III, p. 332

¹⁷ Dillard & Longman, p. 332

¹⁸ Walvoord, p. 21

¹⁹ Walvoord, p. 22

[3] “Wilson finds the textual problems are no different from that of other books whose genuineness has not been assailed. While problems of text continue in the book of Daniel as in many other books in the Old Testament, these problems in themselves are not sufficiently supported by factual evidence to justify disbelief in the present text of Daniel. As in many other arguments against Daniel, [4] **the presuppositions of the higher critics which lead to these arguments are in themselves suspect**; and [5] the widespread disagreement among the critics themselves as to the nature and extent of the textual problem tends to support the conclusion that they are invalid.”²⁰

Alleged problems of language. Various accusations regarding languages used in Daniel have been leveled by the skeptics. “Critics have objected to the presence of various Greek and Persian words in the book of Daniel as if this proved a late date.

Rebuttal: [1] “...in the light of recent archeological discoveries this objection is no longer valid [2] *[Regarding the use of Greek words]* “It has now been proved that one hundred years before Daniel Greek mercenaries served in the Assyrian armies under the command of Esarhaddon (683 B.C.) as well as in the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar. As Robert Dick Wilson has noted, if Daniel had been written in the second century, there would have been far more Greek words rather than the few that occur. Yamauchi has also demonstrated that the critical objections to Greek words in Daniel are without foundation...²¹ [3] “*[Regarding the use of Persian words]* the use of Persian words is certainly not strange in view of the fact that Daniel himself lived in the early years of the Persian Empire and served as one of its principal officials. [!] He naturally would use contemporary Persian description of various officials in chapter 3 in an effort to update the understanding of these offices for those living after the Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 B.C.”²² [4] ***To the charge that the Aramaic of Daniel was not used in Babylon:*** “The argument that the Aramaic of Daniel was western and not used in Babylon, as popularized by S.R. Driver, now has been clearly shown to be erroneous by later archaeological evidence. As Martin observes (relative to Driver’s contention), ‘*When he (Driver) wrote, the only material available was too late to be relevant. Subsequently, R.D. Wilson, making use of earlier materials that had come to light, was able to show that the distinction between Eastern and Western Aramaic did not exist in pre-Christian times. This has since been amply confirmed by H.H. Schaefer.*’”²³ [5] ***To the charge that the use of Aramaic somehow brings into question the inspiration and canonicity of Daniel:*** “As Gleason L. Archer expresses the Aramaic problem, ‘The Jews apparently took no exception to the Aramaic sections in the book of Ezra, most of which consists in copies of correspondence carried on in Aramaic between the local governments of Palestine and the Persian imperial court from approximately 520 to 460 B.C. If Ezra can be accepted as an authentic document from the middle of the fifth century, when so many of its chapters were largely composed in Aramaic, it is hard to see why the six Aramaic chapters of Daniel must be dated two centuries later than that. It should be carefully observed that in the Babylon of the late sixth century, in which Daniel purportedly lived, the predominant language spoken by the heterogeneous population of this metropolis was Aramaic. It is therefore not surprising that an inhabitant of that city should have resorted to Aramaic in composing a portion of his memoirs.’”²⁴[!]

Walvoord adds: “An unusual feature of the book of Daniel is the fact that the central portion (2:4-7:28) is written in biblical Aramaic also called Chaldee (AV ‘Syriac’). A similar use of Aramaic is found in Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jer. 10:11; and the two words of the compound name *Jegar-Sahadutha* in Genesis 31:47. The use of the Aramaic, which was the lingua franca of the period, was related to the fact that the material concerned the Gentile world rather than Israel directly. **The fact that there are similar portions elsewhere in the Bible should make clear that there is nothing unusual or questionable about the Aramaic section in Daniel.** As pointed out by Brownlee, the shifts from Hebrew to Aramaic and back again in Daniel are found in the scrolls of Daniel at Qumran, supporting the legitimacy of this feature of the Massoretic text commonly used in English translations.”²⁵

“*[In short]* ...It must be concluded that objections to the book of Daniel as a sixth century writing on the basis of Greek and Persian words is without reasonable scholarly support and increasingly becomes an untenable position in the light of archeological evidence.”²⁶

Alleged historical inaccuracies. A number of questions and accusations have been raised along these lines. A few examples of the types of issues raised by critics under this category include: [1] A questioning of the existence and reality of King Belshazzar; [2] an alleged contradiction in Daniel 1:1; [3] debate about the identity and reality of Darius the Mede; and [4] a claim that Daniel contains historical inaccuracies in regard to the Medo-Persian & Greek empires.

²⁰ Walvoord, pp. 22-23

²¹ Cf. Archer, pp. 430-436, where he has an extensive discussion and defense of the integrity of Daniel & refutes critical arguments regarding Greek & Persian word usage, etc.

²² Walvoord, p. 23

²³ Walvoord, p. 15 citing W. J. Martin (*New Bible Dictionary*) & Robert Dick Wilson.

²⁴ Walvoord, p. 15 quoting Archer.

²⁵ Walvoord, p. 14

²⁶ Walvoord, p. 23

Rebuttal: The first three issues are treated and refuted in more detail in the notes that follow in the next section. However a few general comments are in order here. [1] “There is no factual manuscript discovery which reasonably can be construed as questioning the historical accuracy of Daniel’s statements. [2] On the other hand, it would be most unusual for a writer in the second century B.C. to have had the intimate knowledge of Babylonian history presented in the book of Daniel in view of the probability that the texts and other materials now in our possession may not have been available at that time... [3] The difficulty of identifying Belshazzar (chap. 5), the source of much critical objection to the accuracy of Daniel on the ground that his name did not occur in ancient literature, has been remedied by precise information provided in the Nabonidus Chronicle.²⁷ [4] ...while questions may continue to be raised concerning the identity of Darius the Mede [see below], **the argument on the part of the critics is entirely from silence.** Nothing in history has been found to contradict the conclusion that Darius is either another term for Cyrus himself or, preferably, an appointee of Cyrus who was of Median race and therefore called ‘*the Mede.*’ As there are several plausible solutions to the identity of Darius the Mede, there is no legitimate ground for the objections to Daniel’s statements because of lack of support in ancient literature. [5] Obviously, there are hundreds of facts in the Bible of historical nature which cannot be completely supported [i.e. that we haven’t yet discovered outside confirming archaeological evidence-*mwe*] ... [however] the Bible itself must be taken as a legitimate ancient manuscript whose testimony should stand until well-established facts raise questions.”²⁸ [6] Regarding the alleged “errors” & “inaccuracies” concerning the Medo-Persian and Greek empires, “...the claim is made that Daniel teaches a separate Median kingdom as preceding the Persian kingdom, which is historically inaccurate. The problem here is that the critics in the first place are seemingly willfully twisting Daniel’s statement to teach what he does not teach, namely a separate Median empire. Second, the alleged discrepancy between the prophecy and its fulfillment is in the minds of the critics. Conservative scholars have no difficulty in finding accurate historical fulfillment of genuine prophecies made by Daniel in the sixth century B.C. Here the critics are guilty of circular argument, based on a false premise which leads to questionable conclusions. [7] The larger problem of the interpretation of Daniel’s prophecy does not in itself invalidate the genuineness of the book unless it can be demonstrated that the prophecy itself is inaccurate. Up to the present, the critics have not been able to prove this.”²⁹

Summary of this entire section “Critical Attacks on the Book of Daniel:” “Taken as a whole, the major objections of critics against the book of Daniel, as well as many minor questions commonly raised, are of the same kind as those hurled against Scripture as a whole and against the doctrine of supernatural revelation. Often the objections are products of the critics’ own theory in which they criticize Daniel for not corresponding to their idea of second century authorship. Prominent in the situation is the argument from silence in which they assume that Daniel is guilty of error until proved otherwise...

