

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 50

DECEMBER 2010

NUMBER 4

CONTENTS

The Second Article: John 1:1-14.....	Frank Gantt
The Third Article: Acts 4:8-13.....	Frank Gantt
Daniel 12:2: An Exegesis and Contextual Study	David Reim
<u>Book Review:</u> <i>Design Matters: Creating Powerful Imagery for Worship</i>	By Jason Moore and Len Wilson (Reviewer: David Schaller)

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The Second Article: John 1:1-14

Frank Gantt

In the last issue we began an Advent series based on the three Articles of the Apostles' Creed. We were reminded that while God is the Creator of heaven and earth, the Bible rarely refers to Him as Father because of this fact. Rather, we call Him Father chiefly because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and also our Father through our faith in Christ.

Unfortunately, this truth has become blurred in our society. In the late 1800s a slogan was promoted by the Free Masons, which was then adopted by mainline Christianity in the early 1900s and has now grown to be a prevalent doctrinal position of many today. The slogan is "The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." It sounds good in a way, even almost biblical, until you understand the thought behind the slogan. Basically, it means that all people on the earth are children of God and all human beings are brothers and sisters of one another. A case could perhaps be made for that idea on the basis of creation, but it also ties in with the idea that since we are all children of God, we must all be headed to the same home, and on that basis we are to accept one another's beliefs about how to get there. This movement also demotes Christ to the position of a great teacher who came to teach us how to love and accept one another. The Christian faith, to this way of thinking, is just another among a multitude of moral belief systems.

We see this type of world view gaining momentum in our nation, and it is therefore necessary that we be reminded what God says concerning Jesus and the importance of the event that we celebrate on December 25. He speaks to us about these things in John 1:1-14:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became 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.

Martin Luther's explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed has been described as the most beautiful writing among all the writings of men that have not been verbally inspired. It is certainly worth committing to memory—not just by Lutherans, but by all Christians—for it captures in a few sentences the sum and substance of the Christian faith.

Sadly, there are many within the sphere of Christianity who believe they have no use for the truths set forth in the Second Article and Luther's explanation. One reason for this view is the acknowledgment made of man's sinfulness, a confession which isn't popular these days. Another reason is that we have an exclusive statement leaving no room for any of the religions of the world as a path to righteousness, to God, and to heaven. A third reason is that it leaves man with no ability to assist in his own salvation.

Against all who would dismiss the Second Article because of these things, the Word of God through John insists: "*The Word became flesh . . . In Him was life . . . As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God . . . We beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth.*" What the Second Article states and Luther reaffirms is fact, whether it is believed or rejected, whether it is clung to or discarded. And it is the most incredible of all facts—God Himself has come to us and become one of us. Touch your face, wiggle your fingers, tap your toes. God the Son can do all those things too—not because He is almighty God who can do all things, but because He became a Man, flesh and blood, just as human as we are.

Of course, the Son of God did not come to do with His body what you can do with yours. He took on our nature to do something else, what could not be done unless God had come in the likeness of man. He came to be born under the same Law of God that condemns us sinners to everlasting destruction. By His own bodily life He came to keep that Law for us. Then He permitted all the curses that the Law threatens against us to be poured out upon Him. Unless He had a real human body and soul, God could not be wounded for our offenses, bruised for our iniquities, chastised to bring us peace, and whipped to bring us healing (Isa. 53:5). He would have no heel to crush Satan, no hands and feet to be nailed to the cross. Surely in the manger was laid the greatest gift the world has ever known—the eternal, almighty God come to be our Redeemer.

Now the beauty of Luther's explanation to the Second Article is that he takes what is universally true—that Christ has redeemed the world through His suffering and death—and applies it to the individual. "He has redeemed **me**, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won **me** from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. He did this that **I** should be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy . . ." (Sydow ed.). That's the amazing gift of Christmas: that God loved you, whoever you are and whatever you have done, so much that He came to take your place and to set things right between you and Him. Each one of you gets to say with absolute confidence: Through Jesus Christ God is reconciled to me and I am forgiven.

Permit me to close with a quote from Luther's *Large Catechism* on this topic, one upon which I pray the Holy Spirit will keep your hearts focused during this season and for the rest of your life:

Let this be the summary of this article, that the little word "Lord" simply means the same as Redeemer, that is, he who has brought us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and now keeps us safe there. The remaining parts of this article simply serve to clarify and express how and by what means this redemption was accomplished—that is, how much it cost Christ and what he paid and risked in order to win us and bring us under his dominion. That is to say, he became man, conceived and born without sin, of the Holy Spirit and the [v]irgin, that he might become Lord over sin; moreover, he suffered, died, and was buried that he might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owed, not with silver and gold but with his own precious blood. All this in order to become my Lord. For he did none of these things for himself, nor had he any need of them. Afterward he rose again from the dead, swallowed up and devoured death, and finally ascended into heaven and assumed dominion at the right hand of the Father. The devil and all powers, therefore, must be subject to him and lie beneath his feet until finally, at the last day, he will completely divide and separate us from the wicked world, the devil, death, sin, etc. (Tappert 414)

What a wonderful gift that was wrapped in swaddling cloth and laid in the manger. What a wonderful gift has been opened and revealed to mankind through the Gospel. May the Holy Spirit give us the grace to value this gift through faith, and may He keep us in that faith until we come into our Father's house. Amen!

The Third Article: Acts 4:8-13

Grace and peace are yours from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

During His ministry Jesus used light often as a way to teach us about the Gospel, that is, about Himself, His purpose, and what it means to be His disciple. Light is a very important part of God's creation, one of the first parts of creation to be called into existence. With the exception of those first three days in the beginning, light has always required a created source. Well, the only source that existed those first three days was the power of God keeping that light shining through the darkness.

Christians are called to be lights, beacons that shine in a dark world. But since we have no light in and of ourselves, our light can only be a reflected light, and so we are to be mirrors of the glory that belongs always and only to our Savior, Jesus. When we fail to reflect the glory of our Savior, very real and very great dangers are perpetuated among us. Information of the most critical nature is being withheld, with eternal consequences at stake. Keep this in mind as we read from Acts 4:8-13:

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

Our text this evening is, once again, not a typical Advent or Christmas kind of text. Yet you can already catch glimpses of its application both to Christmas and to the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed. It begins with a phrase that we may be tempted to overlook, *“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them . . .”* What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Is anyone today filled with the Holy Spirit? *Can* anyone today be filled with the Holy Spirit? How does one know if he or she is thus filled? What does it feel like?

Do we know what Peter felt like when he was filled with the Holy Spirit? No. Do we nonetheless know something about being filled with the Holy Spirit? Yes. We know that anyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit will walk in harmony with the will of God. We know that someone filled with the Holy Spirit will be mindful of the things of God rather than shallow, temporal affairs. We also know that anyone filled with the Holy Spirit will speak the truth, even in the face of resistance or persecution. We know these things because we read of them again and again in the lives of Christians in the Bible. John the Baptist, the great forerunner of the Christ, is one example. Here in our text we have an example from the life of Peter. To be filled with the Spirit indicates that one is controlled by the Spirit. God is in us and working through us.

It is in this state that Peter and John faced and addressed the same group that sentenced the Lord Jesus to death. Remember that fact as you read through this text. They were facing the same men who had the Lord crucified. It had to be intimidating in the extreme for Peter and John to be hauled before them and condemned.

Do you remember, by the way, *why* the Jewish authorities had summoned these men? Peter had healed a lame beggar, a man born lame. Jesus, you’ll recall, had also healed a man with a congenital handicap, blind from birth, but He did so on the Sabbath, which was a point on which the Jews tried to accuse Him. This man was healed, but not on the Sabbath. So what was the real reason for summoning Peter and John? As believers in Jesus Christ they were going around proclaiming Him to be the world’s Savior.

Peter pointed out the ridiculous nature of the charges against him when he said, *“Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man . . .”* Even the Jews had to admit that to arrest a man for healing a man born lame was itself rather, well, lame. Peter, of course, knew their true motive; so he continued: *“If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.”*

Peter went on with words of power that truly shocked his Jewish accusers. It wasn’t necessarily the *content* of the words that shocked them (although the message certainly could have and should have); it was the *source* of the words. Hear again Peter’s closing statement and the Jews’ reaction: *“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* The reaction of the Jews? *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”*

Why couldn’t the educated rulers bully these poor, dumb fishermen into submission? Clearly because the poor, dumb fishermen were convinced by the truth and filled with the Holy Spirit. Their

boldness, like their faith and trust in Jesus, did not originate in them; it was a gift given by the Holy Spirit. Think back to Peter's insistence on Maundy Thursday that he would never deny his Savior, even if all the others would do so. Yet in just a few short hours, he denied, even to the point of cursing, any relationship to Christ. But here he stood before the very group responsible for having Jesus put to death, and he not only was claiming to know Jesus, but insisting that the name of Jesus was the only one by which anyone could be saved. The difference between the two occasions rests in that opening statement: "Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit . . ."

Here is the great and practical message for us in this text, which is two-fold. First of all, our salvation from beginning to end is a gift of God. We reminded ourselves two weeks ago that it is God's coming to us, not our coming to God, that is the basis for our child-to-Father relationship with Him. Last week we heard again how God came to us in the person of His Son, who became not just the world's Redeemer, but **my** Redeemer from sin, death, and hell. Now we are seeing that even the faith to trust in the Word made flesh is entirely a product of God's effort as the Holy Spirit fills us with His power. This is practical because it gives faith a solid foundation. Faith is not the ambiguous hope that everything will be fine somehow. Faith is not an intellectual knowledge that good will finally triumph over evil. Faith is a God-given trust in the Savior-God who never fails to keep His promises.

Secondly, the message of our text is practical also in the reminder that, having been brought to faith, our power to be witnesses of Christ in the world also comes from God the Holy Spirit.

At this time of year we put up all kinds of decorations to focus our thoughts on Christmas. The most notable decoration to adorn our homes and yards is light. Why all those Christmas lights? Because Christ is the Light of the world, and through us He lets His light shine. Now how many of those lights on your tree or in your yard will shine if they do not have a power source? None. By themselves they remain as dark as the night that surrounds them. So it was with Peter and John and all the disciples, and so it is with each one of us. Only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit will we shine brightly in the world, reflecting for all to see the Light of Life, who is Jesus Christ.

The only question that remains is this: How do we become filled with the Holy Spirit? The answer lies in our text as well, and interestingly enough, it is relayed to us by the very ones who had arrested Peter and John and had put Jesus to death. The last verse of our text says, "*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*"

To be filled with the Holy Spirit, one must spend time with Jesus. We, of course, can't travel back two thousand years and follow Jesus around the countryside of Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. But we can spend time with Jesus through His Word, the Bible. When you spend time at home reading and studying God's Word for yourselves and when you speak God's Word to one another during the week and when you gather together to hear His Word at church and receive the Lord's Supper, you are spending time with Jesus. And through that encounter with the Savior the Holy Spirit will fill your hearts and lives with His power.

To that end we pray: Holy Spirit, as we meditate on Your Word, the good news of our Savior's birth, death, and resurrection, fill us with Your presence, strengthen our faith in Jesus, and supply us with Your power so that we may be lights in the world that reflect the Light of the world. In His name we pray. Amen.

Daniel 12:2 An Exegesis and Contextual Study

David Reim

* The original essay, as written for a 2010 CLC pastoral conference, has been abridged and also edited according to MLA guidelines. See Works Cited on page 51 for source documentation of quoted material. All Scripture quotations are New King James, unless noted otherwise.

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

The Last Day?

This verse is often used as a proof text for the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. Who would ever question that? In fact, it is so routinely used as a proof text for the final resurrection that one almost feels un-Lutheran in questioning such an accepted application of the passage. It is, however, because of our Lutheran commitment to understanding the Spirit-intended meaning of every passage of Scripture that we want to delve deeper into this matter of application. One basic rule of Bible interpretation is to understand every passage in its context. And a cardinal sin of hermeneutics is to take a passage out of its context and make it say something that the words themselves may sound like, but in contradiction of the context in which the words are found.

The immediate context of Daniel 12:1-3 has also been often understood as referring to the last days. We quote them below.

At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Verse 1 seems to speak of the great tribulation before the end, and verse 3 seems to suggest the idea that those who are very active in evangelism will have a greater glory in heaven.

These verses, however, are part of a much larger context. Therefore let us take a biblically sound, historical-exegetical look at verse 2 to determine what the Spirit-intended meaning is. First we examine the words exegetically and then consider them in the historical context of the four visions in the book of Daniel.

Exegesis of Daniel 12:2

וְרַבִּים מִיֹּשְׁנֵי אֲדָמַת־עֹפָר יִקְיִצּוּ ... אֱלֹהֵי חַיֵּי עוֹלָם וְאֱלֹהֵי
לְחַרְפוֹת לְדַרְאוֹן עוֹלָם:

וְרַבִּים adj. masc. pl. *much, many*

מִיֹּשְׁנֵי pref. מִן masc. pl. constr. “those who are sleeping”

אֲדָמַת noun fem. sg. constr. of אֲדָמָה *earth, ground*

עֹפָר noun masc. *dust, dry earth*. The same word is used in Gen. 2:7 (“The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground”) and 3:19 (“Dust you are, and to dust you shall return”).

