Daniel

Study Guide

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Introduction

Author: Daniel – *"God is my Judge"*

Date: 605-538BC

Theme: The Absolute Sovereignty of God over all the earth – including nations who do not acknowledge Him.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **2 Chronicles 36:15-20 -** *The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.*
- **Jeremiah 25:8-9-** *Because you have not obeyed My words, behold, I will send Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them…. See Habakkuk 1:5-6*

There were 3 sieges:

605 BC – 2 Kings 24:1,2 and 2 Chronicles 36:5-7

- Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt came to fight the Babylonians at Carchemish
- Crown Prince Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated the Egyptians, chasing them south through Judah.
- Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Heard of his father's death and returned Babylon to assume the throne.
- Jews deported to Babylon – including Daniel Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

597 BC – 2 Kings 24:10-14 and 2 Chronicles 36:10

- Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Coniah) became king, but lasted only 3 months. Nebuchadnezzar removed him from power.
- Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah on the throne – changing his name to Zedekiah.
- Another 10,000 jews deported to Babylon – including Ezekiel.

586 BC – 2 Kings 25:1-21 and 2 Chronicles 36:17-20

- Zedekiah was a weak and vacillating king – he ruled for just 11 years.
- After a long and terrible siege, Jerusalem and the Temple were completely destroyed.
- All, but a few of the remaining population were deported to Babylon. Jeremiah was allowed to stay in Judah.

Babylonian Kingship Reckoning: Accession year (year 0)→ Year 1 → Year 2, etc. Accession year could be between 1 and 365 days in length. The new king was officially coronated at the New Years Festival

Jewish Kingship Reckoning: Year 1 → Year 2 → Year 3, etc. Jews did not have an accession year

Inclusive Reckoning: a part of a measure of time that was counted as a whole = example: Wednesday noon to Friday noon were counted as 3 days.

Daniel served 7 or 8 kings – depending on the identity of Darius:

- Nebuchadnezzar II 605-562 BC – 605 would have been counted as accession year.
- Amel-Marduk "Evil-Merodach" 562-560 BC = Unpopular king. Released King Jehoiachin from prison and gave him a seat of honor.
- Nergal-shar-usur "Neriglissar" 560-556 BC = Army general who murdered the king. Was a strong leader.
- Labashi-Marduk 556 BC = Son of Neriglissar – reigned for 3 months.
- Nabonidus 556-539 BC= Murdered Labashi-Marduk and took the throne. Had unpopular religious views- left Babylon, but remained king.
- Belshazzar = Became co-regent with Nabonidus in 549 BC until 539 BC.

October 539 BC- Babylon conquered by the Medes and Persians.

- Darius (possibly a name taken by Gobryas, the general who captured Babylon and was made governor of the Babylonian Province or another name for Cyrus. I believe "Darius" is Cyrus, but the question mark remains)
- Cyrus the Great – total time as ruler of Medo-Persia = 559 BC-530 BC.

OUTLINE

The book of Daniel is divided into 2 sections:

- The **narratives** (stories) – Chapters 1-6
- The **prophetic visions** – Chapter 7-12

Chapters 1 and 8-12 are written in **HEBREW** – Indicating that the Primary audience was the Jewish exiles.

Chapters 2-7 are written in **ARAMAIC** – Indicating that the audience included the wider Aramaic speaking population.

Chapter 1 – Daniel's determination to remain loyal to God **(Hebrew).**
Chapter 2 – Nebuchadnezzar's 1st dream **(Aramaic).**
Chapter 3 – Firey Furnace **(Aramaic).**
Chapter 4 – Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd dream and conversion story **(Aramaic).**
Chapter 5 – The writing on the wall and fall of Belshazzar and Babylon **(Aramaic).**
Chapter 6 – Lion's Den **(Aramaic).**
Chapter 7 – Daniel's dream of the Four Beasts **(Aramaic).**
Chapter 8 – Daniel's dream of the Ram and the Goat **(Hebrew).**
Chapter 9 – Daniel's prayer, and the vision of the 70-weeks **(Hebrew).**
Chapter 10 – Daniel's vision by the river **(Hebrew).**
Chapter 11 – Revelation about a long war **(Hebrew).**
Chapter 12 – The Rise of Michael **(Hebrew).**

Chiastic Structure

Chapters 2-7

A- Vision of world kingdoms = ch. 2
    B- The faithful tested = ch. 3
        C- Judgment on the King = ch. 4
        C'- Judgment on the King = ch. 5
    B'- The faithful tested = ch. 6
A'- Vision of world kingdoms = ch. 7

Chapters 7-12

A- Coming of the One "like the Son of Man" = ch. 7
    B- Clash of East and West = ch. 8
        C- Revelation of the "Anointed One" = ch. 9
        C'- Vision of a Divine Being = ch. 10
    B'- Clash of North and South = ch. 11
A'- The rise of Michael = ch. 12

Daniel

Chapter 1

What does it mean that, "the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god."?

What do we know right away about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah?

Why would the student's names be changed and why would they have been given food from the kings table?

Daniel = "God is my Judge" →→→→ Belteshazzar = "May Bel protect my Life"

Hananiah = "The Lord is Gracious" →→→→ Shadrach = "Illuminated by the sun god, Rach"

Mishael = "Who is Like the Lord?" →→→→ Meshach = "Who is like Aku?"

Azariah = "The Lord Helps" →→→→ Abed-nego = "A servant of Nabu"

Why didn't Daniel and his friends want to partake of the food and drink from the kings table?

Why was the official concerned about Daniel's request?

What solution did Daniel come up with and what was the outcome?

How did God honor our young men's faith and loyalty to Him?

How long did Daniel serve?

Daniel

Chapter 2

Why weren't Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah included with the other counselors called before Nebuchadnezzar?

Did Nebuchadnezzar really forget the dream or was he testing his counselors?

What was the consequence for not being able to comply with the kings demands?

What does Daniel's response to the situation say about him and his faith in God?

Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar allowed Daniel more time when he had not given the other counselors more time?

What did Daniel immediately do?

How did Daniel react to being given the same dream?

Read 2:26 - Explain the importance of Daniel's response in 2:27-28:

What was Nebuchadnezzar's state of mind before the dream?

What did Nebuchadnezzar see and how did Daniel interpret the dream? (see following page)

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond?

