

FRESH LOOK:

Biblical Prophecies and Histories with a Positive View

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DANIEL PROPHECIES

Introduction

Daniel's *Old Testament* prophecies were delivered in the form of numerous fantastic images with allegorical meanings. *Specific* interpretations were provided through angels for some of the images, but not for others. Images given interpretation were all familiar to the prophet in his day in history, such as Media, Persia and Greece. Those not interpreted may have been too far removed from his lifetime for him to usefully understand them. The book of *Revelation* in the *New Testament* contains many more fantastic images. Because it was written over nineteen centuries ago, its author, John the apostle, could not have had a meaningful understanding of the world's characteristics when the fulfillment comes. It is therefore not surprising that *no* specific meanings were relayed to John in his visions, even though he also conversed with several holy angels.

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased (*Daniel* 12:4).

Understanding of the prophecies will take place but gradually and only by contributions from many expositors. It thus becomes crucial to avoid overly doctrinaire positions. Failure to heed such clear instruction might damage the *credibility* of otherwise sincere evangelical ministries. In at least two visions, Daniel's spiritual burden was for his people, earthly Israel(9:1-24; 10:14). There may be validity in allowing this observation to orient our thoughts as we study all prophecies in this book.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream Daniel Chapter Two

Daniel 2:31-44a

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the aspect thereof was terrible. As for this image, his head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art the king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory; and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine

hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay. And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed . . .

Nebuchadnezzar II (b. c. 630 B.C.-d. c. 561) was specifically identified as the head of gold. He was the son of Nabopolassar, under whom Chaldeans from southern Mesopotamia had defeated the Neo-Assyrian Empire and established the Neo-Babylonian Empire, with Babylon as its capital city. Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt and had many other military successes. He also conquered the kingdom of Judah, and eventually ordered the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. His chief advisor, Nabonidus, was sent to broker an important treaty between the Medes of northern Iran and the powerful Lydians of Anatolia (Asia Minor). One of the most powerful, successful and unchallenged despots in *Old Testament* history, he was made "king of kings" by no less than the God of heaven himself. Greek mercenaries served among his forces.

The breast and arms of silver probably pointed to the Medes and Persians. Medes were distant descendants of the biblical son of Japheth, Madai (*Genesis* 10:2). They had migrated from eastern regions to northern Iran, along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. Later, an offshoot among their tribes relocated to southwestern Iran near the Persian Gulf. These became known as Persians. Led by Cyrus II (b. 590-580 B.C.-d. c. 529), they established the Achaemenian (Persian) Dynasty, which lasted from 559-330 B.C. In alliance with Media, they took over the Neo-Babylonian Empire and came to rule the largest territory yet seen in *Old Testament* times. Under Cyrus and Darius I (b. 550 B.C.-d. 486) the Jews were encouraged to return to their promised land.

Alexander the Great and subsequent Greek influence would likely be represented by the belly (torso) and thighs of brass. One of the pivotal points of history came about when he led Macedonian and Greek forces to victory in all lands of the Persian Empire and a little beyond. After his untimely death in 323 B.C., at the age of 33, his domains were divided by four officers. Two of the portions, the Ptolemaic Empire and the Seleucid Empire, remained very large and powerful until becoming engulfed by the Romans. The period of Greek preeminence is called the Hellenistic Age. Alexander and his followers earned such respect among the conquered peoples that their language was made the "lingua franca" of all lands east of Macedonia and Greece to modern Pakistan, including Egypt. Anyone receiving much of an education studied Greek as a second language in order to travel, engage in business or operate within the governments beyond the local level. Although many of them hailed from the agricultural region of Galilee, the followers of Jesus of Nazareth wrote the *New Testament* in Greek. The writings of Plato and other Grecian philosophers were widely appreciated

in eastern lands. Following the fall of Rome, knowledge of them was lost to most Europeans. This heritage was recovered after contact with well-read Muslims in the Middle Ages. So pervasive and long-lasting was the fusion of Greek and Persian ways of life that some historians have described the Hellenistic Age as "Helleno-Persian." In modern Afghanistan, archeologists unearthed stone inscriptions bearing Greek writing alongside an official Persian dialect, similar to the Rosetta Stone from Egypt. Thus was formed the background of cultures in the Near East as subsequent dominions rose and declined, including the Parthian kingdoms, the Sasanian(Persian) Empire and the Byzantine Empire.

