

The Book of **Daniel**

John Yang



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

Since ancient times, God has chosen minor and major prophets to proclaim his tidings to all humankind. Among the major prophets, Daniel was one who was greatly gifted by the Holy Spirit to prophesy many unknown future events of the world. This is documented in the Book of Daniel, which is full of profound mysteries, inexplicable by normal human wisdom.

Moved by the Holy Spirit, Elder John Yang, the writer of *The Book of Daniel*, offered himself as a full-time minister for over 50 years. Elder Yang has spent many years imparting his spiritual knowledge to many students in the theological college. During his ministry, he also authored numerous books, among which was his exposition of the Book of Daniel. Through guidance of the Holy Spirit, Elder Yang spent many hours researching and interpreting the depth of this book. The Chinese version of this book was printed by the

Theological College of the General Assembly of True Jesus Church in Taiwan over a decade ago. It is indeed a remarkable book for teaching and reference use.

In order for the English-speaking brothers and sisters in Christ to share the benefits of this publication, the Word of Life Publishing House has included a translated and revised edition of *The Book of Daniel* in its 1997 publication plan. Thanks to the wonderful blessings of the Lord, and thanks to the assistance of brothers and sisters in Christ, the book is finally ready for printing. May this book serve as a source of edification to its readers, and may it become a good teaching material and a valuable reference for our English-speaking brethren.

Daniel Pang
Los Angeles, USA
June 1997

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This is a brief study on the Book of Daniel written for Bible study classes. Interpretations are made on the various chapters. The historical background of each chapter is touched upon and difficult phrases are briefly explained.

Concerning the prophecies, those already fulfilled in history are pointed out. Those yet to be fulfilled or which have become theological contentions, e.g., the meaning of "seventy weeks of years" are given with opinions of different authors for reference purposes. From each of the chapters 1 to 6, a topic can be given and arranged for homiletic purposes.

Ideas concerning the antichrist, which is directly related to the idea of "the desolating sacrilege" are derived from the work "Theory on the End-time." These appear as appendices.

May the Lord Jesus, through his grace and the working of the Holy Spirit, enable the readers to have a better understanding of the Book of Daniel. May the readers be edified spiritually so that you are able to understand that the end-time is near, and to do your utmost in saving mankind for the Lord. May the Lord remember and bless the brethren for their labor in compiling this book. The Lord's grace and peace be with the readers. Amen.

John Yang
Los Angeles, USA
March 1994

ABBREVIATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

Genesis	Gen	2 Chronicles	2 Chr	Daniel	Dan
Exodus	Ex	Ezra	Ezra	Hosea	Hos
Leviticus	Lev	Nehemiah	Neh	Joel	Joel
Numbers	Num	Esther	Est	Amos	Amos
Deuteronomy	Deut	Job	Job	Obadiah	Obad
Joshua	Josh	Psalms	Ps	Jonah	Jon
Judges	Judg	Proverbs	Prov	Micah	Mic
Ruth	Ruth	Ecclesiastes	Eccl	Nahum	Nah
1 Samuel	1 Sam	Song of Solomon	Song	Habakkuk	Hab
2 Samuel	2 Sam	Isaiah	Isa	Zephaniah	Zeph
1 Kings	1 Kgs	Jeremiah	Jer	Haggai	Hag
2 Kings	2 Kgs	Lamentations	Lam	Zechariah	Zech
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	Ezekiel	Ezek	Malachi	Mal

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

Matthew	Mt	Ephesians	Eph	Hebrews	Heb
Mark	Mk	Philippians	Phil	James	Jas
Luke	Lk	Colossians	Col	1 Peter	1 Pet
John	Jn	1 Thessalonians	1 Thess	2 Peter	2 Pet
The Acts	Acts	2 Thessalonians	2 Thess	1 John	1 Jn
Romans	Rom	1 Timothy	1 Tim	2 John	2 Jn
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	2 Timothy	2 Tim	3 John	3 Jn
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	Titus	Tit	Jude	Jude
Galatians	Gal	Philemon	Phm	Revelation	Rev

PROLOGUE

1. *Book Title:*

The Book of Daniel is one of the four major books of prophecies in the Old Testament. It is also called the Revelation of the Old Testament. “Daniel” means “God is my judge.”

2. *Author:*

The question of whether Daniel is the author of the Book of Daniel has given rise to many contentions. According to records in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus reckons that it is the work of Daniel (Mt 24:15; cf. Dan 11:31, 8:11). Daniel wrote this book in the first person (Dan 7:2, 4, 6, 28, 8:1, 15, 9:2, 12:5–8). Facts and events of Daniel mentioned in Hebrews 11:33–34 are also quoted in Daniel 3 and 6. Therefore, there should be no doubt as to the authorship and the reliability of the historical records written in this book.

3. *Period:*

Daniel was among the first Jews to be carried captive to Babylon in the year 606 B.C. He was still in Babylon in the third year of Cyrus the Persian king, 534 B.C. This shows that Daniel was in Babylon for 73 years. He was taken captive at about 16 years old and he lived to about 90 years. The Book of Daniel could have been written in between the end of the Babylonian kingdom and the early rule of Media and Persia.

4. *Language:*

The Old Testament is written in Hebrew, but the Book of Daniel, from 2:4 to 7:28, is written in Aramaic (Chaldean). This does not mean Daniel was only proficient in the Chaldean language (Dan 1:4, 17), but that it was important that prophecies concerning Babylon, Media and Persia be understood by all nations so that they would recognize it was God who ruled over all nations (Dan 4:17, 25, 32).

5. *Contents:*

This book can be divided into two sections, the first section begins from chapter 1 to chapter 6, the contents of which place heavy emphasis on the historical aspect. The second section, from chapter 7 to chapter 12, contains mainly prophecies. The author uses the vision of the great image of chapter 2 as its main theme and gives revelation of important events which were to take place from the time of the Babylonian kingdom until the second coming of the Lord Jesus. These include: the rise of many nations, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the birth of the Savior, his crucifixion and ascension, the emergence of the antichrist, Christ's second coming, resurrection of all nations, the final judgment, the appearance of the heavenly kingdom, etc. Classified by chapters, chapter 1 to chapter 4 concern the

era of king Nebuchadnezzar, chapter 5 concerns king Belshazzar, chapter 6 concerns king Darius of the Medes, chapter 7 contains the first vision of Daniel, chapter 8 the second vision, chapter 9 the third vision, and chapters 10 to 12 the fourth vision.

6. *The relationship between this book and the end-time:*

Most of the prophecies in this book are related to the end-time. Many things that are still being concealed today will be revealed and fulfilled at the end-time (Dan 12:4, 8–9, 8:17, 19, 26). Those of us who are born in this end-time have to pay special attention to the prophecies of this book, and wait until the dawn of the last day (2 Pet 1:19; Mt 24:15).

7. *Biography of Daniel:*

a. His life:

Daniel was an Israelite of noble descent. He was carried captive to Babylon in the year 606 B.C. together with his fellow Israelites who violated the commandments of God (Dan 1:1–3). Later, he was chosen by the king and given training for three years together with his three companions. God showered him with grace and he excelled in his studies and was retained by the king to serve before him.

b. Excellent spirituality:

Although Daniel was good-looking and intelligent, the most commendable part about him was the fine spiritual virtues he possessed (Dan 6:3). He revered God since he was young, observed his commandments, and remained undefiled (Dan 1:8). In times of danger he knew how to seek God and relied on him (Dan 2:17–18). He did not become arrogant when he received revelations from God, but instead glorified his name; he would not accept honor and awards for himself only but besought the king for his friends' benefit as well

(Dan 2:19–30, 49). He was faithful to God, not being afraid to disobey the king's decree and persisted in praying to God three times a day. He was above reproach in carrying out his duties, and was classified by the Bible as one of the three greatest righteous men (Dan 6; Ezek 14:14).

- c. Loyal in serving the king:
Daniel, in a foreign land, had served four kings, i.e., king Nebuchadnezzar, king Belshazzar, king Darius of the Medes, and king Cyrus of Persia. He was loyal and faithful in discharging his duties to the kings he served: he counseled king Nebuchadnezzar on the way to a tranquil life (Dan 4:27), and he reproved Belshazzar in light of God's righteousness (Dan 5:17–24).
- d. Patriotic and God-loving:
Though he was given high position in a foreign land, Daniel was grieved at heart because of his fallen nation and the ruin of the holy city. He prayed to God incessantly so that the people could return to their own country to rebuild the holy city.
- e. God's prophet:
Because of his excellent spiritual virtues, Daniel saw numerous visions and received revelations from God. He knew what God had entrusted him, and he made use of opportunities while in the palace of a foreign land to proclaim the will of God as a prophet. Thus, the name of God was greatly glorified (Dan 1–6; Mt 25:15).

I

THE JEWS' CAPTIVITY TO BABYLON

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Jehoiakim and his subjects were captured (Dan 1:1–2).
- B. The Babylonian king trained youths of the chosen people (Dan 1:3–7).
- C. Daniel resolved to remain undefiled (Dan 1:8–16).
- D. God caused the four chosen youths to excel in their studies (Dan 1:17–21).

II. COMMENTS

- A. Why Were the Jews Taken Captives?
 - 1. Idolatry: Manasseh built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the courts of the house of the Lord, and placed Asherah's graven image in the holy temple (2 Kgs 21:10–15).

2. Sabbath-breaking: the people of Israel did not observe the sabbath, nor reckoned it as holy (Jer 17:27; Neh 13:17–18; 2 Chr 36:21).
 3. Burning of God's scrolls: another reason for their captivity was that not only did Jehoiakim not heed the warnings of God, but he also cut God's scrolls with a knife and burnt them in the brazier (Jer 36:20–31).
 4. Failure to heed prophetic warnings: the king and his people departed from the true God and turned to other gods. Though warned by the prophet several times, they mocked God's messenger and despised God's warnings. In the end, their sins were irredeemable (2 Chr 36:15–16; Jer 25:4–12).
- B. Dates of Captivity
1. First captivity: Daniel was taken captive in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign in 606 B.C., the third year of Jehoiakim (Dan 1:1–2; 2 Kgs 24:1–7).
 2. Second captivity: Ezekiel was taken captive in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C., the first year of Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:8–16).
 3. Third captivity: Jeremiah was taken captive in the 17th year of Nebuchadnezzar in 589 B.C., the ninth year of Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:18–25:17).
- C. The Captivity Being of Divine Decree
1. With God's permission: God delivered the king of Judah into the hands of the Babylonian king (Dan 1:1–2).
 2. A form of punishment: God made use of the Babylonians to punish the Jewish people who had turned against him (Jer 25:8–11; 51:20–23).

3. A fixed period of captivity: it was declared that the captivity would last for 70 years (Jer 25:11; 2 Chr 36:20–23).
4. God will punish the nations which brought destruction to the nation of his chosen people (Jer 25:12; 51:24; cf. Isa 10:5–14).

D. The King's Assimilation Policy

1. To train selected youths of the chosen people for three years (Dan 1:5).
2. The youths were well-treated (Dan 1:5).
3. The captives' positions were assured (Dan 1:5).
4. Change of names: the king changed the names of the four youths.
 - **Daniel:** means God is my judge
Beltshazzar: Bel is the name of a Babylonian god, which means the protector of life
 - **Hananiah:** means God is the giver of grace
Shadrach: means the servant of Aku, the moon god worshipped by the Babylonians
 - **Mishael:** means he who is comparable to God
Meshach: means he who is comparable to Merdoch: name of a Babylonian god
 - **Azariah:** means help from the Lord
Abed-Nego: means the servant of Nego, a Babylonian god

From their change of names it can be seen that the Babylonian king planned to assimilate the chosen youths so that they would eventually forget their own God and nation through the process of time.

- E. Abstinence from the King's Rich Food and Wine
- The king's food could have been unclean (cf. Lev 11:1–8).
 - The king's food could have been offered to idols (cf. 1 Cor 10:27–28).
 - Wine can make a person lose his senses and commit sin (Prov 22:20, 29–35; 31:4–6).
- F. God's Dominion
- God delivered the king of Judah with some of the vessels of the house of God into the hand of the Babylonian king (Dan 1:2).
 - God caused Daniel to find favor in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs (Dan 1:9).
 - God gave Daniel and his companions learning and skill in all letters and wisdom (Dan 1:17).

III. LIFE APPLICATION: HOLY VESSELS OF GOD

God's work is mostly done by his people, so the workers must be holy vessels (2 Tim 2:21).

- A. God's Utilization of His people in Babylon
1. Captivity to Babylon from God:

“And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God...” which is to say that if God did not permit, it would be impossible for the Babylonian king to carry the Jews into captive to Babylon (Dan 1:1–2).
 2. God's use of his people in a foreign land:

Through his people, God's word was proclaimed and his deeds manifested. For example, the dream of the great image mentioned in chapter 2, and the great miracle in the furnace in chapter 3 made the foreign king acknowledge the true God.

3. Opportunities to serve:

God had given Daniel and his three companions intelligence—wisdom which surpassed that of others so that they had the opportunities to serve before the king as God's vessels (cf. Dan 1:17–21).