Statue From Daniel's Dream

Babylonian (612 - 539 B.C.)
Head of Gold

Medo-Persian (539 - 331 B.C.)
Chest & Arms of Silver

Greek (331 - 168 B.C.)
Belly & Thighs of Bronze

Roman (168 B.C. - 476 A.D.)
Legs of Iron

10 Nation Confederation (Future)
Feet mixed of Iron & Clay

Daniel

Chapter 3

It has been suggested that one of the motivations behind the construction of the Golden Statue was a failed coup attempt that occurred in **594 BC** in the 10th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Hoping to avoid any future coups, Nebuchadnezzar decided to make a lasting impression – a huge golden statue of himself along with a public and compulsory show of loyalty.

There is no question the vision in chapter 2, would also have had an impact on Nebuchadnezzar. He took this opportunity to reshape the vision – giving himself a better outcome. Nebuchadnezzar, as THE king dominates the story.

Additionally, we have Biblical evidence that King Zedikiah went to Babylon. As far as we know, Zedekiah is the only king of Judah who traveled to Babylon and returned home again.

- **Jeremiah 51:59 -** This is the message Jeremiah gave to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign (594 BC).

Zedekiah may have been present on the plane of Dura for the events recorded in Daniel chapter 3 – interesting thought.

What is the dominate THEME in chapter 3?

What decree did Nebuchadnezzar make concerning the golden image?

What were the consequences of disobedience?

How did Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego get "found out."?

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond?

How did Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego respond?

What happened next?

How does the story end?

Daniel

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 was written predominately in the first-person. It is Nebuchadnezzar's conversion story in his own words.

While there is no specific date attached to this story, we can safely say that it fits within the *"second phase"* of Nebuchadnezzar's reign – the building phase. Babylon was an architectural masterpiece and Nebuchadnezzar's name was literally engraved on every wall. His boastful pride was not without foundation. Babylon was spectacular.

How does the beginning of this chapter compare with Nebuchadnezzar's declaration in ch. 3:15?

How is this dream different from the dream in chapter 2?

Describe the tree.

What did the messenger decree and how do we know he was talking about a person and not an actual tree?

What was the purpose of this decree?

How did Daniel react when he was told the dream?

What were Daniel's instructions to Nebuchadnezzar?

What kind of a prophecy is this and how do we know?

How much time went by?

What happened?

How did Nebuchadnezzar respond?

Daniel

Chapter 5

After Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 BC, there were 4 more Babylonian kings, the last of which was Nabonidus. Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son.

Nabonidus was not Babylonian. He was either Assyrian or Armenian. His connection to the Babylonian throne may have been through marriage to one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters – Nitocris has been suggested.

He became king after Labashi-Marduk was murdered.

Inscriptions and later sources suggest that Nabonidus supported the moon god, Sin, over the traditional national deity, Marduk and that his ultimate wish was to replace Marduk with Sin as head of the pantheon.

Nabonidus lived the last few years of his life in Tema, a large oasis located in northwestern Saudi Arabia. The reason for this is unknown, though it might have been due to disagreements with the Babylonian clergy and powerful nobles over his religious views.

While Nabonidus continued to be recognized as king, Belshazzar acted as co-regent in Babylonia. Belshazzar was a capable soldier, but a poor politician. As a result, he was not a popular leader. The people didn't like him. The priesthood didn't like him. The military didn't like him.

In October 539 BC, Nabonidus's/Belshazzar's reign and the Neo-Babylonian Empire ended abruptly with the quick victory of Cyrus the Great.

Both the Babylonian Chronicles and the Cyrus Cylinder describe Babylon as being taken *"without battle,"* and Cyrus himself declared, *"When I entered Babylon as a friend, I set up the seat of government in the royal palace amidst jubilation and rejoicing."*

How is the Theme of chapter 5 similar to that of chapter 4?

How were Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar similar? How were they different?

Why was Belshazzar throwing a banquet, knowing the Medo-Persian army was camped outside the walls of Babylon?

Describe the mood in the banquet hall.

How did Belshazzar react to the disembodied hand?

Who suggested that Daniel be consulted?

What did Belshazzar offer Daniel as a reward for interpreting the message?

What was Daniel's (God's) indictment against Belshazzar?

How does this event partially fulfill Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2?

Daniel

Chapter 6

"The historical person behind the name ***Darius the Mede*** is still unknown. Some pieces of extrabiblical evidence lead to the conclusion that he might have been ***Gobryas***, the general who led the Medo-Persian army in their conquest of the city of Babylon. Most of the indicators from the Bible, on the other hand, point to Cyrus the Great, who may have been known by 2 titles due to his dual (Medo-Persian) parentage. This commentary takes seriously the view that applies the title "Darius the Mede" to the person of Cyrus the Great." ---- **Zdravko Stefanovic, "Daniel-Wisdom to the Wise, a commentary on the book of Daniel. Page 203"**

There is some credibility to this line of thinking. Pharaoh's of Egypt went by multiple names:

Throne Name	Personal Name	
Maatkare	Hatshepsut	
Nebkheperure	Tutankhamun	
Wehemibre	Necho II	(2 kings 23; 2 Chronicles 35 and Jeremiah 46:2)

In *"modern"* times, when Edward the 8th of England, abdicated the throne in December, 1936, his younger brother, Albert, became George the 6th. He reigned from 1936-1952.

Daniel would have been around 85 years old at the time of this story. While there is no date given, it would have been not long after **538 BC.**

To what position was Daniel appointed?

Who plotted against Daniel? Why?

What was their 1st plan? Why didn't it work?

What was their 2nd plan?

What did the advisers suggest to Darius? Were they successful?

How did Daniel respond to the new law?

What did the advisers do?

How did the king respond?

How did throwing Daniel into the den of lions affect the king?

What was the final outcome?

Daniel

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 begins a new section of Daniel, known as ***Apocalyptic Prophecy:***

- This type of prophecy is communicated through visions/dreams and conveys highly complex symbols.
- The content of the prophecy covers long spans of time = a summary of human history from a divine perspective.
- These prophecies are given in cycles, summarizing or restating the content of the previous vision and enlarging its content with new insights from a new perspective.
- Apocalyptic prophecy reveals God's plans for humanity and are NOT conditional. They reveal His unchangeable plan for the resolution of the sin problem.
- This type of prophecy is unique to the books of Daniel and Revelation.

While the prophecy of Daniel 7 is not dated, it can be reasonably assumed that a date of **550/549 BC** is accurate.