A new era was founded after the death of an Arabian from the city of Mecca, Muhammad (b. c. A.D. 570-d. 632.). In less than twenty years his followers united the Arabian tribes, wrested Syria, Palestine and Egypt from Byzantium and took control of Mesopotamia after defeating the Sasanian Empire. The caliphs, who were early rulers, faced the problem of consolidating the Muslim faith over their vast territories. During the years of his caliphate(A.D. 685-705) a man named 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan instituted a simple and insightful policy. He replaced Greek with *Arabic* as the language of government in the conquered lands. Within a few years, only scholars could understand *New Testament* Greek, while almost everyone, for thirteen centuries, has been able to read Muhammad's sayings in the *Koran*. This writer along with some others would label Nebuchadnezzar's legs of iron *Islam*.

Few well-established *democratic* forms of government are to be found in today's Middle East. Recently, we have witnessed newly-formed democracies arising in Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq. As of the date of this writing, it is possible, but not certain, that non-democratic Syria will withdraw its army from Lebanon. Some degree of democratic authority is, however, cautiously allowed in several Islamic lands. Democratic forms of government seem to be more at home in Christian America and post-Christian Europe; indeed, it is in these countries that it was developed during modern times. *Daniel* chapter two says that the clay will make inroads into the iron's realm, but the elements are too distinct from one another to be able to stick together. This passage predicts that the uneasy mingling of the iron and the clay will begin in the *feet* and continue during the *toes*, right up until their destruction by the return of Christ and his establishing a new world order. Thus, whatever these symbols represent, they will constitute the background state of affairs throughout the "ten king confederacy" and under the coming antichrist.

Beasts from the Sea Daniel Chapter Seven

Daniel 7:2b-7

. . . I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven brake forth upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon two feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a

bear, and it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in his mouth between his teeth: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

Revelation 17:3-6

And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication, and upon her forehead a name written, mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder.

Revelation 13:1b,2a

. . . And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion . . .

The term “great sea” denoted the Mediterranean Sea. It may be seen as representing the three regions which it borders that form the arena of the Bible’s histories: Western Asia, North Africa and Southern Europe. Another interpretation views the phrase as symbolic of the mass of humanity as a whole. The second verse in *Daniel 7* could refer to World War II followed by the end of colonialism and the establishing of the United Nations. Four dominions have influenced the nation of Israel (established 1948) in its history: Great Britain, United States, Soviet Union and Islamic nations. Lions with eagle’s wings were painted as mythological creatures on the brick walls of Babylon, leading to the interpretation that verse 4 represents the ancient Neo-Babylonian Empire. It is the writer’s belief that the final, end-times manifestation of the biblical entity “Babylon the Great (*Revelation 17*)” was spearheaded by the “counter-cultural revolution” of the 1960’s. This phenomenon emanated primarily from two nations - the English-speaking lands of Britain and the United States. There is thus presented an interesting connection to the walls of Babylon. The movement’s influence has been modified by Christians in the U.S., but it was thoroughly taken up by post-Christian Europe. By the reelection of president Bush, who remains a controversial and polarizing figure, on November 2, 2004, the eagle’s wings were plucked from the lion.

Great Britain is the only powerful nation participating with the U.S. in the second Iraq war. Yet its people are European and it is a member of the European Union. Britain does, however, maintain its valuable pound sterling rather than the euro as currency. The nation stands between the spheres of influence of Europe and America.