B. Intended Exploitation by the Babylonian King

1. Special privileges accorded during their studies:

The four youths were given free education for three years. The king provided them rich food and wine in order to win over their hearts (Dan 1:5, 6).

2. Change of names:

The four youths' names were changed to names related to the Babylonian idols. This was probably done to make them forget about their own God and country (Dan 1:7).

3. Secured positions after their education:

As long as they did well in their studies, they would be retained to serve before the king (Dan 1:4, 19).

C. Holy Consecration unto God

1. Daniel resolved to remain undefiled;

According to scriptural teachings, Daniel considered taking the rich food and wine of the king to be defiling. Though it was a kind consideration of the king, it was necessary for Daniel to refrain from such an offer in order to remain undefiled (1:8).

2. A request made according to faith:

First, a request was made to the chief eunuch, but no definite answer was given. Later, the steward was asked that they be permitted to try an alternate diet of vegetables and water for ten days: should they grow

thinner after this period they would submit to the king's wishes. Such a request was spoken out of faith. The youths believed that by observing the requirement of God's teaching, he would surely help them (Dan 1:8–13).

3. Aided by God—holiness maintained:

After ten days of abstinence from the king's rich food and wine, the four youths looked better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the other youths. As such, the steward acceded to their request and gave them vegetables instead. They were able to remain undefiled, and were utilized by God in later days (Dan 1:14–21).

D. Teachings

1. This world as Babylon the Great:

The world has become the dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit. It is filled with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Though the world is like a great harlot, all kings, merchants, and people are drunk with the wine of her impure passion; they are fond of her and pursue after her (Rev 17:1–5; 18:2, 3; 1 Jn 2:15–17).

2. The need for the chosen people to be segregated as holy and not be defiled by her sins:

Though Christians are in the midst of the world, they must segregate themselves as holy in all things, be the light and salt of the world, and manifest the Word of life (2 Cor 6:16–18; Mt 5:13–16; Phil 2:14–16; Rev 18:4).

3. Preservation of a noble vessel by being holy:

God permits us to live in this world in order that we may work for him, but Satan also wants to possess us.

As such, we must be aware of our mission and not be tempted by the worldly vain glory and wealth. On the other hand, we have to maintain sanctification through the Holy Spirit, be concerned with God's affairs, and offer ourselves to God. We must pray to the Lord that his deeds be manifested in us, and be his noble vessels as manifested by Daniel and his companions in Babylon (Lk 2:49; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:21).

IV. REFERENCES

1. Jehoiakim was the 17th king of Judah, the eldest son of Josiah. He cut and burned the scrolls of Jeremiah (Jer 36:23). He was brought bound in fetters to Babylon by the Babylonian king (2 Chr 36:6-7).
2. In the original text, vessels include the drinking utensils, household furniture, and all other equipment in the holy temple (cf. 2 Kgs 20:12-17).
3. The youths during Daniel's time refer to those between the ages of 14 to 18 (cf. Gen 37:2).
4. The Chaldean language was the language of Babylon. Chaldean writing is related to Syrian and also Aramaic writing. Writings in Chaldean include astrological knowledge.

V. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

The king of Babylon symbolizes Satan (Isa 14:4, 12-17); the four chosen youths represent the people of God. We learn a spiritual lesson from the conflict between the Babylonian king and the chosen people of God (Rom 15:4):

1. Why did God permit the chosen people to fall into the hands of the enemies and be ruled by them?
2. What are the foods that we must abstain from taking today, both in material form and in spiritual sense?
3. How do you decline a superior's offer to do something that is in fact sin, when the offer is made out of goodwill?
4. How were the spiritual virtues of the four youths cultivated? How do we cultivate the spiritual virtues of our church youth today?

2

THE DREAM OF THE GREAT IMAGE

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. The king commanded the wise men to interpret his forgotten dream (Dan 2:1–13).
- B. Daniel prayed to God for revelation of the king's dream (Dan 2:14–30).
- C. Daniel made a description of the king's dream (Dan 2:31–35).
- D. Daniel interpreted the king's dream (Dan 2:36–49).

II. COMMENTS

- A. The Second Year of Nebuchadnezzar's Reign
The king had the dream in the second year of his reign which was in 603 B.C. The Jews were taken captive to Babylon in the year 606 B.C. However, according to

Jeremiah, the dream occurred during the first year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:1). After the four youths' three-year training, they served before the king. As such, the dream should have occurred in the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar. Therefore, why was it recorded in the second year? Historical records reveal that from 606–605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar assisted his father king Nabopolassar, and he was only officially crowned as king in the year 604 B.C. after his father's death. Hence the second year as recorded in this chapter refers to Nebuchadnezzar's second year reign which was in the year 603 B.C.

B. Those Summoned by the King

1. The magicians: those who practiced astrology and geomancy.
2. The enchanters: those who practiced divination and the like.
3. The sorcerers: those who practiced witchcraft and sorcery.
4. The Chaldeans: those who were well-versed with the various ancient writings and were able to interpret dreams and visions.

The first three categories of people can be of any nationality, but the fourth category of people must be Chaldeans, also called the wise men. Daniel and his companions belonged to this category of wise men whom the king wanted to destroy (Dan 2:12–13, 18, 24).

C. Dream of the Great Image

Through the dream of the great image God revealed the crucial events of the rise and fall of nations beginning from the reign of king Nebuchadnezzar until the second coming of Christ.

1. The golden head refers to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as the king symbolizes the nation.
2. The silver breast and arms refer to Medes and Persia which were yet to emerge.
3. The bronze waist refers to Greece which emerged after Persia.
4. The iron legs refer to the Roman Empire which was later divided into two kingdoms, hence it was symbolized by the two legs.
5. The partly iron and partly clay feet refer to all existing nations before Christ's second advent. They continue to divide and are unable to stay united.
6. A stone cut out by no human hand struck and broke the great image into pieces. This refers to Christ descending from heaven to execute judgment and to destroy the world, when the heavenly kingdom is fully established (cf. 2 Pet 3:10–13).

III. LIFE APPLICATION: THE RISE AND FALL OF A NATION DEPENDS ON GOD

“He makes nations great, and he destroys them: he enlarges nations, and leads them away” (Job 12:23). God made king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon have a dream in order to make him understand that God dominates over all nations. The rise and fall of a nation lie in God's hands.

A. The King Had a Dream

1. The king summoned the magicians and wise men to interpret his dream:

After his dream the king was troubled and could not sleep. He summoned the magicians—enchanters who practiced witchcraft and sorcery—and also the wise men to interpret his dream for him. Because it was a forgotten dream, the king could not tell its contents. Those summoned expressed that they were unable to describe and interpret his dream, and this incurred the wrath of the king (Dan 2:1–6).

2. The king was furious and commanded that all the wise men of the nations be destroyed:
Because the wise men and magicians had for the second and third time expressed their inability to describe and interpret the king's forgotten dream, the king ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be slain (Dan 2:7–13).

B. Daniel Requested for an Appointment with the King

1. Daniel was a target to be slain:
Daniel and his companions were also listed as wise men, so their lives were also at stake. Daniel believed that the dream had come from God, and that if only he inquired from God, it would be revealed to him. He went to see the king and asked that he be given an appointment so that he would be able to describe and interpret the king's dream to him (Dan 2:12–16).
2. Daniel and his companions prayed to God for revelation:
Daniel made the matter known to his companions and they sought mercy from God to reveal the mystery to them. At night, God revealed the mystery to Daniel in a vision. Daniel was full of thanks, and he praised and glorified God (Dan 2:17–24).

C. Description of the King's Dream

1. All glory be given to God:
Arioch brought Daniel before the king and Daniel said

to him: “But as for me, not because of any wisdom that I have more than all the living has this mystery been revealed to me, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your mind.” Daniel attributed all wisdom, power, and glory to God (Dan 2:24–30).

2. Content of the dream:

The king dreamed of a great image: “The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay ... a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces; then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Dan 2:32–35).

3. Meaning of the dream:

Please refer to Daniel 2:36–45, which briefly explains the meaning of the different portions of the great image. Beginning from king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the nations which emerged later were as revealed in the dream. The world has now entered into the portion of the feet. Christ will be coming soon, the heavens and earth will be destroyed, and the heavenly kingdom will appear soon (cf. 2 Pet 3:10–14).

D. God Rules over the Nations (Ps 22:28)

1. The rise and fall of a nation lie in God’s hands:

Since the fate of a nation lies in the hands of God, he is able to reveal and foretell events that are going to take

place in a nation. Not only the fate of a nation, but the fate of man also lies in the hands of God. Hence, God can reveal the future of man through dreams or other means (1 Sam 2:6–7; Gen 37:5–11).

2. Man cannot comprehend the thoughts of God:
This is why the magicians and wise men were unable to describe and interpret the king's dream. But Daniel was able to do so, not because of wisdom, but because of revelation from God. Paul says: "For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:11). To understand the prophecy and will of God one must emulate the importunate prayer of Daniel and his companions (cf. Dan 10:12).
3. Revere God in all things—trust God and glorify him:
From the fate of a nation down to the fate of each individual, all is destined by God. We must stay alert and revere God. Let us trust God in all things and look towards his mercy. When we achieve small successes we must give thanks to him. All glory and praise should be given to God (cf. 1 Chr 29:12, 13; Ps 115:1).

IV. REFERENCES

1. Erroneous view of the great image's relation to the gospel: the four nations refer to Babylon, Medes and Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire. The big stone refers to the birth of the Lord Jesus, the spreading of the gospel, and the crushing of the sins of all nations.
Refutation: the Roman empire was not crushed, but prospered instead. The Church did not dominate the world.

2. Erroneous view of historical eras: there is no interval after the fourth nation. The Lord will come to establish the millennium. The fourth nation is divided into two stages: the thighs refer to the ancient Roman Empire, and the legs and feet refer to the revived Roman Empire.

Refutation: why is there a time restriction in the millennium to be established by the Lord? Furthermore, there is an interval between the legs and the feet which is difficult to explain.

V. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. Why couldn't the wise men describe the king's dream?
2. What do we learn from Daniel, who gathered his companions to pray together with him?
3. Which portion of the great image is a description of the present world?
4. What are the virtues of Daniel that are mentioned in this chapter?
5. What are the main teachings in this chapter?
6. What have you learned from this chapter?

3

THE THREE YOUTHS OF GREAT FAITH

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. The king compelled his subjects to worship the golden image he made (Dan 3:4–7).
- B. The three chosen youths refused to obey the king’s command (Dan 3:8–12).
- C. Though pardoned by the king, they still refused to obey the command to worship (Dan 3:13–18).
- D. The youths were determined to sacrifice their lives, yet they obtained life instead (Dan 3:19–27).
- E. The Lord’s name was glorified, and the three youths were promoted (Dan 3:28–30).

II. LIFE APPLICATION: BE FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev 2:10). “And they have conquered him by the blood of the

Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death” (Rev 12:11).

A. The King Set Up the Great Image

1. Building of the great image:

The king built an image of gold on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Its height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits (one cubit is equivalent to 44–45 cm). The image was probably gold plated and not of solid gold. Its image was not of the king’s, but probably made in the likeness of the idol worshipped by the king (Dan 3:12, 14, 18).

2. Dedication ceremony:

On the day of dedication, all the important high ranking officials of the provinces were invited to attend. The king commanded that everyone who heard the sounds of the musical instruments to fall down and worship the golden image. Those who disobeyed would be thrown into the fiery furnace (Dan 3:1–7).

3. Motive of the king in setting up the golden image:

The Bible does not record the king’s motive in building the image of gold. Whether the great image seen by the king in his dream was made of gold, Daniel interpreted the dream to the king saying: “You are the head of gold. After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you.” Perhaps feeling dissatisfied, he wanted to build an image of gold and pray to his god so that his nation might live forever. Whatever the wishes of man may be, man cannot deter or change God’s will (cf. Dan 2:37–39).

B. The Three Chosen Youths Refused to Worship the Golden Image

1. Unexpected pardon by the king for the transgressors:

The chosen youths Shadrach and two others should have

been immediately cast into the burning fiery furnace for refusing to worship the golden image because they chose to obey God's commandment. Unexpectedly, the king did not have his order carried out but gave them another opportunity. Superficially, it seemed to be a merciful and gracious pardon, but it was in fact a very dangerous temptation (Dan 3:8–15; Ex 20:3–6).

2. The chosen youths' answer to the king:

The king's forbearance could not change the chosen youths' loyalty toward God. They replied to the king, saying:

- a. "We have no need to answer you in this matter," meaning that there is no further consideration: "we shall never worship your golden image."
- b. "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king," meaning God has the power to deliver them from death (Dan 3:17).
- c. "But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up," meaning that if God did not deliver them from death in the burning fiery furnace they were willing to be martyred for the sake of observing God's commandments (Dan 3:16–18).

C. The Youths Remained Unharmful When Cast into the Burning Fiery Furnace

1. Four people instead of three (Dan 3:19–25):

The king became furious because the chosen youths rejected his pardon. He ordered that the furnace be heated seven times more and that the three youths be cast into the furnace. But the king saw four persons walking in the midst of the fire, the fourth like a son of the gods.