It is interesting to note that that same year, Cyrus, king of Persia, defeated King Astyages, the Median ruler, laying the foundation for the next world empire – that of the Medes and Persians.

The animals identified in the prophecy do not resemble real creatures. In Babylonian tradition, animals symbolized upcoming historical events.

There are 3 main schools of thought when it comes to the interpretation of the prophecies found in the books of **Daniel** and **Revelation:**

- <u>Preterist</u>: Daniel is dated to the 2nd century BC and the contents is considered to be historical rather than prophetic. Similarly, Revelation is not about the future, but about events that took place in the 1st century AD.
- <u>Futurist:</u> Daniel is generally dated to the 6th century BC, but the events do not occur until just before the 2nd Coming of Christ. Likewise, from Revelation 4:1 onward, the prophecies are about the future to be fulfilled AFTER the rapture of the church and during the 7 years prior to the 2nd Coming.
- <u>Historicist:</u> Events are real but are portrayed using symbolic language. History is presented from Daniel's time until the end of time – even if we do not completely understand them. Some prophecies have been fulfilled. Some prophecies are currently being fulfilled and some are yet to be fulfilled. The main challenge Historicist face is identifying the historical events represented in Apocalyptic Prophecies. The most important outline in both Daniel and Revelation is found in Daniel chapter 7, which provides an indispensable historical timeline.

Seventh-day Adventists are generally **HISTORICIST.**

This chapter was written in Aramaic. It has global implications as demonstrated by the imagery of the churning sea and the 4 winds.

The key word in this chapter is ***"dominion"*** and provides a political perspective to the conflict between God and the opposing powers on earth.

What was the Interpretation of Daniel's Vision – v. 17-18, 23-27?

Identify the characteristics of the 4 beasts:

Lion – v.4:

The mystery of the WINGED LION is easy to solve based on Biblical and extra-biblical sources:

- Babylonian art often depicts winged lions, examples of which can be found in museums around the world, and many winged lions decorated the main road to Babylon.
- Jeremiah depicts Nebuchadnezzar by the double image of a lion and an eagle (Jeremiah 49:19, 22).

The representation of a winged lion combined the strength and majesty of a lion with the speed of an eagle. This kingdom is the best, just like the head of gold described in chapter 2.

Commentators agree that the final description of this animal refers to Nebuchadnezzar's mental illness and ultimate restoration.

Bear – v.5:

In the historical framework, the Medes and the Persians were not equal in strength. The Mdeo-Persian Empire was created in a single generation by one man – Cyrus the Great. The Medes were stronger, but when Cyrus conquered Astyages in 553/2 BC, he became sole ruler of both kingdoms, giving political supremacy to the once inferior Persians.

There were 3 main conquests of the Medo-Persian empire: Lydia, Babylon and Egypt.

The earliest sources of Jewish tradition recognize the bear as representing the Persians (the Babylonian Talmud). This kingdom, though larger in size, did not have the splendor of Babylon.

Leopard – v.6:

A leopard is dangerous, in part, because it is sneaky. It is noiseless in its movements and its unexpected attack instills terror.

This kingdom is characterized by the unexpected speed and totality of its conquests:

- Alexander the Great conquered most of the ancient world, including Egypt and Asia Minor, in less than 10 years and amassed the largest empire in the ancient world in just 13 years – 336 BC-323 BC.

When Alexander died, unexpectantly, his empire was divided between his 4 generals:

- Cassander = Macedonia
- Lysimachus = Thrace and much of Asia Minor
- Ptolemy = Egypt, Cyrenaica and Palestine
- Seleucus = the rest of Asia

The 3rd kingdom is the only one to which dominion, *"authority to rule,"* is specifically offered.

"The Leopards dominion encompasses much more than mere geography. It extends also on a cultural level. Greek thought has infiltrated itself everywhere and constitutes the backbone of western thought." – Jacques B. Doukhan, "Secrets of Daniel" pg. 104

Political systems and procedures like democracy, trial by jury and lawful equality originated in Greece. Ancient Grecian thinkers laid the foundations of many fields of study: philosophy, astrology, mathematics, biology, engineering, medicine and linguistics – to name a few. (The Immortality of the Soul has its foundations in Greek Philosophy)

The Greeks also established many of the standards by which we identify beauty and creative value in art, including literature, music, architecture, design and the performing arts.

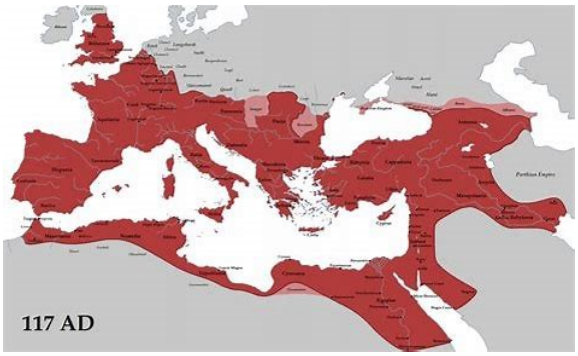
The modern Olympic games are inspired by the ancient Olympics held in Greece from the 8th century BC to the 4th century AD. Even the flame used to start the modern games originates from a ceremony that occurs in front of the remains of Hera's Temple in Olympia.

Beast – v.7, 19:

This 4th beast is different from the other 3 by the magnitude of its destructive power.

Chapter 2 describes this kingdom as being as strong as iron - capable breaking and smashing everything that stood in its way.

Chapter 7 describes this kingdom as being terrifying, frightening and very powerful. It would crush, devour and trample everything in its path.



However, even though it was terrifying, this kingdom would eventually be divided into 10 kingdoms – symbolized by clay mixed with iron and the 10 horns. History bears this out. While the list of kingdoms varies, most historians agree to the following: the Franks, the Burgundians, the Allaman (Huns), the Vandals, the Suevi, the Visigoths, the Saxons, Ostrogoths, the Lombards and the Heruli.

What is more interesting, is that Daniel views these kingdoms as irrelevant - they do not interest him – v.24. He is more interested in the Little Horn in their midst.

What are the characteristics of this Little Horn – v. 8, 11, 20?

There is much history surrounding this event, but this is what you need to know:

The Visigoths, Vandals and Ostrogoths moved into Italy and surrounding regions. History tells us that these 3 kingdoms originally belonged to the Arian branch of Christianity and were always in conflict with the main body of the church threatening its supremacy.

