

MANUSCRIPT

“DANIEL” Revisited

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ABSTRACT

This work presents a fresh commentary on the book of Daniel. In the multitude of classical commentaries many expositors present contradictory interpretations due to the inability to simply correlate prophetic scripture with the historical record. These contradictions are as significant as disagreeing with major historical world empires, and as subtle as misinterpreting the literal Hebrew text.

In this effort, the span of history from the pre Babylonian/Chaldean empires to the rulers at the end of this age is examined, adhering to the angelic constraint to: “shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end,” (Dan. 12:4). Following this approach, we find a startling litany of events that precisely match ancient Bible prophecy with fulfilled events of the twentieth century which culminate in the twenty-first century.

As these many prophetic chapters and verses overview the milestones of classical history and key events of modern history, -- the nations, the political leaders, the wars, and the rise and role of the one-world-government, -- we find unerring accuracy. And as applicable, the prophecies of Daniel are interwoven with corollary verses from Psalms, Ezekiel, and Revelation.

Just as Daniel had been called to prophesy to the “nations,” the bulk of this study pertains to world historical and headline events. However, because God allows Daniel to interpret the “seventy years” of Jeremiah, we are allowed an additional insight into the end-time events of the nation of Israel. This non-classical examination of prophetic writings in context with recorded history provides compelling insight into scriptures that have long remained veiled, misunderstood, and misinterpreted.

GOD’S PURPOSE FOR DANIEL

KNOW THE AUTHOR

In the book of Daniel, we see a Jewish youth from an upper-class family who is taken by captivity to Babylon to serve in King Nebuchadnezzar’s palace. Early on, King Nebuchadnezzar found Daniel and two of his compatriots capable and wise. Over the course of years and circumstances, Daniel

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proved to be a living testimony and witness of who GOD was and is, but not to Jewish kings and populous but rather to the world's kings.

This proof is evident in that Daniel is called to prophesy to the rulers of his day including King Nebuchadnezzar, his son Belshazzar, the last ruler of that empire -- Darius the Mede, and serving into the reign of the Medo-Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great. But greater than this, Daniel's prophecies transcend this ancient age and ascend to the 2,500 year span of world empires concluding at the end of the world's governments in our own era.

Today, Daniel still speaks to the world's kings of historical, current, and future events. It is from this fundamental perspective that we grasp GOD's design for this man and this book.

This is in contrast to the book of Revelation which is written to the Church, and the book of Ezekiel which is written to the nation of Israel. It is important to understand that GOD extends his presence into all facets of life including pronouncing himself through the heavens and creation, so that kings, nations, and individuals, should all come to know HIM.

But there are other considerations which further define the application of this book.

CLASSICAL COMMENTARY DIFFICULTIES

"The history of the exegesis of the 70 Weeks is the Dismal Swamp of O. T. criticism. The difficulties that beset any "rationalistic" treatment of the figures are great enough, but the critics on this side of the fence do not agree among themselves; but the trackless wilderness of assumptions and theories and efforts to obtain an exact chronology fitting into the the history of Salvation, after these 2,000 years of infinitely varied interpretations, would seem to preclude any use of the 70 Weeks for the determination of a definite prophetic chronology. ..."¹

"This prophesy of the seventy sevens is one of the most difficult in the entire OT, and although the interpretations are almost legion, we shall confine ourselves to the discussion of three which may be regarded as of particular importance."²

Note: According to the dictionary³ a legion consists of 3,000 to 6,000 foot soldiers, and 300 to 700 cavalry.

'EXTRA-BIBLICAL' CONSIDERATION

Some respected authorities cite limitations on prophetic scripture to the Eur-Asian-African 'known world' of those ancient days. To apply any portion of those prophecies to any as yet unknown countries or continents is called 'extra-biblical.' This restriction applies not only to prophesied end-time nations and events, but also to the Anti-Christ's origins.