While its far-flung foreign connections are no longer an empire, it leads the (British) Commonwealth of Nations. These and probably future developments will answer to the second half of verse 4.

Verse 5 predicts the re-entrance of Russia into the affairs of the Near East.

Few references to leopards are to be found in scripture. The first is the name Nimrod, which means "leopard" or "subduer of the leopard." *Genesis* 10:8-12 suggests that he was a leader of the effort to build the tower of Babel, described in the next chapter of *Genesis*. The city of Babylon was later built near Babel's ruins. Its brick buildings have been reconstructed for world tourism in modern Iraq. The leopard of verse 6 predicts Islamic revival lead by a democratic Iraq. The four heads might signify the horsemen of the apocalypse (*Revelation* 6), who could be false prophets having world-wide influence. "Wings of a fowl" could refer to the nature of Islam, which was derived in part from the Hebrew *Old Testament* and Christian *New Testament* (*Matthew* 13:4).

To identify the final entity, described as "terrible and powerful," one need only turn to *Revelation* 13:2, which depicts the antichrist and his system at the height of its reign. There is a lion, a bear and the leopard. But there is no eagle. Ronald Reagan's prophetic vision of America becoming a "shining light upon a hill" stands even now in fulfillment, as a post-Christian Europe commences its inescapable slide toward one-world unity, eventually to be devoured by the "man of sin" and his ten-horned beast!

The Ram and the He-Goat Daniel Chapter Eight

Daniel 8:3-10

Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; and no beasts could stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and magnified himself. And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west over the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had the two horns, which I saw standing before the river, and ran upon him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him: but he cast him down to the ground, and trampled upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. And the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and instead of it there came up four notable horns toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the glorious land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host and of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them.

Daniel 8:20-22

The ram which thou sawest that had the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. And as for that which was broken, in the place whereof four stood up, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not with his power.

Daniel 8:23

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

Daniel 8:24,25

And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and do his pleasure: and he shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people. And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and in their security shall he destroy many: he shall also stand up against the prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

These two beasts are designated as the Achaemenian Empire and Macedonia-Greece under Alexander the Great. Ancient Greece brought a logical, scientific and somewhat more modern view to a world that was subjugated by the old Hamito-Semitic powers. Democratic government has its known origins in Athens. A scholar is quoted who stated that all of western philosophy can be written as footnotes to Plato. While their civilization governed and organized much of the world, learned Romans confessed the awareness that their genius did not equal that of earlier Greeks in most other categories of human achievement. Emperors repeatedly tried, and failed, to reach the standard set by Alexander and his armies. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* presents its history under the title *Greek and Roman Civilizations*. The Holy Roman Empire may indeed have been none of the above, but its founding in the Dark Ages offered a source of inspiration and hope that was not thought unnecessary until its disbanding in 1806. Movements which have most shaped the world as we have known it - the Renaissance, the scientific revolution, the age of global colonization and discovery, democratic government and its productive if opportunistic stepchild, the *corporation* - have been perfected, if not always initiated, in the Christian West. It is rightly commented that we still live in a Greek world. It ought therefore to be observed with mourning and trepidation, in large parts of the northern *and* southern hemispheres, and with silence everywhere else, that the final phase of Daniel chapter 8 and verse 23 *has only recently begun*.

Verse 9 probably points to somewhere within the confines of the Seleucids as the place of origin of the promised antichrist.

Seventy Sevens Daniel Chapter Nine

Daniel 9:24-26a

Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince, shall be seven weeks: and threescore and two weeks, it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing . . .

Daniel 9:26b,27

. . . and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and his end shall be with a flood, and even unto the end shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator.