2. The youths were unharmed in the fire (Dan 3:25–27):
Because the furnace was heated seven times more, the mighty men who cast the three chosen youths into the fire were burnt by the flame. The ropes that bound the youths were burnt, and yet they were unharmed by the fire. Their hair was not singed and their clothing had no smell of fire.

3. God was glorified, and the chosen youths were promoted (Dan 3:28–30):
After this event king Nebuchadnezzar praised God with all his heart and he decreed to all his people that: if anyone blasphemed the God of the three chosen youths, they would be dismembered and their houses would lie in ruins. The king also promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in Babylon.

D. Teachings

1. Trials will be experienced by the chosen people (cf. Jn 3:5; Tit 3:5; Mt 3:11; Acts 14:22; 1 Pet 4:12,13):
In order to reach perfection, believers must undergo baptism of water, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and baptism of “fire”.

2. The way to receiving God’s grace is through undergoing trials and tribulations (cf. Jas 1:3, 4; Rom 5:3–5; 1 Pet 1:6, 7; Jas 5:10, 11):
Spiritual progress enhances physical blessings.

3. One may see God in a fiery trial (cf. 1 Cor 10:13; Ex 14:13; Isa 43:2; Job 42:5):
We must be steadfast in faith during trials, and not be afraid of sufferings. By committing everything to God, we will see his gracious hand in times of trial, thus enabling God’s name to be praised and glorified.

III. REFERENCES

1. There was a lapse of 20 years between the king's dream in chapter 2 and the worshipping of the great image in chapter 3. At that time, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were about 37 years old.
2. Having made the right decision, one should not hesitate, lest the devil be given an opportunity.
 - After believing in the Lord Jesus, one should not consider other religions.
 - Apart from the True Jesus Church, a believer should not consider switching to other denominations.
 - A believer should not consider marrying someone other than a fellow believer.
3. Which of the following faith is the strongest (Rev 12:11; Acts 20:23–24; Rom 8:34–39)?
 - A faith which is not afraid of poverty
 - A faith which is not afraid of sickness
 - A faith which is not afraid of failures
 - A faith which bears and endures hardship
 - A faith which submits to oppression
 - A faith which is steadfast and immovable
4. The various official designations of the Babylonian kingdom:
 - Satrap: there was one satrap for each region, which covered several provinces. Satraps held governing and protective authority.
 - Administrator: officer next to the satrap who was responsible for the administration of one province—the provincial head (Jer 51:23).
 - Governor: assisted the satrap in the running of local administration.
 - Counselor: advisor to the king.
 - Treasurer: in charge of financial matters.

- Judge: in charge of judiciary matters, similar to judges of today.
- Magistrate: second class judge.
- Chaldeans: rulers of the Babylonians; astrologers who served in the palace (cf. Dan 1:4, 2:2).

IV. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. What does Babylon symbolize (cf. Rev 17:1–6, 18:1–4; Isa 14:3, 18)?
2. The king compelled his subjects to worship the image. Will this kind of scene be repeated in the last days (cf. Rev 13:15)?
3. What are the spiritual teachings with respect to the worship of the golden image (cf. Col 3:5; Mt 6:24)?
4. The fiery furnace could not consume the chosen youths. What teaching do we get from this incident?
 - God's promise concerning the flesh (Isa 43:2).
 - Fire symbolizes the baptism of fire, or trials. Christians must undergo water baptism, spiritual baptism, and fire baptism (cf. 1 Pet 4:12–13; Mt 3:11–12; Acts 14:22). A person of genuine faith is not afraid of trials by fire; it will only make the person become more spiritual, perfect, and blessed (cf. Job 23:10, 42:5–7; Rom 5:2–5; Jas 1:1–4).
5. Showing one's faith in times of danger gives God an opportunity to manifest his power (cf. Heb 11:33, 34; Ex 14:13–14).
 - When shall we give opportunities to the Lord? Give examples of receiving grace by trusting in the Lord.
6. What edification have you received from this chapter (cf. Rom 15:4)?

4

GOD RULES OVER THE NATIONS

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. The king proclaimed the signs and wonders of the Most High (Dan 4:1–3).
- B. The magicians could not interpret the king’s dream (Dan 4:4–7).
- C. The king related his dream to Daniel (Dan 4:8–18).
- D. Daniel interpreted the king’s dream and counseled him (Dan 4:19–27).
- E. The dream was fulfilled (Dan 4:28–33).
- F. Reinstatement and repentance of the king (Dan 4:34–37).

II. LIFE APPLICATION: THE MOST HIGH RULES THE KINGDOM OF MEN

“The Most High rules the kingdom of men” is mentioned three times in this chapter (Dan 4:17, 29, 32). It shows that God

wanted the king and the people of the world to know the truth through the happenings in this chapter.

A. Initially, God Revealed His Revelation to the King through Dreams

1. The magicians and wise men of Babylon could not interpret the king's dream:

The dream Nebuchadnezzar had in chapter 2 was completely forgotten by him. But he remembered clearly the dream he had in this chapter and he related it clearly to the wise men. The wise men of Babylon could not interpret the king's dream because it was a revelation from the Most High God (Dan 4:4–7).

2. Daniel interprets the king's dream:

Finally the king sent for Belteshazzar (Daniel), chief of the magicians, to interpret his dream. By then the king already knew that Daniel had the spirit of God in him and that no mystery was too difficult for him. After Daniel heard the king's dream he interpreted it by saying: "You shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will" (Dan 4:8–26).

3. Counsel of Daniel:

Realizing the seriousness of the matter and for the sake of peace for the king, Daniel boldly counseled the king to "break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your tranquillity" (Dan 4:27).

B. The Dream Was Fulfilled

1. After twelve months:

The king was not angry with Daniel's counseling, but seemed to be feeling apprehensive. During those twelve months he did not try to practice the righteousness and mercy which would have lengthened his tranquillity (Dan 4:28, 29).

2. Pride of the king:

We know he was arrogant from his failure to admit that his gifts were from God. He was an intelligent and brave king and he took for granted that it was all his own wisdom, and thus glorified himself. He said: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan 4:30).

3. Punishment came:

While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven: "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and you shall be made to eat grass like ox; and seven times shall pass over you, until you have learned that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." The king went insane immediately, and he was driven from among men (Dan 4:30-33).

C. The King Came to His Understanding

1. He lifted his eyes to heaven:

The king lived like a beast in the field until the days were over, as determined by God. He lifted his eyes to heaven and came to his senses again, his wisdom returning to him (Dan 4:34).

2. He acknowledged the authority of the Most High:
After this severe punishment, the king understood and acknowledged that his intelligence, wisdom, power, and all success came from God. Therefore he praised and glorified God. He honored and extolled God for his faithfulness and justice, he who is the ever-loving and everlasting Lord (Dan 4:34–37).
3. To make the people of the world realize God's power:
Nebuchadnezzar's punishment was not only to make him understand that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and that he will give it to whom he will. But this was also to make the people of the world understand that the majesty of Nebuchadnezzar came from the grace of God. Thus, the king should not be praised and glorified, but instead he should give thanks to God for the gifts he received (Dan 4:1–3).

D. Teachings

1. The appointment of a king, his removal, and the rise and fall of a nation depends on God. The king should be thankful for God's grace, rely on him for help, and glorify his name (Dan 4:25; Ps 22:28; Job 12:23).
2. The life and death, prosperity and adversity of men are all in the hands of God. We must know how to rely on God, give thanks to him in all matters, and glorify his name (1 Sam 2:6, 7; 1 Chr 29:10–16).
3. Those who deny God's grace do not glorify him, and those who do not repay his love will incur his wrath (2 Chr 32:25; Acts 12:22–23).

III. REFERENCES

1. The vast territories of the Babylonian empire stretched eastward to India, westward to Asia Minor and South Eastern

Europe, and southward to Egypt and North Africa. It also included Syria, Edom, Judah and Persia.

2. The great city of Babylon was situated on the east bank of the river Euphrates, the city walls measured 96 km in perimeter. The height of the wall measured 100 m, and its thickness measured 27 m. There were 100 city gates with 250 watch towers built atop the city walls. The city was surrounded by canals which drew water from the river Euphrates. The canals also acted as a deterrent to any enemy approaching the city wall. The streets were wide, the palace was magnificent and resplendent with many gardens. The hanging garden was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was built of gold, silver, and all kinds of jewels.
3. God rules over the nations (Dan 4:17, 25, 32):
 - God dominates all nations (Ps 22:28, 66:7).
 - God removes and sets up kings (Dan 2:21; 5:19–21).
 - The rise and fall of a nation is determined by God (Job 12:23).
4. Pride comes before destruction (Prov 18:12):
 - Not acknowledging God's grace is pride (Dan 4:30; cf. 2 Chr 32:25).
 - Not giving glory to God is pride (Dan 4:30; cf. Acts 12:22–23).
 - With pride comes shame (Dan 4:30–33; cf. Est 6:6–12).
 - Humility goes before honor (Prov 15:33; Dan 4:34–37).
5. The king's sickness: some scholars feel that the king was suffering from a form of mental disorder, thus thinking himself as a beast.
6. According to history, Nebuchadnezzar acceded to the throne in the year 605 B.C. and he reigned for 45 years. He probably

became insane during his 35th year reign. There was a missing four-year period of his reign. The “seven times” is a period determined by God, and probably refers to this four-year period.

7. Evil-merodach was Nebuchadnezzar’s son (2 Kgs 25:27).

IV. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. What vital truth did God intend to make known to the king and the people through the vision of the giant tree (Dan 4:17, 25, 32)?
2. Which aspect of what the king said in verse 30 is wrong?
3. What is the main teaching for you in this chapter?

5

THE KINGDOM OF BABYLON FELL

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Belshazzar sinned against God (Dan 5:1–4).
- B. God wrote on the wall (Dan 5:5–9).
- C. The king summoned for Daniel (Dan 5:10–16).
- D. Daniel rebuked Belshazzar (Dan 5:17–24).
- E. Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall (Dan 5:25–29).
- F. The kingdom of Babylon fell (Dan 5:30–31).

II. LIFE APPLICATION: THE FALL OF THE BABYLONIAN KINGDOM

Babylon possessed vast and extended territories and strong city walls. How was it possible that Babylon, with such a great army, was destroyed overnight? What does its history symbolize?

A. Strange Fingers Appeared

1. King Belshazzar gave a great feast:

Though the city of Babylon had been surrounded by armies of Media and Persia for a long time, its strong city walls were supposed to be unbreakable. This prompted the king to throw a great feast for a thousand of his lords, his queen, and his concubines in merrymaking, drinking, and praising their idols (Dan 5:1–4).

2. The fingers of a man suddenly appeared:

All of a sudden, the fingers of a man appeared and wrote on the wall. The king was frightened, his countenance changed, and his knees knocked together. The king cried aloud to bring in the enchanters, the Chaldeans and the astrologers. He would reward generously whoever was able to read and interpret the writing, but they were not able to do so (Dan 5:5–9).

3. The queen recommended Daniel:

When the king and his lords were alarmed and did not know what to do, the queen came into the banquet hall and recommended Daniel, who had served as the leader of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers during Nebuchadnezzar's reign (Dan 5:10–12).

B. Daniel Rebuked the King for His Arrogance

Daniel was not interested in the king's generous reward. He rebuked the king for his sins before he interpreted the meaning of the writing:

1. Though the king knew that Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather, was punished by God for his arrogance and became insane, he would not humble himself before God. Instead he used the holy vessels, separated out for use in the temple, to drink wine and to praise his idols (Dan 5:13–23).

2. He did not give glory to God, in whose hand was his life as well as all his movements. As such, the finger from God wrote on the wall (Dan 5:23, 24).

C. Interpretation of the Writing

1. MENE MENE:

- It means “God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.” In those days the king would reign for as long as he remained on his throne. Should the king be slain, the kingdom would also come to an end.
- Therefore “MENE” means the days of the king are numbered. That very night the king was slain (Dan 5:25, 26, 30).

2. TEKEL:

- It means “You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting.” The king was found wanting because he not only did not repay God’s grace, but also denied and sinned against God. He worshipped all types of idols, defiled God’s vessels, made great feasts, and did what was abominable in God’s sight (Dan 5:27).

3. PERES:

- It means “Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” God not only revealed to the king that he would die, he was also told who would take over his kingdom. Here we see that it is the Most High who rules in the kingdom of men, and he will give it to whom he wills. God may even appoint a lowly man to rule over a nation (Dan 4:17, 25, 32, 5:28, 30, 31).

D. Teachings

1. Symbolism: the historic Babylon symbolizes the sinful

world. Before the last days punishment will come suddenly and the world will be completely wiped out.

2. Wanting: the Bible says that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). If we cannot repay God’s bounteous grace, we should at least try not to be found wanting. As such we must not cease giving thanks to God with our devout worship and also thank him for his grace of salvation and for the sustenance of our lives. We should resolve to be sanctified and love the Lord with all our mind and might, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We should live for the Lord and offer up the gifts we have received and utilize them in God’s great task of saving humankind (Eccl 12:13; 2 Cor 5:14, 15; 2 Thess 2:13; Mt 22:37–40; Rom 14:7, 8).