יִקְיִצּוּ Hiph. Impf. 3rd pl. *to awake, to be aroused*. Used of waking from sleep and also in “Noah awoke from his wine” (Gen. 9:24).

אֱלֹהֵי... pron. pl. *these*

לְחַיֵּי pref. לְ noun masc. pl.; as adj. *alive, living*; as substantive *life*

עוֹלָם *eternity, eternal, long time*

לְחַרְפוֹת pref. לְ noun fem. pl. *reproach, scorn, contempt*

לְדַרְאוֹן pref. לְ noun masc. *abhorring, abomination, one who is abhorred*.

A literal translation: *And many of those sleeping in the dust of the earth shall awake: these to life eternal and these to scorn and abhorring eternal.*

There is nothing difficult about the exegesis itself. It is quite straightforward as far as I could

tell—a conclusion also born out by the uniformity in the translations.

NIV: Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

NAS: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt

NKJ: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

ESV: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Luther: *Und viele, so unter der Erde schlafen liegen, werden aufwachen: etliche zum ewigen Leben, etliche zu ewiger Schmach und Schande.*

in the dust of the earth is a vivid picture of death, especially since the same manner of speaking describes man's death as a return to the dust. The second half of the verse certainly seems to be talking about the truth that we will be raised either to eternal life in paradise or eternal torment in hell.

, the little word *min* prefixed to the second Hebrew word does raise the question of whether this really is the final resurrection. The natural understanding would be the partitive use of *min*: “Many of the ones who sleep in the dust of the earth . . .” The majority of translations reflect this partitive use, while some seem to ignore it. We know that on the last day not just many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will rise, but “all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth . . .” (John 5:28-29). Have some avoided the simple translation because it doesn't fit what they assume to be the sense of the passage? That is another cardinal sin of Bible interpretation: to make a passage fit one's preconceived idea of the meaning rather than to study the text to see what it is saying. Many of the surrounding verses are also interpreted on the assumption that this verse is talking about the final resurrection. We need to explore the wider context to see what God has revealed to Daniel and to us in this verse.

The historical context of Daniel's visions

Chapters 7-12 of Daniel contain some of the most detailed prophecies about the future of God's kingdom in the midst of the kingdoms of this world. These prophecies are portrayed in four visions given to Daniel. It's as if God has allowed Daniel to look into the future through a powerful zoom lens. In the first vision Daniel's lens, so to speak, is zoomed way out to the widest possible angle. It takes in the whole history of the world from King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon right down to the end of time. Each successive vision then zooms in for a closer look at more specific periods and events that would unfold in the course of history.

We consider a brief overview of the first three visions.

The vision of the Four Beasts and the Eternal Ruler in chapter 7

God showed Daniel the four successive world empires that would rule the world right down to the end of time. They are pictured as four fierce beasts.

The winged lion is King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. He was the king of beasts. He also had wings of an eagle, the lord of the air.

The fierce bear is the Medo-Persian Empire that rose up to conquer Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, thus the three ribs in its mouth.

The leopard with four wings is Alexander the Great, who flew across the world, devouring the nations. The image had four heads to portray how the kingdom would be divided up to the four generals when Alexander unexpectedly died at a young age.

The dreadful beast with 10 horns and iron teeth is the Roman Empire. It had one little horn, different from the other 10 horns, that rose up and became greater than them all. This little horn is pictured as ruling until the Ancient of Days comes for the final judgment. It had “eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words” against the Most High (7:8). Daniel saw this horn “making

war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came” (7:21-22). What a vivid description of the Antichrist coming out of the Roman Empire. The papacy of the Roman Catholic Church has been in many respects a continuation of the Roman Empire. It does do war against the saints by the pompous words it speaks against the Most High. But when the Ancient of Days comes and judges the earth, this little horn together with all enemies of God’s kingdom will be destroyed forever. Then the “One like the Son of Man” will reign over His kingdom forever.

Given in the last chapter that is written in Chaldee, this vision is for the whole world to see that the powers of the world may fight against God and His kingdom, but God will destroy them in the end. Implied is a warning: Turn to God while there is still time; God’s kingdom will prevail and last forever! The rest of the visions are written in Hebrew, serving at that time and beyond as messages given primarily for God’s people of Israel.

The vision of the Ram and the Goat in chapter 8

Daniel’s second vision zooms in for a closer look at the next two empires that would arise and have an impact on God’s people; these are the Medo-Persian Empire and the Macedonian-Greek Empire. God mentions these two kingdoms by name (8:20-21), leaving no question as to whom they refer. Also contained in the vision of chapter 8 is a very vivid picture of what these two empires would be.

The Medo-Persian Empire is pictured as a powerful ram with two horns. This ram charged to the west and the north and the south—a portrayal of the actual order in which Cyrus the Great conquered the nations in his empire. No one could withstand him.

The Macedonian-Greek Empire comes into view as a male goat flying across the ground without touching it—a striking picture of the blitzkrieg war success of Alexander the Great.

Yet it is one descended from the fourth general of Alexander who becomes the main focus of this vision. Out of the Seleucid Kingdom near the end of the reign of the Greeks, at a time “when the transgressions have reached their fullness, a king shall arise. . .” (8:23). This king “shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also **the holy people**” (v. 24). He is described as another “little horn” that grew up out of the others. He would do great harm to the people of Israel, even “taking away the daily sacrifices,” and in his time “the place of the sanctuary was cast down” (v. 11). But then “he shall be broken without human means” (v. 25). This is a striking prediction of Antiochus Epiphanes (or Antiochus IV), sometimes called the “Antichrist of the Old Testament.”

There would be dreadful times ahead for the people of Israel as a result of their growing transgressions. However, God prescribed that the tribulation would be for a limited time and that God would break the one who troubles them.

The vision of 70 Sevens in chapter 9: Messiah shall come

The previous vision was so devastating and frightening that Daniel “fainted and was sick for days” (8:27). About thirteen years later, after the fall of Babylon, God granted Daniel a much more encouraging vision by zooming in even closer on the most important and blessed event of all history—the coming of the Messiah.

a study of the prophecies written by Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2), Daniel realized that the time of their exile was complete. Jeremiah had prophesied 70 years of captivity, and that time was up. So Daniel fasted, put on sackcloth and ashes, and prayed fervently to the Lord. He confessed his sins and the sins of the people and pleaded for God to forgive them and to restore Jerusalem as God had promised.

Daniel was still praying, the angel Gabriel was sent to give Daniel another vision, which assured him that in just one more period of 70 the Messiah would come. This time it would be 70 sevens.

During that time the people of Israel would be allowed to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem. The city and the Temple would be rebuilt, and most importantly, at the end of the 70 sevens the Messiah would come. Messiah would bring the answer to and fulfillment of Daniel’s greatest petition, the forgiveness of sins. By the end of the 70 sevens the transgressions would be finished, there would be an

end of sins, reconciliation would be made, everlasting righteousness would be brought in, and the Most Holy would be anointed (9:24). Messiah, here named with that title in verses 25 and 26, would finish the work of redemption.

This would be a very comforting and encouraging prophecy, but it also contained the very ominous and saddening fact that destruction would come upon those who reject the Messiah. At the end of the vision is a very brief look ahead to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The fourth and final vision in Daniel 10-12

In the previous three visions God sent Gabriel to reveal the messages from God to Daniel. Now in this fourth vision the Son of God Himself has come to give the revelation. It is most crucial to notice the scope of the entire fourth vision, namely, that the pre-incarnate Christ tells Daniel: *“Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come”* (10:14).

What are the “latter days” that Christ is revealing to Daniel? We are conditioned to think of the “latter days” as a reference to the end of the world. Is that the case here?

Gabriel explained the focus of the second vision in a similar way: “Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end” (8:17). Again in verse 19 he says, “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.” But in that second vision God was revealing what would happen to Israel near the end of the Greek age. That makes the prophecy point to about 164 BC. In His Olivet discourse (Matt. 24) Jesus shows that the time of tribulation under Antiochus Epiphanes was a prefigurement of the end of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem. So the “latter days” that the fourth vision features could be the latter days of the nation of Israel.

can also look at the designation for God’s people used throughout the different visions. The first vision spoke of God’s people as “the saints of the Most High” who would “receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever” (7:18). This kingdom undoubtedly is the same as the one described in verse 14, the one belonging to the Son of Man “which shall not be destroyed.” Both references appear to include all of God’s people right up until the time when the Ancient of Days would come in judgment.

The third vision in chapter 9, the 70 sevens, is made in direct correlation to “your people and your holy city” (9:24). Daniel prayed for the people of Israel, his people, and God’s answer was specifically about his people and the city of Jerusalem. All interpretations that extend this vision to the end of time overlook this important detail and miss the great comfort of our redemption secured by the Messiah (the Christ).

Now in the final vision Christ again is talking about “what will happen to your people in the latter days . . .” (10:14). These are Daniel’s people, the Jews specifically, not all the saints of God. Thus we hear Christ declaring this last vision to be focused on what would become of the nation of Israel. It gives a detailed and fascinating description of what would happen to Israel right up to its very end. What is foretold in these final chapters, for the most part, are the latter days of Israel as a nation and, more importantly, as God’s covenant people, not the latter days of the world.

Chapter 11 begins the description of what would happen to Israel right up to its end as a nation. This is, without a doubt, the most detailed, most explicit revelation of a future period of time to be found in the entire Bible. These chapters provide a vivid and powerful proof that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, for the prophecies were all fulfilled in such exact detail. It is also a comforting reassurance that Christ, the promised Redeemer, is also the King of kings and Lord of lords who rules the nations. Even when these powerful kingdoms of the world set themselves against the Lord and His Anointed, Christ and His kingdom will be victorious. We will take a brief look at the events foretold.

foretold the major events of virtually every foreign king that controlled Israel from Daniel’s time until the destruction of Jerusalem. Daniel served the first king of the Medes, Darius, who reigned together

with Cyrus the Persian. After that there would be only four more kings of Persia. The fourth would be very powerful and rich; that was Xerxes, or Ahasuerus, whom we know quite well as the king who married a Jewish girl named Esther. He “stirred up all against the realm of Greece” (11:2). Though he gathered a massive army of more than 2.5 million men, he was badly defeated by the Greeks. Consequently, the Persian Empire was decimated. Even though the nation of Persia continued for another 135 years, they never really amounted to much after losing to the Greeks. For all practical purposes the Persian Empire was over. And especially as far as the people of Israel were concerned, Xerxes was the last Persian king to have power over them.

The next foreign kings to have power over the Jewish people would be Greek. Daniel again saw how the great king of Greece, Alexander, would come to an untimely end, resulting in his kingdom being divided up, but not among his own posterity.

The prophecy then gives remarkable detail about the military campaigns, the alliances, the political marriages, the intrigue and assassinations that would happen in the power struggle between two of the Greek kingdoms: the Seleucid kingdom of Syria, whose ruler is called the “king of the North,” and the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt, whose ruler is called the “king of the South.” These events are important to Daniel because the land of Israel was caught in the crossfire between these two regional powers.

A [available in the original essay] gives an accounting of the historical fulfillment of the details in Daniel 11.¹ These include many famous people and events of history, such as the Syrian Wars and Cleopatra I, the fourth great grandmother of the famous Cleopatra who had affairs with Julius Caesar and with his general Mark Antony. The most important figure for Israel was Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC), to whom 15 verses of this vision are devoted—more than any other king, even though he ruled for only 11 years. He would cause the greatest grief for God’s people. Daniel was also shown how some in Israel would stand up and fight for God’s Word. Predicted in Daniel 11 is Mattathias, a priest who refused to offer profane sacrifices. He killed the king’s agent and fled to the mountains. He and his sons, the most famous being Judas Maccabeus, would begin the Maccabean revolt.

Daniel 11:36 is the point in the vision that reveals the rise of a new and different king.

At first glance the prophecy appears to continue uninterrupted, as though it is still talking about Antiochus IV Epiphanes. But as one reads on, the things said about this king no longer fit Antiochus IV. This king is said to “honor . . . a god which his fathers did not know . . .” Antiochus always remained faithful to the gods of Greece and tried to force them on the people of his realm. More importantly, verse 40 says that “the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind . . .” Since Antiochus was the king of the North, he cannot be the king who is spoken of in these verses. Notice in verse 36 that he is introduced simply as “the king,” not the “king of the North” or the “king of the South.”

So who is this new king? Millennialists suddenly jump here from Antiochus Epiphanes to the end-time Antichrist. But the whole prophecy so far has been an amazing, detailed account of a succession of kings following each other in chronological order. There is nothing in the text or the context to suggest or even to allow for such a sudden jump in time. The narration of the vision simply continues on unbroken.