It was the Sumerians who in southern Mesopotamia devised the world's first calendar. It contained 360 days in a year. This round number fit in well with their earliest mathematical system, which utilized a base of 60. If it is assumed that each "week" stands for a grouping of seven years, then "seventy weeks" must point to a total of 490 years ($70 \times 7 = 490$). The period of seven weeks (49 years) was almost certainly the time it took to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem after Jews returned from their captivity. "Threescore and two" stands for 62. Therefore, since $7 + 62 = 69$, 69 of these 70 weeks must have elapsed "unto the anointed one." Biblical scholars have discovered that when 360 days is inserted as the length of one year, this chapter predicts the entry of the Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of his life *to the day*. Thus the calendar with 360 days is known as the "prophetic year."

It must furthermore be concluded that one more group of "weeks," or "sevens," have been held over by the Almighty to complete his dealings with Israel, as verse 24 explains. But one must not forget that each of these "years" will last only for 360 days, not the actual year of 365 and 1/4 days.

Verses 24 to 26a or 26b must have ended with the crucifixion of Christ. Verses 26b and 27, or possibly just verse 27, must be seen as an *end-time* prophecy pointing to the antichrist. Bible commentaries and books are readily available which explain the calculations referred to above.

Daniel 8:11-14 and 9:27 contain valuable keys toward understanding biblical prophecy that will be presented below.

The Final Week of Years: Events Before and During
Daniel 11:21-45

Daniel 7:7,8

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Daniel 11:21

And in his place shall stand up a contemptible person, to whom they had not given the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in time of security, and shall obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Daniel 8:11-14

Yea, it magnified itself, even to the prince of the host; and it took away from him the continual burnt offering, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And the host was given over to it together with the continual burnt offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground, and it did its pleasure and prospered. Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said unto that certain one which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Daniel 9:27

And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the consummation, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator.

Daniel 11:30b,31

. . . therefore he shall be grieved, and shall return, and have indignation against the holy covenant, and shall do his pleasure: he shall even return, and have regard unto them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, even the fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering, and they shall set up the abomination that maketh desolate.

Daniel 11:44,45a

But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: and he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain . . .

Daniel 11:21-30a details early events in the career of the man who becomes the antichrist, as he is ascending toward absolute dominion. Only the first of these verses is quoted above. Notice from chapter 7 that he enters the scene only *after* the ten kings have formed their confederacy, and makes himself supreme over them by displacing three of the original ten. *Revelation* 13 portrays ten kings being involved, not seven. Since this chapter reveals the whole system in its final stage of existence, it is likely the uprooted kings have either been replaced with vassals or restored to their positions once their loyalty has been assured. The reader should also turn again to *Revelation* 17. Here we are told that Babylon the Great - another, quite distinct entity - will move in to associate with the ten kings prior to the antichrist's arrival. At his initial appearance, he is described in *Daniel* 11:21 as a "contemptible person."

The heavenly questioner in *Daniel* 8:13 apparently perceived the removal of the "continual burnt offering" and the "transgression that maketh desolate" as related yet separate events or actions. The allotted period for *both* these developments is 2300 days, which equals 6 years and 4+ months - not the full seven years. At this point in time, the antichrist *relocates* "the tents of his palace," that is, he leaves Jerusalem (*Daniel* 11:45). Righteous priests move in and cleanse the temple (*Daniel* 8:14). We are informed in *Daniel* 9:27 that the sacrifices will be interrupted for "half" the week, or 3 1/2 years.

These simple comparisons admit into consideration the following broad scenario. Ten kings will associate and a "temple" will be built in Jerusalem (Babylon the Great will arrive around this time, *Revelation* 17). The antichrist will ascend into prominence over the ten kings and proceed with an early career. Upon conclusion of a secret treaty with some group in Israel, he will gain access to the temple and remove its sacrifices. The final week of seven years has now begun. For 3 1/2 years, the beast and Babylon the Great will struggle for supremacy. When his beast emerges victorious, the antichrist will become transformed into an irrational megalomaniac, for which see *II Thessalonians* 2:1-4.

Kings North and South *Daniel* 11:2-8

Daniel 11:2-4

And now I will shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and when he is waxed strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; but not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion wherewith he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside these.