The Catholic governors of the region considered it their sacred duty to eliminate their heretical influence:

- Clovis, king of the Franks, converted to Christianity then immediately proceeded crush the Visigoths in 508 AD.
- Justinian, declared that the pope was the ruler of all the holy priests of God then declared war on the Arians.
- Catholic forces crushed the Vandals in North Africa in 534 AD and chased the Ostrogoths out of Rome in 538 AD.

The Catholic church was now without rival, both religiously and politically.

What are the actions of the Little Horn – v.21, 25?

What is “Prophetic Time” and how do we use it to determine the meaning of, “time, times and ½ a time prophecy?”

Both the Jewish and Babylonian years followed the Lunar Calendar = 360 days

3 ½ years x 360 = 1260 days or 1260 years – (see Revelation 11:2-3; 12:14; 13:5 = same time period)

This method is used by the Historicist school of Apocalyptic interpretation.

- **Genesis 29:27** = Laban requires an additional seven years of work in contract for Rachel's hand in marriage, calling it a week.
- **Numbers 14:31-35** = The Israelites wandered for 40 years in the wilderness, one year for every day spent by the spies in Canaan.
- **Ezekiel 4:1-8** = The prophet Ezekiel is commanded to lie on his left side for 390 days, followed by his right side for 40 days, to symbolize the equivalent number of years of punishment on Israel and Judah respectively.
- **Daniel 9:24-27** = Is known as the Prophecy of the 70 weeks. Scholars understand the passage to refer to 70 "sevens" of years—that is, 490 years.

538 AD is the beginning date. By this date, Rome had solidified papal control + 1260 = **1798**.

> *"During this period, the state church in Western Europe claimed that the pope was its head, with the position and prerogatives of God. These claims are reiterated in modern times in the statement of Pope Leo XIII: 'We [the popes] hold upon earth the place of God Almighty.'*
>
> *In addition, the atoning ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary was replaced by the claims of the church's priesthood to forgive sins. All those who insisted on living by the Bible, rather than the state religion, experienced persecution and martyrdom. Historians believe that more than 50 million Christians paid with their lives for the faithfulness to the Bible's teachings. Although in modern times of ecumenism and religious tolerance, such statements are regarded as harsh and unfair, the present cannot erase the historical facts and reality."* ---- {Ranko Stefanovic "Plain Revelation" page 156}

The events of the French Revolution brought the church's oppressive rule to its end. In 1798, the French army under the leadership of General Berthier invaded Rome and captured Pope Pius VI. He was expelled from Rome after refusing to renounce his authority.

Who are the *"Ancient of Days"* and *"One like a Son of Man"* and why is it important that they are inserted in the middle Daniel's vision – v.9-10, 13-14?

What is the real take away from this chapter?

GOLD	BABYLONIAN EMPIRE 605-539 BC THE LION
SILVER	MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE 539-331 BC THE BEAR
BRASS	GRECIAN EMPIRE 331-168 BC THE LEOPARD
IRON	ROMAN EMPIRE 168 BC-AD 476 THE DRAGON
IRON & CLAY	DIVIDED KINGDOMS

Daniel

Chapter 8

2 years have gone by since Daniel's vision in chapter 7.

The date is approximately 547 BC.

The basic message in chapter 8 is the same as that of chapter 7 – conflicts on earth and challenges to God's rule will someday come to an end and will be replaced by God's eternal kingdom.

There are several notable differences:

- Chapter 7 focuses more on the political aspect of the conflict: beasts/kingdoms – little horn – universal judgment.
  Chapter 8 focuses more on the religious aspect of the same conflict: beasts/kingdoms – little horn – cleansing of the sanctuary.

  Same event – different audience.

  "The Day of Judgment in chapter 7 is seen in chapter 8 as God's way of setting the heavenly sanctuary aright. Seventh-day Adventists use the term, "Pre-advent or Investigative Judgment" to describe this event. It should be stressed that the principal purpose of this judgment is not to condemn, but to acquit God's faithful people." ---- {'Daniel-Wisdom of the Wise' page 324}

- Chapter 7 was written in Aramaic, indicating that it was intended for a universal audience.
  Chapter 8 was written in Hebrew, indicating it was intended for a specific people group.

  Same message – different audience.

- Chapter 7 depicts wild-hybrid animals/beasts.
  Chapter 8 depicts domestic, ritualistically clean, sacrificial animals.

- Chapter 7 does not provide the identity of the 4 beasts – we can only identify them historically.
  Chapter 8 names the empires represented by the 2 animals.

Where was Daniel in his vision – v. 1-2?

Describe Daniel's vision – v. 3-12.

What question is asked in v. 13?

What is the response in v. 14?

What is the Interpretation of Daniel's vision? – v.19-22

- The "Two-horned Ram."

- The "Shaggy or Hairy Goat."

- The 4 horns that replace the large horn. (see ch. 7)

Identification of "the Little Horn" (see "Secrets of Daniel" chapter 8):

In Verse 9 the vision narrows in focus to the unusual power of a "Little Horn."

This small horn originates in the west and grows in the direction of the south, east and the *"Beautiful Land"* – which is Palestine. (see Ezekiel 20:6).

This *"Little Horn"* power reminds us of the *"Little Horn"* in chapter 7:

- Both display great arrogance and intelligence
- Both want to usurp God on 2 levels – assuming His prerogatives and taking away the perpetual sacrifice from Him – and remind us of the description of Satan in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:12-18. By seizing the perpetual sacrifice, the Horn takes God's place in the religious experience.
- Both despise the law (truth).
- Both persecute the followers of God.
- Both succeed the reign of the previous beasts and remain the sole power to the end.

We can conclude, then, that the *"Little Horn"* of chapter 8 is the same *"Little Horn"* described in chapter 7. Representing the Roman Empire in both its Political and Religious capacity.

If both visions are describing the same thing, why are there 2 visions?

Daniel's focus in vision #2 is not on the kingdoms, but on the animals themselves – The Ram and the Goat. Beyond their representations of Medo-Persia and Greece, the 2 animals direct our thoughts to the Day of Atonement. It is during the Day of Atonement, *"Yom Kippur,"* that the dual sacrifice of the Ram and Goat are made (Leviticus 16).