Verse 36 says, “He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods.” That is very similar to the description of the “man of lawlessness” in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, “who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped . . .” Thus many conservative theologians, including Martin Luther, have concluded that this new king is the Antichrist. There are many details that would seem to fit that viewpoint. But making that identification would still require a jump of at least 400 to 600 years between verses 35 and 36. So the same reason that excludes the millennialistic interpretation would speak against this idea as well.

expression, “the time of the end,” is used again in connection with this new king. As noted before, this need not be referring to the end of the world, but the end of the nation of Israel. Identifying this king with the Antichrist of Rome would take us past “the time of the end” thus indicated in the

previous verses.

Who else could this king be? Let's remember that this entire chapter has given us a chronological succession of foreign kings who have controlled the holy city of Jerusalem and the people of the covenant. Who was the next foreign king over Israel?

Antiochus IV was tied up in a battle against the Parthians in the East. That was, no doubt, part of God's plan to prevent Antiochus from crushing the small band of Jewish warriors. With God's blessings Judas Maccabeus (the hammer), by his unrelenting attacks on the Syrian forces, finally prevailed to drive them out of Israel. He liberated Jerusalem in 165 BC, cleansed the Temple, and restored the true worship of God. The Jews still celebrate this event every year with the Chanukah festival. Antiochus IV died a year later in a military campaign against the Parthians. His successor, Antiochus V, withdrew from Jerusalem entirely and ended the persecution. The Seleucid Kingdom never recovered. No Seleucid king ever troubled Israel again, and the last one was dethroned by the Romans in 64 BC.

The Maccabees continued to expand the territory of Israel almost to its original extent under David and Solomon. They gained complete independence in 152 BC, when the Seleucid king recognized Judas' brother, Jonathan, as high priest. The family of Judas and Jonathan became the new royal dynasty of Judea. Known as the Hasmonaeans, this Jewish family would rule until about 63 BC.

In 63 two descendants of the Maccabees, brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobolus, fought over who should be king. It was decided to ask the Roman general Pompeii, who controlled Syria now, to mediate in the dispute. Pompeii moved into Israel with his armies. He slaughtered many Jews and made Hyrcanus, the weaker of the two brothers, the nominal puppet ruler of the country.

This outcome was part of the Roman system. They preferred to rule by proxy, allowing the local governor or king to deal with the day-to-day problems of running the country, as long as the Roman tax was paid and Roman laws were obeyed. Hyrcanus would be the last Jewish ruler.

expression, "the time of the end," is very important in identifying this new king. Recall that verse 35 used that expression in connection with the time of the Maccabees. They would continue "until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time." The end of the Maccabean rule marks the beginning of "the time of the end" of the nation of Israel. The last clause of verse 35, "because it is still for the appointed time," suggests that God had something very big planned at this time near the end of the nation of Israel.

was the next foreign king over Israel who came to power after the Maccabees and marked the beginning of the end of Israel? It was none other than Herod the Great. Herod was an Idumean, a descendant of the ethnic group once known as Edom. As a descendent of Esau, therefore, he was not an Israelite. The remainder of chapter 11 gives an interesting detailed prophetic account of the exploits of this wicked king. You can read the details of the prophecies and their historical fulfillment in Appendix B.

That brings us to **chapter 12 and the verse under consideration**. Chapter 11 ends with these words prophesied about Herod the Great: "He shall come to his end, and no one will help him." As history makes clear, Herod did come to a miserable and lonely death.

Notice how the next verse continues, "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book" (12:1).

We have now reached the climactic verses of this vision. Christ had told Daniel that He was going to make him understand "what will happen to your people in the latter days . . ." (10:14). He was foretelling the time of the end of the nation of Israel. That time would come according to what is said in chapter 12. To take these words out of this context and transport them ahead to the tribulation at the end of the world and the final resurrection does violence to the simple words given here.

The tribulation of "that time" does not refer to any end-time tribulation, but to the great tribulation that came at the end of the nation of Israel. Jesus Himself points to the destruction of Jerusalem as a fulfillment in Matthew 24:

“Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” (Matt. 24:15-22)

that time the true Israelites would be delivered. Appendix C gives a more detailed account of the great tribulation and the great deliverance that occurred in AD 70.

, we arrive at verses 2 and 3: “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.*” The *waw* consecutive ties these verses directly with that time of tribulation and deliverance in verse 1. We do violence to the text if we transport the sense expressed here to the end of the world and the final resurrection. That being said, how then shall we understand these words?

This would not be the first time that God has described a spiritual awakening as opening the graves and bringing people to life from the dead. Consider Ezekiel 37:11-14. Right after showing Ezekiel the valley of dry bones and bringing them to life, God said:

“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it,” says the LORD.’”

Jesus uses the same image when He says, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25). Also consider Paul’s words in Ephesians 2:4-5: “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

Daniel 12:2 *The great awakening*

Let’s consider Daniel 12:2 in the chronological context indicated so far, the end of the nation of Israel. The nation and people had long been in a state of spiritual sleep and were dead in their sins. At that time they would experience a great awakening.

Matthew declared that this time of spiritual awakening had come in the ministry of Christ. In this regard he quoted Isaiah 9:2: “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has shined” (Matt. 4:16). This prophecy, Matthew states, was fulfilled when Jesus began His Galilean ministry. Jesus likewise declared the time of spiritual awakening to have begun when He said, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:25).

Beginning with the ministry of John the Baptist, the people began to be awakened from the dust of the earth as they came to be baptized for the remission of their sins. It continued in Jesus’ own ministry as multitudes excitedly followed Him. This great awakening came into full force during the ministry of the apostles on the day of Pentecost and beyond. By the power of the Gospel thousands of Jews were wakened out of their sleep and the dust of their unbelief to spiritual life in Christ.

the Daniel prophecy says, they were “raised to everlasting life.” When Jesus talked about the spiritual awakening as being raised from the dead, He said, “He who hears My word and believes in Him

who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. . . . [T]he hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live” (John 5:24-25). In other words, those awakened in faith already have eternal life. In their conversion they are truly awakened to life with God forever.

What about the last part of Daniel 12:2? How could it be said that some were awakened “to shame and everlasting contempt”? There were many others who, in spite of their unbelief, were stirred and agitated by the preaching of John, Jesus, and the apostles. John aroused the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees. He warned them to flee from the coming wrath, but they did not listen. Jesus stirred many out of their sleep of complacency, only to have them reject Him. Instead of receiving life, they were determined to destroy Him. But in so doing, they destroyed themselves, for they were awakened “to shame and everlasting contempt.” Just as Jesus said, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:18-19). Also, at the end of the same chapter we have John the Baptist’s testimony: “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

The preaching of the apostles in Jerusalem also stirred the leaders of the Jews to awake in the negative way. They threatened the apostles several times, warning them not to preach in the name of Jesus. The apostles, of course, couldn’t do anything else but preach the Word. Persecution broke out against the Christians. All this finally led to the terrible unrest in the nation of Israel and fighting between different factions, which would culminate in the final destruction of the nation, the holy city, and its Temple. In that way it is true that a great many at that time were awakened “to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Daniel 12:3 *Those who shine like the firmament*

Degrees of glory in heaven? If we remain in the context of the end of the nation of Israel and the great awakening described above, this verse portrays the apostles and others as bright lights in the world. “*Those who are wise* [the Hiphil could also be translated “those who make wise”] *shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.*” Jesus said to His disciples, “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14), and then told them to “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (5:16). The apostles and many other believers did shine brightly in the world as they proclaimed the Word of God and lived their faith. The apostles were shining brightly in the darkness on Pentecost and beyond. Because of their shining with the light of the Gospel, they were also helping to bring about the great awakening spoken of in verse 2. Through them many people were brought into the light and made wise as they were turned to righteousness.

The apostles have continued to shine like stars to the present time in that we have their inspired Word of God today. And they will shine forever. In eternity all will hold them in honor for their work in the building of the Church.

also are called to be lights in the world and to shine like the firmament as we show others the way of salvation today. That is the one thing from our life on earth that will continue to shine on in eternity, as we rejoice together with those whom God converted through the Word that we shared.

Daniel 12:4 *Many running to and fro and the increase of knowledge*

The glorious Man who spoke to Daniel in chapters 10-12 now commanded him to “shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end . . .” This prophecy was to be preserved until the time of the end. Daniel’s prophetic announcements were sealed symbolically and had to be “opened,” or revealed, to be understood. In Revelation 5, for example, Jesus was given a scroll with seven seals. Each time a seal was broken, a prophecy was revealed that would be fulfilled.

The prophecy given to Daniel was to be sealed “until the time of the end.” At the time of the end Jesus opened the seal when He pointed to the prophecy in His Olivet discourse as ready to be fulfilled in the coming destruction of Jerusalem. The “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel” was about to come. All the believers at the time could see and understand what had been revealed to Daniel over 500 years before and know that the fulfillment was coming soon. In opening that seal as He did, Jesus provided the warning for them to escape the dreadful end.

The fulfillment of this prophecy would include another wonderful thing. “*Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*” Many see these words as a prediction of the hectic lifestyles that are common today, running here and there, and also the ease and speed of transportation in our modern era. The “increase of knowledge” they see as foretelling the increase of scientific knowledge by leaps and bounds. This is viewed as a sign of the imminence of the end of the world. While that may be a tempting solution, it again takes us away from the time expressed as being the end of Israel as a nation. More importantly, scientific knowledge is not spoken of in the Bible as true knowledge. For the wisdom and knowledge of man is shown by God to be foolishness. Compare 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, especially verse 20: “Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” True wisdom and knowledge are the knowledge of God and His Son, a truth revealed in Proverbs: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7). And in 2 Timothy 3: “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

much more wonderful fulfillment of these words will occur at the time of the end of Israel. The phrase “run to and fro” means to “go out and completely cover an area.” The phrase is used of God whose eyes “run to and fro throughout the whole earth” (2 Chron. 16:9). What a fitting description of the command Jesus gave His disciples to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). And the result of the command was this: “And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mark 16:20). The disciples truly did run to and fro throughout the earth, preaching the gospel. The Apostle Paul went throughout the Roman Empire, even as far as Spain. Church history reveals that Thomas went as far as India. After persecution broke out in Jerusalem, “those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). The Apostle Paul could say in his day that the gospel “was preached to every creature under heaven” (Col. 1:23).

As the disciples went to and fro throughout the earth with the message of the Gospel of Christ, knowledge did increase in the best way of all. People everywhere came to the “knowledge of the truth” and were made “wise unto salvation.” Think of Paul preaching to the pagan city of Ephesus or to the philosophers in Athens and even to Caesar’s household in Rome and giving them the knowledge of the glory of God.

Even though the nation of Israel was crumbling and falling, the knowledge of Israel’s God was spreading throughout the whole world. The command to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” has not been revoked. We too are called upon to run to and fro with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. The end of the world is coming, and the one thing that people need to know before the final judgment falls upon them is the forgiveness from God that can save them from eternal suffering. With the true knowledge of God and His Son, we and they have righteousness, peace, and unending joy.

rest of the chapter brings a few more interesting details about the final end of Israel as the covenant people of God, culminating in the total destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation of Israel. A more complete account of this prophecy is found in Appendix C. One more verse, however, will help to show that verse 2 has been fulfilled and is not looking ahead to the final resurrection of the dead on the last day. Someone asked in verse 6, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” Then Christ, “the man clothed in linen,” stated in His reply: “When the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished” (Dan. 12:7).

the glory of God’s plan. Even as the nation of Israel had rejected God’s Son and His salvation and therefore were mercilessly destroyed, God sent the archangel Michael to preserve His true children of the nation of Israel. They were delivered from both the temporal and the eternal judgment. God also

worked a great awakening of His people through the shining lights of the apostles so that many rose from their sleep to eternal life by faith in God's Son. Those same apostles and believers then went out into the entire world and caused the knowledge of God to increase everywhere. Daniel was allowed to see how the end of Israel was not the very end, but the beginning of the glorious new era of God's grace in Christ extended throughout the world. The Apostle Paul rejoiced in this same thing. After considering how the Jews were cut off the tree of God's kingdom and Gentiles were grafted in so that all Israel is saved, he concluded: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36).

prophecy finally does get to the last day and the final resurrection, but it's in the last verse of the book. Jesus says to Daniel, "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance in the end of the days."

Is there a future application of this prophecy?

whole prophecy is expressly stated to be about the time of the end of the nation of Israel, and it would all be fulfilled "when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered" (Dan. 12:7). Therefore it would not be proper interpretation to say that it also has a future fulfillment beyond what the Spirit expressly says it is about. When the past fulfillment of prophecy is overlooked, the prophecy is confused and the meaning is lost.