Daniel 11:5,6

And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion. And at the end

of years they shall join themselves together; and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the strength of her arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm; but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in those times.

Daniel 11:7,8

But out of a shoot from her roots shall one stand up in his place, which shall come unto the army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: and also their gods, with their molted images, and with their goodly vessels of silver and of gold, shall he carry captive into Egypt; and he shall refrain some years from the king of the north.

We must return to the first half of the eleventh chapter, which, because of its complexity, has been saved for last. The reader is asked to bear with this explanation as we introduce a subject that will be completely unexpected. For we will now review signal recent developments *in the chaotic relationship between Palestinians and Israelis* (verses 2-4 review the Achaemenians and Greece under Alexander the Great, followed by the Hellenistic Age, the Roman Empire, Parthian kingdoms and subsequent world history).

Through the Camp David Accords, signed by Israeli prime minister Begin and Egyptian president el-Sadat and facilitated by U.S. president Carter, not only was a peace treaty made between Egypt and Israel, but also a general framework was erected toward eventual peace between Israel and the Palestinians and Arab governments such as Syria to the immediate north. In the years that followed, the latter was not achieved despite talks with Syria and the Oslo Accords with the PLO, which established the Palestinian Authority as a governing body over an emerging Palestinian nation. In the latter half of the year 2000, president Clinton of the U.S., nearing the end of his terms in office, attempted to broker a peace deal between Palestinian Authority president 'Arafat and Israeli prime minister Barak. The effort was made an utter failure when 'Arafat renewed the "intifadah(shaking off)" and later walked out of the negotiations. Egyptian president Mubarak could not resist engaging in anti-Israeli rhetoric around this time.

Above efforts aimed at implementing past United Nations resolutions which partitioned the land of Palestine into Israeli and Palestinian countries. In Camp David negotiations, el-Sadat had been much more general and conciliatory in his approach than was Begin, who studied and debated every detail. Yet, only when he remembers that *under old aristocracies treaties and alliances were consolidated by intermarriage* (Genesis 34:9,10), should the reader be convinced of a connection between modern Near Eastern events and *the end-time fulfillment of Daniel 11:6!*

As a result of the second Iraq war, begun in winter 2003, it has come out that the "Oil for Food" program administered under the United Nations had degenerated into a monumental scandal, and was probably being used to finance terrorist organizations. U.S. president Bush also proposed his "Road Map to Peace" between Palestine and Israel about the same time. His plan envisioned a two state solution. After the passing of 'Arafat, it apparently stands a chance of success. If the Egyptian government should

become re-involved, for instance in hosting negotiations or a signing ceremony, surely such a welcome development would represent a thrilling answer to *Daniel* 11:7,8.

We can easily imagine that certain Middle Eastern powers might be described as “kings of the north” in the prophecies of chapter 11. But how could we accept the modern United States identified with Daniel’s “king of the south?” The awe-inspiring answer will be made clear as we engage in a comparison and contrast discussion concerning the beginnings of the world’s earliest civilizations, Sumer and Egypt, in the following essay, *Lenses Left in Time*.

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LENSES LEFT IN TIME

Civilization East and West Daniel 11:9-20

For the sake of brevity, we will not supply verses 9-20, which predict a period of on-going conflict between a series of kings of the north and kings of the south. Recall that the hectic tyranny of the antichrist, who will be the last of these kings of the north, is covered in vv. 21-45.