The Day of Atonement was a day of Judgment for Israel. The entire sacrificial system, set up by God in the wilderness, was designed to point the worshipper to Jesus and all the aspects of the Plan of Salvation: Jesus in His sacrificial role. Jesus in His priestly role. Jesus in His High Priestly role.

Every day of the year, the sinner confessed his sins over the head of a perfect lamb, in essence, transferring those sins to the lamb, then the lamb was sacrificed, replacing the sinner. The blood of the slain lamb was then taken into the sanctuary by the priest and sprinkled on the curtain separating the holy from the most holy places, placing those sins in

"storage." Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would go into the Most Holy Place, *"collect the stored sins,"* judge them and remove them from the Most Holy Place – The Most Holy Place was now cleansed of all the stored sins from the previous year. Those sins were then taken by The High Priest and *"transferred"* to the Scape Goat, removing them from the Sanctuary forever.

The *"Little Horn"* power seeks to replace Jesus in all his roles and at the same time persecutes his followers, but he is only allowed to do so for a specific period of time: *"2300 days until the sanctuary is cleansed."* Daniel is told that this time period will begin in the time of Medo-Persia (v.20) and will stretch into the distant future. However, until the *"2300 days"* is given a start date, the prophecy remains murky at best. Chapter 9:25 will give us the answer.

How did Daniel respond to the vision? – v. 27

Daniel

Chapter 9

It is now **538/537 BC**

Approximately 10 years have elapsed since the vision of chapter 8. According to Daniel, that vision was beyond understanding and left him, *"exhausted, appalled and ill for days."*

There are 4 links that show us a connection between chapters 8 and 9

- The angel, Gabriel, visited Daniel in both chapters (8:16; 9:21).
- Daniel refers to the vision of chapter 8 in chapter 9 (v.21).
- Gabriel came to give Daniel understanding. In both chapters, Daniel uses 2 words for **"vision"** – *khzon* and *mar'eh.* In 8:26, Gabriel said the *"mar'eh"* of the 2300-day time prophecy was true. In 9:23 Gabriel told Daniel that he had come to help him understand the *"mar'eh,"* pointing us back to chapter 8.
- The time element not explained in chapter 8 is now discussed in chapter 9 (v.24-27).

When the new Medo-Persian empire came to power, a feeling of great expectation would have filled the hearts of the exiles from Judah, because it meant the 70 years of captivity were coming to an end and soon the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah would be fulfilled:

- **Isaiah 44:23, 28** - Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel…… [28] who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." '
- **Isaiah 45:1-4** - This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: [2] I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. [3] I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. [4] For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me.
- **Jeremiah 25:11** - This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.
- **Jeremiah 29:10** - This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.

By studying Jeremiah and giving special attention to the 70-year prophecy, Daniel must have thought the end of the captivity was going to happen soon. However, there didn't seem to be anything happening…… Daniel turned to prayer.

How does Daniel approach God – v. 3?

Briefly summarize Daniel's prayer – 4-19:

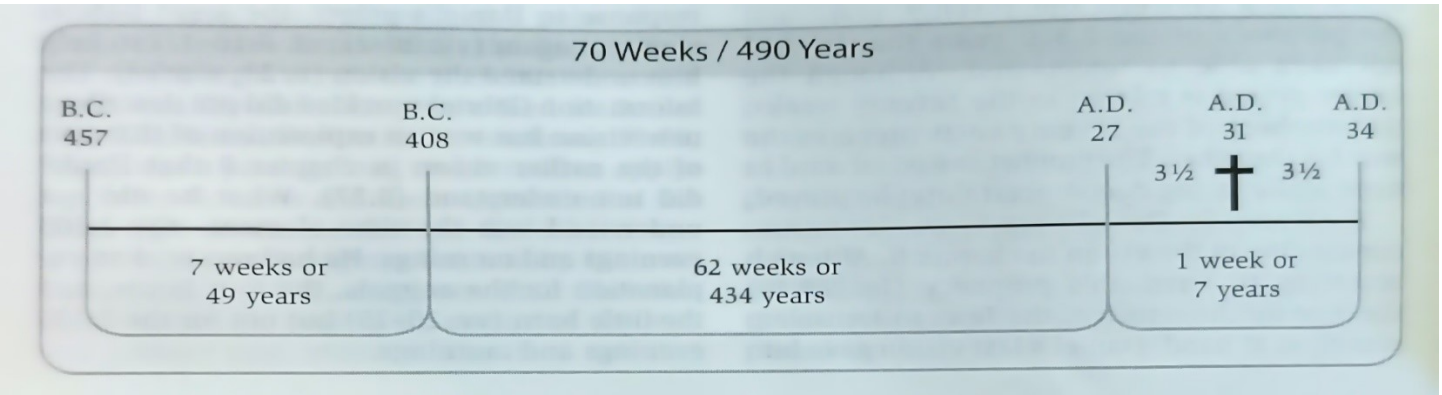
Why is Daniel's use of the words, *"we, us and our"* so important in his prayer – v. 4-19?

To what is Daniel referring in v. 11 (see Deuteronomy 29:1, 9-12, 18-28)?

Who appeared to Daniel while he was still praying – v. 21?

What did he come to do and how does he describe Daniel – v. 22-23?

Now we come to v. 24-27 (see "Andrews Bible Commentary - OT" pages 1047-1051).



Daniel was told that the Jews would be given a further 70 weeks of prophetic time = 490 years. All the research I have done indicates that most scholars believe, that, while the 490-year prophecy is a part of the larger 2300-year prophecy, it is a distinct period of time that relates exclusively to the Jewish people as the unique and set apart people of God.

When does the time start?

v. 25 - *"From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem."*

- **457 BC =** In the 7th year of the reign of Artaxerxes I, the decree was issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 7:11-26). Unlike the earlier decrees of Cyrus and Darius (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-12), Artaxerxes decree explicitly included Jerusalem.
- **457 BC** is also the begin date for the 2300 day/year prophecy in Daniel 8:14, which takes us to **1844.** All time prophecies in the book of Daniel end in 1844.

The 70 weeks are divided into 3 segments:

- **"7 weeks" or 49 years = 408 BC**. The time period allotted for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and it walls.
- **"62 weeks" or 434 years = 27 AD.** At the end of this time period the Messiah would appear. Jesus was baptized and anointed in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar.