III. REFERENCES

A. Belshazzar Was Indebted to God

Not only did he not show his gratitude to God, he also sinned against God:

- He willfully rejected God (Dan 5:18–24).
- He worshipped all kinds of idols (Dan 5:4, 23).
- He defiled the vessels of God (Dan 5:2–3; 23).
- He made a great feast and did what is abominable in God’s sight (Dan 5:2, 23).

B. Daniel Was Made the Third Ruler in the Kingdom

The highest promotion for an officer was to be promoted to the office of the prime minister, which was second to the ruler. Why did the king made Daniel the third ruler instead? According to some historical records, Belshazzar was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. In the original scripts, the phrase “your father” can also be interpreted as “grandfather.” In 1854, an Englishman by the name of Rawlinson excavated

the ancient city of Babylon and discovered stones with the following inscription: “Belshazzar’s father took the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar as queen during his reign.” In another inscription, it is written that Belshazzar and his father were simultaneously kings of Babylon. One administered the kingdom while the other took charge of the military affairs. It is perhaps for this reason that Daniel was made the third ruler instead of the second.

C. Babylon Was Wiped Out Overnight

Why was the city of Babylon captured overnight? The events that led to the capture of Babylon by Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian were recorded in the Babylonian history. The water from the river Euphrates flowed into the city through canals that cut across the foundation of the city walls. The course of the river was changed by digging another canal, thus the canals that cut across the foundation of the city were completely drained. In this way, the army of Darius and Cyrus were able to enter the city through the passageway of the canals. Belshazzar was slain by the Medes on the same night which marked the end of the Babylonian Empire (Jer 51:54–58).

D. The Destruction of Babylon As a Symbolic Figure

1. Babylon symbolizes the chaotic, evil and sinful world (Rev 18:1–4).
2. It will be punished for its sins (Rev 18:4–5).
3. The act of punishment will come suddenly (Rev 18:8, 10, 17, 19).
4. It will be completely wiped out (Rev 18:21, 20:11).
5. Believers must get out of Babylon immediately (Rev 18:4).

- To depart from idols and sins (Rev 9:20, 18:4, 5, 21:8).
 - To worship the Lord of heaven and earth (Rev 14:6–7).
 - To believe that Jesus is the Lord and Savior (Acts 4:12; John 14:6).
 - To be baptized into Christ Jesus (Gal 3:27; Mark 16:16).
 - To keep one’s heart pure and holy (Rev 22:14; 2 Tim 2:21).
 - To truly love one another (1 Pet 4:7–8; Mt 22:37–40).
 - To abound in God’s work and to honor him (Ps 116:12; 1 Cor 15:58).
- E. Belshazzar’s father, Nabonidus reigned from 556–539 B.C. He appointed his eldest son, Belshazzar as regent in 553 B.C. He reigned for two years until 539 B.C. The “queen,” wife of Nebuchadnezzar, was Belshazzar’s grandmother. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar’s daughter was the mother of Belshazzar. In the Aramaic and Hebrew language there was no word for “grandson”; hence they were commonly called “sons.”
- F. The city of Babylon was besieged by the armies of Media and Persia for about four years. During this period canals were being dug and constructed.

IV. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. The Babylonian king was punished for being indebted to God. How are we indebted to God today?
2. What can we tell about Daniel’s character from his rebuke to the king?
3. What do you consider to be the most important teaching from this chapter?

6

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Daniel was made a president (Dan 6:1–3).
- B. The other presidents and satraps plotted against Daniel (Dan 6:4–9).
- C. Daniel, unafraid of the edict, continued to pray and gave thanks to God three times a day (Dan 6:10–15).
- D. Daniel was cast into the lions' den (Dan 6:16–23).
- E. The victory of Daniel's faith (Dan 6:24–28).

II. COMMENTS

- 1. By that time Daniel was over 80 years old. He was at the peak of his career, and showed no sign of decline in his capability.

2. A signed document and interdict could be sealed with the king's signet ring, which is equivalent to a signature today.
3. Christians ought to pray at least three times a day (Ps 55:17, 119:164). Muslims pray five times a day.
4. According to ancient law, one who was cast into the lions' den and found unscathed throughout the night would be acquitted immediately.
5. Who was Darius? There are three opinions:
 - a. Darius was in fact Cyrus himself
 - b. Cyrus' son Cambyses
 - c. One commissioned by Cyrus to be the ruler of Babylon, who was called Gubaru (victor of Babylon)

III. LIFE APPLICATION: THE VICTORY OF DANIEL

Daniel prayed incessantly. He was cast into the lions' den and yet he was unharmed. What happened to him later?

- A. Daniel Was Cast into the Lions' Den:
 1. His peers were jealous of him:
King Darius was aware of Daniel's fine spiritual virtues, which surpassed those of all the other presidents and satraps. Therefore, the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. This caused jealousy from the other presidents and satraps. They sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find none (Dan 6:1-5).
 2. Daniel was cast into the lions' den:
Because Daniel was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him, his enemies plotted against him on matters concerning religion. Then the presidents and

satraps came by agreement to the king and told him that he should establish an ordinance and enforce an edict that whoever made petition to any god or man for thirty days—except to the king—should be cast into the den of lions. The king was unaware of their conspiracy and agreed to enforce the edict. Though Daniel learned about the edict, he prayed and gave thanks to God three times a day facing Jerusalem as usual. He was thus cast into the lions' den (Dan 6:6–16).

3. Darius was distressed for Daniel:

In those days even the king himself could not revoke an edict he made. Therefore, the king had no choice but to command that Daniel be cast into the lions' den. Darius was a good king who appreciated talented people. He said to Daniel: "May your God whom you serve continually deliver you." Then he returned to his palace and fasted the whole night for Daniel. At day break he went in haste to the lions' den and cried out in a tone of anguish to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Unexpectedly, he heard Daniel's reply. The king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up from the lions' den (Dan 6:16–23).

B. Why Was Daniel Victorious?

1. He was blameless before God:

Daniel knew God from his childhood, and honored and revered him. He lived a life observing God's commandments and pleased God in everything he did. He confessed that he was blameless before God (Dan 6:22).

2. He was also blameless and faultless before the king:
Though he was serving a Gentile king, he was loyal and above reproach in discharging his duties. Thus the nation prospered. Ezekiel was a prophet of the same period as Daniel, and he referred to Daniel as one of the three great righteous men. This shows that Daniel was a righteous man who feared God and departed from all evil. The virtues of fearing God and keeping his commandments had shut the lions' mouths from Daniel. Another fact which made him victorious was his constant prayers (Dan 6:4; Ezek 14:14; Heb 11:33).

3. He trusted God through his incessant prayers:
Though Daniel's conduct was perfect, should he have been fearful of being persecuted and changed his faith, ceasing his prayers and not trusting in God, he might not have been spared from the lions' mouths. The Bible tells us that Daniel "by faith shut the lions' mouths." It also says that "because he trusted in his God" he had obtained peace (Dan 6:23, 10, 11; Heb 11:33).

4. Daniel's afflictions enabled God to be praised and glorified:
Daniel's good behavior had enabled Darius to gain elementary knowledge and reliance from God (Dan 6:16, 18). After Daniel's miraculous escape from the lions' den had enabled the king to gain further knowledge of God, he decreed that all his subjects must revere the almighty and living God worshipped by Daniel. Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian (Dan 6:25–28).

C. Teachings

1. Be loyal and responsible: no matter what circumstances, Christians must be loyal in their responsibilities. We

must be exemplary so that others may perceive the fragrance of the Lord, thus glorifying God (cf. 1 Pet. 2:13–15; Col 3:22–4:1; Dan 6:4, 22).

2. Practice the teachings of God: we should not be greedy for unrighteous money; we should be holy in our relationships with the opposite gender; we should be compassionate; we should walk in righteousness and humility (1 Tim 6:8–10, 17–19, 5:1, 2; Mic 6:8; Mt 5:13–16).
3. Pray incessantly: we should pray daily for ourselves, our family, church, country, and for the salvation of the world. Not only should we pray three times or even seven times a day, but we should give thanks to God day and night and with supplication (1 Tim 2:1–6; 1 Sam 12:23; Ps 55:17, 119:164, 71:8; Rev 4:8). If we can emulate Daniel to be perfect before God and man, together with incessant prayers, and trusting God in all things, then the devil, who is likened to a roaring lion, will not be able to harm us (1 Pet 5:8–11). We shall be more than victorious!

IV. REFERENCES

- A. The Virtues of King Darius
 - He was prepared to utilize the talents from another race (Dan 6:1–2).
 - He called for the service of men who were spiritual (Dan 6:3).
 - He had the welfare of his talented subordinates at heart (Dan 6:14, 18–20).
- B. The Two Keys to Victory Against the Lion Which Symbolizes the Devil (1 Pet 5:8)

- Be a perfect person (Dan 6:22, 4).
 - Rely on the Lord through earnest prayers (Dan 6:10).
- C. The Evil Plot Backfired (Eccl 10:8; Prov 26:27)
- Those who plotted against Daniel (Dan 6:24).
 - Haman who plotted against Mordecai (Est 7:9–11).
- D. The Prophet Daniel
- God gave him the opportunity to hold a high position (Dan 2:46–48).
 - He was faithful in his service to the king and was highly regarded by the king (Dan 6:3–4, 22).
 - He received God's revelation and declared his message (Dan 2:19–45, 5:17–27).
 - He was a government official but, more than that, a messenger of God (Mt 24:15).

V. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. Why did Daniel risk his life and pray to God as usual?
2. What are the worries and cares of those in high positions?
3. Do the people around you know you are a Christian? How do you show it?

VI. DISCUSSION

- How can we enrich and intensify a daily life of prayer?

7

DANIEL'S VISIONS OF THE FOUR BEASTS

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. First vision: three evil beasts (Dan 7:1–6).
- B. Second vision: a fourth beast (Dan 7:7–8).
- C. Third vision: thrones appearing (Dan 7:9–12).
- D. Fourth vision: the Son of man receiving his kingdom (Dan 7:13–14).
- E. An angel's interpretation of the four visions (Dan 7:15–28).

II. COMMENTS

There is some similarity between chapter 2 and chapter 7. Both chapters deal with the same topic, but from two different angles. Chapter 2 is told from man's point of view while chapter 7 from God's point of view. It may be said that chapter 7 explains chapter 2.

A. The First Beast Is Babylon (the Golden Head of the Great Image)

1. It is like a lion: the lion symbolizes Babylon (Jer 4:6–7). The lion is the king of the beasts. It is swift and fierce.
2. It has wings like an eagle: the eagle also symbolizes Babylon (Ezek 17:3–12). Eagles are among the strongest of all birds. They fly at great heights with swift movements. To liken Babylon as a lion with eagle's wings shows that it has great strength, and that it is stronger than the strongest.
3. Its wings removed: the sanity, the throne, and the glory of Nebuchadnezzar's majesty were removed. This was fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar, whose arrogance led him to the punishment of losing his sanity and behaving like a beast for seven times (Dan 4:28–33).
4. It stood like a man: the return of sanity and the support of man. This was fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar when God caused him to regain his sanity, throne, and glory after a term of seven years. Thereafter, he was greatly humbled, full of gratitude for God's grace, and gave all glory to God (Dan 4:34–37, 16–17).

B. The Second Beast Is Media and Persia (the Silver Breast of the Great Image of chapter 2)

1. It is like a bear: a bear has great strength but it is not swift in movement. The bear cannot match the lion, just as the second kingdom cannot measure up to the achievements of the first.
2. It sits on one side: also translated as "it was raised up on the side." This means that one side is considerably stronger than the other. True enough, Persia was stronger than Media in the later years.

3. It has three ribs in its mouth between its teeth: that is, the beast will devour Babylon, Libya, and Egypt (Dan 8:4).
 4. It devours much flesh: the Medes and Persian armies were cruel and blood-thirsty, often slaying all the inhabitants of their captured cities.
- C. The Third Beast Is Greece (the Bronze Belly of the Great Image of chapter 2)
1. It is like a leopard: the leopard is swift in its movement but its strength cannot be compared with that of a lion or a bear.
 2. It has the four wings of a bird: the leopard with wings of a bird indicates that it moves swiftly. But the wings of a bird are not as powerful as those of an eagle. Thus the beast has no stamina.
 3. The first king of the kingdom of Greece was Alexander (Dan 8:21). He inherited the throne from his father Philip II and became the king of Macedonia. With only fifty thousand well-trained soldiers, he was able to conquer Persia and establish the great kingdom of Greece. He was enthroned at the age of twenty and died at the age of thirty-two.
 4. The power was taken over by four prominent horns: this refers to the four generals of Alexander. After the death of Alexander, his kingdom was split into four kingdoms (Dan 8:8, 11:3–4):
 - Cassander ruled over Macedonia and Greece
 - Seleucus ruled over Syria, Pakistan, Babylon, and Armenia
 - Ptolemy ruled over Egypt

- Lysimachus ruled over Turkey, Asia Minor, and Europe

D. The Fourth Beast Is Rome (the Iron Legs of the Great Image of chapter 2)

1. It has a monstrous appearance: the fourth beast refers to the Roman empire which was militant and relentless, employing every possible torment to torture and slay its captives. It has ten horns which refer to the ten kings (Dan 7:24). The “ten” referred to here does not necessarily mean the numeral “10”. It has the connotation of wholeness. It symbolizes every form of government in the last days.
2. The emergence of a little horn: the little horn emerging from the midst of the ten horns is the persecutor of God’s chosen people. It symbolizes the antichrist of the last days.