The broad historical questions raised in the study of Daniel have been answered by Robert Dick Wilson, who has demonstrated that the critics have not made an adequate case for their theories or their conclusions. **Wilson shows that our problem is not with facts, as no facts have been discovered which contradict Daniel, but with theories too often supported by circular argument.** To date, the critical arguments have not been confirmed by fact and must be accepted by faith. For the conservative expositor, **it is far more preferable to accept the book of Daniel by faith in view of its confirmation by Christ Himself in Matthew 24:15.**³⁰

VI. A FEW SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF CRITICAL ATTACKS ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL, WITH REBUTTALS:

A) The alleged “wrong” location of Daniel within the divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament. While the book of Daniel is located in our English Bibles as the last of what we refer to as the “Major Prophets”, that is not the case in the Hebrew Bible. This has raised the question of “*Why if Daniel was a prophet, was the book not included in the section of the Hebrew Old Testament called “the Prophets?”* “In the Hebrew Old Testament—divided into three divisions consisting of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings [which is also called Kethubim (Hebrew) or Hagiographa (Greek)]—Daniel is included in the third section, the Writings.”³¹ This positioning in the OT canon has often been questioned, with skeptics implying that the fact that Daniel is not included in the section of “the Prophets” in the Hebrew OT is an indication that it was written at a much later date, after the OT canon had been nearly completed. In addition, “It has been pointed out that Jesus ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) makes no mention of Daniel even though he refers to all the other prophets (in 170 B.C.).”³²

Rebuttal: [1] The location of Daniel in the section “The Writings” in the Hebrew Old Testament is completely inconsequential. As Walvoord points out, “Although the ministry of Daniel was prophetic, it was of [a] different character than the other major prophets; and apparently for this reason, the Jews included Daniel in the Writings. As Robert Dick

²⁷ Excellent colour photographs of these archaeological discoveries, as well as direct quotations from those cylinders, etc., is found in Peter Master’s book “*A Heritage of Evidence*” (Wakeman Trust: London, England, 2004), pp. 82-95

²⁸ Walvoord, pp. 23-24

²⁹ Walvoord, p. 24

³⁰ Walvoord, pp. 24-25

³¹ Walvoord, p. 12

³² Archer, p. 424

Wilson has pointed out, the reason for this was not that the Jews regarded Daniel as inferior, nor because the prophetic section of the canon had already been closed, but as **Wilson states, ‘It is more probable that the book was placed in this part of the Heb Canon, because Daniel is not called a nabhi (‘prophet’), but was rather a hozeh (‘seer’) and a haktam (‘wise man’)**. None but the works of the *nebhi'im* were put in the second part of the Jewish Canon, the third being reserved for the heterogeneous works of seers, wisemen, and priests, or for those that do not mention the name or work of a prophet or that are poetical in form.”³³ [2] Walvoord adds: “J.B. Payne observes, ‘...**though Christ spoke of Daniel’s function as prophetic (Matt. 24:15), his position was that of governmental official and inspired writer, rather than a ministering prophet** (cf. Acts 2:29-30).’ [3] In any case, the Jews did not regard the third division as less inspired, but only different in character. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that they included in it such venerable writings as Job, Psalms and Proverbs, the historical books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, along with others not considered either the Law or the Prophets. There is no hint anywhere in ancient literature that the Jews regarded Daniel as a pious forgery.”³⁴

In addition, Archer says, “[4]...it should be noted [a] that some of the documents in the Kethubhim (the third division of the Hebrew Bible) were of great antiquity, such as the book of Job, the Davidic psalms, and the writings of Solomon. **Position in the Kethubhim, therefore, is no proof of a late date of composition.** [b] Furthermore the statement in Josephus (*Contra Apionem*. 1:8)...indicates strongly that in the first century A.D., Daniel was included among the prophets in the second division of the Old Testament canon; hence it could not have been assigned to the Kethubhim until a later period. The Masoretes may have been influenced in this reassignment by the consideration that Daniel was not appointed or ordained as a prophet, but remained a civil servant under the prevailing government throughout his entire career. [5] Second, a large percentage of his writings does not bear the character of prophecy, but rather of history (chaps. 1-6), such as does not appear in any of the books of the canonical prophets. Little of that which Daniel wrote is couched in the form of a message from God to His people relayed through the mouth of His spokesman. Rather, the predominating element consists of prophetic visions granted personally to the author and interpreted to him by angels. (Here a comparison may be drawn with Zechariah, which likewise features a series of visions. But in Zechariah far more emphasis is laid upon God’s communicating His message to Israel through a prophetic mouthpiece.) It was probably because of the mixed character of this book, partaking partly of historical narratives and partly of prophetic vision, that the later Jewish scribes relegated it to the third or miscellaneous category in the canon.”³⁵ [6] In addition, “R.K. Harrison points out that in four instances, the Qumran Manual of Discipline (IQS 1:3; 8:13) and the Zadokite Fragment (CDC 5:21; 7:15) refer to the Old Testament simply as ‘the law and the prophets,’ and make no mention of a third division in the canon. The same is true of the New Testament references to the Old Testament, except that the psalms are mentioned as separate in Luke 20:44. In the 2nd ed. of *The Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*, Harris refutes the suggestion of A.C. Sundberg that in all these instances only two-thirds of the Old Testament canon was referred to.”³⁶

In response to the argument that Jesus ben Sirach made no mention of Daniel even though he referred to all the other prophets Archer responds: [7] “But it should be noted that other important authors like Ezra received no mention either. (Nor for that matter did he make mention of such key figures in Hebrew history as Job, or any of the Judges except Samuel, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Mordecai. How can such omissions furnish any solid ground for the idea that these leaders were unknown to Jesus ben Sirach? See ZPED ii 19A) [8] [In response to] Critics [who] have also pointed to ben Sirach’s statement that there never was a man who was like unto Joseph; and yet, it is alleged, Daniel’s career greatly resembled that of Joseph. [It should be noted], that *in none of the particulars specified did Daniel resemble Joseph*[!]: ‘Neither was there a man born like unto Joseph, a governor of his brethren, a stay of the people, whose bones were regarded of the Lord’ (Ec’us 49:15).”³⁷

To summarize: The fact that the book of Daniel is found in the section of the Hebrew Old Testament referred to as “the Writings”, as mentioned earlier, is inconsequential, and in fact is completely understandable.

³³ Walvoord, p. 12 quoting Robert Dick Wilson, “*Book of Daniel*,” *ISBE*, 2:783

³⁴ Walvoord, p. 12 quoting J. Barton Payne, “Book of Daniel,” *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, p. 198

³⁵ Gleason Archer, Jr., “*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*” (Moody Press: Chicago, Illinois, 1994 updated and revised edition, p. 424. Archer comments: “cf. the able discussion of Laird Harris on this point in *The Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*, pp. 141-142, 184-185.

³⁶ Archer, footnote, p. 424. In his preface, Harris makes it clear that the “threefold division” of the OT may, itself, be open to question: “The view here presented that the original division of the Old Testament canon did not consist of three definite sections, but was somewhat fluid, and that certain books were sometimes in the second division and sometimes in the third, is not original with the author. It apparently was held in former days, but the view of a threefold development gained credence among critical scholars in the last century. Then, among conservatives, the prestige of the name of William Henry Green carried the day for the theory of a tripartite [OT] canon. Robert Dick Wilson, approaching the evidence afresh, taught the view here espoused of a fluid threefold classification of the books. It was passed on to the author by his teacher, Wilson’s pupil, Dr. Allan A. MacRae.” (R. Laird Harris, “*Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*” (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1969 enlarged edition), pp. 9-10).

³⁷ Archer, p. 424.

B) Alleged dating contradiction in Daniel 1:1. Walvoord explains the “problem” and supplies an explanation: “According to Daniel 1:1, the crucial siege and capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came ‘*in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah.*’ Critics have lost no time pointing out an apparent conflict between this and the statement of Jeremiah that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim* (Jer. 25:1)...This supposed chronological error is used as the first in a series of alleged proofs that Daniel is a spurious book written by one actually unfamiliar with the events of the captivity.”³⁸

Rebuttal: “There are, however, several good and satisfying explanations. [1] The simplest and most obvious explanation is that Daniel is here using Babylonian reckoning. It was customary for the Babylonians to consider the first year of a king’s reign as the year of accession and to call the next year the first year...Jack Finegan, for instance, has demonstrated that the phrase *the first year of Nebuchadnezzar* in Jeremiah actually means ‘*the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar*’ of the Babylonian reckoning. Tadmor was among the first to support this solution, and the point may now be considered well established...Daniel is a most unusual case because he of all the prophets was the only one thoroughly instructed in Babylonian culture and point of view. **Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use a Babylonian form of chronology. By contrast, Jeremiah would use Israel’s form of reckoning which included a part of the year as the first year of Jehoiakim’s reign.**”³⁹ [2] Another possible explanation: “Thiele resolves the discrepancy by assuming that Daniel used the old calendar year in Judah which began in the fall in the month Tishri (Sept.-Oct.) and that Jeremiah used the Babylonian calendar which began in the spring in the month Nisan (March-April). According to the Babylonian Chronicle, ‘Nebuchadnezzar conquered the whole area of the Hatti country,’ an area that includes all of Syria and the territory south to the borders of Egypt, in the late spring or early summer of 605. This would be Jehoiakim’s fourth year according to the Nisan reckoning and the third year according to the Tishri calendar.”⁴⁰ Archer adds: “More recent investigation...has shown that the Jews reckoned their regnal year from the first month preceding the year of accession (reckoning the year as commencing in the month of Tishri, or the seventh month of the religious calendar). This would mean that 605 B.C. would have been the fourth year of Jehoiakim who came to the throne in 608. The Babylonians, however, reckoned the first regnal year from the next succeeding New Year’s Day, that is, from the first of Nisan (the first month of the Hebrew religious calendar). Therefore, the year 605 would be only Jehoiakim’s third year according to the Chaldean reckoning. Thus in D.J. Wiseman’s *Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings* (1956), it is stated that Nebuchadnezzar’s first regnal year began in April 604, even though he had been crowned in September 605.”⁴¹

C) Alleged error in the use of the term “Chaldean” in Daniel. Archer explains: “Critics point to the fact that one class of wise men or soothsayers in the book of Daniel is referred to as the ‘Chaldeans’ (*Kasdim*). They allege that this ethnic term for Nebuchadnezzar’s race could not have become specialized to indicate a class of soothsayers until a much later time. In Nebuchadnezzar’s own time it surely would have carried only a racial connotation. This indicates [sic] that the author of Daniel must have written at a time long after the Neo-Babylonian empire had collapsed and had become an almost forgotten memory.”