, there are many similarities between the end of the nation of Israel and the end of the world. There are similarities between the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment and destruction of the world. Jesus speaks about both events in His Olivet discourse in Matthew 24. In that way Jesus ties them together thematically so that we learn from the lessons of the past and are ready for the future.

glory to God who has shown us our end in Christ.

Appendix A

Comparing the prophecy of Daniel 11:5-35 with the Fulfillment in History

Vs. 5: "Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion."

The king of the South or Egypt, was Ptolemy I Soter (Savior) (323-285).

One of his princes was Seleucus I Nicator (312-281 B.C.). He had been the ruler of the North (Syria) for a short time. Then another of Alexander's generals, Antigonus, tried to regain control of the whole empire. He succeeded in ousting Seleucus who fled to Ptolemy I in Egypt. He became one of Ptolemy's generals, and together they were able to defeat Antigonus.

Gain power over him: Seleucus I regained his kingdom and became greater at the expense of Ptolemy who initially helped him. He now controlled the land of Palestine.

Vs. 6a And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement;

A struggle between the two nations over territory (with Israel caught in the middle of this struggle), continued for **some years**. They became known as the "Syrian Wars".

Join forces: Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) made a move to consolidate the two nations by offering his daughter, Berenice, in marriage to Antiochus II Theos (Literally Antiochus the God, 261-246 B.C.). The problem was Antiochus II was already married to Laodice. He therefore divorced Laodice and married Berenice. Berenice

soon had a son, who was to take over both the northern and southern kingdoms. The agreement was made, but it didn't prove to be a lasting solution.

Vs. 6b but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.

She shall not retain the power. Two years after their marriage in 252 B. C. Berenice's father, who arranged the marriage, died. Antiochus Theos then divorced Berenice and remarried his former wife, Laodice. Laodice was upset about all this so she arranged for the murder of her husband and Berenice and her son.

The end result was that the father who planned the political marriage was dead, so was his daughter Berenice together with her husband Antiochus and her son. None of them retained their authority.

Laodice then had her son, Seleucus II Callinicus, succeed her husband on the throne.

Vs. 7 But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail.

A branch of her roots, her brother, Ptolemy III, called Euergetes (the Benefactor), launched a military campaign against Syria to avenge his sister's death. He killed Laodice and utterly defeated the Seleucid kingdom.

Vs. 8 And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North.

Ptolemy III defeated other nations after the Seleucids. Jerome provides added details about what Ptolemy III Euergetes did next.

"When he heard that a rebellion was afoot in Egypt, he ravaged the kingdom of Seleucus and carried off as booty forty thousand talents of Silver, and also precious vessels and images of the gods to the amount of two and half thousand. Among them were the same images which Cambyses had brought to Persia at the time when he conquered Egypt. The Egyptian people were indeed devoted to idolatry, for when he had brought back their gods to them after so many years, they called him Euergetes (Benefactor)."

Vs. 9 Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.

Several years after the Egyptian invasion, Seleucus Callinicus was able to mount a return attack on Egypt in about 240 B. C. Seleucus was defeated and returned to his own land and died in 226 B. C.

Vs, 10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.

His sons: Despite Seleucus Callinicus failure to defeat Egypt, his sons were able to do what he could not. Seleucus III (226-223 B. C.) his son died in battle in Asia Minor. Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B. C.) succeeded where his father failed. Antiochus III began what became known as the Fourth Syrian War. He regained territory that was taken by Egypt. This territory included the land of Israel.

And return to his fortress. The NIV has "and carry the battle as far as his fortress." That was Ptolemy's fortress at Raphia in southern Palestine.

Vs. 11 And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy.

The king of the South was Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203 B. C.). The attacks of Antiochus III only infuriated Ptolemy IV who assembled a large army in 217 B. C. Antiochus also gathered a multitude to meet the attack at Raphia. The Egyptian army, led by Ptolemy and his wife-sister, Arsinoe resulted in a complete victory for Egypt.

Antiochus lost his entire army and fled into the desert. Egypt reclaimed southern Syria for the time.

Vs. 12 When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.

Ptolemy IV was proud of his great victory, but he did not remain victorious for long. He did not continue to pursue Antiochus III, but returned to the comfortable and dissolute life in his palace. As a result Antiochus was able to regain power by turning his attention to the East part of his kingdom. His campaigns against Bacteria and Parthia (Persia) gained him the title "The Great" (212 -204 B. C.)

Vs. 13 For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

In 203 B. C., Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe had a mysterious death. Their son, Ptolemy V (203-181 B. C.) succeeded them, he was seven when he took power. Antiochus the great saw his opportunity and assembled a greater army then his failed attack in 217 B. C. against the child king.

Vs. 14 Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall.

The Egyptian garrison was held at Jerusalem. Some Jews saw this as a chance to regain their own independence and so joined the battle and rebelled against Ptolemy V. The gates of Jerusalem were opened for the armies of Antiochus to attack.

Vs. 15 So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist.

Antiochus the great defeated the fortified city of Sidon in Phoenicia, along the Mediterranean coast. Even Egypt's best troops were unable to stop him.

Vs. 16 But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.

Antiochus III could do pretty much anything he wanted at this point. The Jewish men who rebelled against Egypt failed to gain freedom. Now Antiochus stood over their land and ruled with power and destruction.

Vs. 17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him;* thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him. *Or, bring equitable terms (make an agreement)

Antiochus devised a plan to gain complete control over Egypt. He gave his daughter into marriage with Ptolemy V. This was Cleopatra I, the fourth great grandmother of the famous Cleopatra who had an affair with Julius Caesar and his General Mark Antony.

Antiochus planned that her son and his grandson would become king and unite with the Seleucids. He assumed Cleopatra would help him, but his plan failed when she sided with her husband against her father.

Vs. 18 After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him.

Face to the coastlands: After this, Antiochus turned to the West. He captured several islands near Greece. The Roman consul, Lucius Scipio Asiaticus defeated Antiochus III. In two battles, the first at Thermopylae, north of

Athens, in 191 B. C, and again at Magnesia on the Maeander River in 189 B. C. This paved the way for Roman expansion later into the region. Rome forced Antiochus III to pay tribute for 12 years and turn over his son Antiochus IV as a hostage.

Vs. 19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Antiochus III turned back to his own land. Hoping to raise more money he plundered a temple in Elam and was killed.

Vs. 20 There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.

The next king of Syria, Seleucus IV Philopator (187-176) was left with the bill for all of his father's campaigns and also for the heavy tribute now owed to Rome. He paid for it like any king would - he imposed a special tax. He raised special taxes on the Jews in the **glorious kingdom**. These taxes were administered by Heliodorus (2 Mac 3:7), Heliodorus plundered the Temple in Jerusalem. Seleucus Philopater suddenly died after that, some suspect he was poisoned by Heliodorus. Compared to his father's 37 year reign, his 11 years was a short time.

Can you imagine how overwhelmed Daniel must have been hearing all these details about the wars, bloodshed and intrigue which would surround his people? Palestine would be the scene of many of these bloody wars between the two greater powers. The Jews would also be easy prey as the two kings needed to gain more money and supplies for their battles. This was a difficult time for God's people as their land was ravaged and their treasury decimated. However, all this was just the back ground history leading up to the real time of tribulation that was to come - the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. God revealed much about him in the vision of the little horn in chapter 8. Now He will reveal more about this cruel tyrant over God's people.

Verses 21-30 The Rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175 - 164).

Vs. 21 And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceable, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

This vile person was Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164). 15 verses of this vision are about this evil tyrant, more than any other king, even though he only ruled for 11 years. He would cause the greatest grief for God's people. So much that He is called the Antichrist of the Old Testament.

He was not given the throne, but took it through much intrigue. If you look back a couple of verses you will recall that Antiochus IV was taken hostage by the Romans. His brother, Seleucus IV ruled in Syria.

In 175 B. C., Seleucus IV intervened and substituted his own son, Demetrius for his brother Antiochus IV. While Antiochus IV was in Athens, Seleucus was killed.

Peaceably: Antiochus IV came back to the capital peaceably, claiming to act on the behalf of his brother's son. Antiochus IV knew the right people to flatter and succeeded in taking the kingdom for himself.

Vs. 22 With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.

Antiochus IV immediately set about to secure his throne. It is uncertain who the "they" refers to in this verse. It is clear that he would conquer his enemies. He did overthrow Heliodorus in Jerusalem who was rumored to have killed his brother. He also took up the long standing battle with Egypt. Or perhaps it refers to the people of Israel. Remember, that while the vision is describing the events in the kingdoms of the North and South, it is primarily about God's people in Israel. One can easily imagine that while he overcame Heliodorus in Jerusalem, he also took the opportunity to crush the people of Jerusalem to show his power over them.

The Prince of the covenant most certainly refers to Onias III, the High Priest over Israel. The covenant refers to the covenant between God and His people. The High Priest would be the Prince of that covenant. Antiochus killed him in 172 B. C. That gives more support to understanding the "they" as referring to the Jewish people. With Onias out of the way, Antiochus IV was able to introduce Greek culture and customs into Temple worship. In 171 B. C. a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin named Menelaus purchased the office of High Priest from "Zeus Incarnate," Antiochus IV. He went along with the Hellenization of Jerusalem.

Vs. 23 And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people.

This verse describes his treacherous nature. He made treaties and formed alliances which he had no intention of keeping. As long as it served his purpose he went along with it but then broke them in a moment if it no longer suited him. In his deceitful way, he was able to gain great power with only a few people.

One example of his deceitful alliances took place in Egypt. The death of Cleopatra his sister, who was queen in Egypt, created a contest for power between her two sons, his nephews. Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Euergetes struggled with each other for control of Egypt. Antiochus made a league with Philometor to gain the throne, but he used it for his own gain.

Vs. 24a He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers:

In his deceptive ways, he would enter into some of the richest places pretending to come in peace. Then he would plunder their wealth.

However, Antiochus IV did something very unique with the money he gathered, something that none of his forefathers had ever done. A plan to gain the loyalty of his people. God foretold it first 3 1/2 centuries before.

Vs. 24b he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.

Instead of using the plunder to enrich himself, he acted very shrewdly by giving it to the people. You can imagine how the people would have loved him. They would have supported him in everything he wanted to do because he was doing so much good for them. With the support of the people, he could make plans to conquer other strongholds.

But this only lasted "for a time." When he had the support and loyalty of his people, he could then fulfill his own desires.

Vs. 25 He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him.

When he had the full support of his kingdom, he determined it was time to try to defeat the King of the South. This was the same Ptolemy Philometor whom Antiochus helped come to power.

This was the first of four campaigns against Egypt by Antiochus. Even though Ptolemy VI mustered a large army he was unable to withstand Antiochus IV. That was not so much due to the greater power of Antiochus' army as the intrigue and plots devised against Ptolemy. The next verse foretells the details of those plots.

Vs. 26 Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.

Some of Ptolemy's advisors and counselors, Eulaeus and Lenaeus, who ate at his table, gave him bad advice to try to recover Syria. Whether this was intentional or just bad judgment is unsure. Antiochus IV heard about the attack and invaded Egypt with a large army. After heavy losses Ptolemy VI made peace with his uncle.

Vs. 27 Both these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time.

Antiochus IV was quick to take advantage of this turn of events. He tried to align with the ex-king in his struggle against the new king. They sat at the table with each other, pretending to be friends wanting to help each other, while they were both lying, and they knew it.

The end will still be at the appointed time. God has his plan for these nations especially as they relate to His people. God's plan is always fulfilled. As the saying goes, "Man proposes, God disposes."

Vs. 28 While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land.

When Antiochus IV did not succeed in taking Alexandria, he returned home with many spoils but also frustrated. So he took out his frustration on Jerusalem. This was Antiochus Epiphanes' first real attack on Jerusalem. Historians report that Antiochus killed 80,000 men, women and children. He took 40,000 prisoners and sold again as many into slavery. He also showed his contempt for the Jewish religion by entering the temple in Jerusalem and stealing the gold and silver vessels and sacrificed a pig on the altar. This tyrant king of the North would be back to do more atrocities to God's people and blaspheme God.

Vs. 29 At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter.

The two brothers, Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VII Euergetes, formed an alliance against Antiochus IV. When Antiochus heard of this, he launched a new attack on his nephews in 168 B. C.. This time things would be much different than before.

At the appointed time: This obviously is God's time. Why does God set the times when Antiochus IV makes these attacks on Egypt, knowing, as He shows in the next verse, that it will result in another attack on His people? God used Antiochus Epiphanes to chastise His people and bring them back to repentance. That is why it had to be at God's appointed time.

Vs. 30 For ships from Cyprus* shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

(*The Hebrew word kittim literally means western lands. It sometimes referred to Cyprus, but probably not here. The Septuagint translates this word as Romans.)

When Antiochus was besieging the city of Alexandria in Egypt, ships from the western coastlands, that is from Rome, came to help the Egyptians. The Romans ordered him to leave Egypt immediately or be attacked by Rome. The Roman consul, Gaius Popillus Saenas drew a circle around Antiochus IV and demanded a decision before he stepped out of the circle. Antiochus IV, being a captive in Rome from 189 to 175 B. C., knew the power of Roman might. He retreated to his kingdom and planned on securing his borders against Roman power.