E. The Establishment of the Throne and the Coming of the Son of Man:

The throne here refers to the throne of judgment which will appear on the final day when Jesus comes to execute judgment, and to bring an end to all the earthly kingdoms, thus establishing the eternal kingdom of heaven (Mt 25:31–46; Rev 20:11–13).

III. REFERENCES

A. Babylon

1. The former Babylon: according to the Old Testament, the first king of Babylon (king of Shinar) is Amraphel, who lived in the days of Abraham (Gen 14:1, 9).

2. The latter Babylon: the former Babylon was under Assyrian domain for a period of six hundred years. The founder of the latter Babylon was Nabopolassar, who was Nebuchadnezzar's father (625–604 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar married Amytis who was the daughter of the king of the Medes. In the year 606 B.C. Nabopolassar and his ally, Kyaxares of Media, attacked Nineveh and captured a large portion of land for his kingdom. God gave power to Babylon and used it as an instrument to punish his rebellious people. The latter Babylon was in power for 87 years before it was eliminated by king Darius of the Medes (Jer 25:8–11; 49:28–29; Dan 5).

B. Media and Persia

The Medes of Media and the Babylonian empire had held dominion over the east of Tigris river for over two hundred years under Assyrian domain, until the year 717 B.C., when a revolt erupted. In the year 710 B.C., Deioces founded the kingdom of Media, which lasted until the time of Cyrus the Persian king (506 B.C.). Persia was situated southeast of Media. It was originally part of the kingdom of Media. Its inhabitants spoke the same language as the Medes. They were of the same descendants as the Medes. Cyrus' grandfather, Astyages, was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. Astyages laid the foundation for an excellent government for the Persians during his reign. At the time of Cyrus, a unified Medo-Persian empire was established. The highlands of Iran are the original location of Persia. What is referred to as Persia in history has been called Iran since March 21, 1935.

C. Rome

Augustus Caesar of Rome defeated the Greek navy in a naval battle near Actium in 31 B.C. The queen Cleopatra and Anthony escaped to Egypt and later committed suicide, thus

ending the 301-year dominion of the kingdom of Greece. The former domain of the Roman empire included England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, and Greece.

From the time of Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece to the time of Rome and the successive emergence of the superpowers, there have been successors of power but the domain of each country remained more or less the same.

IV. DISCUSSION

Make a comparison in six aspects between the little horn of Daniel in chapter 7, and the monstrous beast in Revelation chapter 13.

8

THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. The vision of the ram (Dan 8:1–4).
- B. The vision of the he-goat (Dan 8:5–8).
- C. The description of the little horn (Dan 8:9–14).
- D. The angel Gabriel explains the vision (Dan 8:15–27).

II. COMMENTS

Chapter eight and the remaining chapters were originally written in Hebrew because they concern the prophecies of the chosen people.

- A. The Ram
The horns of the ram refer to Media and Persia (Dan 8:20); they are equivalent to the silver breast of the great image.

The new and longer horn refers to Persia, whose power far exceeds that of Media. The ram charges westward —this includes Babylon at the time of Media and at the time of Persia. It charges further westward to cover the islands of Aegean Sea and part of Macedonia from Philistia to the Danube river into the mouth of the Black Sea in the south. The ram charges southward, covering Egypt and Libya. The ram charges northward, covering all of Asia Minor, southern Caucasus plateau, as well as Armenia. The ram described here is equivalent to the second beast of chapter 7, which has three ribs in its mouth between its teeth.

B. The He-goat

The he-goat refers to Greece. Greece is situated in the west, and so the he-goat comes from the west. The he-goat charges across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground: this refers to the swiftness of the wars waged by Alexander, who virtually devoured all the countries of his time within a span of ten years. The goat has a conspicuous horn, referring to Alexander the Great. He was full of pride after he conquered Media, Persia, and the other countries. But in the midst of his pride, the great horn was broken and he died at the age of thirty-two. From the root of the horn came up four conspicuous horns like the four heads of a leopard: this refers to Alexander's four generals who divided his kingdom after his death.

C. Out of the Four Horns Came Forth a Little Horn

Part of the prophecy concerning the little horn had already been fulfilled in Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was the king of Syria, one of the four countries in the prophecy. He reigned from 175 B.C. to 164 B.C. for a period of eleven years. When he raided Jerusalem, he deliberately defiled the holy temple and blasphemed God. He did not allow sacrifices to be offered, yet he himself burned swine at the

altars, sprinkling their blood all over the temple. He slew the priest, leaders, and common people, up to a total of about one hundred thousand souls. Furthermore, he forced the Jews to worship idols and to practice immorality in the temple.

D. The Little Horn Symbolizes the Antichrist

Some Bible scholars reckon that the little horn of chapter seven symbolizes the great evil one of the last days. However, the little horn of chapter eight has been fulfilled in Antiochus and it has no connection with the last days. They reckon that the two do not originate from the same source, for they come from Rome and Greece respectively, and so cannot be linked together. However, the writer reckons that since Greece has been devoured into the territory of Rome it is both correct to say that it comes from Greece and Rome and there is no contradiction. The little horn recorded respectively in chapters seven and eight symbolizes the great evil one, the antichrist of the last days. The combined chapters give a clearer and true picture of the antichrist. The desolating sacrilege has been historically fulfilled in Antiochus and also by the Roman soldiers in A.D. 70, which was prophesied by the Lord. However, the little horn will appear one more time in the last days, fulfilling the coming of the antichrist (Mt 24:15–22; Dan 11:28–37; Rev 13).

III. DISCUSSION:

1. The saints shall receive the kingdom (Dan 7:18). Here, do the saints refer to the Israelites, the chosen race, or the Christians, the chosen people?
2. Which is the kingdom that we shall receive—the earthly kingdom of 1000 years (millennium) or the eternal kingdom of heaven?

TABLE OF COMPARISON OF THE VARIOUS VISIONS

	Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8
Vision	Great image	Four great beasts	Ram, he-goat
Babylon	Golden head	Lion	—
Media/Persia	Silver breast	Bear	Ram
Greece	Bronze belly	Leopard	He-goat
Rome	Iron legs	Beast	—
Nations of the end-time	Half iron and half clay feet	Ten horns and a little horn	Little horn
The second coming of Christ	A stone smites the great image into pieces	The saints receive their kingdom	The little horn is destroyed

9

PROPHECY OF THE 70 WEEKS OF YEARS

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Daniel's prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem (Dan 9:1–23).
- B. The prophecy of the 70 weeks of years.

II. CONTENTS

- A. Daniel Prayed for the Restoration of Jerusalem
 - 1. He perceived from the Book of Jeremiah the nearing completion of the term of captivity (Dan 9:1–2).
 - 2. He fasted and prayed for the chosen people of God (Dan 9:3).
 - 3. He confessed that their sins had led them to captivity to a punishment they deserved (Dan 9:4–15).

- He confessed his own sins (Dan 9:3–4, 20).
 - He confessed the sins of Judah (Dan 9:16, 20).
 - He confessed the sins of their fathers (Dan 9:5–6, 16).
4. He prayed to God for mercy and forgiveness and for the restoration of Jerusalem (Dan 9:16–19).
 5. His prayers were heard by God (Dan 9:20–23).
- B. The Prophecy of the 70 Weeks of Years
1. Seventy weeks of years have been fixed for the citizens of the kingdom and the holy city (Dan 9:24).
 - to finish the transgression
 - to put an end to sin
 - to atone for iniquity
 - to bring in everlasting righteousness
 - to seal both vision and prophet
 - to anoint a most holy place
 2. From the command of rebuilding Jerusalem to the coming of the anointed one, there shall be seven weeks (Dan 9:25).
 3. The holy city shall be restored and built in the midst of tribulation (Dan 9:25).
 4. When 62 weeks are over, the following shall take place (Dan 9:26):
 - The anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing.
 - The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
 - There shall be war to the end.

- C. The Following Shall Take Place in One Week (Dan 9:27)
- He shall make a strong covenant with many people.
 - When half of the week is past, he shall put an end to sacrifices and offerings.
 - One who makes desolate shall come upon the wind of abominations.
 - A decreed end comes upon the desolator.

III. COMMENTS

- A. Daniel's Prayers Were Answered by God
1. He prayed with the right motive (1 Jn. 5:14).
 - for the glory of God (Dan 9:17, 19).
 - for the removal of national humiliation (Dan 9:16).
 - for the restoration and revival of Jerusalem (Dan 9:16).

He prayed that God would cause his face to shine upon the desolate holy temple, the desolate holy land, and the troubled people of God (Dan 9:17–19).
 2. He prayed with humility (Lk 18:9–14).
 - He offered supplications not because of his own righteousness (Dan 9:18).
 - He trusted God to show his great mercy (Dan 9:16, 18).
 3. He prayed with confession of sins (Ps 51:7).
 - He confessed his own sins, and the sins of the people and their fathers (Dan 9:3–6, 16, 20).
 - He acknowledged that their punishment was according to the righteousness of God (Dan 9:7).
- B. The Revelation of the 70 Weeks of Years
1. Purpose: this is a decree for the people of Judah and the holy city (Dan 9:24).

2. Period: from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the decreed end of the desolator (Dan 9:25–27).
- C. Duration (the years mentioned below are obtained from the research of historians and Bible scholars)
1. First duration: $7 \times 7 = 49$ years
It extended from the going forth of the word to restore Jerusalem to the completion of the holy temple. It began in the 20th year of king Artaxerxes, which was reckoned by historians as the year 454 B.C., to the sixth year of Darius, which was the year 405 B.C. (Neh 2:1; Ezra 6:13–15).
 2. Second duration: $62 \times 7 = 434$ years
It extended from the completion of the holy temple to the crucifixion of Christ, that is, it began in 405 B.C. and ended in A.D. 29 when Jesus was thirty-three years old (according to historians, Jesus was born in the year 4 B.C.).
- After the eradication of the anointed one, two great events shall take place:
 - a. The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (Dan 9:26). This event was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when Titus, the general of the Roman emperor, led an army to attack and destroy Jerusalem.
 - b. There shall be war to the end (Dan 9:26). At the time when Christ was born, the world had already entered the last days (Heb 1:1–3). There will be many tribulations in the last days with wars being fought unceasingly. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and this will continue until the coming of the great tribulation (Mt 24:3, 6–7, 21–22).

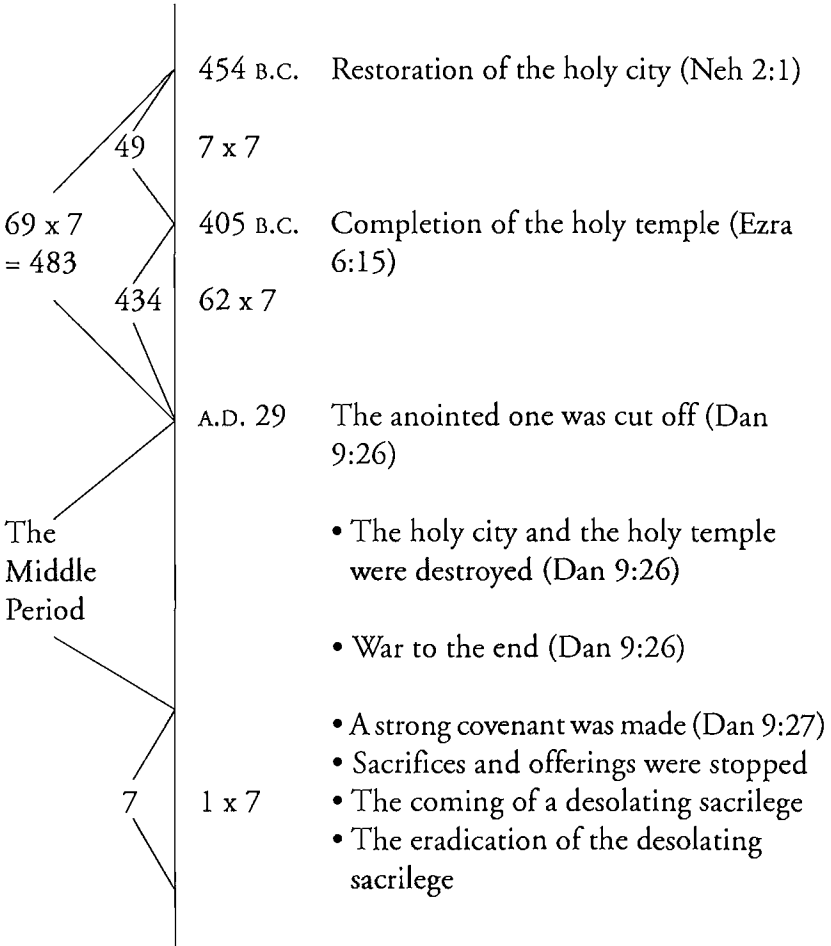
3. Third duration: the last lot of seven
 Toward the end of the last lot of seven, the desolating sacrilege will be eradicated (Dan 9:27). The little horn of chapters 7 and 8 is the desolating sacrilege. Its destruction will take place at the second coming of Christ. Thus, the last lot of seven will be fulfilled at the end-time, which is the time of great tribulation (Dan 7:26, 8:25; Mt 24:15).
- The last lot of seven is divided into two halves:
 In the first half the antichrist will make a strong covenant with many people. In the second half the saints will be given to the antichrist for three and one-half years. It is when the beast with seven heads and ten horns is allowed to have its way for forty-two months (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:5).