Rebuttal: “This theory, however, fails to fit the data of the text, for the author of this work [Daniel] was certainly aware that *Kasdim* was the ethnic term for the race of Nebuchadnezzar. Thus in Dan. 5:30 Belshazzar is referred to as ‘*the king of the Chaldeans*’; in this case the term certainly could not refer to any class of wise men. Even in 3:8 the accusation against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego brought by certain ‘Chaldean men’ seems to refer to high government officials who appear to be ‘Chaldean by race’...which means ‘Chaldean’ was used in two senses in this book. Chaldean did not only mean ‘soothsayer/priest,’ but also can indicate a specific race of people. Therefore, the theory of later origin fails to explain the facts as we have them. We must look to other explanations for this twofold use of *Kasdim*. Herodotus (vol. 1, sec. 181-83) refers to the Chaldeans in such a way as to imply that they were speedily put into all the politically strategic offices of Babylonia as soon as they had gained control of the capital. If this was the case, then ‘Chaldean’ may have early come into use as a term for the priests of Bel-Marduk.”⁴²

D) Alleged errors revolving around King Belshazzar in Daniel 5. For decades skeptics and liberals pointed to Daniel 5 as a chapter supposedly “filled” with historical errors. For instance, critics said that there was no historical evidence for a person named Belshazzar, that the name was apparently made up centuries later; that Daniel should have been rewarded with the position of “*2nd in the kingdom*” instead of “*3rd in the kingdom*” for interpreting the handwriting on the wall; etc, etc.

Rebuttal: The liberal critics have been forced to eat their words. [1] Subsequent archaeological discoveries have shown not only that Belshazzar existed, but we even have the names of his secretaries! We also know that he co-reigned with his

³⁸ Walvoord, p. 30

³⁹ Walvoord, pp. 30-31

⁴⁰ Walvoord, pp. 31-32

⁴¹ Archer, p. 425

⁴² Archer, p. 425. Archer supplies an additional solution proposed by Robert Dick Wilson as well, which revolves, not surprisingly, around linguistics and the relationship of Akkadian and old Sumerian words (see Archer, pp. 425-426)

father Nabonidus. [2] Consequently, Daniel could have only been offered the position of third in the kingdom, etc.⁴³ Archer: “Later discoveries of cuneiform tablets referring to Belshazzar as ‘*the son of the king*’ serve to discredit that criticism almost completely (one tablet from the twelfth year of Nabonidus calls for oaths in the names of both Nabonidus and Belshazzar [*mar sari* i.e. ‘son of the king’]).”⁴⁴ Those enrolled in this present course [“*Daniel & Revelation*”] have been able to view colour photos of a number of archaeological discoveries that are still on display in the British Museum, and which completely refute the accusations of higher critics and similar skeptics.⁴⁵

But, instead of learning their lesson, it seems such critics never seem to give up! Archer: “Nevertheless it is still objected that Belshazzar is referred to in chapter 5 as a *son* of Nebuchadnezzar, whereas his father was actually Nabonidus (*Nabuna'id*) who reigned until the fall of Babylon in 539. It is alleged that only a later author would have supposed that he was Nebuchadnezzar’s son. This argument however overlooks [1] the fact that by ancient usage the term *son* often referred to a successor in the same office whether or not there was a blood relationship. Thus in the Egyptian story, ‘King Cheops and the Magicians’ (preserved in the Papyrus Wescar from the Hyksos Period), Prince Khephren says to King Khufu (Cheops), ‘I relate to thy Majesty a wonder that came to pass in the time of thy father, King Neb-ka.’ Actually Neb-ka belonged to the Third Dynasty, a full century before the time of Khufu in the Fourth Dynasty. [!] In Assyria a similar practice was reflected in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, which refers to King Jehu (the exterminator of the whole dynasty of Omri) as ‘the son of Omri.’ [2] Moreover it is a distinct possibility that in this case there was an actual genetic relationship between Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. If Nabonidus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar in order to legitimize his usurpation of the throne back in 556 B.C., it would follow that his son by her would be the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. The word for ‘father’ (*’ab* or *’abba*) could also mean grandfather (see Gen. 28:13; 32:10; in 1 Kings 15:13 it means ‘great grandfather’).”⁴⁶

E) Controversy over the identification of “*Darius the Mede*.” Critics allege that whoever wrote Daniel must have been confused, *supposedly* because they were writing so long after the time of Daniel [sic]. While we will not be able to go into a detailed study of this question due to space and time, I do wish to point out that there are solid answers that address the accusations of the skeptics. Three different explanations have been propounded which plausibly treat the question of the identity of Darius in the book of Daniel and other related problems, such as how he could have issued a decree to the inhabitants of “*all the earth*” if he was merely a regional governor, etc.⁴⁷ **John C. Whitcomb, D.J. Wisemen and W.H. Shea** are the leading advocates of the three different conservative treatises’ on the subject. Dillard and Longman III give brief synopses of their three positions, and appear to favor Shea’s explanation.⁴⁸ Archer also has a section on this question, but comes down in favor of Whitcomb’s position.⁴⁹

VII. THE “MACCABEAN THEORY” OF THE SETTING, MOTIVATION, AND TIME OF WRITING OF DANIEL

i.e. The attempt at “*Late Dating*” the book of Daniel to the time of the Maccabees. Critics of the book of Daniel almost uniformly contend and attempt to show that the book of Daniel was written at the time of the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes IV (circa A.D. 175-164), was fulfilled in the events of that time period, and has no future prophetic meaning. Archer succinctly describes the critical viewpoint regarding the authorship and time of writing of the book of Daniel: “The great majority of critics regard this book as entirely spurious and composed centuries after the death of the sixth-century Daniel. They understand it to be a work of historical fiction composed about 167 B.C. and intended to encourage the resistance movement against the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes.”⁵⁰

Rebuttal: [1] **The argument from Greek and Persian (Aramaic) word usage is bankrupt.** In fact that argument instead leads to the conclusion that Daniel was written very early i.e. the time it purports to be written, as Archer has demonstrated.⁵¹ He states:

“Actually, the argument based upon the presence of Greek words turns out to be one of the most compelling evidences of all that Daniel could not have been composed as late as the Greek period. By 170 B.C. a Greek-speaking government had been in control of Palestine for 160 years, and Greek political or administrative terms would surely have found their way into the language of the subject populace. The books of Maccabees testify to the very extensive intrusion of Greek culture

⁴³ Masters, pp. 82-85

⁴⁴ Archer, p. 426

⁴⁵ See Peter Masters, “*Heritage of Evidence*” (The Wakeman Trust: London, England, 2004), pp. 76-83, 92-94

⁴⁶ Archer, p. 426

⁴⁷ For a full treatment of who Darius the Mede was, see Gleason Archer, “*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*”, pp. 427-430; John F. Walvoord, “*Daniel-The Key to Prophetic Revelation*”, pp. 24, 132-134; & Raymond B. Dillard & Tremper Longman III, “*An Introduction to the Old Testament*”, pp. 334-337

⁴⁸ Raymond B. Dillard & Tremper Longman III, “*An Introduction to the Old Testament*,” (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994), pp. 334-337