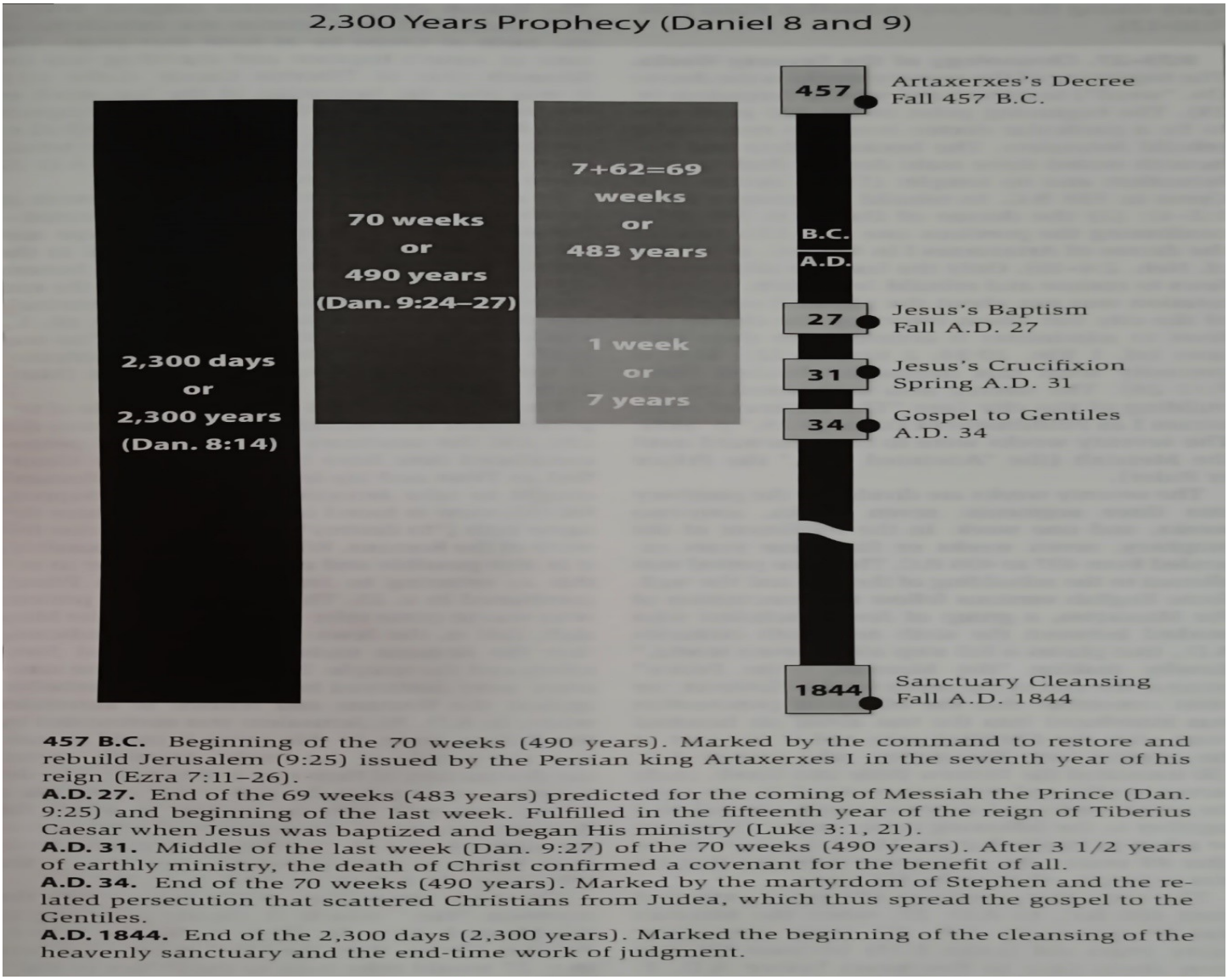
- **"1 week" or 7 years = 34 AD.** With the stoning of Stephen in **34 AD**, the Theocracy formally came to an end. The process of the Gospel being carried to all the world and the Gentiles being included in the lineage of Abraham as Spiritual Israel began.

v. 26 causes a bit of confusion because it is not chronological. This verse is describing the eventual destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in **70 AD.** The sanctuary and the city were destroyed because the Jews rebelled against the Romans and refused to surrender.

v. 27a – "The middle of the last week" 3 ½ days or 3 ½ years = 31 AD. In the middle of the last week the Messiah would be cut off. When Jesus died, the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom. This event marked the end of the sacrificial system and the ratification of the covenant God made with His people that would also be extended to the Gentiles.

v. 27b – has also caused controversy amongst scholars. Some argue that it is referring back to **v.26,** further describing the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. SDA scholars (historicist perspective) argue that it is describing the same time period of the little horn power which ends in 1844 (see 8:25).

What is the basic message of v. 24-27?



Daniel

Chapters 10-12

It is a shame that the final section of Daniel has been divided into 3 chapters, because it causes our minds to naturally encapsulate each chapter. However, the last 3 chapters of Daniel are, in fact, 1 event and should be treated as such.

The opening verses of chapter 10 tell us this event occurred in the *"3rd year of Cyrus king of Persia*" - *"on the 24th day of the 1st month."* = Spring (March/April) 536 BC.

By that time, the 1st group of exiles had returned to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple had begun. There would have been great excitement and enthusiasm for the future – especially after the foundation of the Temple was laid.

However, that excitement did not last long. The book of Ezra tells us that the exiles soon faced serious difficulties. Those who occupied the land were not excited for the return of the exiles and made every attempt to undermine them.

Discouragement, threats and letters of accusation to the Persian authorities, were all used to derail progress on the Temple (see Ezra 4:1-6, 24). That is the backdrop for Daniel 10-12.

What do we know of Daniel's state of mind – v.2, 3?

It is likely that Daniel's distress was the result of the failure of the returning exiles to rebuild the Temple.

Who is the Being who appeared to Daniel – v.5-6 & 12:6-7 (also see Exodus 28:4-5; Joshua 5:14-15 and Revelation 1:12-16)?

How did Daniel respond to this vision – v.8?

Who is the messenger and why was he sent – v. 9-12, 14 (see 8:17-19 and 9:21-23)?

Why was he delayed – v. 13?

Who is Michael – v.13; 12:1; Q 2 - The name, Michael (Mi-ka-el) means "Who is like God" (see Exodus 15:9-11 and Rev. 12:7)

How did Daniel respond? – v. 15?

What is the message of 10:16-11:1?