IV. THE GREAT EVENTS TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE 70 WEEKS OF YEARS (DAN 9:24)

- A. Deliverance from the present evil age (Gal 1:4; Tit 2:14; Rev 1:5).
- B. The sins of the world are taken away (Jn 1:29; Heb 9:26; 1 Jn 3:5).
- C. Securing an eternal redemption (Heb 9:12, 14; Tit 2:14).
- D. Bringing in everlasting righteousness (Rom 3:24–26; 1 Tim 3:16).
- E. Anointing the holy one (Ex 30:26–29, 40:9–10).

V. REFERENCES

The table of 70 x 7—from the work of Jia Yu-Min



VI. THE FOUR INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 70 WEEKS OF YEARS

It is generally believed that the writings concerning the 70 weeks of years mentioned in this book is an important prophecy

relating to the advent of the Messiah. There are also various other interpretations. On the whole, most accept that the “70 x 7” is calculated by the year. There are two opinions concerning the time of its fulfillment: one considers that the 490 years derived from 70 x 7 is continuous, but these years cannot satisfactorily fit into any period in history. The second opinion of the 70 x 7 is by intervals. The first 69 x 7 years was fulfilled until the death of the Messiah (v. 25); the last lot of 7 would be fulfilled during the great tribulation of the last days. Between the period of 69 x 7 years and the last lot of 7, there is a concealed and undisclosed “period of the church” in the Old Testament. According to the early church fathers, the explanation is as follows:

- A. The duration of “70 x 7” years begins with the order given to restore Jerusalem (v. 25). There are three periods in history relating to this matter.
 1. In 538 B.C. king Cyrus decreed the rebuilding of the holy temple in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1–4).
 2. In 458 B.C. king Artaxerxes sent Ezra back to Jerusalem; among his commands was to restore the walls of the holy city (Ezra 7:6–7, 9:9).
 3. In 445 B.C. king Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem to restore the city walls to complete the unfinished job left by Ezra (Neh 2:7). The 490 years from 70 x 7, if calculated according to the solar calendar, has as its first year 458 B.C. But if calculated at 360 days a year according to the lunar calendar then it is most likely to be 445/444 B.C.
- B. Of the two kings, one is the “anointed king” (v. 25), who is the Lord Jesus. He began his ministry in A.D. 26. The second “king” to come (v. 26) is the antichrist.

- C. After the first “70 x 7” and the “62 x 7” in between, two main events will take place in history:
1. The Messiah will be cut off and shall have nothing.
 2. The restored holy city and the holy temple shall be destroyed. It is generally believed that the first refers to Christ’s crucifixion (about the year A.D. 30), and that the latter refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.
- D. Important events which will take place during the last lot of seven (v. 27):
1. The future king (antichrist) will make a seven-year covenant with the Israelites.
 2. During the seven years this king will interfere and suppress the Israelites’ beliefs. There are others who think that “he” referred here is the Messiah who sacrificed himself for our redemption: hence, no more offerings are necessary. This last lot of 7 has yet to be fulfilled.
- E. There is an interval between 69 x 7 and 70 x 7, which was the period of the church manifested in the New Testament but was not revealed in the Old Testament. There is another non-Messianic explanation that the “70 x 7” is related to king Antiochus of Syria. “The order to restore Jerusalem” refers to the prophecy spoken by Jeremiah in 587 B.C. (Jer 25:11). “The anointed prince” refers to king Cyrus of Persia; the “anointed one” in verse 26 is the high priest Onias III (who was assassinated in 171 B.C.). “King of the people” refers to Antiochus’ army; “he” in verse 27 also refers to Antiochus. Therefore, the last lot of 7 is the period between 171–164 B.C.; Antiochus was destroyed by God in 164 B.C. (cf. Dan 8:25).

The 70 weeks of years can be categorized into three periods: 7 x 7; 62 x 7; and the last being the last lot of 7 (first half of

seven and second half of seven). Generally, 7 means seven years and its calculation is not without problem. The various interpretation could be categorized into four as follows:

1. Historical interpretation: from the time of captivity until their return to Jerusalem (587–538 B.C.) being the first duration of 7×7 ; from Cyrus until the high priest Onias III being the 62×7 (538–171 B.C.); and from the martyr of the high priest until Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the Jews, which gave rise to the Maccabees' revolution (171–164 B.C.) being the last lot of seven. The years or periods may not have been calculated correctly, however, these calculations are confined to the history in the Old Testament.
2. Traditional interpretation: the 70 weeks of years was the period when Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem (538 B.C.) until the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (444 B.C.). From the time Nehemiah restored the city walls until the birth of Christ can be considered the period of 62×7 . The last lot of 7 is Christ manifested in the flesh until his second coming. This is the church fathers' interpretation.
3. Symbolic interpretation: since the return of the Jews from their captivity (538 B.C.) until the birth of Christ and his death was the period of 7×7 . The second duration of 62×7 was the era of the church. For the last period, the first half of seven is the emergence of the antichrist and the second half of seven is the second advent of Christ. This is the standpoint held by the Reformers.
4. Parenthetic interpretation: from the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem (14th day of the third month in 444 B.C.) until Christ made his last entry to Jerusalem (6th day of the 4th month in A.D. 32) totals 173, 880 days

being the 69×7 (totaling 483 years calculated at 360 days per year). In between the 69×7 and the last lot of 7 was the era of the church (this is parenthetic). The last lot of seven is divided into two halves—the first half according to Revelation 6:2 (appearance of the white horse) and the second half according to Revelation 19:11 (reappearance of the white horse; return of the King of kings). This is the explanation of the Fundamentalists.

These opinions can be taken for reference. The 70 lots of 7 are not only confined to the Old Testament but extended to the coming of the Messiah who is Christ as fulfilled in the New Testament.

The parenthetic concept has no biblical proof, and the calculation of time is not all that accurate. However, there is still room for discussion. Yet, there should not be any doubt that God will fulfill his redemptive plan in the course of history.

VII. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. Were the 70 weeks of years fulfilled by the first coming of the Lord?
2. The first 69 lots of seven were fulfilled in the past but the last lot of seven will be fulfilled in the last days, and this concerns the restoration of the Israelite nation. Discuss.
3. The last lot of seven has no connection with the Israelites, but will be fulfilled in the true Israelites of the true church. Discuss.

IO

DANIEL SOUGHT AFTER GOD

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Daniel fasted (Dan 10:1–3).
- B. He saw the glorious Lord (Dan 10:4–9).
- C. The angel appeared to him (Dan 10:10–21).

II. CONTENTS

- A. Daniel Fasted
 - 1. In the third year of king Cyrus Daniel saw a vision concerning the great conflict (Dan 10:1).
 - 2. He fasted for 21 days to seek the understanding of the future (Dan 10:2–3, 12).

B. He Saw the Glorious Lord

1. On the 24th day of the first month, he saw the Lord appear on the bank of the river Tigris (Dan 10:5–6).
 - The Lord was clothed in linen.
 - His loins were girded with gold of Uphaz.
 - His body was like beryl.
 - His face was like the appearance of lightning.
 - His eyes were like flaming torches.
 - His arms and legs were like the gleam of burnished bronze.
 - His words sounded like the voice of a multitude.
2. Daniel alone saw the vision (Dan 10:7).
3. The others with Daniel did not see the vision. They fled because they were too afraid (Dan 10:7).
4. Daniel became weak, and fell on his face in a deep sleep upon seeing the vision (Dan 10:8–9).

C. The Angel Appeared

1. An angel was sent to answer Daniel's prayers (Dan 10:10–12).
2. The angel was held up by the prince of the kingdom of Persia for 21 days (Dan 10:13).
3. Michael, one of the chief princes, intervened (Dan 10:13).
4. The angel revealed to Daniel what the people would encounter in future (Dan 10:14).
5. The angel left Daniel to fight against the prince of Persia (Dan 10:20).

6. After the angel was through with the prince of Persia, the prince of Greece would come (Dan 10:20).
7. Apart from Michael, there was no one to help the angel fight against the two princes (Dan 10:13, 21).

III. COMMENTS

1. In the third year of Cyrus, Daniel recorded what he had seen concerning the vision of the conflict in chapter 11.
2. For the sake of understanding the vision of the conflict, Daniel humbled himself before God and fasted for 21 days. Eventually, he was shown the meaning of the vision, in spite of the interference by the prince of Persia. This chapter tells us that we must be humble in our attitude and go deep into our prayers, only then can we understand the mystery of God. For us to understand a certain truth through our prayers is to engage in spiritual warfare, and Satan is sure to interfere. We must therefore be persistent, keep our mind pure and to wait patiently for God's answer.
3. In our prayers, apart from encountering the obstacles of Satan, we must also make constant self-check to remove any obstacles within ourselves (cf. 1 Pet 3:7; Jas 4:1–6).

II

WAR BETWEEN THE KINGS

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. The war between Persia and Greece (Dan 11:1–4).
- B. The war between the kings of the north and south (Dan 11:5–20).
- C. A depraved king (Dan 11:21–35).
- D. Symbolism of the antichrist in the last days (Dan 11:36–45).

II. COMMENTS

- A. The War between Persia and Greece
 - The fourth king of Persia was Xerxes. He led a huge army to attack Greece and prevailed. The other three kings were Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, and Darius (Ezra 4:6–7, 24).

- The courageous king here refers to Alexander. Even though he had prevailed over Persia, his kingdom was divided and taken by four generals after his death.
- B. The War between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms (Dan 11:5–35)
- The first battle: king Ptolemy Soter of Egypt in the south prevailed (Dan 11:5–8). One of his princes that was stronger was the king of the north. He was the provincial governor of Babylon, later installed as king of the north. His name was Seleucus Nicator.
 - The second battle: Seleucus II, the northern king of Syria (Dan 11:9). He fought a losing battle. The battle was fought in the year 240 B.C.
 - The third battle: the king of the south prevailed (Dan 11:10–12). The second son of the northern king was Antiochus the Great. The battle took place in the year 218 B.C.
 - The fourth battle: the king of the north prevailed. Then a Roman commander rose up and defeated Antiochus (Dan 11:13–20).
- C. The Depraved King of the North (Dan 11:21–30)
- This king was Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.). His impact on the chosen people was very great:
- He was installed a king through unscrupulous means. He distributed his ill-gotten spoils to the multitude (Dan 11:21–24).
 - He attacked the southern king and prevailed (Dan 11:25–27).
 - He persecuted the people of God (Dan 11:28–35):
First persecution (Dan 11:28): according to history, on his return from a triumphant battle against Egypt he heard that there was a rebellion in Jerusalem. He went to overcome the uprising Jews. In the course of action he slaughtered some 40,000 Jews.

Second persecution (Dan 11:29–31): he attacked Egypt the second time, but was thwarted by the ships of Kittim belonging to the Roman navy. This made him afraid, and he withdrew his army and turned back. While on his return, he joined force with those who had forsaken the holy covenant and persecuted the elect. He also profaned the temple and took away the continual burnt offering. He also set up a desolating abomination, perhaps an idol.

D. The Crimes of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- He defiled women and killed infants.
- He took away the continual offering in the holy temple and barred people from circumcision.
- He forced the Israelites to embrace Syrian religion to worship the idol gods of Greece and put to death those who disobeyed him.
- He purposely put idols in the temple and used swine to make sacrifices to blaspheme God.

E. Resistance Put Up by Judas Maccabeus

- When Antiochus IV Epiphanes occupied the temple, the priest Mattathias led the people to resist him.
- Mattathias had five sons, one of them named Judas Maccabeus. Judas was nominated as the leader and he led soldiers to fight against Antiochus.
- Though Mattathias suffered heavy casualties, eventually the Maccabees won the war and the temple was sanctified.
- The kingdom of Maccabees was set up after having successfully suppressed Antiochus, and the Jews enjoyed forty years of peace. In the year 63 B.C., the Romans attacked Jerusalem, and Judah became a colony of Rome. The Jewish people lost their sovereignty.

F. Prefiguration of the Antichrist

- The persecution of the elect by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (the little horn) prefigures the work of the antichrist administered to the elect.

- From verses 36 to 45, the contents largely deal with the king of the north (the little horn) of the last days.
 1. The king will do anything according to his will. He is boastful and self-magnifying, and will speak against the God of gods (Dan 11:36).
 2. He has no concern for the God of his fathers or whatever gods, but for one god, the god of fortresses that he will honor (Dan 11:37, 38).
 3. He will magnify those who acknowledge him with land and will also make them rulers (Dan 11:39).