⁴⁹ Archer, pp. 427-430

⁵⁰ Archer, p. 423

⁵¹ Archer, pp. 430-436

and Greek customs into the life of the Jews by the first half of the second century, particularly in the big cities. Furthermore it should be observed that even in the Septuagint translation of Daniel, which dates presumably from 100 B.C., or sixty-five years after Judas Maccabeus, the rendition of several of the Aramaic technical terms of state officials was mere conjecture... It is impossible to explain how within five or six decades after Daniel was first composed (according to the Maccabean date hypothesis) the meaning of these terms could have been so completely forgotten even by the Jews in Egypt, who remained quite conversant in Aramaic as well as in Greek... This is especially significant in view of the fact that the Aramaic of Daniel was a linguistic medium which readily absorbed foreign terminology... It is hard to conceive, therefore, how after Greek had been the language of government for over 160 years, no single Greek term pertaining to politics or administration had ever intruded into Palestinian Aramaic. The same generalization holds good for the Hebrew portions of Daniel as well. It contains such terms as palace (*appeden* in 11:45, from *apadana*), noblemen (*part-min* 1:3, from *fratama*) and king's portion (*patbag* in 1:5), from *patibaga*). Yet the Hebrew chapters contain not a single word of Greek origin (even though, according to some critics, Daniel's Hebrew is later than his Aramaic sections)."⁵²[!]

b) The alleged similarity of Daniel to apocryphal literature of the Inter-testamental period is contrived. "Adherents of the Maccabean theory customarily lay great emphasis upon the supposed development or evolution of religious thought of the Israelite nation. They point to motifs and emphases in Daniel which they believe to be akin to those characterizing the apocryphal literature of the Inter-testamental Period (such works as the *Book of Enoch* and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, or even such books of the *Apocrypha* as *Tobit* and *Susanna*). **These emphases include [a] the prominence of angels, [b] the stress upon the last judgment, [c] the resurrection of the dead, and [d] the establishment of the final kingdom of God upon earth with [e] the Messiah as the supreme ruler of the world.**"⁵³

Rebuttal: Archer refutes this whole idea pointing out: "Any reader may easily verify the fact [a] that Zechariah also mentions the Messiah and angels on several occasions in his prophecies, which date from 519 to approximately 470 B.C. (2:3; 3:1; 6:12; 9:9; 13:1; 14:5). Furthermore, angels play a very similar role in Zechariah to that in Daniel, namely, that of interpreting the significance of visions which were presented to the prophet. The affinity [in fact] is close enough to warrant the deduction that either Zechariah had influenced Daniel or Daniel had influenced Zechariah. There are two significant references to the Messiah in Malachi as well (Mal. 3:1 and 4:2) and to the last judgment also in chapter 3. On the other hand, works which are admittedly of the second century B.C., such as 1 Maccabees and the Greek additions to Daniel, Baruch, and Judith, show none of these four elements (angelology, resurrection, last judgment, and Messiah) which are asserted to be so characteristic of this period that they betray the second-century origin of Daniel [sic]. Even the Jewish apocryphal literature from the first century A.D. contains only two works (out of a possible sixteen) having all four characteristics, namely, the Vision of Isaiah and the Ascension of Isaiah..."

"Perhaps it would be well at this point to review the occurrences of these four elements in the earlier books of the Old Testament. [a] Concerning the ranks of angels, Genesis mentions cherubim. Joshua refers to a prince of the angels. Their function was said to be the delivery of messages to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and various prophets such as Isaiah, Zechariah, and Ezekiel. Thus as early as the Torah we find the angels revealing the will of God, furnishing protection for God's people and destroying the forces of the enemy. [b] So far as the resurrection is concerned, there is the famous affirmation of Job in Job 19:25-26 (although another interpretation of this passage is possible); Isaiah's affirmation in 26:19 ('*Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise,*' ASV); Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, and possibly the resuscitation of the dead by Elijah and Elisha. On the other hand, of the large number of post-canonical works, only the Book of the Twelve Patriarchs refers to a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked as is found in Dan. 12:2. [c] The doctrine of the last judgment is mentioned in Isaiah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and in many of the psalms. [d] In many instances this judgment pertains to the nations of the world as well as to Israel. References to the book of life or a book of remembrance go back as far as Ex. 32:32-33 and Isa. 4:3 (cf. Isa. 65:6; Ps. 69:28; and Mal. 3:16). [e] The concept of the Messiah appears as early as Gen. 3:15 and 49:10 (cf. Num. 24:17; Deut. 18:15; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:11-17; Ezek. 34:23-31; Mic. 5:2)..."

"Doubtless it is possible to make out some kind of progression in the development of these doctrines during the history of God's revelation to Israel, but it is a mistake to suppose that Daniel contains anything radically new in any of the four areas under dispute. Moreover, these precise doctrines were most appropriate for Israel's comfort and encouragement during the time of captivity and on the threshold of their return to the promised land."⁵⁴

⁵² Archer, p. 432

⁵³ Archer, p. 437

⁵⁴ Archer, pp. 437-438

VIII. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY.⁵⁵

1) **“INTERPRET CHRISTOLOGICALLY.”**

a) **“Our Lord Jesus Christ is the heart and center of all prophecy** (cf. **I Pet. 1:10-11**). Prophecy is arranged in concentric circles around Him. See A.T. Pierson: *‘Knowing the Scriptures,’* pp. 34-35.” (Custer, *Syllabus*, p. 4) & “Michael P.V. Barrett, *‘Beginning With Moses: A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament’* (Ambassador-Emerald International: Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1999).

b) **Throughout the Old & New Testament Jesus Christ is revealed.** He is seen clearly in the New Testament miracles He performed and statements that He made about Himself. But besides such direct statements we are told that many of the characters, instances, etc., of the Bible are types or shadows of Jesus Christ. For example Romans 5:14 tells us that Adam was ‘the figure of him that was to come.’ In Luke 24:25-27 we are told that ALL the Scriptures speak of Christ. When interpreting Scripture, and especially prophecy, we need to remember that Christ truly is ‘the heart and center of all prophecy.” (Custer) cf. Heb. 9:9-11, 24-26; 11:19 I Pet. 3:20-22; etc.

c) For a good study on this subject see *“Christology of the Old Testament,”* by E.W. Hengstenberg. This is a classic and is now in an abridged form running to 700 pages. Such books as *“Portraits of Christ in Genesis,” “The Tabernacle,” & “The Romance of Redemption,”*—all by M.R. DeHaan (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), *“The Tabernacle,”* by Henry Soltau (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI, n.d.) are a few examples of books that are helpful in regard to types. The one by Hengstenberg deals with prophetic passages.

2) **“INTERPRET ACCORDING TO THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROPHECY.”** We have reference here to the prophet and how he views things. This is also called **“Prophetic Telescoping.”** We must understand two facts related to this:

a) **“The prophet often sees things together that are widely separated in fulfillment:** The first and second advents of Christ” (**Isa. 61:1-2**). (Custer, *Syllabus*, p. 4). In reading this passage, if you were a Jew living before Christ you would get the impression that when the Messiah came He would immediately set up His kingdom and begin to rule. But such was not the case. It’s interesting to note that when Christ read this passage in the synagogue he deliberately stopped in the middle of verse two (Lk. 4:16-21)! This also explains why many of His followers wanted to set Him up as a physical, political king. They misunderstood this prophecy, because they failed to realize that prophetic passages often telescope, or condense, events that are widely separated.

Dillard & Longman similarly comment: “Telescoping is a metaphor to describe prophecy’s ‘compressed’ nature. That is, a prophet relates events that, when fulfilled, will actually take place at different periods of time. A commonly accepted example is found in the message of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-12). In the same context of his prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, John also describes Christ’s ministry as one of violent judgment: ‘His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire’ (v.12). Unknown even to John (Matt. 11:1-19), his prophecy telescoped the first and second comings of Christ.”⁵⁶

b) **“The future often appears to be present or completely past... [also], prophecies of the future are sometimes described with ancient weapons (Zech. 9:10).”** (Ibid).

3) **“DON’T OVER-EMPHASIZE PROPHECY.”** A good student of Scripture studies all of Scripture, not just one part. During the past 2-3 decades there has been a real “glut” of books dealing with Bible prophecy which have flooded the market. Some people spend all their time studying nothing but prophecy. Some preachers spend all their time preaching on just one subject: prophecy. To do so is not good. If there is no balance in our preaching & teaching, it will result in the immature development of believers.

4) **“DON’T UNDER-EMPHASIZE PROPHECY.”** Sometimes one may be tempted to say something similar to the following: *“Bible prophecy is too complicated. I think I’ll just forget about studying it & preaching on it.”* However that is a wrong attitude! We should not shy away from preaching on a subject of theology because it involves hard, intensive study! God says some very definite things about the sluggard in the book of Proverbs, and a pastor can be lazy in his study and sermon preparation, just as a laborer can be lazy in any other job. May we not be found guilty of laziness when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ!