Isaiah 46:8-13

Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country; yea, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it. Hearken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

The Bible’s Adam and Eve, who lived about 4500 B.C., are to be credited as an early source of the world’s first high civilization. They lived, as did all others in the Near East at that time, in the foothills of the mountains around the Fertile Crescent, in primitive Neolithic farming communities. Human society at this time began a long and gradual process of transformation. Men learned to control the water and moved into the marshlands of southern Mesopotamia. They built ever-enlarging towns, yet kept alive the basic activities that had originated in previous days, such as warrior chiefs, who set up civil administration, and groups of priests to lead sacrifices and worship,

as well as oversee academic inquiry. These stayed in close contact with civil leaders and their small armed forces, and often exercised control over their policies. Government and religion were from the beginning united, and city leaders sometimes served also as chief priests. Such activities evolved into accepted institutions. Essential trades and businesses, such as ceramics, metallurgy, and commerce and importing of commodities, separated into specialized fields of endeavor. City-states developed. As a result of conflicts, a background of shifting alliances and frequent warfare came to exist. Ambitious rulers pieced together kingdoms consisting of several territories, which rose and fell. Like that of the lands of European civilization from A.D. 500 or so . . . if one could look at the map only once in two centuries, it would always be changing.

Ancient Fertile Crescent leaders were called kings of the north in the *Old Testament* because, whether they came from the due north or the northeast, whenever they were on the march they followed the course of the Fertile Crescent to enter into Israel from the north (*Ezekiel 26:7; Jeremiah 4:6; 25:26*). In the near future, any European big-shots who involve themselves in Middle East affairs in such a way as to influence Palestinians and Israelis will also qualify as members of the club.

Toward the end of the many centuries summarized above, artifacts from already highly-advanced Mesopotamia, situated far away in the East, were left up and down the valley of the Nile River in Egypt, where tribes of advanced neolithic villagers interacting with nomadic peoples had long existed. Within a short time historically, Egyptians set up a central government under a head of state, the pharaoh. Egyptian society did not evolve through a city-state phase; rather, from the beginning, its more rural but unified country was divided into well-defined territorial provinces called "nomes." Nomes were governed by officials known as "nomarchs." However, there did exist a broad cultural division between the southern and northern parts of the nation. The title pharaoh meant "lord of both countries." Another contradistinction with Mesopotamia can be seen in religion. For a long time, temples remained small and decentralized affairs scattered everywhere throughout the length and breadth of the land. Situated between deserts that were inaccessible to organized armies for millenniums of the Bronze Age, Egypt rarely faced external threats. Its people referred to their side of the civilized world as *the West*.

Staring at a dollar bill, *with its Egyptian pyramid* - and the all-seeing eye - the writer has wondered if really he is the only one to have peered into the volumes of long-gone seers, as through a recessed window while a breathtaking vista resolves itself piecemeal into focus, and pondered, have we been viewing the future . . . or is it the past?

The Princes that shall Come

I Thessalonians 1:9b,10

. . . how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come.

Daniel 9:26b

. . . and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary . . .

Daniel 11:23b

. . . for he shall come up, and shall become strong, with a small people.

Most readers will be aware of a common expectation that places the ten king confederacy in Europe as some future development of the Common Market. This is derived from reasonable speculation about *Daniel 9:26*. A generation after the death of Christ, in A.D. 69-70, the Jewish nation in Galilee and Judaea (with its capital Jerusalem) was destroyed and its population deported and enslaved. Because these devastations were brought about under the Roman Empire, it has been argued that the future antichrist must come to rule over a modern Roman Empire which in some way has been revived. Anyone who proposes an alternative theory, as on these pages, must account for this verse.

Such conjecture may be proposed as a result of noticing another verse describing the "people" of the antichrist, *Daniel 11:23*, for here we are told that his people will not be numerically numerous. The past couple centuries display repeated examples of masses radicalized by the eerie charismatic power possessed by a few. *Revelation 13* explains that the final supporters of the beast will become, in a realistic sense of the term, *devil worshipers*.

Upon hearing about current reports of HIV, grown rapacious and not to be appeased, the writer cannot avoid recalling the testimony of a prophetess who in vision at the great pyramid of Mexico saw the level from which blood of the sacrificial victims gushed downward to cover every stone, and heard their screams. Scriptural pictures of an apocalypse may never have been meant to be taken as literal. But the intensity of their corresponding earth-bound convulsions, however they materialize, is going to be real. "They committed their lifestyles to Lucifer," she said, "and he abandoned them to the slaughter when they failed him."