- At the end-time, the king of the south will fight against him (Dan 11:40–45). The movement of war of the end-time is revealed:
 1. The king of the north will wage war against many nations like the mighty flood waters (Dan 11:40–41).
 2. He shall enter into the glorious land (Dan 11:41).
 3. The Edomites, the Moabites, and the main part of Ammonites shall be delivered out of his hands (Dan 11:41).
 4. Egypt cannot escape. The Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow him (Dan 11:42–43).
 5. But tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many (Dan 11:44).
 6. Yet he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious mountains (Dan 11:45).
 7. However, when his end comes, there is no one to help him (Dan 11:45).

- The above prophecies are to be pondered over in terms of spiritual and physical aspects.

III. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

To whom does this little horn, the antichrist, refer to?

1. Does it refer to the persecutor of the Israeli nation?
2. Or, does it refer to those who oppose the true church in the last days?

12

EVENTS OF THE END-TIME

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Events that will happen in the end-time (Dan 12:1–4).
- B. The fulfilment of strange events (Dan 12:5–13).

II. COMMENTS

- A. The Time of Great Trouble (Dan 12:1)
 - Every person whose name was found written in the book of life will be delivered (Dan 12:1).
 - Many people will resurrect, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting condemnation (Dan 12:2).
 - Those who are wise will lead many to righteousness, and they shall shine like the stars in the sky forever (Dan 12:3).

- B. The words shall be sealed until the end-time (Dan 12:4, 9).
- Matters concerning the end-time can only be understood through diligent studies when the time of the end has come.
- C. When will the strange events occur (Dan 12:5–13)?
- All things will be fulfilled in a time, two times, and half a time—when the power of the holy people be shattered.
 - Only those who are wise shall understand, not the wicked (Dan 12:3–10).
 - A thousand two hundred and ninety days shall passed from the time of the removal of the continual burnt offering to the setting up of the detestable items (Dan 12:11).
 - The one who waits til the 1335 days will be blessed (Dan 12:12).
 - You shall have a place in the final consummation (Dan 12:13).

III. QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY

1. The war between the north and the south kings that was yet to be fulfilled—where is this recorded in the Bible?
2. Does the little horn in chapters 7 and 8 and the king of the north in chapter 11 both refer to the antichrist?
3. What is the religious characteristics of the king of the north in the end-time?
4. What does the “great trouble” refer to?

APPENDIX

THE ANTICHRIST: THE LITTLE HORN

I. FOREWORD

The views of the True Jesus Church concerning this subject have always been based on the Bible. Rejecting traditional theology which has been passed down through the generations, it relies on the Holy Spirit to make known and to examine the real meaning of the Bible. For example, the answer to such an important question as: “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) must be found in the Bible, because the foundation of the Church must be built upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus and his apostles and the prophets (Eph 2:19–20; Rev 21:14). The True Jesus Church not only differs in her water baptism, footwashing sacrament, Holy Communion, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the sabbath observance from the doctrines of other denominations; concerning the concept about God, the True Jesus Church also disagrees with the Catholic and Protestant

churches in their belief of the trinity. As for teachings regarding the end-time, the difference is even greater. The main reasons point to the different interpretations regarding the “millennium.” The general view of other denominations is that Christ will establish his kingdom on earth for one thousand years. There are two interpretations: the “pre-millennium” and the “post-millennium.”

The “post-millennium” interpretation states that Christ’s advent is after the millennium, that all mankind shall return to the Lord and honor Jesus as King, and the Church will manifest a golden era. However, after the millennium is over, Satan will be set free to deceive all people; he will oppose Christ and persecute the saints. After that Christ will descend from heaven to execute judgment to end the history of the present age, which will be followed by the entry into eternal life—eternal bliss or eternal condemnation.

The “pre-millennium” interpretation states that Christ’s advent is before the millennium. This will be explained in detail later. The True Jesus Church’s view concerning Christ reigning for a thousand years with his believers shall be fulfilled in the spiritual sense. She does not believe that Christ will establish his kingdom on earth for a thousand years. Due to the different interpretations concerning the millennium, there are vast differences in views relating to the physical “revival of Israel” and “the antichrist.” Now we shall take “the antichrist” as an introduction to the “pre-millennium” interpretation, which is a general and common view. After which the writer will, according to his understanding concerning this subject, offer his views to readers as a reference in the hope that it will raise concern. May the Spirit of revelation enable us to have a deeper understanding toward the works of God at the end-time, so that we shall stay alert to receive the coming of the Lord!

II. IMPORTANT POINTS CONCERNING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE PRE-MILLENNIUM INTERPRETATION

- A. Jesus, the King of the Jews was born.
- B. Jesus was crucified, resurrected and ascended into heaven.
- C. The Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost.
- D. Era of the church—the Bride of the Lamb.
- E. The Lord Shall Come to Receive His Bride.
 - 1. The righteous shall resurrect.
 - 2. The believers who are alive shall be transformed into spiritual beings.
 - 3. Believers shall be caught up in the clouds.
 - 4. The Bride shall meet the Lord in the air—wedding of the Lamb—thus fulfilling the aspiration of the Church and the grace of redemption.
 - 5. The Church shall be caught up to escape the great tribulation.
- F. The Great Tribulation
 - 1. Revival of Israel.
 - 2. Emergence of the antichrist.
 - 3. The Israelis repent and believe in the Lord Jesus.
- G. Christ Appears with All the Saints
 - 1. Christ returns to earth the second time.
 - 2. Judgment on all nations living on earth.
 - 3. The antichrist shall be destroyed.
 - 4. Satan is bound.
 - 5. Repentance at the great tribulation where the dead in Christ arise, thus completing the first resurrection.

- H. The millennium: Christ reigns with his Bride—the Church.
- I. Satan is released: Satan is released after the millennium, and will lead Gog and Magog to oppose Christ and persecute the saints.
- J. The last judgment: the dead are resurrected, judged, and those condemned are cast into the lake of fire.
- K. Eternity: coming of the everlasting generation (according to *Jesus Is Coming* by Rev W.E. Song).

III. EVENTS SURROUNDING THE ANTICHRIST WHICH MAY TAKE PLACE ON THE LAST DAYS

- A. Revival of Israel.
- B. Russia and her allies shall attack Israel, but Israel shall be saved.
- C. After the attack on Israel by Russia and her allies, the antichrist will seize the opportunity to build up his power.
- D. The Church Shall be Caught Up
 - 1. The righteous will rise; those who are alive shall be transformed and be caught up in the air.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit shall cease to oppose the hindrances of the antichrist.
 - 3. The great tribulation shall begin on earth at the same time.
- E. Times of the Great Tribulation
 - 1. The first three-and-a-half years
 - a. The antichrist and Israel sign a peace pact for seven years.

- b. The Israelis build the holy temple.
 - c. The antichrist rules the entire world.
 - d. The beginning of the 70 weeks of years in the Book of Daniel.
2. The second three-and-a-half years
 - a. The antichrist is revealed to the world.
 - b. The antichrist stops worshipping God in the holy temple of Jerusalem, and also blasphemes God.
 - c. He declares that he is the “Messiah” and compels the people to worship him.
 - d. The antichrist rules in Jerusalem for three-and-a-half years.
 - e. The remnant of the Israelis who belong to God are slain because they refuse to worship the antichrist.
 - f. God executes judgment on the antichrist, which is the time of judgment of the seven bowls mentioned in Revelation.
- F. Battle of Armageddon
1. The antichrist, the false prophets, and the spirits of Satan gather the armies of all nations and assemble at Armageddon.
 2. God’s army—the angels and the saints—defeat the atheistic government.
 3. The antichrist and the false prophets are thrown into the lake of fire.
 4. Satan is bound for a thousand years.
- G. Period of the Millennium
1. Christ rules over the whole world in Jerusalem.
 2. Wild beasts dwell peaceably among men.
 3. The saints rule with God and judge the world.
 4. The people on earth often worship God in Jerusalem.

5. There is no more death.
6. The holy temple is purified and put into use again.

H. Satan Is Loosed

1. Satan deceives those who are born in the millennium.
2. The disobedient will be consumed by fire from heaven.
3. Satan is thrown into the lake of fire forever.

I. The Final Judgment

1. All humankind will face the final judgment.
2. The scroll is opened; those whose names are not found in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire.
3. The earth will be destroyed by fire.

J. The New Things on the New Earth

1. Seven new things: new earth, new heavens, new city, new world, new holy temple, new healings, new lights, and new works.
2. Seven things that shall be no more: no death, no darkness, no sins, no lies, no betrayal, no sicknesses, and no memories of the past (from *The Antichrist* by Yu Yi-Zhong, Bible Research Fellowship, Inc., June 1974).

IV. THE PLACE OF EMERGENCE OF THE ANTICHRIST ACCORDING TO THE PRE-MILLENNIUM INTERPRETATION

Many Bible scholars think that the antichrist only emerges during the seven years of tribulation. There are various opinions concerning "the place of emergence of the antichrist." The following are three main concepts:

- A. The Antichrist Emerges from the Revived Roman Empire
This concept is according to the ten toes recorded in Daniel

chapter 2; the little horn which emerges from the ten horns of the fourth beast is recorded in Daniel chapter 7. The fourth beast refers to Rome, and the antichrist will emerge from the Roman empire in the future. At that time Rome will be restored to its former glory. A ten-nation alliance will be formed and the leader of these ten allied nations will be the antichrist.

At the same time, king Gog from Magog of the north shall rise and lead his allied nations to invade Israel. According to many Bible scholars' opinion, the little horn mentioned in Daniel chapters 7 and 8 refers to two different persons. The little horn in chapter 7 refers to the antichrist, and the little horn in chapter 8 refers to the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan 2:21–45), which symbolizes the northern king Gog of Magog of the last days. There are various scholars who have different opinions as to when Gog, the king of the north will invade Israel. Probably it will happen beyond the great tribulation (Ezek 38:8–11) or during the great tribulation. There are some who think that it will be towards the end of the great tribulation.

At that time the antichrist will join in the great battle of Armageddon until the Lord descends from heaven and destroys him (Zech 12:1–4, 14:1–9; Rev 16:12–16, 19:17–21).

During the great battle of Armageddon, the kings of the east will form an alliance to join in the battle. The three foul spirits will go abroad to the kings of the world to assemble the three great allied nations for battle at Armageddon in Palestine (Rev 16:12–16). At that moment, the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven to destroy them (Rev 19:11–21).

B. The Antichrist Emerges from Syria

Some Bible scholars disagree that the antichrist emerges from Rome, and think that the antichrist emerges from Syria. The reason is that the little horn in Daniel chapters 7 and 8, and the king of the north in chapter 11 refers to the same person, the antichrist.

Chapter 7 mentions that he emerges from the revived 10 nations of Rome, but chapter 8 mentions that he emerges from Greece. The four nations of Greece include: Asia Minor, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt. All these places were part of the Roman territories. Chapter 7 mentions that he emerges from the ten nations of Rome, and the scope has been narrowed in chapter 8, which suggests that he emerges from the Greek territories, one of the ten nations. Chapter 11 further suggests that Syria, a northern nation of the four nations of Greece, is the place where the antichrist is born. As such, the antichrist is called the king of the north.

C. The Antichrist Emerges from Magog

Some Bible scholars think that the king of the north of Greece symbolizes the antichrist of the last days, and that he will emerge from the land of Magog.

They state that in the beginning of the seven years of great tribulation, a leader will emerge from the land of Magog who will be filled with Satan. He will have great power in order to fulfill the prophecies of the Bible concerning the antichrist. The following is a brief account of their findings:

Gog is the leader

The last portion of chapter 11 in the Book of Daniel clearly states that the antichrist is the king of the north. Joel has prophesied that during the great tribulation there will be such great and unprecedented armies which will attack Israel,

and these great armies will come from the north (Joel 2:1–11, 20). Ezekiel has clearly defined Gog of Magog as the leader of the armies of the north (Ezek 38:15, 39:2). He shall lead his allied nations to attack Israel like a cloud covering the land, a great tribulation such as never has been since there was a nation till that time (Dan 11:40–41, 12:1).

D. Attack During Tribulation—Half of Seven

Gog's attack on Israel will be in the "latter years" (Ezek 38:8–16). The seven years of tribulation shall be divided into two periods, the first half being the "the beginning of tribulation" and the second half the "great tribulation." The antichrist makes a strong covenant with the Israelis over the first three-and-a-half years (Dan 9:27). After this time the antichrist breaks the covenant. With the support of the false prophets of Judah, he enters into the holy temple and proclaims himself as God. He wants the people to worship him and prohibits all matters pertaining to worshipping the true God (Rev 13:11–18). Hence, the Israelis will suffer great tribulation (Rev 12:6, 13–17; Zech 13:8).

When the antichrist leads his army southward to attack Israel, the king of the south and all those nations that oppose the king of the north—the antichrist—will become stronger and rise to wage war against him (Dan 11:40). Though the king of the north prevails over many nations, tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him (Dan 11:44). A possible reason is that the nations in the east send armies to attack Magog. Another possibility is that the kings of the east, seeing the king of the north occupying Israel, also assemble their armies to fight for possession of the middle east. Under such circumstances, the antichrist shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many. At this moment, wars shall break out in all parts of the world, and they will assemble to fight in Armageddon. There will

be unprecedented earthquakes, and great and terrible bombings by man. The city of Jerusalem shall be split into three parts and the cities of the nations shall fall. This situation is similar to the one when God sends fire on Magog (Ezek 38:17–23; cf. Zech 14:1–7).