5) **“DON’T BE TOO RELEVANT IN YOUR INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY.”** We can come up with interpretations that are so “up to date” or relevant, that if Christ doesn’t return soon, we will look silly—not to mention wrong!

⁵⁵ With the exception of the single quote under pt 2 (*Interpret According to the Perspective of Prophecy*) “all of these points, most of the sub-points and all other quoted material has been taken from *“Syllabus for OT Prophecy”* (unpublished paper) & *“Tools for Preaching & Teaching the Bible”* (BJU Press: Greenville, SC, 1979) both by Dr. Stewart Custer.

⁵⁶ Dillard & Longman III, p. 331

The ones who gathered on a hill in white robes a century or more ago to await Christ's coming are a case in point. Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults have made such erroneous predictions in the past. More recently, several preachers or groups, including Christians, have made similarly ridiculous statements in the past 2-3 decades! Such groups or individuals maintain that they have received their views from a study of the Bible. But to develop such faulty teachings will bring great shame upon Christ and His Word! Jesus said *no one knows the day or the hour of His return* (Mt. 24:36)! **Steer very clear of unbiblical predictions & interpretations, especially in regard to prophecy!** False cults have been making erroneous predictions for a century or more, but it's particularly distressing when Bible believers make similar mistakes!

A couple of examples:

1982-The "Jupiter" Effect. A number of fundamental preachers said that 1982 was going to be the year that the tribulation was going to start. The reason they gave was that all 9 planets would be lined up on one side of the sun, and they felt that this would trigger gravitational upheavals that would occur on earth and be the start of the signs described in the book of Revelation. There were at least two problems with that idea (both of which were pointed out by Christians at that time): (1) The planets would not be in a straight line, but spread out over a 100 degree angle, (2) Such an astronomical occurrence happens every 179 years, and there is nothing in past history that indicates anything extraordinary like that has ever happened in the past! (Custer, quoting Dr. Joseph Henson). Of course nothing happened in 1982, and Christians who had promoted such thinking, or passed out tracts to that effect, were greatly humiliated & embarrassed!

Hal Lindsey. Lindsey wrote the famous book on Bible prophecy, "*The Late, Great Planet Earth*," one of the highest selling books of all time! He is a professing Christian (who has been married three times!). He has written some good things regarding Bible prophecy. Unfortunately his later books seem to have gotten farther and farther off base! One man has said about Lindsey's book on Revelation: "Some commentaries on Revelation are helpful to read after generations; Lindsey's is so 'relevant' for this decade (the 1980's) that if the Lord does not return now (the 1980's) it will be of little value for the next generation." (A statement that turned out to be rather prophetic-no pun intended) (Faith for the Family, Vol. 5, No. 10, p. 12).

Here are a few examples of what this critic was referring to: "He (Lindsey) interprets the sixth seal as a nuclear exchange (pp. 108ff.), the first trumpet as a more severe nuclear attack (p. 130), the second trumpet as a colossal H-bomb (p. 131), the third trumpet as another thermonuclear weapon (p. 132), and the fourth trumpet as the pollution in the atmosphere caused by the fallout from the nuclear exchanges (p. 133). Lindsey cannot decide whether the fifth trumpet refers to supernatural mutant locusts or to Cobra helicopters (pp. 138ff.). He is definite in claiming that the last earthquake is a reference to the last full-scale nuclear exchange of all remaining missiles (p. 226)." (Ibid). Lindsey also (previously) stated that he believed Christ would return in 1988. That kind of relevancy is to be avoided at all costs!"

Jack Van Impe. It has been reported to me that this televangelist has recently (2008?) stated that Christ will return in 2012. He, of all people, should know better than to make such a ridiculous statement. Sadly, he has made other, even more unbiblical statements, in the past few years e.g. claiming that Pope John Paul II was the greatest Christian of the past century [sic], etc. Dr. Van Impe is a sad story indeed, since he started out as a dynamic, fundamentalist evangelist, but has gone down the road of unbiblical compromise in the past couple of decades.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS ON PROPHECY & ON THE PROPHETIC CHAPTERS OF DANIEL.

DANIEL 2& 7 - There are several different interpretative views as to who the nations are in Daniel 2 & 7:

- a) *Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece & Rome*
- b) *Babylon, Media, Persia & Greece.*
- c) *Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece & the Syrian empire under Antiochus Epiphanes IV.*

In this instructor's opinion, the only viable position that does justice to the context of Daniel, as well as to known world history, is the first position i.e. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece & Rome. The other interpretive views are mostly motivated by a desire to fit in with a "*late dating*" (i.e. Maccabean dating) of the book of Daniel, which is usually (not always) motivated by liberal/higher critical attempts to explain away the genuine predictive prophecies of Daniel, by placing the writing of the book after the fact, historically speaking.

Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's image, Dr. Bob Shelton makes the following comment: "...the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream represented four world empires: Babylon—the head of gold; Medo-Persia—the silver breast and arms; Greece—the brass belly and thighs; and Rome—the iron legs ... [Rome] remained a united kingdom until A.D. 364, then continued on as a divided empire with its western capital in Rome and its eastern capital in Constantinople. Western Rome died in A.D. 476, while the eastern empire continued on until A.D. 1453. There are some who believe the two legs (2:33) represent eastern and western Rome, but what we know for sure is that the iron legs had their fulfillment in the Roman Empire (2:40) ... When put together in one fearful image, they present at a glance a period of Bible prophecy called '*the times of the Gentiles.*' It speaks of those times when Israel would be under the control of Gentile power, beginning with the deportation of Judah into

Babylonian captivity in 605 B.C. ...*THE REVIVED ROMAN EMPIRE*. All of the empires listed above have made their appearance, but there is one part of the image that is yet to appear. It is associated with the Old Roman Empire and is seen in the image as feet (2:33) with ten toes (vv. 41 & 42). The late H.A. Ironside wrote of this important part of the image in these words:

‘This brings us to the last form of the fourth kingdom; for the Roman Empire, though at present in abeyance, has not yet come to its end. The ten toes on the feet of the image represent ten kings who are to reign at one time, but who will form a confederacy on the ground of the ancient empire. This is something which the world has never yet seen.’

“When **Dr. Ironside penned these words in 1911**, such a merger was the farthest thing from most minds. Today, however, the stage is set for the formation of these ten kingdoms into a confederacy clearly prophesied 2600 years ago through a dream God gave to Nebuchadnezzar...Many have tried to tie together the nations that currently exist over the ashes of the Old Roman Empires without success...There were many who tried—Charlemagne, Napoleon, Bismarck, and Hitler, to name a few. One indication that the end of this age is near is that for the first time since Rome crumbled, the empire is now emerging again...Many Bible students believe...the European Economic Community [European Union], is the forerunner of the revived Roman Empire...Frankly, the Bible does not tell us how many nations will join the [European Union]. What we know for sure is that from among the nations that occupy the territory of the old Roman Empire, ten will come together in a special alliance. Those ten nations were seen by Nebuchadnezzar in the form of ten toes.”⁵⁷

Important point: The “*little horn*” in Daniel 7 is not the same as the “*little horn*” in Daniel 8! The “*little horn*” of Daniel 7 is the Antichrist (note that he comes out of the 4th empire i.e. Rome). On the other hand, the “*little horn*” of Daniel 8 comes out of the 3rd empire (i.e. Greece) and is clearly Antiochus IV.