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REBIRTH AND THE RAPTURE

The Woman in Glory Revelation 12

Revelation 12:1-6

And a great sign was seen in heaven; a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child: and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. And there was seen another sign in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was about to be delivered, that when she was delivered, he might devour her child. And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Revelation 12:7-12

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.

Revelation 12:13-17

And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus . . .

The word “travailing” in verse 2 refers to the birth pangs of a woman in labor. During such a time, she cannot escape from her suffering, because its source is from within. Only after the new life comes forth is deliverance from the difficulty to be found. Little wonder, then, that the woman is not able to concern herself with the near presence of the beast, controlled by the great dragon himself. He has foreseen this moment, and is perfectly positioned for it. His goal is not merely to subjugate the woman. That will come soon enough. It is the child that represents his sole immediate concern. For with a “rod of iron” having been given into his hand, it is her son, a “man child,” who is destined to possess the authority to govern the future. The rod of iron is welded by both the Lord himself, in *Revelation* 19:15, and by those who overcome through him (*Revelation* 2:26,27). Verses 7-12 portray a scene in heaven. The man child may correspond to the believers of vv. 10 and 11, who overcame the dragon and have a close connection to Christ. The woman herself flees immediately into the wilderness, where she will be protected by God for 1,260 days, or precisely 3 1/2 prophetic years - a period of time repeated (“a time, and times, and half a time”) in verse 14.

The Spiritual Body

Acts 1:7,8a

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . .

Acts 2:1-21

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will shew wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 2:41,42

They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Ephesians 1:15-23

For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and which ye shew toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Hebrews 6:5b

. . . the powers of the age to come . . .

God's Holy Spirit came to empower all believers in the Church Age, starting with an instantaneous outpouring of spiritual experience that brought into being a *new spiritual body*. The shock waves of its initial creation literally exploded into the world. *Ephesians* explains that this "body of Christ" is synonymous with the church. An analogous visitation, in an age of mass communication, could detonate the spiritual universe all the way into the next age. Such an event, should it ever occur, would fulfill prophetic passages regarding the rapture.

And Assyria Too?

Isaiah 19:19-25

And in that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a defender, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and shall perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall return unto the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

Revelation 19:6-16

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are true words of God. And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written, which no one knoweth but he himself. And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Galatians 4:26

But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother.

I Corinthians 2:9

. . . but as it is written,

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

For centuries the families of the Assyrians survived near the periphery of two older civilized areas: southern Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. These far-northern territories embraced a number of tributaries to the Tigris River. The people in their frontier trading posts gradually coalesced into a nation under forceful leaders who accumulated wealth through commerce with the Hittite Empire in the latter region. Cycles of aggression and contraction during subsequent periods must have frustrated diplomats and policy-makers around the Near East in many generations. Their exercise of dominion was characterized by the ruthless crushing and subduing of all opponents. This was the first nation to utilize a policy of mass deportation to control troublesome vassal peoples. City leaders in rival countries might procure a better deal, and keep possession of their heads, through full cooperation; but they were sure to be quietly watched over by an extensive network of informants reporting to central bureaucracies.

Religious leaders could become influential, but were under the heel of the secular powers more often than was typical in other ancient civilizations.

Yet nobles who ran the state respected cultural refinement as well as militarism. Skillful works of art, many of them glorifying the omnipresent emperor, his wars, and hunting expeditions, have been recovered from the ruins of a succession of chief cities. From collections once held in the great library of Nineveh, the last and largest of these, researchers garnered a lot of information about Sumer and Akkad.

More so in recent than previous decades, conscious American readers might even foster admiration for the no-nonsense ways by which this *Old Testament* nation initiated an era of cultural unification throughout most Middle Eastern lands during the Iron Age. Its greatest dominion, the Neo-Assyrian Empire, lasted about a century before its sudden collapse.