The 3 kings of Persia after Cyrus the Great – v.2:

- Cambyses – 530-522 BC
- Gaumata (false Smerdis) – 522 BC
- Darius I (Darius the Great) – 522-486 BC

4th King of Persia – v.2:

Xerxes I (Xerxes the Great or Ahasuerus in the book of Esther) – **486-465 BC**

Xerxes was the son of Darius and Atossa (daughter of Cyrus).

Xerxes is best known for his invasion of Greece in **480 BC.** He personally led his army across the Hellespont and had victories at Thermopylae (army) and Artemisium (navy) before capturing and destroying Athens.

Xerxes' army controlled mainland Greece until its defeat at the Battle of Salamis. The defeat at Plataea the following year, effectively ending the Persian invasion of Greece and historians view Greece's ultimate victory over Persia to be the beginning of the decline of the Medo-Persian Empire.

Who is the *"mighty king whose kingdom was broken up and scattered to the 4 winds."* – 11:3-4 (see 7:6 and 8:21-22)?

11:5-39 – We have arrived at the part of the vision that is considered by scholars to be the most difficult – in all scripture – to understand. Scholars have wrestled with and argued about the details for many decades. Even historicists do not completely agree on its interpretation.

Once again, I want to remind you that, from our perspective, these are past events. The most important truth is that while earthly political and religious powers fight for supremacy, OUR GOD is working out His plans and purposes.

One of the characteristics of Scripture is that repetition means importance. For instance, in Daniel chapter 3:

- The instruction to bow down to the image when the music starts is repeated 3 times. It is an important detail describing passive coercion (lulling people into doing what you want them to do).
- *"Firey Furnace"* is repeated 10 times. Passive coercion is backed up by the threat of death for failure to submit. We can certainly say that this is a marriage of church and state. Nebuchadnezzar used political power to back up a religious agenda. God will never use coercion or threats to get people to worship Him – that is Satan's M.O. A timely reminder as we see more and more religious leaders championing the use of political power to make people come into line religiously.
- The word *"worship"* is repeated 10 times. At its heart chapter 3 is about worship – to whom are you going to bow? Who is going to have your loyalty?

I believe that the use of repetition is what we are seeing in chapters 2, 7-12. God has been revealing to Daniel the same events over and over from different perspectives (political and religious), with each vision expanding on the previous vision:

- **Chapter 2:** (Aramaic) 4 kingdoms - 10 fragile kingdoms - God's eternal kingdom is established.

- **Chapter 7:** (Aramaic) 4 beasts or kingdoms. The 3rd kingdom (the leopard) will be divided into 4 kingdoms. The 4th kingdom (the dragon) will have 10 horns. 3 of those horns will be replaced by 1 *"little horn"* that will blaspheme against God. 1st prophetic time revealed = *"time, times and ½ a time"* = 1260 years. During that time the *"little horn"* power will speak against the Most High, oppress His people and seek to change times and laws.
- **Chapter 8:** (Hebrew) 3 kingdoms. The 2nd kingdom will break the power of the 1st. 4 kingdoms will arise out of the 2nd kingdom. Another horn – a *"little horn"* will grow large and powerful setting itself up to be as great as the *"Prince of hosts,"* taking away the daily or continual sacrifice, desecrating the sanctuary and trampling God's people underfoot. 2nd prophetic time revealed = 2300 days/years but no explanation given.
- **Chapter 9:** (Hebrew) Explanation of chapter 8. Introduction of 490-year prophecy, which deals specifically with the Jewish people and is the 1st part of the larger 2300-year prophecy. The expansion comes in chapter 9 with a start date for both time prophecies, *"From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem."* = **457 BC**
- **Chapter 10-12:** (Hebrew) 2 kingdoms - Persia and the *"mighty king whose kingdom was broken up and scattered to the 4 winds."* 2 additional kingdoms are introduced; the king of the north and the king of the south. These 2 kingdoms dominate chapter 11. There is a long period of war between these 2 kingdoms which is political in nature, but in verse 30, there is a decided religious shift in the king of the north's agenda. He will show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. His forces rise-up to desecrate the temple and abolish the daily or continual sacrifice. The people of God will firmly resist him but will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. He will do as he pleases and will exalt and magnify himself above all other gods and will say unheard of things against the God of gods (11:30-37). His success, however, will be cut short. In chapter 12:7, the *"time, times and ½ a time"* prophecy of chapter 7 is repeated as a response to how long the king of north's religious/political agenda will last.

11:40-12:3 – Seventh-day Adventists generally hold the position that these verses are yet to be fulfilled – pointing forward to future *"end of time"* events, culminating with the 2nd Coming of Jesus, when He will *"arise"* to take the eternal throne of the universe. (For further study, read Great Controversy Chapter 40, "God's People Delivered.")

Why was Daniel instructed to "seal the book" until the end of time – v. 4, 8-10 (see Is. 55:8-9; 1 Cor. 2:14; Col. 1:9; Rev. 22:10)?

Daniel Epilogue – v. 5-13

In the last 7 verses of chapter 12 we find reference to 3 final time prophecies. We see a repeat of the *"time, times and ½ a time,"* prophecy from chapter 7:25 and 2 new day/year time prophecies – **1290** and **1335**.

In what historical period can v. 7 be placed?

The start date for the final 2 time prophecies – 1290 days/years and 1335 days/years – is generally dated to **508 AD.**

In that year Clovis, king of the Franks, converted to Christianity and then crushed the Visigoths, who belonged to the Arian branch of Christianity, because they were considered to be heretics by the main branch of Christianity in Rome.

This event was a decisive step in uniting the political and religious powers of the church.

- **508 + 1290 = 1798.** The same end date for the, *"time, times and ½ time"* (1260 day/year) prophecy of chapter 7:25 and repeated in 12:11 when the French Army imprisoned pope Pius VI and turned Rome into a Republic.
- **508 + 1335 = 1843/1844** – also the end date for the 2300 day/year prophecy of Daniel 8. This understanding is centered around the argument that at the end of 1335 days/years there will be a blessed movement waiting on Christ's 2nd Coming based on the study of the book of Daniel – v. 12.

Is there a movement that meets the criteria for this argument? Yes there is.

The Millerite Movement was a religious revival – part of the 2nd Great Awakening – that started in 1831 when a Baptist preacher, William Miller, began preaching and writing about the soon return of Christ. This movement included believers from many denominations – including Baptists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Lutherans – and was not an exclusively North American movement. The message spread to England, Germany, Holland, other parts of Europe, and even India and Asia.