DANIEL 8 – This chapter provides a detailed description of two empires: The Medo-Persian Empire and the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great, following it all the way to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. “It should be recognized that considerable attention in Daniel is devoted to the coming events of the reign of Antiochus, for the very good reason that this period was to present the greatest threat in all of subsequent history (apart, of course, from the plot of Haman in the time of Esther) to the survival of the faith and nation of Israel. Assuming these predictions were given by divine inspiration and that God had a concern for the preservation of His covenant people, it was to be expected that revelations in Daniel would make it clear to coming generations that He had not only foreseen but had well provided for the threat of extinction which was to be posed by Antiochus Epiphanes.”⁵⁸

DANIEL 9 – Regarding the “70 Weeks,” Shelton explains:

“But there is one ‘week’ (7 years) of time that is yet to be fulfilled. This might well be called ‘*the seventieth week of Daniel*.’ The logical question is, ‘*When will it begin?*’ God tells us through His servant [Daniel] ... The personal pronoun ‘he’ is a clear reference to the ‘prince that shall come’ of verse 26b. **Be careful not to confuse ‘*Messiah the Prince*’ with the ‘*prince that shall come*.’** ‘*Messiah the Prince*’ is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, while the ‘*Prince that shall come*’ speaks of the great imposter, the Antichrist. According to the prophecy, when this great world leader comes on the scene, he will ‘*confirm the covenant*’ with the nation of Israel for seven years. At that point, the Jews will believe this great and powerful leader of the revived Roman Empire is none other than their long-awaited Christ. They will be deceived into thinking they are actually living in the Kingdom Age. In reality, it will be a lull before the storm...the Seventieth Week of Daniel begins when the Antichrist signs his covenant of peace with the nation of Israel. **The Seventieth Week does not begin, as many suppose, at the Rapture of the Church. There could be several days, even years, between the Rapture and the signing of the covenant.** All we know from God’s Word is that the final portion of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks, namely the seventieth ‘week’ (7 years), will begin with Antichrist’s signing the covenant. That covenant obviously cannot be signed until the Antichrist comes on the scene, and the Antichrist will not surface until the Bride of Christ has been caught away.”⁵⁹

The Antichrist: Shelton observes: “[Regarding the vision of Daniel 7]...Then comes an addition. Daniel’s dream has something in it that was missing in the dream that God gave to Nebuchadnezzar. Please note Daniel 7:8: ‘*I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*’ Daniel sees in his dream an eleventh horn—a ‘*little horn*.’ It is obvious from the description that this horn represents a man. This man is often spoken about in the chapters and books that follow. He is called by different names, but in each case, he is the same man who is destined to play an important role in the prophetic drama. He is called, among other names, ‘*the prince that shall come*’ (Daniel 9:26); ‘*the king*’ (Daniel 11:36); ‘*the man of sin...the son of perdition*’ (II Thess. 2:3); ‘*the wicked one*’ (II Thess. 2:8); and ‘*the beast*’ (Rev. 13:4). The name we know him by best is ‘*the antichrist*’ (I John 2:22). Our first question

⁵⁷ Robert Shelton, “*God’s Prophetic Blueprint*” privately published [originally], Greenville, SC, 1985, pp. 23-25

⁵⁸ Archer, p. 439

⁵⁹ Shelton, pp. 33-34

was, **'From where will he come?'** The answer is found in the vision that God gave to Daniel. *'I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn...'* (Dan. 7:8). The Antichrist will arise from among the nations of the revived Roman Empire. We are not told from which of the ten nations he will come, but as surely as God's Word can be trusted, he will make his appearance at just the right moment in the prophetic plan."⁶⁰

Is the world ready for such a man today? One of the early planners of the original European Common Market, Henri Spaak, once said:

*"We do not want another committee, what we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and to lift us out of the economic morass into which we are sinking. Send us such a man and be he god or devil, we will receive him."*⁶¹

a) The **"Abomination of Desolation."**

General comments by Dr. Mark Minnick:

"Jesus mentions the **"Abomination of Desolation"** in v. 15. So an understanding of Daniel 9 is critical, if we are to understand and interpret Matthew 24 correctly! Going back to the time of Daniel, he had begun to wonder about and pray about when the Jews might be going back to Israel, since he had read in Jeremiah that Israel would be in captivity for 70 years. Since Daniel went to Babylon with the list wave of *POW's* (prisoners of war) in 606 B.C., he figured the return could possibly be soon (Ezekiel went to Babylon in the 2nd wave in 597). When did Darius give the decree to return? 538 B.C. and the Jews were in the land in 536. So, since things were coming close, Daniel began to pray, since he was concerned about the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:16). So the angel Gabriel came and gave Daniel instruction in Daniel 9:24-27. He lists the stupendous things that will occur (& definitely haven't happened yet! e.g. sin hasn't ended!)

- a) *"To finish the Transgression"*
- b) *"To make an end of sin"*
- c) *"To make reconciliation"*
- d) *"To bring in righteousness"*
- e) *"To seal up the vision and prophecy"*
- f) *"To anoint the most holy"*

Some dating considerations and information: Which date refers to **"restoring"** Jerusalem?

538 B.C. – Darius' decree?

458 B.C. – Ezra teaching the people in the Temple?

445-444 B.C. – The walls of Jerusalem going up (i.e. the rebuilding of the city)? This would be considered the correct date by the majority of prophecy teachers and Bible scholars.

Note Daniel 9:25 – *"It will be built with streets and moat"*, etc. This would seem to obviously indicate that the correct date is the last one, i.e. 444 B.C. Now Gabriel instructs Daniel that 483 years will pass before Messiah will be cut off (but not for himself) -Dan. 9:26.

444 B.C. minus 483 yrs comes to A.D. 38 (483-444=A.D. 39. However, we must remember to subtract one year since 01 B.C. to 01 A.D. is one year, not two!). A.D. 38 is a little too late, but it is in the right decade. If we change the starting date to 458 B.C. it comes out to A.D. 25 which is clearly too early for the date when Christ ministered and died. However we need to keep in mind the number of days in a Jewish year which was 360 days! **So if we use "Jewish years", we end up at about A.D. 32-33.** Keep in mind that when you try to figure calendar dates it is very complex. No one can know with absolute certainty. However, if we knew everything, we would know that God is absolutely precisely correct!

Daniel mentions *"the people of the Prince that will come... that they will destroy the city."* The Prince of verse 26 is Antichrist cf. v. 27 gives us the proof. Notice who destroys the sanctuary (v.26): The people of the prince. Antichrist doesn't destroy the city and sanctuary, the people do. *"The flood"* (v.26) doesn't have to be water, it could mean people.

Returning to the subject of, and Jewish beliefs regarding the Abomination of Desolation: The Jews were trapped in Jerusalem but they were still waiting for the Lord to come and destroy their enemies. Daniel 9:27 tells us *"the Prince that shall come"* will make a covenant in the middle of the *"week"* (final 7 years i.e. the Tribulation). II Thess. 2 clearly shows us that the temple will be rebuilt, since it too says that the antichrist will take *"his seat in the temple of God."*

⁶⁰ Shelton, pp. 36-37

⁶¹ Quote found in Shelton, p. 39

The word “**Abomination**” occurs 28 times in the OT. In every single case besides the one in Matthew (i.e. 27 times) it refers to **idols or idolatrous practices** (e.g. Dt. 29:17; I Kings 11:5-7; Ezek. 20:7; Jer. 32:34; etc). So if we ask, “*What is the Abomination of Desolation?*” it clearly has to do with some sort of idolatrous worship.

“**Desolation**” means either making something desolate/empty, or that it is desolate.

So the phrase “Abomination of Desolation” has the following meaning:

“The abomination which by consequence makes it desolate” (i.e. everyone abandons it).⁶²

Dr. Bob Shelton explains well **what will transpire at the time of the future abomination of desolation**, in the following paragraphs:

“Daniel 9:27 is the key to understanding the starting point of the seventieth week. It will begin when ‘*the prince that shall come*’ (Antichrist) ‘*confirms the covenant*’ with the nation of Israel (Daniel 9:26b, 27). Verse 27 also holds the key to the beginning of the Great Tribulation: ‘*...and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease...*’ (Daniel 9:27). Remember, the seventieth week of Daniel is a period of seven years, so when we read, ‘*in the midst of the week,*’ we are to understand at the half-way point, after three and one-half years, the Great Tribulation will begin. When Antichrist causes ‘*the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,*’ he breaks a promise he made to the nation of Israel three and one-half years earlier.

“The fact that animal sacrifices will no longer be permitted will be enough to persuade many Jews that they have been deceived. They will see that their ‘great leader’ is not their long-awaited Messiah but the prophesied ‘man of sin, the Antichrist.’ Other developments will also serve to open the eyes of blinded Jews...Antichrist will cause ‘*all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads*’ (Rev. 13:16). The true Messiah would never allow such a thing, for God would never command people to do something He had clearly forbidden. In Leviticus 19:28, God declared: ‘*Ye shall not...print any marks upon you: I am the Lord.*’

“Perhaps the greatest indication that the Roman prince is the counterfeit Christ is found in Daniel 9:27: ‘*...and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease...*’ This passage must be associated with Matthew 24:15: ‘*When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).*’ The ‘abomination of desolation’ is a reference to Antichrist who will enter the temple, ‘*stand in the holy place,*’ and declare to the world that he is God. The Apostle Paul adds... ‘*... (he) exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*’ (II Thess. 2:4).

“Then will come what some have called ‘the ultimate sacrilege.’ Antichrist will have an image made of himself. The image will appear to be human, for it will be able to speak, and those who will not worship the image must be found and killed (Rev. 13:14, 15). It appears that the image will actually be located in the Holy of Holies of the temple, for it is written: ‘*And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days*’ (Dan. 12:11).