And sanctified multitudes, from Odessa to the horizon on the Bering Sea, may soon perceive in the turbulent history of Russia, with its Dark Ages Kievan trading kingdom, rejoicing amidst its waterways that converged toward the Anatolia of Byzantium, a meticulous handiwork of the very Sovereign who inspired such inexplicable thoughts out from the meditations of his initiatory major prophet, ". . . a blessing in the midst of the earth . . ."

Yet as our mother, the "Jerusalem that is above" must even now yearn once again to serve as one that has been made free. So we must not begrudge her appointed destiny - *afterwards to descend as the wife of the Lamb* - in a fast-preparing abiding place, *the third world*. *Revelation* twelve's man child will form the "armies which are in heaven," described in 19:14.

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MAKING SENSE OF REVELATION

This Author's Viewpoint

Textbook histories are written in chronological order. That is, the main events to be covered are presented, logically, from chapter to chapter in a beginning to the end manner. However, charts, maps and narrative insertions are not uncommonly placed throughout the main chronological text. For instance, chapters that teach the American Civil War might carry special insertions that delve with greater detail into important themes, such as the life of Abraham Lincoln or the development of political parties and their positions on slavery, etc.

Quite some years ago, the author received teaching that the book of *Revelation* can reasonably be outlined in an identical manner. Winding its way through the text, one can discern a trail that represents the main chronology. Into this sequence of events are interspersed passages which enlarge upon special topics, which we may refer to as "parenthetical visions."

The main chronology lays out the following prophesied developments: 4:1-5:14 - Tumult surrounding a scroll(or book), which contains the turbulence of the apocalypse; 6:1-9:21; 11:15-19; 15:1-16:21 - A series of seven seal openings, followed by seven trumpet blasts, followed by seven bowls of wrath; 19:1-22:5 - The marriage of the Lamb, the triumphal return of Christ, the battle of Armageddon, the millennial kingdom, its downfall, judgement before the great white throne and the eternal ages.

Five parenthetical visions will be labeled as follows: The Little Book, Measuring of Temple and the Two Witnesses(10:1-11:14); The Woman in Glory, the Great Red Dragon, and her Man Child(12:1-17); The Beast out of the Sea(13:1-18); The 144,000 on Mount Zion, Angelic Pronouncements and the Harvest(14:1-20); Babylon the Great, History of the Beast and the Fall of Babylon(17:1-18:24).

Connecting parenthetical visions to main chronology requires the uncovering of specific items that form cross-links between parenthesis and text. It will be seen that the details of outside passages must be compared for this to be accomplished. The chart below presents a scheme of organization along these lines.

Although it will not become our task to comment on *Revelation* verse by verse, we may risk a supposition. As, earlier in these essays, we have noticed the book's vast array of fantastic images, it may be that their precise interpretation will require examining each detail and developing every theme as they have been delivered to us throughout the rest of scripture, *Genesis* to *Jude*.

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SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

	Main Time-Line	Parenthetical Visions	Daniel			New Testament			
			ch8	ch9	ch11	Matt	2Thess	1 Cor 1 Thess	
D E V E E A L R O L P Y M E N T S									
	4:1-			17:3					
	6:1						24:4,5		
	6:9,10	12:2					24:14ab	2:3ab	
3 ½	6:11		17:14	11b	27a	30b, 31a	24:14c	2:3c	5:3
Y F E I N R A S L									
S E V E N									
Y E A R S E R V S									
	9:21;	9:13	11:14						
	3 ½ p i d	11:15-							15:52, 4:16
	e	11:19;							
S E N T S									
	15:1-								
		16:12-16							
	16:21.				14		44, 45		

ARMAGEDDON Rev 19:1-21 (Compare 19:17,18,21b and Ezekiel 39:17-20)

MILLENNIAL REIGN Rev 20:1-6

"AGES OF ETERNITY" Rev 20:7-22:5