Enraged by this forced retreat, Antiochus took out his anger on Jerusalem once again. He was determined to destroy the Jewish faith and make Jerusalem a Greek city. He took the city by assault on the Sabbath, slaughtered many people and sacked the city. Jews were compelled under the penalty of death to forsake the laws of God. Those who did were treated well and joined Antiochus in trying to turn the Temple in Jerusalem into a Greek Temple and wipe out every trace of God given faith. Still today Satan has his allies trying to wipe out the Christian faith.

Vs. 31 And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

Antiochus took all the gold and silver from the Temple sanctuary in Jerusalem. He desecrated the Temple by erecting an image of Zeus in the holy place and called it the temple of "Jupiter Olympius" and sacrificed pigs on it.

(1 Macc. 1:30, 2 Macc 5:24) This was the Abomination of Desolation so that no Israelite could worship the Lord there. He made it illegal, under penalty of death to offer the daily sacrifices or any other religious ceremony.

Antiochus also built a citadel in the city which overlooked the temple and put into it a garrison of Macedonians. He also made the Jews build temples, and raise idol altars in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day. He also commanded them not to circumcise their sons.

Vs. 32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.

There are always wicked people within the visible church who aid the enemies of the Church of God. That was true in Israel. Antiochus IV used flattery to bring the apostate Jews to his side and help him stamp out the worship of the Lord. Notice how the world praises and promotes the wicked. The wicked then become more open in their wickedness.

God promises to preserve His Church through all ages. In the days of Elijah, God preserved 7000 Israelites who did not bow the knee to Baal. In this time of apostasy, God raised up people who knew their God. He strengthened them to rise up in defense of the true worship of God. Mattathias, a priest who had five sons, refused to offer profane sacrifices. He killed the king's agent then fled to the mts. He and his sons began the Maccabean revolt.

Vs. 33 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.

Mattathias' actions not only gained the attention of Antiochus who was enraged and came after them, he also caught the attention of many Jews who were likewise fed up with the attacks of Antiochus IV. Others gathered together with Mattathias. He and his sons taught them the word of God. Others saw that their faith was worth fighting for.

This was a difficult time for the Jews. Antiochus was determined to wipe out this rebellious band. Many of them were killed in battle or captured. Others were burned in their homes as Antiochus' men burned villages trying to eradicate them.

Vs. 34 Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.

They did not give up however. They continued a guerrilla warfare against the troops of Antiochus. They were aided with a little help. Some take that to be a reference to Judas Maccabeus (the hammer). He was one of the sons of Mattathias who led the revolt. Or it could simply refer to the small band of men that he gathered together. Either way, they were a very small group fighting against the much larger, trained armies of Antiochus.

Many joined the revolt for insincere motives. They were not all fighting because they were zealous for God and wanted to restore the true worship of God. Some probably just wanted political freedom.

Vs. 35 And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

Here we see the marvelous grace and love of God. He lets His children stumble and fall at times but always and only for their good. He does so to refine and purify them. Just like gold is refined by intense heat, yet the gold is not harmed, it is only strengthened and purified. So God allows the fire of tribulation to come, not to harm us but to strengthen and purify us in the faith.

There is great comfort in the last two phrases. God never lets the trials go on indefinitely. He has an appointed time for their end. He uses it for its purpose for our good and then He blesses us again. When God says, "It is still for the appointed time" you get the feeling that God is talking about more than just the end of their tribulation. God is still looking ahead to something far more important that will happen at exactly the time God prepared it. We will look more closely at that statement in a little while.

Appendix B: Comparing the prophecy of Daniel 11:36-45

with Herod the Great as its fulfillment in history

The content of Appendix B appears below in a revised format. The verses of Daniel 11:36-45 are quoted from the New King James Version (but without the italicizing of supplied words).

11:36) “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.”

Herod was given the title, “The King of the Jews,” by the Roman Senate. So the simple designation in this verse, “the king,” is fitting.

The king, as foretold, “shall do according to his own will.” That same expression was used also of Alexander the Great (Dan. 11:3) and Antiochus the Great (11:16). They were men who accomplished what they set out to do, no matter what they had to do to attain it—a trait also true of Herod the Great. He accomplished whatever he wanted.

Herod was a very shrewd and ruthless ruler. He used religion only to help further his own interests. Thus he claimed allegiance to the gods of Rome only to secure the support of the Roman emperor. He gave lip service to the God of Israel to gain the favor of the Jews. Yet he blasphemed God with many of his actions. The greatest example of that fact was the attempt he made to kill God’s Son, who was born “King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:1-18). Herod did prosper and reign for 33 years. When “the wrath” was complete against him for all his atrocities, especially his plot against Jesus, Herod died.

“*What has been determined shall be done.*” In Jeremiah 31:15 God had foretold the weeping of the mothers for their children who were killed by Herod. He also had prophesied, “Out of Egypt have I called My son” in Hosea 11:1. Everything that was determined beforehand in connection with Herod the Great would be fulfilled and would serve to bring God’s wrath on him.

11:37) “He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.”

Herod was a descendent of Abraham through Esau. Also, the Maccabees had forcefully converted his Idumean fathers to Judaism. But Herod did not have any true regard for the God of Israel. Though he did not want to offend the Jews and did not defile their Temple, he did not regard their God as his own. When Herod appointed his wife’s brother, Aristobulus, as high priest, he was only 17 at the time. The law of God required that the high priest be at least 21. Shortly afterward, Herod had him killed because of his popularity, for Herod ruthlessly cut down any official in church or state who threatened his rule.

“*Nor the desire of women.*” The “desire of women” is usually understood to be the desire for children or the love of family. Herod killed his wife’s family to eliminate any threat to his throne. He certainly had no regard for the women of Bethlehem when he murdered all the boys under two years old. As foretold, his ruthless actions taken to secure power would distinguish Herod as one would “exalt himself above” everyone, god or man.

11:38) “But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.”

You could say that Herod’s religion was Might is Right. He essentially worshiped himself and promoted his own glory by building fortresses. Most archaeologists consider Herod to be one of the greatest builders of all history. He rebuilt and expanded the Temple into a fortress of its own. This was a huge undertaking. It took 10,000 men ten years to complete the foundation alone, as they built up high retaining walls to make a platform large enough to hold 24 football fields. This was the area size required to have the whole Temple complex on one level surface. It was a space large enough to accommodate the millions of Jews who came to Jerusalem for the three great festivals. The size of the Temple’s foundation stones caught the attention of our Lord’s disciples, as we hear in Mark 13:1. In his “Antiquities of the Jews” Josephus reported their dimensions as 25 cubits long, 12 cubits wide, and 8 cubits high (XV 11:3; Josephus 334).² That’s 37 feet by 18 feet by 12 feet.

Josephus describes the Temple appearance:

Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men’s minds or their eyes: for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun,

reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for, as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceeding white. ("Wars" V 5:6; Josephus 555)³

The Temple's renovation helped Herod to gain the favor of the Jews. However, Herod also placed at the main entrance a huge Roman eagle, which the pious Jews saw as a sacrilege. A group of Torah students promptly smashed this emblem of idolatry and oppression, but Herod had them hunted down, dragged in chains to his residence in Jericho, and there they were burned alive. Herod then took measures to ensure that the Temple would be run without future problems of this kind. He appointed his own high priest, having by then put to death 46 leading members of the Sanhedrin. So even though Herod adorned the Temple "with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things," he was clearly honoring a foreign god, not the God of Israel. Further evidence of this misplaced honor, as it pertained to Herod's allegiance to Caesar, shall be addressed in our treatment of verse 39.

Further building feats of Herod the Great

In addition to the Temple's extensive renovation, Herod also built massive fortifications around Jerusalem as well as three towers at the entrance to the city. He built entire cities, like the port city of Caesarea, which he named in deference to the Roman emperor. As a city in vogue with the culture of that time, Caesarea had a beautiful amphitheater, a hippodrome for chariot races, bath houses, and a large temple dedicated to the Roman god-emperor, Augustus Caesar. He also built a huge edifice at the top of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

Another impressive structure of Herod was the fortress of Masada, built on top of a high rock plateau. At the time it was an incredible feat of engineering and construction. Complete with all the creature comforts one could have in the desert, Masada had an incredible water supply system, which fed gardens for growing agricultural staples and supplied the water needed for three bathhouses. After Jerusalem was destroyed, it would become the last stronghold for the zealot Jews against the Romans.

In yet another incredible feat of engineering Herod built an artificial mountain at Herodium and on top of it a huge palace. This palace was destroyed in AD 70 during the Great Revolt. Also built by Herod was a beautiful summer palace in Bethlehem. Perhaps that made the birth of Christ in Bethlehem all the more infuriating to him.

Based on building activity alone, Herod would fit God's description of the king who honored "a god of fortresses."

11:39) "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain."

The translation here is a bit difficult. Literally the Hebrew says: "He will deal with the strongest fortresses." This could simply be a follow-up on the last verse and speak of his making and using those fortresses rather than attacking them. The rest of the verse can also be translated: ". . . and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price."

Herod killed anyone whom he saw as a threat to his power, including some of his own sons and his wife whom he loved dearly. Even Caesar Augustus said, "It is better to be Herod's dog than one of his children." With that type of rule at work and the intimidation it would naturally bring, many people acknowledged him as a great king. To them he would grant the honor of receiving land and high positions.

Another way of understanding verse 39 is to take "the strongest fortresses" as referring to the Temple itself and the tower that he built right beside it. He designed it all with such huge stones so as to be a stronghold or fortress. The tower beside the Temple he named Antonia, after the Roman general Mark Antony. This tower was for the Roman forces, which made the whole temple complex a stronghold for the Roman Caesar, not for the Lord God and His people. In this way Herod was acting against God's fortress in league with a foreign god. Herod recognized Caesar as the sole source of his own power and rule. Therefore in the Roman style he tried to promote the worship of Caesar. He erected statues of Caesar in many places. He did acknowledge the foreign emperor-deity and advanced his glory in ways well noted by Philip Mauro in his book on Daniel's prophecy:

. . . the Roman emperors claimed for themselves divine honors, and . . . it was by "forces," or "fortifications," that they extended and maintained their power, and enforced the worship they demanded. This honor Herod paid to them, and after the most extravagant fashion; and he did it, of course, in order to make himself secure. . . . This honor paid by Herod, first to Julius Caesar, then to Anthony, and then to Anthony's conqueror, Augustus, was one of the most conspicuous features of Herod's policy. Josephus records how he sent delegations to Rome, and also to Anthony and Cleopatra in Egypt, bearing the most costly presents; also how he converted the ancient Strato's Tower into a magnificent seaport, and named it *Caesarea*, in honor of Caesar, and how later he

rebuilt Samaria, and renamed it Sebaste (*Sebastos* being the equivalent of *Augustus*). He built many other fortified cities and named them in honor of Caesar. (Mauro 146)

Verses 36-39 have described this new king. Verses 40-43 will now reveal more about the world powers at the time of Herod. These verses, it would seem, are a parenthesis inserted into the prophecy about Herod. This is important because it describes events that transformed Rome from a republic ruled by a senate to an empire ruled by the Caesars. These events would solidify the power of Rome, which in turn would bring Israel to an end as a nation.

11:40) “At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him;* and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.”

(* Note: “attack him” literally means “shall push at” or “with him.”)

“*At the time of the end*” once again tells us that the prophecy has the end of the nation of Israel in view, and these are the events that lead up to that end.

The “king of the South” and the “king of the North” would again be the main players in this conflict. However, they would no longer be the two Greek powers foretold earlier in chapter 11. Syria had long been under Roman rule, and Egypt was the last country still ruled by the Greeks. But soon they would both be taken over by a powerful Roman force. The king of the South pushed with Herod against the king of the North. But the king of the North came against them with full force, both on land and on sea, and overwhelmed them all, while passing through the land of Israel.

To get a better understanding of the fulfillment of this prophecy, let’s briefly retrace the history of Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar was one of the greatest military generals of all time. He won great favor in Rome by his many victories. In his day the Romans were ruled by a Senate, and they hated the idea of a king. By defeating the other Roman generals, Julius Caesar managed to become a dictator without a crown in 49 BC. Some of the aristocrats, however, were afraid of his power, and a group of them led by Brutus and Cassius, men Caesar trusted as friends, killed him on March 15 (the Ides of March) in 44 BC.

A civil war broke out after the death of Julius Caesar. In 43 Caesar’s adopted son and heir, Octavian, formed a Triumvirate with Caesar’s army officers, Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus. Octavian and Antony killed Brutus and Cassius, defeated Caesar’s enemies, and then pushed Marcus Lepidus out of the way. At this point Octavian and Antony fought each other for the control of Rome.