“Once again, truth-seeking Jews will see the real identity of Antichrist. They will reason, ‘He cannot be our Messiah for the true Christ would never give a command that would conflict with His own law. And the law is clear: ‘*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt now bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God...*’ (Ex. 20:4-5a).”⁶³

General facts & information regarding the temple in Jerusalem and the siege in A.D. 70 [from Minnick]: The Temple Mount area was about 5 football fields long and 3 football fields wide. In Jesus’ day there was nothing in the Holy of Holies. In A.D. 66 the Jews stopped offering the daily sacrifice to the Roman Emperor. So the putting down of this insurrection ultimately fell to Vespasian’s son Titus. It took almost 4 years for the Romans to subdue the area of Galilee. (Josephus joined the Romans at this point in time). Eventually there were 65,000 troops in the area of Jerusalem and the siege lasted for 130 days. They used battering rams, etc. The first break in was at the Nicanor Gate (West side) in May of A.D. 70. Two months later they had gotten even closer (July). Then in August they finally broke into the Temple platform area, and in September they finally got into the Temple proper. In the closing days of the siege Josephus says the Romans were crucifying up to 500 Jews/day, and posting them along the roads.

⁶² Excerpt from lecture notes taken in the graduate level course “*Expository Preaching in Matthew*” by Dr. Mark Minnick. Notes taken, July 1999. Transcribed, November, 2007.

⁶³ Shelton, pp. 57-59

DANIEL 10 – This is basically a prelude or introduction to what follows in chapter 11. On a separate subject, it should be pointed out in passing, that this chapter in no way supports the popular but misguided charismatic/Pentecostal teaching regarding “*spiritual warfare*.” It should be carefully noted that in Daniel 10 the warfare was going on in heaven-not on earth, and was being done by angels and demons-not by Daniel or other believers commanding things from earth. Pentecostal followers have totally misunderstood and misapplied terms and words such as “*binding & loosing*” (Mt. 18).⁶⁴

DANIEL 11 – This passage has a double meaning or application. Most of it describes and applies to Antiochus Epiphanes IV. However even reformed writers (i.e. those who hold to a postmillennial or amillennial theological position) acknowledge that there may be a future fulfillment and additional meaning beyond Antiochus in Daniel 11:40-45: “Baldwin applies this concept to her understanding of Daniel 11:29-45 and suggests that the whole section applies to Antiochus IV, but not exclusively. It also is relevant to other future oppressive rulers, hinting that the ultimate fulfillment of the passage is the Antichrist, who will embody evil at the end of the age.”⁶⁵

“This prophetic emphasis [on Antiochus Epiphanes] was all the more warranted in view of the fact that Antiochus and his persecution were to serve as types of the final Antichrist and the great tribulation which is yet to come in the end time (according to Christ’s Olivet discourse, recorded in Matt. 24 and Mark 13). This is made evident from the startling way in which the figure of the Greek emperor Antiochus suddenly blends into the figure of the latter day Antichrist in Dan. 11, beginning with verse 40. (Note that the little horn is said in 11:45 to meet his death in Palestine, whereas Antiochus IV actually died in Tabae, Persia). It is interesting to note that even S.R. Driver admits that these last mentioned verses do not correspond with what is known of the final stages of Antiochus’ career; actually he met his end at Tabae in Persia after a vain attempt to plunder the rich temple of Elymais in Elam.”⁶⁶

The “Battle [War] of Armageddon.” – Rev. 19.

a) Introductory thoughts.

Shelton writes: “Now we come to that great confrontation when the ‘*stone cut out without hands*’ will smite the ‘*image upon his feet*’ (Daniel 2:34). Consider these sobering words from Revelation 19: ‘*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God*’ (vv. 11-13). Who is this one on the white horse? His name is called ‘*The Word of God.*’ In John 1 we read: ‘*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*’ (John 1:1). Here is the record of the One who was with God and at the same time was God, whose name was the Word of God. This eternal person then became a man, for verse 14 declares: ‘*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.*’ It is clear from this passage that Bethlehem was not the beginning of God the Son. When He took a body, He also took the name, ‘the Lord Jesus Christ,’ but from eternity past, His name was, ‘*The Word of God.*’ This will be the name He bears as He descends from Heaven in His Revelation.”⁶⁷

b) General information & description:

Shelton comments: “For nearly three and one-half years, the Satanic trinity will appear to have absolute control over the affairs of men [i.e. during the 2nd half of the tribulation]. In Daniel’s prophecy we read: ‘*And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished...*’ (Dan. 11:36). But then a strange turn of events will take place: ‘*And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him...*’ (Dan. 11:40a). It is important to understand that directions in Scripture, unless otherwise designated, are usually related to Israel. That is, when we read of ‘*the king of the south,*’ it is to be understood that the text is speaking of that kingdom south of Israel. Most students of Bible prophecy are convinced that this is a reference to Egypt.

“The day is coming when ‘*the king of the south*’ (Egypt) will ‘*push at him,*’ [i.e.] the Antichrist. Here is a revolt in the making. It appears from the following verses that the rebellion will be subdued, at least temporarily. Then comes bad news for the Antichrist from other quarters of his world kingdom: ‘*But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him...*’ (Dan. 11:44). Here is a full scale revolt. The Russian Bear will have had at least three and one-half years to lick the wounds from his humiliating defeat by God (Ezek. 38)⁶⁸, and he is now ready to join forces with the kings of the east in an uprising against the forces of Antichrist. The prophecy of Daniel 11 is a revolt against the Roman prince. On the one side will

⁶⁴ See the supplementary 2 page handout “*Spiritual Warfare*” by me that will be distributed during this course-mwe.

⁶⁵ Dillard & Longman III, p. 331

⁶⁶ Archer, p. 439

⁶⁷ Shelton, p. 67

⁶⁸ Note: That is assuming that the events described in Ezek. 38-39 occur at the mid-point of the tribulation. However not all agree about that, some Bible scholars place these prophetic events at the beginning of the seven year tribulation period-mwe

be the revived Roman Empire (the first ten nations to come under the control of Antichrist), plus the rest of Western Europe and those countries that were born of European influence. [?] These nations will all remain loyal to Antichrist. On the other side will be the revolting nations of Daniel 11, including the king of the south (Egypt), the king of the north (Russia), and the kings of the east. Once again directions must be related to Israel...

“The kings of the east are those kings east of Israel. They can be identified further from Revelation 16:12: ‘*And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*’ It is clear to see that the kings of the east are east of Israel and also east of the River Euphrates. They are the kings of the Far East. We read further of these kings and their movements toward Israel in Revelation 9: ‘*And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, “Loose the four angels which are bound in the great Euphrates,” And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them*’ (vv. 13-16). Imagine as this mighty army of 200 million moves from the Far East to unite forces with the kings of the north and south for the great showdown with the armies of Antichrist, it will destroy ‘*the third part of men.*’ That is, as the army from the Far East makes its way to the land of Israel for the great battle, it will kill one out of every three people on earth. One wonders how any system could be so ruthless. Certainly, we are seeing the warm-up in our day for such a massacre.”⁶⁹

c) “*Why will the nations of earth be divided into two factions at this point in Bible Prophecy?*”⁷⁰ And why are they gathered to Israel anyway? Walvoord & Walvoord explain:

“Although from their point of view they are gathered to fight it out for world power, the armies of the world will actually be assembled by Satan in anticipation of the second coming of Christ. The entire armed might of the world will be assembled in the Middle East, ready to contend with the power of Christ as He returns from heaven. As subsequent events make clear, the movement will be completely futile and hopeless. The armies of the world are by no means equipped to fight the armies of heaven. Still, Satan will assemble the nations for this final hour, and, in fact, the nations will choose to side with Satan and oppose the second coming of Christ. It will be the best that Satan can do. These events will give the nations their choice and allow Satan his desperate bid to oppose Christ’s second coming.”⁷¹

d) “*Is the war of Armageddon a single battle, or a series of military engagements?*” Pentecost, quoting from someone named Sims, advances the idea that the war of Armageddon is actually a campaign that transpires over a wide area and in a number of venues. He appeals to Joel 3:2, 13, Ezekiel 39:11 & Zechariah 12:2-11 & 14:2 in the Old Testament and Revelation 14:20 in the New Testament for support for this position. However it appears he may be confusing/combining descriptions from two different battles in regard to the Ezekiel passage. He states: “This wide area would cover the entire land of Palestine and this campaign, with all its parts, would confirm what Ezekiel pictures when he says the invaders will ‘cover the land’ (Ezek. 38:9, 16).” The vast majority of premillennial expositors would draw a clear distinction between the conflict described in Ezekiel 39-39, and the conflict of Armageddon. Likewise Sims, whom he quotes, takes literally the statement in Isaiah that describes Christ as coming “from Edom” with blood-stained garments. Not everyone would agree with such an interpretation. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt that when Christ returns He will stand on the Mount of Olives which is quite a distance from the valley of Megiddo. Consequently the idea that the war of Armageddon may cover a fairly wide area in Israel, geographically speaking (though it is perhaps centered at Megiddo), is certainly understandable, and has some biblical support.