¹ John Walvoord, "Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation", Moody Press, Chicago, 1971, p. 217

² Guthrie, D., & J.A. Motyer, New Bible Commentary: Revised, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1970, p. 699

³ Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary - 2nd ed, p. 1035

This position has inherent contradictions. Mark 16:15 commands Christians to “*go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.*” However, using this constrictive logic, maybe the as yet undiscovered two American continents, the Australian continent, and vast regions of Far East and southeast Asia should have never been evangelized. Furthermore, when Christ returns for the 1,000 year Millennial Reign, will one half of the world be exempt from HIS authority?

Although we should be cognizant of and weigh various premises, we need to carefully judge whether a given hypothesis adheres to the encompassing scope of GOD’s involvement in the affairs of HIS creation.

KNOW THE AUDIENCE

When comprehending GOD’s focus for the book of Daniel, one must not only understand the span of world empires, but we must also view Daniel’s prophetic observations from both his Jewish heritage and toward his gentile target audience. Specifically, where as most biblical understanding evolves around Jewish practices, traditions, and cultural influences, Daniel’s writings transcend these mores, and ascend to a more cosmopolitan expository. Although it’s absolutely necessary to know the author, we must not forget that this author knows his audience.

It’s this writer’s opinion that we must allow Daniel the liberty to prophesy to this world’s rulers and reveal prophetic truth in the fullness of our mutual backgrounds as Scripture provides. Specifically, where Daniel was called to prophesy to the nations, he was also given the grace to prophesy to the Jews in Chapter 9, under the mantle of Jeremiah.

BASELESS PRECONCEPTIONS

Classical interpreters present the book of Daniel with prejudice. A specific example concerns the 11th chapter where Daniel cites the kings of the “north” and “south.” Without scriptural authority, they insist that the nation of Israel is the point of reference. They then search for fulfillments which fall under this constraint. When they ultimately fail, after much contriving, hypothesizing, and falsifying “history”, they claim a time schism in which the balance of the prophecies are deferred to some ambiguous and unspecified latter time. Per this practice, the 11th chapter ceases any semblance of ancient history fulfillment between verses 36 and 40, depending on the commentator, leaving what appeared to be a continuous discourse suddenly skewered by some thousands of years. (Similarly, the commentators assert the Chapter 9 discourse is interrupted by a two thousand year gap between the anointed one who is “cut off”, and the seventieth week.)

However, when this preconception is cast off, “north” and “south” can be simply interpreted as pertaining to two of the world’s end time nations, merely denoted with respect to geographical latitudes. Thus we find the prospect for a fulfillment which exhibits the correct sequence, is contiguous, and precisely agrees with modern historical events.

END-TIME FULFILMENT

The opportunity for a thorough re-examination of the prophecies of Daniel may be better understood in light of the Ellicott’s Commentary On The Whole Bible⁴ discourse regarding the eleventh chapter of Daniel -- specifically addressing the mighty king of verse 3.

“Those who explain what follows to refers to the Ptolemies and Seleucidae identify him with Alexander the Great, and compare with this verse chaps. vii. 6, viii. 5-8, 21, 22. Certainly [we find here what] was characteristic of Alexander, but there was nothing in the context which

⁴ Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1959, Vol. 5, p. 392

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makes it necessary to limit the passage to him. Some autocrat may arise 'in the latter times' to whom it will apply with greater force than it did to Alexander."

Of course the first consideration is the disregard for the angel's instructions (12:4 & 9) that the prophecies are "*shut up and sealed until the time of the end*". And there is no excuse or justification, no matter how craftily conveyed, which can allow a 200BC event to be presented as "*end time*".

And secondly, where we find that Ellicott holds the door open for a true "*end time*" fulfillment, we equally demand the same for the whole body of Daniel's prophetic writings. For as presented in this work, a false interpretation yields disconnected tangents, but the truth proves an interwoven cross-correlating tapestry of end time events, -- in full conformance with Daniel 12:4 & 9.

And finally, this commentary uses the Revised Standard Version,⁵ as this version provides the most literal and precise translation. (See Figure #1)

⁵ "Holy Bible," Revised Standard Version, Thomas Nelson, NY, 1972