Mark Antony joined forces with Cleopatra, who ruled Egypt after the death of her husbands, Ptolemy XIII and XIV. The final battle between Antony and Octavian was the Battle of Actium on September 2, 31 BC. This was the battle foretold in Daniel 11:40. The king of the South would be Mark Antony, together with Cleopatra. Their combined forces pushed northward with Herod the Great. Herod originally had sided with Mark Antony against Octavian. The “king of the North” in verse 40 was Octavian, the rightful heir of Julius Caesar.

The prophecy specifically mentions that the king of the North, Octavian, will come against them with “chariots, horsemen, and with many ships.” These words are a crucial, interesting part of the prophecy, for they portray a deciding factor in the outcome of the battle. Although Antony and Cleopatra’s foot soldiers outnumbered those of Octavian and although his generals urged him to fight the battle on land, nevertheless, Antony listened to Cleopatra, who wanted him to fight a battle at sea. The ancient historian Plutarch writes: “Such a slave was he to the will of a woman that, to gratify her, though much superior on land, he put his whole confidence in the navy; notwithstanding that the ships had not half their complement of men” (qtd. in Mauro 153). Antony and Cleopatra had about 1,000 ships, almost twice as many as Octavian. These were large war ships with battering rams. But they were not well manned. Octavian outmaneuvered them with his smaller ships. When the battle turned bad for Egypt, Cleopatra took her fleet and fled. Antony left his men and ships as well and fled with her. Octavian easily defeated the rest of the fleet in that decisive battle of Actium.

11:41) “He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.”

Octavian then continued the battle on land with his chariots and horsemen. As God foretold, he overwhelmed the countries. Then he entered “the Glorious Land,” the land of Israel. Herod the Great quickly changed his allegiance from Antony to Octavian. He was so gracious in his diplomacy that Octavian accepted his allegiance and showed him great favor. Josephus writes about Herod’s actions at this point: “Caesar went for Egypt through Syria when Herod received him with royal and rich entertainments; and then did he first of all ride along

with Caesar, as he was reviewing his army about Ptolemais, and feasted him with all his friends, and then distributed among the rest of his army what was necessary to feast then withal (Wars I, 20, 3)” (qtd. in Mauro 154).

Mauro observes that the conquest of Augustus, or Octavian, “follows most literally the predictions of the prophecy,” which includes verse 40: that “*he entered into the countries, and overflowed, and passed over them, possessing himself of regions of Africa, Upper Cilicia, Paphlagonia, Thrace, Pontus, Galatia, and other provinces from Illyria to Armenia*” (153, *emph. orig.*). And as foretold in verse 41, there were three countries Octavian did not conquer. Edom, Moab, and Ammon prevailed against Octavian’s general, Aelius Gallus, who was accompanied by 500 of Herod’s men. Those three countries remained unconquered by the “king of the North,” Octavian, who would become Caesar Augustus.

11:42) “He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.”

Octavian came with his chariots and horsemen to attack Egypt. After the disaster at Actium Mark Antony’s infantry deserted him. After one small victory against Octavian outside of Alexandria, even more of his troops deserted, leaving Antony no escape. Antony had heard rumors that Octavian had captured Cleopatra. Recognizing complete defeat, Mark Antony killed himself. When Cleopatra heard the news, she also killed herself, reportedly by a poisonous asp smuggled in to her in a basket of figs. So the land of Egypt, as God had said to Daniel about 500 years beforehand, did not escape. The Ptolemaic Kingdom was ended, and Egypt was now completely under Roman rule.

11:43) “He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.”

God’s prophecy especially mentions taking over the treasures of Egypt. Those treasures were very great and notable. Egypt never had such great treasures again. Cleopatra went to great lengths in her attempt to protect them from Octavian, but in the end he did get all those treasures.

From there he sent his general, Cornelius Balbus, to conquer Libya and Ethiopia, a task which he carried out with success.

Octavian would return to Rome, take on the name Augustus, and become the first emperor in 27 BC. That was about 23 years before he gave the decree that all the world should be registered—an important event that would cause Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem—and so Jesus would be born there, rather than Nazareth, in accord with the prophecy of Micah 5.

With verse 43 we reach the end of the parenthesis about the Roman Caesar and his impact on Herod the Great and on the land of Israel. Herod the Great remained closely connected to Caesar Augustus and tried hard to stay in his good graces. But Herod also did things that benefited the Jews. For example, all the nations under Roman rule were required to worship the Roman gods except for the Jews. The Romans had learned from the mistake of the Greeks that the Jews were not like the heathen nations. They could not be forced into worshiping idols. Therefore, partly with the help of Herod, the Jews were granted special status and could continue to worship their God exclusively.

While Herod might have helped the Jews keep their right to monotheistic worship, he also took certain measures to further the Hellenization of Judea and other places within his realm. Herod developed his country into a wealthy trade center. Judea had become a great way station for incense and spices from Arabia and the East, and also prominent in the production of olive oil, dates, and wine. As the Jewish lands of Palestine became wealthier, religion became less vital. More and more Greeks and Romans moved in with the influx of commerce. Thus the Hellenization of Israel was well underway on Herod’s watch. The Jewish upper class went for this supposedly higher, enlightened way of living. To promote the advancement of Greek culture in his realm, Herod reportedly killed any rabbis whom he saw as an obstacle to his goal. Herod the Great certainly had much to do with reshaping the religious scene in Judea and Galilee during the time when Jesus was born. And so the religious elite and ruling parties of the Sanhedrin were more concerned about their position under the Romans than they were about the Word of God or the true Messiah, who had come in their lifetime. Note the self-serving concerns they expressed in John 11:47-50.

The prophecy now continues with the two remaining verses in chapter 11 that describe Herod’s end.

11:44) “But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.”

This verse describes so accurately the actual events near the end of Herod's life as recorded in Matthew 2:1-11: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men **from the east came** to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star **in the East** and have come to worship Him.' When Herod the king heard this, **he was troubled . . .**" There was nothing that troubled Herod more than one who appeared to be a threat to his throne—especially one given the exact same title as he possessed: "King of the Jews."

The prophecy could not have described more accurately the reaction of Herod the Great. We read in Matthew 2:16: "Then Herod . . . was **exceedingly angry**; and he sent forth and **put to death all the male children** who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under . . ."

The prophecy of verse 44 also mentions troubling news "from the north." About this same time Herod's oldest son, Antipater, who was currently in the north, conspired against his father and posed a threat to his throne. Also, two other sons rose up against him. This news, no doubt, enraged him even more, as he thought about how he had killed his two most noble sons from his beloved wife, Mariamne, whom he had also killed.

Herod's rage was uncontrollable. He was already very ill and knew he would die soon. Yet in his rage he executed many Jews and put to death his oldest son just five days before Herod himself died.

From the ancient source of Josephus via Mauro comes the report of this final outrage of King Herod:

"He came again to Jericho, where he became so choleric, that it brought him to do all things *like a madman*; and though he was near death, yet he contrived the following wicked designs: He commanded that all the principal men of the entire Jewish nation be called to him. Accordingly there were a great number that came, because . . . death was the penalty of such that should despise the epistles that were sent to call them. And now the king was *in a wild rage* against them all; . . . and when they were come, he ordered them all to be shut up in the hippodrome, and sent for his sister Salome and her husband Alexas, and spake thus to them: 'I shall die in a little time, so great are my pains; . . . but what principally troubles me is this, *that I shall die without being lamented, and without such a mourning as men usually expect at a king's death.*'" (qtd. in Mauro 159, emph. Mauro)

Mauro then reports: "Therefore, in order to insure that the nation should be plunged into mourning, he left an order that, immediately upon his own death, all those leaders of the Jews, whom he had confined in the hippodrome, should be slain. That order, however, was not carried out" (160).

11:45) "And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him."

Herod had two palaces in Jerusalem. As mentioned earlier, one was in the Temple area. That is, on the "glorious holy mountain," which was between the seas, the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. The location of his fortress at Masada was between the two seas as well.

The final prediction about Herod is that "he shall come to his end, and no one will help him." Not only did no one help him, but no one even mourned his death. Mauro refers to Farquharson's comment on the outcome of Herod's death in relation to the prophecy:

"This part of the prediction obviously implies that, in his last hours, the king would apply for deliverance or remedy, from some affliction or disease, but would receive none. And how literally was this fulfilled in the end of Herod the Great! History has preserved to us few such circumstantial accounts of the last days of remarkable men, as that which Josephus has transmitted to us of his; but we deem it too long for insertion here. It exhibits the most fearful picture to be found anywhere of the end of an impenitent sinner, who, having cast out of his heart all fear of God and all feeling of responsibility to Him, had equally lost all sense of duty to man; and after committing innumerable crimes and cruelties—in which he spared not those connected with him by the dearest and tenderest ties, any more than others—was at last seized in his old age with a painful and loathsome disease; and suffering alike from that, and from the pangs of guilty fear, yet continued in a course of extreme wickedness to his last hour, seeking no remedy for his evil passions. . . ." (qtd. in Mauro 160)

This verse brings us down to the time of the end, and more importantly the time God had appointed for His Son to be born and take up the work of redeeming the world. Even though Herod the Great died when Jesus was a very small child, seventy some years before the nation of Israel would come to an end, his influence continued on through his sons, who continued to rule for several generations. The Herodian dynasty begun by Herod the Great continued until the very end of the Jewish nation. Herod's son, Archelaus, reigned over Judea when Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt. That is why they did not go back to Bethlehem, but rather to Nazareth, where they raised Jesus according to the prophecy noted in Matthew 2:19-23.

Herod's son Antipas would be the one who beheaded John the Baptist (Matt. 14:1-12) and to whom Pilate sent Jesus during the Passover trial (Luke 23:6-12). Herod Agrippa I was the one who executed the Apostle James. When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he also imprisoned Peter, planning to kill him as well. God, however, miraculously freed Peter from prison. Herod Agrippa I then died, being eaten by worms, as noted in Acts 12:23. The Apostle Paul was on trial before Herod Agrippa II when he appealed to Caesar (Acts 26:24-32). This last Herodian king was reigning when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 and Israel ceased to exist as a nation.

God surely gave Daniel an amazing and complete preview of the history that would unfold from his own time right up to the time of the promised Messiah. Given the tragic nature of many of the details, it must have been very sad for Daniel to see all the trouble and turmoil his people would endure and to know that his nation would come to an end. But it must have also been a great joy and comfort to know that at that time the long-awaited Savior of the world would come. As we will see in the next section, Appendix C devoted to chapter 12, Daniel's people, the true Israel, would be delivered, even though the nation as an earthly entity would be destroyed.

All of the above gives more information of all that was involved in the apostolic declaration of Galatians 4: "When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4-5). God had a time planned out, even from eternity, and He made everything ready for the ultimate, pivotal intervention for all mankind, the central event of all history.

In the service of God's plan, therefore, the Hellenization of the world, begun under Alexander and carried out by his successors, had caused Greek to be the universal language of the civilized world. This in turn would make the spread of the Gospel throughout that world much easier. And so we have the New Testament originally written in Koine (or Hellenistic) Greek. So also, the Roman rule of the world established peace (*Pax Romana*) and ease of travel to any nation in its realm. Roman engineering had developed a far-reaching road system, allowing men like the apostles to travel from one region to the next with very little hassle. Also significant is the influence of Herod the Great and Greco-Roman culture in Palestine, which partially contributed to certain developments in the Jewish nation at that time, namely, leaders of the church who were corrupt and hungry for power. These were men more interested in holding their power and freeing Israel from Roman rule than they were about God's righteousness and the freedom from the slavery to sin. Their position in the Sanhedrin created the right climate for the Jews to reject and kill their own Lord and Savior. And the Roman authority over Israel saw to it that the Jews could not simply take Jesus and stone Him, which was their standard way to put someone to death. Jesus was crucified according to the Roman practice for all non-Roman criminals and traitors. This final development was so crucial in carrying out God's plan of universal, vicarious atonement—Christ crucified and thus cursed by God in our place (Gal. 3:10-13).

Yes, "when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son." May we ever rejoice and praise God for His perfect and marvelous plan of salvation, as we trace its incredibly detailed blueprint in the prophecies of the Old Testament and its precisely accurate fulfillment in the amazing events reported in the New Testament.

Appendix C: The great tribulation and the great deliverance in Daniel 12

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone one who is found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1).

Michael the prince shall stand up.

We have been introduced to Michael, "the great prince," earlier in this same vision, which began when Daniel was mourning for three weeks by the banks of the Tigris River. Then Daniel looked up and saw a glorious man, who was, we believe, Christ Himself before He became man. This glorious man spoke to Daniel and revealed all the things of this vision pertaining to the people of Israel. In Daniel 10:13 Christ had said that He would have come sooner, but was withstood by the prince of Persia. Then we learn that "Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help" Him. Again in verse 20 this glorious man speaks of fighting with the prince of Persia and in verse 21 says, "No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince."