DANIEL 12 - Some helpful comments by Ryrie regarding this chapter: “[v.1] ‘*At that time*’ i.e. the time of the events of 11:36-45, the Great Tribulation...[v.2] The verse predicts the resurrection of the righteous dead of OT times as well as the righteous martyrs of the Tribulation at the second coming of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6). Believers of the church age will already have been changed and raised at the Rapture. (The resurrection of the wicked does not occur at the same time, but after the Millennium; Rev. 20:5)... [v.4] *seal the book*. Not that its meaning was to be left unexplained but that the book was to be kept intact so as to help those living in the future tribulation days. *Many shall run to and fro*. As the end approaches, people will travel about seeking to discover what the future holds... [v.7] The events of the Tribulation will be consummated when the time, times, and an half (the last 3&1/2 years of that seven-year period) come to a close. These last 3&1/2 years constitute the Great Tribulation (cf. Mt. 24:21)... [v.8] Even Daniel did not understand all these prophecies... [v.11] *the abomination that maketh desolate*. At the midpoint of the tribulation ‘week’ Antichrist will abolish the Jewish sacrifices (9:27; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:4). From that time to the end will be 1,290 days. Normally 3 & ½ years (of 360 days per year) would include only 1,260 days. The extra 30 days mentioned here allow for the judgments that will take place after the second

⁶⁹ Shelton, pp. 61-63

⁷⁰ Shelton, p. 65

⁷¹ John F. Walvoord & John E. Walvoord, “*Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis*” (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1974), pp. 164-165

coming of Christ. See Ezek. 20:33-44; Joel 3:2-3; Matt. 25:32)...[v.12] Because the one who lives 75 days after the second advent (1,335 days from the midpoint of the Tribulation) is called blessed, this must mark the beginning of the actual functioning of Christ's millennial kingdom."⁷²

Supplementary comments on Ezekiel 38-39 – The Battle of Gog & Magog. There is one other battle/war/event that we haven't addressed yet. It is the events that are described in Ezekiel 38-39. As mentioned above, not all scholars agree as to when that prophesied event will occur. Some feel the events described there will occur at the beginning of the tribulation, others in the middle, and a few, possibly, even think it will take place at the end of the tribulation. While we cannot go into great depth at this time regarding those chapters and the events described there, a few brief comments and quotes are certainly in order here.

Shelton: “*‘And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth and all thine army...’* (Ezek. 38:1-4a). In Ezekiel 39:2, God declares that He will bring a mighty army to ‘the mountains of Israel’ and will also ‘turn them back.’ With God’s hooks in its jaws, this army will invade the land of Israel and will experience its greatest military defeat... [1] **WHO LEADS THE INVASION?** ...Most students of Bible prophecy are convinced that verse 2 is a reference to the land of Russia...In Genesis 10, the generations of Noah are listed. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Gen. 10:1). Notice that among the sons of Japheth are mentioned ‘*Magog...Tubal, and Meshech*’ (Gen. 10:2). Scofield is accurate in stating, ‘From Magog are descended the ancient Sythians, or Tartars, whose descendants predominate in the modern Russia.’ Meshech and Tubal were also progenitors of those peoples who moved in a northward direction and, in turn, became the fathers of those who later established what we know today as Russia. It is believed that the city of Moscow derived its name from Meshech and Tobolsk received its name from Tubal...

“The Russian Bear will not be alone in its effort to devour the little nation of Israel, for its allies are presented in verses 5 and 6: ‘*Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.*’ It is interesting to note that the first nation mentioned which will unite its forces with Russia in this attempt to destroy Israel is Persia. The name Persia was changed in 1932 to Iran.”⁷³

Pentecost adds: “From the prophecy in Ezekiel it is learned that there will be a great confederacy, known as the northern confederacy under the leadership of one who arises in the land of Magog—Russia. Allied with Russia will be Iran (Persia) certain Arab states (Put or Ethiopia), Germany, and some Asiatic peoples known as Togarmah, which may include an extensive coalition of Asiatic powers. That this is not an exhaustive list is seen from Ezekiel 38:6, ‘*and many people with thee.*’”⁷⁴

“**WHY IS THERE AN ATTACK?** ...Part of the answer is a common **hatred for the Jews**. There have always been men on the scene like Haman, who would have slain all of the Jews in Medo-Persia if God had not intervened...But more than a hatred for Jews enters into the picture before us. May I suggest that **hunger for material gain** will also excite Russia and its allies. In Ezekiel 38:12, it is written that this great army will come ‘*to take a spoil.*’ Israel is the ‘gateway to three continents.’ ...But beyond the actual worth of Israel is the fact that the day may come when **the oil of the Middle East** will be available only to those nations that position themselves against Israel...

“**WHEN WILL IT OCCUR?** Our third question is, ‘When will Russia come against Israel?’ Obviously, the invasion of **Ezekiel 38 could not take place until a nation called ‘Israel’ existed...In the past, liberal theologians have scoffed at this prophecy by citing that Russia would have great difficulty destroying a nation that did not exist.** It is true that since 605 B.C. the Jews have been unable to claim the land of Israel as their own (except briefly during the days of the Maccabean revolt)...For 2600 years, the Jews have not been in their own land, or if they were, it did not belong to them...The question of liberal theologians was, ‘**How could Russia come against a nation that did not exist?**’ Imagine the confusion in liberal circles when in 1948 the United Nations created a home for Jews in the land of Palestine. On May 14th of that year, British control came to an end; and for the first time in 2600 years, the Jews were in their own land ruling their own affairs. Of course, God said it would happen. [!] Consider for a moment...Ezekiel 37: ‘*Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel*’ (vv. 11-12). One of the most significant prophetic developments of our day has been the return of the Jews from all over the world to the land of Israel. They have returned from no less than 120 nations, speaking at least 83 different languages. I grant you that they are returning, for the most part,

⁷² Ryrie, pp. 1290-1291

⁷³ Shelton, pp. 45-46

⁷⁴ J. Dwight Pentecost, “*Things to Come*” (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1958, 1973), p. 331

in unbelief. That is, they are not aware of the truths of Ezekiel 37 and 38, nor are they willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah, but the day will come when the scales will fall from their eyes. They will see that God caused them to come together (Ezek. 37:7) as the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision came together... [So] 'When will the invasion [by Gog & Magog] occur?' Obviously it could not occur until Israel is a nation. That miracle has now taken place...It should also be noted that **the invasion out of the north cannot take place until Israel is 'at rest.'** 'And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates' (Ezek. 38:11)...

"There are those who believe the next major prophetic event will be the destruction of the armies of Russia against the mountains of Israel [i.e. that this battle occurs at the beginning of the tribulation period]. They believe this must happen before Antichrist will be revealed in the world...But there are several events that must precede the invasion of Israel by the northern confederacy. In proper sequence, they are:

- The Rapture of the Church
- The coming of Antichrist
- The signing of his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27)
- The Jews' belief that their long-awaited Christ is ruling over them, that they are actually living in Kingdom days
- The establishment of Israel as 'the land of unwallled villages...at rest...dwelling safely' (Ezek. 38:11)

Shelton summarizes: "It is obvious that Israel is not dwelling safely today. It is not the land of 'unwallled villages' ...The invasion of Israel cannot take place today because Israel is not at peace. Israel is not at peace because the covenant of Daniel 9:27 has not been signed. The covenant has not been signed because Antichrist has not yet been revealed, and Antichrist has not been revealed because the Church has not been raptured. Certainly, the coming of Christ for His Bride is near."⁷⁵

"WHAT IS THE RESULT? ...'What will be the results of the invasion?' ...we read: '*And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel*' (Ezek. 38:18-19). God will begin His judgment on the northern armies by sending an earthquake. Notice, '*a great shaking*' This will, no doubt, create such panic within the ranks that '*every man's sword shall be against his brother*' (Ezek. 38:21b). To add to the confusion and destruction, we read: '*And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone*' (Ezek. 38:22). It is interesting to compare God's judgment upon Egypt prior to the Exodus with His judgment in Ezekiel 38. '*so there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail...*' (Ex. 9:24). When fire and ice come out of Heaven at the same time, you can be sure God is at work! Ezekiel 38 concludes with these words: '*Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord*' (Ezek. 38:23)."

⁷⁵ Shelton, pp. 47-51