Their understanding of prophecy was unique in that they supported a **pre-millennialist** view – that is, Jesus would come and the 1000 years would follow (see Revelation 20:1-3). This belief is still held by Seventh-day Adventists.

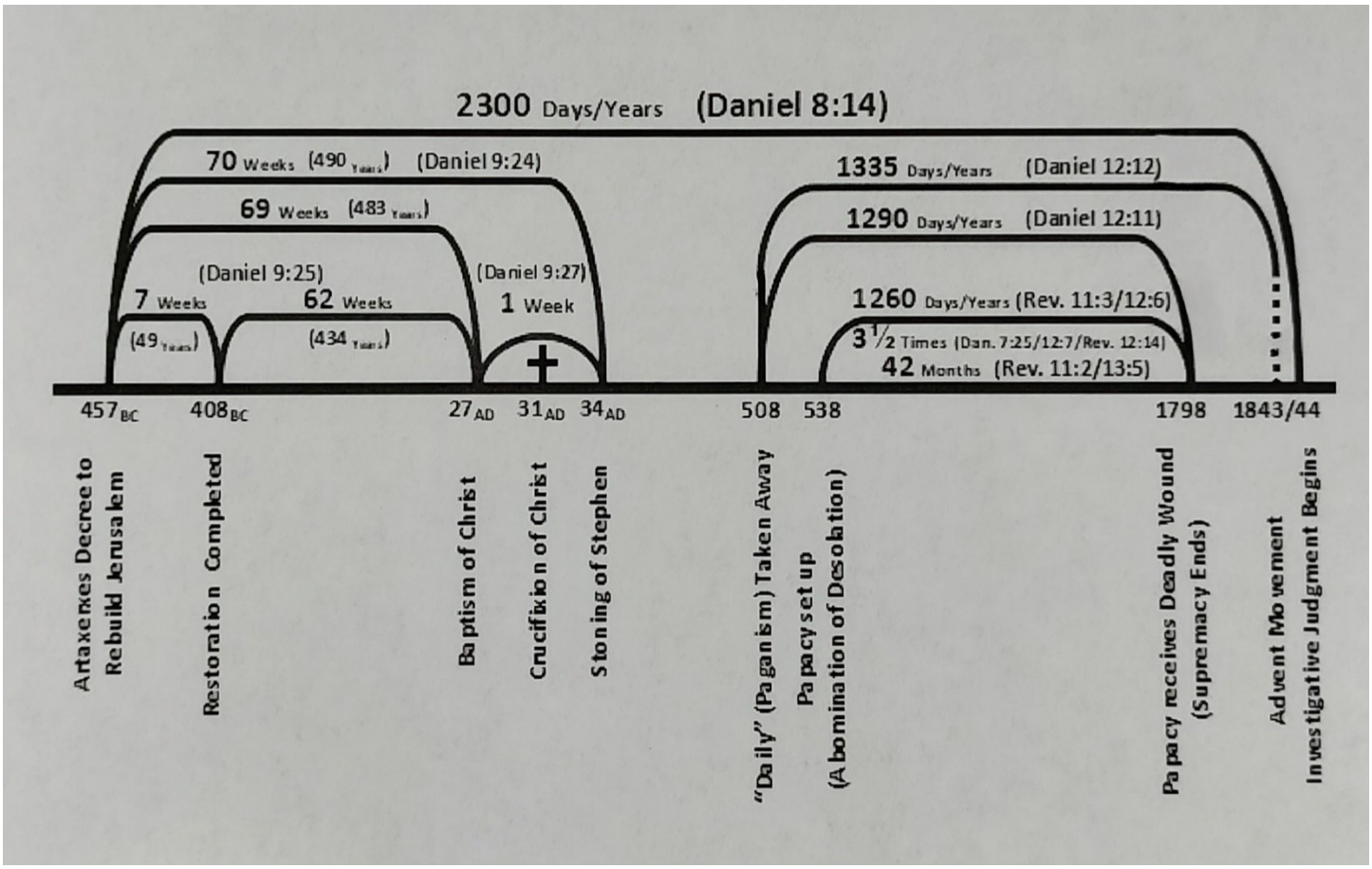
The viewpoint of most Christian denominations was **post-millennialist** – that is 1000 years of peace would occur before Christ's 2nd Coming (this belief is still widely held today).

Due to a generally held misunderstanding that the Sanctuary represented earth, a misinterpretation of the prophecy in Daniel 8:13-14, led Miller and his followers to conclude that the 2nd Coming of Jesus would occur sometime in 1843 or 1844 and the earth would be cleansed by fire. (William Miller never set a specific date and for a long time resisted going beyond 1843/1844. However, on October 6, 1844 he was convinced to accept the date of October 22, 1844)

When Jesus did not return on October 22, 1844, the Millerite Movement shattered and many disillusioned believers walked away, permanently. Others stayed with the goal of understanding what had happened.

They went back to the Bible and after much study, determined that something HAD happened on October 22, 1844. Not the 2nd Coming of Jesus, but Jesus' transition from His holy place activities in Heaven to the Most Holy Place to begin the Day of Atonement activities as described in Leviticus 16 – better known to Adventists as the *"Pre-advent Judgment."*

Out of the ashes of the Millerite Movement and the Great Disappointment was born the Seventh-day Adventist church (for further study read the excellent books by George R. Knight, *"Millennial Fever."* and *"A Search for Identity."*).



In conclusion:

I believe that at the heart of every story and every vision in Daniel is the fight for spiritual supremacy.

Satan's desire has always been to be like God and to destroy the people who love God and oppose his (Satan's) rule.

If he cannot accomplish his goals overtly – through earthly kingdoms, political power, war, conquest and persecution, etc., then he will try it covertly – through a combination of political and religious power, religious complacency and human tradition.

He does not care how he derails people so long as they are derailed.

Don't be derailed. Through this study 4 truths have been revealed:

(1) There are only 2 sides in this conflict.

(2) Satan truly is a *"lion seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). Yet, despite his best efforts, Satan. Is. A. Loser.

(3) God is Sovereign. He has provided us with His view of history to encourage and strengthen our faith. He is victorious.

(4) Each of us has choices to make: to whom will we bow – who has our loyalty – whose side are we on.