Michael is mentioned by name only in two other passages of Scripture. In Jude 9 Michael the archangel is described as "contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses." In Revelation 12:7-9 Michael is the leader of the angels in their battle against the devil and his angels. In all that Scripture reveals, including the book of Daniel, we learn that the archangel Michael is charged with protecting God's people and fighting the devil

and his minions when they seek to harm God's people.

was Michael doing "at that time" in Daniel 12:1? This prophecy does not specify what exactly he would do. No doubt, he would play an instrumental part in the deliverance of God's people. There is no direct reference to Michael or any other archangel in the Gospel accounts of Christ's life on earth. However, just as Michael assisted Christ against the prince of Persia, so now when Christ came to fight the final great battle against the devil, Michael would undoubtedly "stand up" to support Christ in His great work of deliverance.

we think about the period of history from the birth of Jesus to His ascension and the subsequent establishing of His Church, we see more visible activity of the angels than any other time of history. The angel Gabriel was sent to Zacharias to announce the birth of John the Baptist and also to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph three times, all relating to the birth and protection of Mary's Son, Jesus. We can be sure that Michael, as the leader of the angels, had an important (but not reported) part in that work. An angel of the Lord announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds, with a multitude of angels there to sing God's praises. Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation in the wilderness and in the Garden of Gethsemane, two pivotal events in the Lord's battle against the devil. Angels were sent to announce His resurrection and to assure the disciples at His ascension. Angels continued to be active during the establishment of the New Testament Church. An angel of the Lord freed the apostles from prison in Acts 5:19. When Peter was set to be executed by Herod Agrippa, an angel of the Lord freed him from prison (Acts 12:7), and an angel struck down Herod for blaspheming God (Acts 12:23). An angel of the Lord assured Paul that he and all the passengers aboard his ship would survive the shipwreck (Acts 27:23). God did not identify the angel by name in any of these accounts. But in every case he did "stand watch over the sons of [Daniel's] people." Could this not have been Michael, "the great prince," or at least an angel under his leadership?

crucial time was also a period of greater activity among the devils, as is evidenced by the widespread demon possession during the time of Jesus' ministry. If Satan and his demons were battling Christ, together with Michael, during the time of the Persian Empire, how much more would there be such battles now when Christ was working towards the final defeat of Satan? Once again, Michael would be a likely one to "stand up" in support of Christ, our Savior.

must have been a great comfort for Daniel to hear that at this time of great trouble "Michael shall stand up, that great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people." What a comfort it is still for us today, for we know the victory has been won for us, and Michael is still vigilant as one who stands watch over God's people. Even in the worst of times, we are safe in the care of our Lord and the angels He sends to protect us.

The time of great trouble

"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time."

This statement is usually taken as a reference to the great tribulation before the end of the world. But that interpretation overlooks the fulfillment that Jesus Himself points to when Jerusalem was to be destroyed.

Daniel prayed, confessing the guilt of his people in chapter 9, he mentioned the first destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in this way: "For under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem" (9:12). Now Daniel hears that a time of trouble even worse than that would come at "that time." This time of greater trouble happened when the Romans came to destroy Jerusalem for the second time in its history. It was a time of unprecedented tribulation, which Jesus said will not be surpassed to the end of time.

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (Matt. 24:15-22)

Josephus was a Jewish historian present at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. As an eyewitness he was able to describe, as Philip Mauro puts it, the "unparalleled tribulation" in great detail in his "Wars of the Jews." Mauro, in his comprehensive and informative work, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, makes a very good point that Josephus was not a disciple of Christ; so he could not be accused of altering the events in an attempt to make them fit Christ's prophecy (Mauro 240). Also, Josephus wrote in the year AD 75, not long after these things took place. Since the events were fresh in the minds of many, any falsehoods would have been recognized. We can, therefore, have confidence that his account was a fairly accurate description of those events. Though not inspired by God or infallible in every aspect, his record helps to show how Christ's words to Daniel and also to His disciples

were fulfilled in great detail. We note at this point the historian's introductory assessment of the overall demise of the city:

"It had come to pass that our city Jerusalem had arrived at a higher degree of felicity than any other city under the Roman government, and yet at last fell into the sorest of calamities again. Accordingly it appears to me that *the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were.* (qtd. in Mauro 167, emph. Mauro)

Without even knowing it, Josephus gave confirmation of Jesus' words as being perfectly fulfilled.

commanded the Roman army under Emperor Nero when the invasion of the nation of Israel began in AD 66. Later, Vespasian became the emperor and sent his son and commander, Titus, to finish the job. Jerusalem was completely destroyed in 70. The last holdout of Jewish zealots at Masada was defeated in 73. At that point Israel as a nation had reached its end.

One would expect the nation of Israel to band together, to fight off the Romans at this critical time of war. Yet Josephus describes how the greatest part of the suffering was self-inflicted, brought on by the warring factions among the Jews. It was a time of unprecedented hatred and division, which Josephus characterized in these words: "It is impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men's iniquity. I shall, therefore, speak my mind here at once briefly: *That neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world* (Wars V. 10:5)" (qtd. in Mauro 167-8, emph. Mauro).

Stated by Mauro again from the viewpoint of Josephus, the destruction of the nation of Israel was more a case of self-destruction than Roman conquest at work.

There were at that time two parties in Jerusalem. One turbulent faction advocated immediate revolt against the Romans. The other party, led by the priests and the chief of the Pharisees, realizing the madness of the proposal, sought to restrain the seditious element; but finding they would not listen to argument or persuasion, they sent to the governor Florus, and also to Agrippa, for troops to quell the revolt. From that time the fighting began; but *the Jews killed one another in numbers far greater than those slain by the soldiers.* (Mauro 243, emph. orig.)

In a summary of some of the self-inflicted atrocities that Josephus records, Mauro quotes this observation of the Jewish historian: "It was then common to see cities filled with dead bodies, still lying unburied; those of old men mingled with infants, all scattered about together. Women also lay among them without any covering. You might then see the whole province full of inexpressible calamities" (qtd. in Mauro 244). Mauro's summary continues:

In some places the horrors were worse because Jews fought against Jews. In Scythopolis alone above 13,000 were slain at one time (II 18:1 & 2). Josephus relates the case of one prominent man who, because of the terrible things happening all around, and in order to save his family from a worse fate, killed first his father and mother with the sword—they willingly submitting—and afterwards his wife and children, finally taking his own life (II 18:3). This incident will give us at least a faint idea of the awful conditions of those "days of vengeance, and of wrath upon this people." (244)

Of special note is Mauro's conclusion:

Many pages are filled with accounts of the slaughter of the Jews in various places. Reading them we are impressed with the Saviour's saying that "except those days should be shortened there should *no flesh be saved*" (Matt. 24:22). The calamities were beyond description. Thus, at Alexandria, where the Jews enjoyed the greatest privileges for centuries, they were incited to rise in revolt by the seditious element, and "were destroyed unmercifully. . . . No mercy was shown to the infants, and no regard had to the aged; but they went on with the slaughter of persons of every age, till *all the place was overflowed with blood, and fifty thousand of them lay dead in heaps*" (II 18:8). (244-245; emph. Mauro)

All this describes the battle against all the Jews, particularly in Judea. As the Roman armies moved toward Jerusalem, the horror and trouble increased even more. Jewish people turned on each other. There were battles between those who wanted to fight and those who wanted peace. Groups of Zealots reportedly tortured and killed thousands of their peaceful-minded countrymen. Fear of the militant group was so great that no one dared to bury the bodies of family members, which lay untended in the streets. Another quote from Josephus is to the point:

"The noise of those that were fighting was incessant, both by day and by night; but the lamentations of those that mourned exceeded the noise of the fighting. Nor was there ever any occasion for them to leave off their lamentations, because their calamities came perpetually, one upon another. . . . But as for the seditious bands themselves, they fought against each other while trampling upon the dead bodies which lay heaped one upon another, and being filled with a mad rage from those dead bodies under their feet, they became the more fierce. They, moreover, were still inventing pernicious things against each other; and when they had resolved upon

anything, they executed it without mercy, and omitted no method of torment or of barbarity (V. [1]. 5).” (qtd. in Mauro 250)

When Titus reached Jerusalem, he sent Josephus, who was his captive, to the Jews to urge them to surrender and be spared. The urgent plea with his countrymen not to resist the power of Rome was to no avail. So the siege began.

the Romans camped outside the city walls, people were destroying each other within. The fighting men hoarded what little food could be found and the rest starved. This led to even more horrible suffering and struggle over a mere bite of food. Josephus reports: “Now of those that perished by famine in the city, the number was prodigious, and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable; for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear, a war was commenced presently; and the dearest friends fell a-fighting one with another about it . . .” (VI 3:3; Josephus 578). Josephus even recounts one woman who killed and ate her own son in the desperation of starvation (VI 3:4; Josephus 578-579).

Jesus had said, “Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” Mercifully those days were shortened before the entire city perished. The Romans finally were able to enter the city, at which point they slew thousands in the battle that followed, and many more were sold into slavery. Again taken from the record of Josephus, Mauro accounts for the details below from the perspective of Bible prophecy.

When at last the Romans gained entrance into the city, the soldiers had become so exasperated by the stubborn resistance of the Jews, that they could not be restrained from wreaking vengeance upon the survivors. So they indulged in slaughter until weary of it. The survivors were sold into slavery, but at a very low price, because they were so numerous, and the buyers were few. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord by Moses, “And there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, *and no man shall buy you*” (Deut. 28:68).

Many were put into bonds and sold to slavery in the Egyptian mines, thus fulfilling several prophecies that they should be sold into Egypt again, whence God had delivered them (Hos. 8:13; 9:3).

In concluding this part of his history Josephus gives the number of those who perished (a million one hundred thousand) and of those sold into slavery (ninety seven thousand), and explains, as we have already stated, that “they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army.” And he adds: “Now this vast multitude was indeed collected out of remote places, but the entire nation was now shut up by fate as in prison, and the Roman army encompassed the city when it was crowded with inhabitants. Accordingly the multitude of those that perished therein *exceeded all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world*” (VI. 9. 4).

Thus ended, in the greatest of all calamities of the sort, the national existence of the Jewish people, and all that pertained to that old covenant which was instituted with glory (2 Cor. 3:7, 9, 11), but which was “to be done away.” (Mauro 254-255, emph. orig.)

Josephus certainly has reported much more, but what is stated above is sufficient to show that this would be the “time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation” (Dan. 12:1).

The great deliverance:

Where was Michael during all of this calamity? Wasn’t he supposed to be standing watch over God’s people? Truly he was, as we shall see. The people who perished in Jerusalem were no longer God’s people. But God had promised, “And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book” (Dan. 12:1). Those “found written in the book” were the elect children of God. According to God’s promise Michael did stand up to deliver them in a very marvelous way. The fact that the Christian Jews living in Jerusalem escaped the horrors mentioned above is one of the remarkable feats and facts of history.

When Jesus spoke about the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the disciples asked for a sign as to when He would come in judgment. Jesus answered, “Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes” (Matt. 24:15-18).

turned His disciples’ attention to the book of Daniel as the key to understanding what would take place. It’s another evidence that the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Israel as a nation were the Spirit-intended fulfillment of these prophecies. What Jesus said in the account of Luke spells it out even more clearly: “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee

to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-22).

What Jesus foretold was all fulfilled in a marvelous manner. Again, Josephus has provided the details, whose account is summarized from a Christian perspective by Mauro.

The Roman general, Cestius, now led his army from Syria into Judea, destroying widely, and laid siege to Jerusalem. He *made such rapid progress that the city was on the point of being captured*. The seditious element fled in large numbers, and the peaceable inhabitants were about to throw open the gates to the Romans, when a remarkable thing took place, *so unaccountable from any natural standpoint that it can only be attributed to the direct intervention of God, and for the fulfillment of the word of Christ*. Josephus tells how the people were about to admit Cestius as their benefactor, when he suddenly recalled his soldiers and retired from the city “without any reason in the world.” Had he not withdrawn when he did, the city and the sanctuary would, of course, have been spared; and Josephus says “it was, I suppose, *owing to the aversion God already had towards the city and the sanctuary* that he (Cestius) was hindered from putting an end to the war that very day” (II 19:6). (Mauro 245, emph. Mauro)

This unexplained event served two purposes, it would seem, in God’s plan. First of all, it would secure His dreadful judgment on the wicked people of Jerusalem. If the Jews would have opened the doors to Cestius and surrendered to him, the end of Jerusalem would not have been a time of trouble greater than any other, and the Temple would not have been destroyed. However, God had determined and Jesus had foretold that both should take place. Jesus said, “Not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down” (Matt. 24:2). It would not do, then, for the Romans to take the city without force. Incidentally and later on, when Titus came to do the job that Cestius for some reason did not do, he also was determined to spare the Temple. However, during the fighting between the Jews, while Titus still remained outside the city, some of the Jews had set the Temple on fire. When Titus entered the city, the Temple was already burned; so Titus gave the command for his men to level it to the ground. God was not about to let His house be taken over and desecrated by Roman idols.

strange and foolish retreat of Cestius also served the purpose of deliverance. It provided the opportunity for God’s chosen people to escape. Remember the sign that Jesus had given the believers. He said, “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Luke 21:20-22). This sign was unmistakable. The armies of Rome did surround Jerusalem and then unexpectedly retreated. The believers remembered Jesus’ words, fled to the mountains of Perea, and escaped the dreadful judgment that followed.

, the unbelieving Jews, who either did not know or give any thought to Jesus’ words, apparently saw the retreat of Cestius as a sign that they would be able to resist the enemy in Jerusalem. And so the seditious Zealots returned to Jerusalem. And in a moment of apparent peace several million unbelieving Jews came to Jerusalem from all over the world to celebrate the Passover. That is when Titus returned, trapping them all inside the city. Both in judgment and in deliverance God’s plan was carried out.

What a perfect fulfillment of God’s promise to Daniel: “And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.” Michael, the great prince, did stand up to protect and deliver the true people of Daniel who were the chosen of God. It is not difficult to see the archangel behind the retreat of Cestius. We can also see him together with his angels guarding and protecting the Christian Jews as they fled from Jerusalem to the mountains.

Verses 5-7: “How long shall it be?”

Daniel 12:5 snaps us back to the setting of the whole vision. Daniel had been standing by the Tigris River (10:4). Now he saw two others, presumably angels, one on either side of the river. One of these asked the Lord, who had been revealing this vision to Daniel and was hovering above the water, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” He did not ask how long *until* these wonders are fulfilled, but how long shall they be? How long will they last?

The Man dressed in linen “held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time” (12:7). The dramatic holding up of the hands and the swearing by God the Father show that this would be a very important matter and that His answer would be absolutely certain and true. But what does it mean? Many take it to be a period of three and a half years. The actual destruction of Jerusalem did take approximately that long. So in hindsight one could claim that it was a description

of the actual time that the greatest tribulation would last.

However, this designation, “a time, times, and half a time,” has occurred before in Daniel 7:25 where it referred to the time that the Antichrist would have power over the people. In that connection we have concluded that it refers to a specific time set by God that we cannot know. That description also fits this prophecy. God knew exactly how long this time of trouble would last. The “half a time” may indicate that the time of trouble would suddenly come to an end or be cut short. That also fits well with the words of Jesus saying that “for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matt. 24:22).

It is interesting to note that 3.5 is half of 7, which is the number of God’s covenant with His people. In all the places in the Bible (i.e., in Daniel and Revelation) where that specific time reference is used, it is talking about a period of persecution. So the time given by the Man in linen probably indicates for Daniel and for us that God is completely in control of this time and every time of persecution and trouble. He has predetermined the exact length of time that He will allow it to continue. It will be just long enough to carry out the needed judgment, and it will be brought to a timely end so as not to destroy the elect, but only to serve as a means of bringing them back to Him in repentance and faith. Truly as His people our own times are measured in the loving control of our glorious, wonderful God.

The Man in linen gave one more indication of time for the fulfillment of this prophecy. He said, “When the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished” (12:7). This is probably the greatest evidence that “the time of the end” and this whole prophecy refer to the things leading up to the end of the nation of Israel. The power of the holy people was utterly shattered when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70. The nation of Israel was so shattered that it did not rise again for about 1,878 years when the new state of Israel was formed in 1948. It is amazing that they were restored as a nation at all. But notice that the prophecy given to Daniel does not say that they would be completely destroyed. It does not say they would never rise again, as God had foretold of many other nations. It simply says that their “power” would be “completely shattered.” That can only refer to the decisive end of the covenant nation of Israel as carried out by the Romans.

The Man in linen clearly states that at that time “all these things shall be finished.” Everything in this prophecy will be completely fulfilled by the time Israel comes to an end. That makes it impossible to take any part of this prophecy as referring to the Antichrist or the end of the world. Jesus said almost the same thing when He spoke of the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 21:22. “For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” That prediction, therefore, ties Daniel’s words to the end of the nation of Israel. Jesus also confirms for us that the Jewish people would not be completely destroyed: “They will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

Verses 8-10: Daniel does not understand

It was not uncommon for the prophets to understand only partially the prophecies that were given to them. Peter said that they studied their own prophecies to know “what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ, who was in them was indicating . . .” (1 Pet. 1:10-11). In verse 8 Daniel stood up and said, in effect: Wait a minute; I didn’t get it! So he asked the Man in linen practically the same question as the angel in verse 6, but in a slightly different form: “*My Lord, what shall be the end [or outcome or completion] of these things?*”

Man in linen said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” Recall that in verse 4 He told Daniel to seal them up until the time of the end. It’s as if He was telling Daniel that he didn’t need to understand now. It was sealed until the time of the end. At that time it would be revealed, that is, when Jesus referred to this prophecy in warning His disciples of the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem. However, Jesus gave Daniel one more bit of information that gave comfort to Daniel and to us.

“Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.” (Dan. 12:10-13)

Even in the end, as horrible as it would be, Daniel was given the reassurance that the elect, the true people of Israel, would be saved. It is an incredible evidence of God’s grace and mercy to see how even in the time of the greatest tribulation the world would ever know, “many shall be purified, made white, and refined.”

Interpretations about the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days abound. We won’t even mention those that look beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, but rather focus on two legitimate ways to understand this last part of the prophecy. One is very literal, the other more figurative.

The literal understanding

The daily sacrifice mentioned in verse 11 was the sacrifice of a lamb every morning and evening in the Temple, as commanded by God in Exodus 29:38-46. In connection with this sacrifice being made, God also promised, “I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God” (v. 45).

daily sacrifice would come to an end during the Roman siege of Jerusalem. It was such an important event and a sign of coming disaster that Josephus, who was watching the whole thing take place, noted the very day when it happened. It was the 17th day of Panemus (which would correspond to our July) in the year AD 70.

other event mentioned was the setting up of “the abomination of desolation.” Jesus, we remember, had explained in Luke 21:20-21 that the armies encircling Jerusalem would be a sign for the believers to flee Jerusalem to the hills outside of Judea. That event began in the month that corresponds to our November in the year 66. Counting the full months between gives a total of 3 years and 7 months or 43 months between those two important events. 43 Jewish months is exactly 1,290 days. Such a chronology would, it seems, fit very well with a literal understanding of the 1,290 days in verse 11.

God also said, “Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.” What great blessing would come 45 days later to those who “wait,” who survive? Josephus recounts that the siege against Jerusalem suddenly and unexpectedly ended when the factious element of the Jews came down out of the towers and strongholds of the city. Titus was able to enter the city and bring the whole ordeal to an end. Josephus said that this happened on the seventh day of the Hebrew month Elul, which corresponds to September. So approximately a month and a half or 45 days after the daily sacrifice ended, the time of great trouble came to an end.

Titus took the city, the militant Jews who were not killed were sold into slavery at a very low price. The more peaceful Jews who had been caught in the city and those who were imprisoned by the factious element were all set free and granted pardon by Titus. An interesting side note comes from another ancient source, Philostratus in his work, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (6:29): Titus reportedly refused to accept a wreath of victory, as there is “no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God” (qtd. in “Siege”).

As we heard earlier, many chose to kill themselves and their families rather than endure more suffering and a wretched end. But as God promised, those who waited and survived to the end of the 1,335 days were blessed. More than the blessing of being spared from death, they were given a new time of grace to learn about their true Savior from sin and death.

that Jesus spoke about the time being shortened “for the sake of the elect.” But those who were already believers at the time of the siege had fled to the mountains and escaped. So we may suggest that God had His elect also among the Jews who as yet did not know or did not yet believe that Jesus was their Messiah. Perhaps among such elect were also believing Jews who came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and could not leave. For their sakes God brought the siege to an end earlier than expected. They were truly blessed, being saved not only from the terrible time of trouble, but also from eternal torment in hell. For they too would be refined in the fire, purified, and made white through the gospel of Christ that engendered and sustained their faith.

The figurative understanding

All of that seems very convincing. However, as some point out, the two main events are listed in reverse order. For that reason, they say, there can’t be 1,290 actual days from the taking away of the daily sacrifice to the setting up of the abomination of desolation because the abomination of desolation came first. So they take this verse in a more figurative sense. That is, it gives the reassurance that the period of judgment would be limited and that there would be mercy for those who hold out.

response to the reverse order of the events, we note that God does not say “from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away to the abomination of desolation.” That would be the normal wording if it were listing the events in chronological sequence. Rather, the two events are simply connected with “and.” In effect, one could say: Between this event and this event, there will be such and such time. With the general kind of wording in the text it doesn’t explicitly or tacitly indicate which comes first.

Since the prophecy specifically mentions those two actual events and since the times are so close and accurate, the literal understanding seems preferable. Also, the original question was “How long.” God seems to be giving a literal answer to that question. An answer that by God’s grace faithful Jews in the city might discover and find hope to hold on during the turmoil. Perhaps they were some of “the wise who shall understand,” mentioned at the end of verse 10. The wicked did not understand, and they continued to do wickedly to their own destruction. But the wise understood, placed their hope in God’s Word, and were delivered as God promised.

would seem that the best way to understand these time passages is to recognize that God first gave a more vague description of the time at the end as “a time, times, and half a time” (Dan. 12:7). Then for the sake of the elect who might have access to this book around the time of the invasion or while under siege, He gave this very exact time so that they could have hope and hold on.

Verse 13: A final word of promise

Daniel still might not have understood everything. But that was alright. The Lord reassured him that he would “rest.” Daniel would die and rest with his fathers long before any of this took place. He would not see any of these troubles. God also gave him the wonderful reassurance that he would rise to his “inheritance at the end of the days.”

is the glorious promise that every believer holds dear. Whether we understand every detail of prophecy doesn’t matter. Much of it, especially the time frames that are predicted, are difficult to understand. Many have drifted far afield in speculating about these numbers and times. It is better to stand firm on the things we know and the sure promises of salvation through the forgiveness of sins in Christ. For the rest we can await the glorious time when we too “will arise to [our] inheritance at the end of the days.” What a glorious end we see and also claim in this magnificent book of prophecy.

Notes

¹ Appendix A is not included in this issue. See page 27 for more information.

² In accord with the convention used in the *Complete Works* of Josephus, the Roman numeral specifies the book; then come chapter and paragraph numbers, separated by a colon. The page number of each quotation in *Complete Works* is given last per MLA guidelines.

³ “Wars” refers to “The Wars of the Jews” in *Complete Works*.

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Book Review

Jason Moore and Len Wilson: *Design Matters: Creating Powerful Imagery for Worship*, Abingdon Press, 2006, paperback with DVD, 114 pages.

If you are the parish pastor who appreciates a good bulletin cover but has trouble finding satisfying graphics and layouts that fit nicely with your service themes, this small book may well help you create new and refreshing images on your own. Graphic designers Jason Moore and Len Wilson have put together a volume for untrained artists to learn some basic design principles so that they can create satisfying images for worship.

The first few chapters present the importance of communicating the gospel through images. Jesus Himself often used picture language to present truths in such a way that they would be remembered easily. Worship graphics can also play a role in presenting Scriptural concepts in memorable ways. Who doesn’t remember a striking illustration? In one anecdote a woman noted that a particular worship image presented in her church had such an impact that she clearly remembered the point of the sermon six

months later.

Communicating graphically is different than communicating in text. We are very good at communicating in word (we are taught this over and over again in school). To communicate with an image, however, is not as simple as finding a piece of clip art and slipping a Bible passage underneath. The authors emphasize that the image itself should communicate an idea, and they show the reader how to find and construct images that do this. One may not care for every specific example the authors present, but the underlying concept they teach—to think in terms of metaphor as a foundation for imagery—is solid.

The book's focus is on worship images for the screen (such as images to be projected in connection with sermons or hymns), but the design principles presented could be adapted and used effectively in bulletin covers, evangelism materials, posters, and other forums where good religious images are needed or helpful.

Topics covered include such things as learning to use reference material (you'll start watching television commercials and looking at magazine ads in a whole new way!), composition and texture guidelines, how to use color, how to manage light and shadow, using fonts and typography, and building a set of images for an entire worship service.

An accompanying DVD shows examples in color of all the images in the book (the book is not printed in color). It also reviews and reinforces the design principles through further examples and explanations. The disc includes several video tutorials on how to create worship graphics using Photoshop, a popular graphic design program for the personal computer.

While a graphic design professional may find this book too simple, it seems to be just the right introduction for the preacher looking to improve the quality of his worship graphics (either on the screen or in print) without investing a lot of time or money. At just 114 pages it is an easy read. If you don't wish to pay for the expensive Photoshop software to start designing your own images on the computer, you can couple this book with a powerful freeware graphics tool like GIMP (www.gimp.org), and you'll soon be ready to try your own hand at illustrating the great gospel message.

- David Schaller