The descriptions of Gog made by Ezekiel and the king of the north mentioned by Daniel correspond with each other:

1. He blasphemes and opposes God; God is also against him (Ezek 38:3, 39:1–7; Dan 7:10–25, 8:11–12, 11:41).
2. He goes against the saints, and should be destroyed (Ezek 38:16–18; Dan 7:25, 8:13–15, 11:41).
3. He occupies Jerusalem and sets up his palace, but tidings from the north alarm him and fire descends on Magog. He shall go forth in fury and utterly destroy many people (Ezek 39:6; Dan 11:44–45).
4. He is not defeated by armies of the world, but God himself destroys him (Ezek 38:4–23, 39:1–3; Dan 7:11, 8:15, 11:45; Zech 12:1–6, 14:1–7, 12–15; Rev 19:11–21).
5. His invasion of Israel will be a complete failure. The chosen people are greatly victorious because of God's salvation, and their nation is restored forever (Ezek 39:9–10, 25–29). Chapters 40 to 48 discuss the temple of the millennium (Dan 7:18, 22, 27, 8:14).
6. After the millennium, Satan rebels once again, represented by Gog and Magog. They are Satan incarnate. After the millennium, Satan is released temporarily while still making use of the remnants of Gog and Magog. With the spirit of the antichrist he

deceives the nations and besieges the tents of the believers, the beloved city. Fire then descends from the sky and destroys them. As for the antichrist himself, he will be cast into hell after the great tribulation, and before the millennium (Rev 19:20, 20:10). Obviously, Gog is the antichrist; he is not someone who hails from Rome. Otherwise, God would have used another name. The above are three inferences of the pre-millennium interpretation concerning the emergence of the antichrist (according to *Study of Bible Prophecies* by M. I. Ho).

Following is a brief account of the writer's view concerning this subject.

E. Two Uncertainties Found in the Pre-millennium Interpretation

From the above descriptions, common views that are held by Bible scholars of the pre-millennium interpretation include:

1. The antichrist will appear after the church has been caught up.
2. The enemies of the antichrist are the Israelis.
3. The antichrist makes a strong covenant with the Israelis in the first half of seven, but breaks the covenant in the second half of seven and wants to destroy them.
4. When the Israelis are in great danger, God will intervene to deliver them.
5. The antichrist is thrown into the lake of fire. Satan is bound, and what follows is the millennium.

With such an interpretation, the writer wishes to point out two reservations:

- a. "The church is caught up": will it take place before the last day?
- b. Are the enemies of the antichrist the Israelis, or Christ and his Church?

F. The Two Reservations Mentioned in 5(a) and (b) of Section E:

a. *"The Church Is Caught Up": Will It Take Place Before the Last Day?*

Bible scholars supporting the pre-millennium interpretation have drawn up the following sequential diagram:

the advent of Christ ⇨ the church is caught up ⇨ great tribulation ⇨ Christ appears with the saints ⇨ establishment of the millennium ⇨ Satan is released ⇨ judgment of the last day ⇨ entry into eternity (heaven or hell)

According to their interpretation, the taking up of the Church will not take place on the last day. The Church is caught up because the number of Gentiles are filled. For the believers who are saved, with the dead resurrected, those who are still alive will be transformed into spiritual beings and be caught up in the air. After which, a great tribulation shall come upon the earth and the Israelis shall face days of trouble. The tribulation has nothing to do with the Church because the Church

has been caught up. During this period the Israelis will believe in the Lord Jesus.

After the expiration of the seven years, Christ will appear to destroy the antichrist. The millennium will be established on earth, the saints and the Israelis will have great glory in this kingdom. The last day will come after the millennium; Christ the Lord shall execute the final judgment to end this generation.

- 1) There is only one resurrection which is on the last day. As such, the believers will be resurrected and caught up on the last day. According to the pre-millennium interpretation there are three resurrections. The first is when the Church is being caught up; the righteous of the past shall be resurrected on that day and appear with the Lord in the air. The second is after the seven years of great tribulation, when Christ appears with the saints; those who repent and die during the great tribulation will resurrect and be allowed entry into the millennium. The third is on the last day; all evil-doers will be resurrected to face judgment and be thrown into the lake of fire. However, what does the Bible say?
 - a) Resurrection will take place on the last day when Christ comes again.

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing at all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn 6:39–40).

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn 6:44). “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn 6:54). “With a loud trumpet call” when the Lord comes again on the last day” (Mt 24:30–32). “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor 15:52). “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess 4:16–17).

- b) There is only one resurrection. The good and the evil will resurrect at the same time. “For the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (Jn 5:28–29). “Having a hope in God which these themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust” (Acts 24:15). “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2). The righteous and the evil shall be judged at the same time. This shows that the resurrection of the good and the evil occurs at the same time (Rev 20:12–13; Mt 25:31–46).

2) There is only one judgment, which is on the last day; therefore the church is caught up and redeemed on the last day. According to the pre-millennium interpretation there are two judgments. The first is when Christ appears with the saints during Christ's second advent on earth to judge all nations living on earth, so as to differentiate those who are qualified to enter the millennium. The second is after the millennium comes to an end, to execute the final judgment on the sinners on the last day and cast them into the lake of fire. However, what does the Bible say?

a) Judgment occurs on the last day when Christ makes his second coming, and all who died will be judged.

“And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb 9:27). On the judgment day, “the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day” (Jn 12:48). The day of the coming of the Lord is the last day. “Since indeed God deems it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant rest with us to you who are afflicted” (2 Thess 1:6–10). “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done” (Rev 22:12).

b) There is only one judgment: the good and the evil will be judged at the same time.

“He [God] has fixed a day [last day] on which he will judge the world [all nations] in righteousness by a man [Christ] whom he has appointed” (Acts 17:31).

- ◆ According to Matthew 25:31–46:
 - The day of judgment is the last day: “When the Son of man [Christ] comes in his glory” (v. 31).
 - The judge is Jesus Christ: “The Son of man will sit on his glorious throne” (v. 31).
 - Those to be judged include the good and the evil: “All the nations” (v. 32).
 - Outcome of judgment: the evil receives eternal condemnation, but the righteous receives eternal life (vv. 34, 41, 46).

- ◆ According to 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10:
 - The day of judgment is the last day: “On that day” (v. 10).
 - The judge is Christ Jesus: “The Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God” (vv. 7–8).
 - Those to be judged: the evil ones “shall suffer the punishment,” but the righteous shall be granted rest (vv. 7, 9).

- ◆ According to Revelation 20:11–15:
 - On the day of judgment, the last day: “From his presence earth and sky fled away” (v. 11; 2 Pet 3:10–13).
 - The judge, Christ Jesus: “Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it” (v. 11).
 - Those to be judged include both the good and the evil: “The dead, great and small, standing before the throne” (v. 12).
 - Outcome of judgment: “If any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (v. 15).

According to the above revelations from the Bible, “the church is taken up” when Christ comes again on the last day. This is the day when all nations will resurrect and be judged at the same time. Those who are saved shall enter into eternal life to be with God in glory. Those who are condemned are to be cast into the eternal fire to suffer with the devil. The old heavens and earth will be dissolved by fire, and the new heavens and new earth will appear (2 Pet 3:10–13). Therefore, it does not make sense that after the church is redeemed and taken up, there will still be a great tribulation, a millennium on earth, and for Satan to be released. It seems that “the taking up of the church” will not take place before the “last day.” In fact, the day the church is taken up will be the last day. This day is drawing near. As such, we should stay sober to be received by the Lord.

b. Are the Enemies of the Antichrist the Israelis, or Christ and His Church?

Bible scholars supporting the pre-millennium interpretation have interpreted that the antichrist will emerge after the Church is taken up. There will be a time of sufferings for the Israelis before the millennium. According to their speculations, the antichrist will emerge either from the revived Rome, Syria, or Magog. The motive of his emergence is to harm and eradicate the nation of Israel, and that has nothing to do with the Church. These countries deem Israel as their enemy, which is equivalent to opposing Christ. However, what does the Bible say?

1) The Jews rejected Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ’s foremost mission is to redeem the Jews. As the Lord Jesus says, “I was sent only to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 15:24). He was born in Judea for this purpose. He first preached to the Jews but they rejected him and refused to gather under his wings. As such, their houses were forsaken and their nation became desolate (Mt 23:37). The Lord once wept for Jerusalem because of the ignorance of her people (Lk 19:41–44). Not only did the Jews reject the Lord, they even compelled the governor Pilate to release a notorious prisoner and had Jesus crucified on the cross instead. They even said: “His blood be on us and on our children” (Mt 27:25).

- 2) The Jews are no longer the chosen people of God. The Jews who proclaimed they were the chosen people of God lost their status in the New Testament period. As Paul said: “For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal” (Rom 2:28–29). “For I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin” (Rom 3:9) for they all need God’s salvation because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). In order to become the chosen people of God to inherit the glorious heavenly inheritance, one must believe in Jesus and receive water baptism. As the Bible says: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal 3:27–29).

3) Is the national revival of Israel a rejection of Jesus Christ?

As of today, the Israelis have been hard-hearted in not believing that Jesus is the Savior. Their national revival movement clearly indicates that they do not acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. Their intention for national revival is to repossess Canaan, and more importantly, to rebuild the holy temple in Jerusalem on the original temple site built by Solomon so that they can offer sacrifices to God. What they are doing is against Jesus' redemption on the cross. If God were to fulfill their wish, then the Lord's sacrifice on the cross would have been in vain.

The Israelis suffer great tribulation in their effort for national revival because of the tribe of Esau's "perpetual enmity" toward them (Ezek 35:2-5). The Arabian countries want to form an alliance in order to wipe out Israel completely so that its name shall no longer be remembered by man (Ps 82:4-7). In future, Israel will be a target of attack by all nations (Rev 16:12-16). When the time comes as prophesied by Isaiah: "If the Lord of hosts had not left us children, we would have fared like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah" (Rom 9:29). This has to do with the great sin of their ancestors who nailed the Lord on the cross. But they will not be wiped out completely because it is the Lord's grace for them to learn that Jesus is the Savior. As mentioned in the Bible: "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over

a first-born” (Zech 12:10). By then their number will not be many, for the Bible says: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved” (Rom 9:27).

- 4) Anti-Israel is different from antichrist
The Israelis should be the ones who lead people of all nations to believe in the Savior of humankind. Instead, they strongly resist Jesus Christ. They are being deceived by the spirit of the antichrist. However, most Bible scholars stubbornly claim that anti-Israel is antichrist, and this is a great error.

- 5) The antichrist as mentioned in the Bible
In a narrow sense, the term antichrist refers to any theory or any source of power, including any individual, organization, or nation which opposes Christ. In a broader sense, it refers to any theory, attitude, and power which opposes Christ. All their words and deeds come from the spirit of the antichrist (1 Jn 4:3). The objective of the antichrist is to deny Christ and to wipe out his Church. His methods are many and varied. His main motives are to: confuse the truth, disrupt the way to the truth, destroy the unity of the Church, eliminate the power of the Church, persecute the Church, and destroy the faith of the Church toward Christ.

V. THE ANTICHRIST AS MENTIONED IN THE APOSTOLIC ERA

- A. According to the Apostle John
Bible verses: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false

prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already. Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world, therefore what they say is of the world, and the world listens to them. We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 Jn 4:1–6).

Note: According to the above Bible verses, all deeds of the antichrist comes from “the spirit of the antichrist,” also called the “spirit of error,” which is Satan’s spirit. His instruments are the “false prophets.” His erroneous theory is “to deny Jesus Christ who came in the flesh.” What he says is “of the world.” He refuses to listen to the counsel of those who belong to God.

Bible verses: “Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they are all not of us” (1 Jn 2:18–19).

Note: The above Bible verses reveal that the antichrist emerges at the end-time, and there are many of them. Their hostilities are such that “they went out from us [the church of God].” The church thus becomes divided. John was adamant that the church of God must not be divided.

Bible verses: “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 Jn 7).

Note: From the above three Bible verses, John was certain that the antichrist was the instrument of the evil spirits. Their main objective at that time was to deny Jesus as the Savior and to destroy the unity of the church.

B. According to the Apostle Paul

In Paul’s letters to the Thessalonica Church concerning the antichrist, a passage in which he mentions “the man of lawlessness” is noteworthy (2 Thess 2:1–10). It is analyzed as follows:

1. The antichrist is called “the man of lawlessness,” “the son of perdition,” and “the lawless one” (vv. 3, 8).
2. He is Satan’s messenger: “The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders” (v. 9).
3. He opposes Christ by resisting the Lord, and hinders the people from believing in him (vv. 4, 10). He robs the glory of God and “exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God” (v. 4).
4. He “will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders” (v. 9).

5. Time of emergence of the antichrist will be:
 - during the apostolic era, “for the mystery of lawlessness is already at work” (v. 7);
 - “only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way” (v. 7);
 - “and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming” (v. 8).
 - This shows that his appearing is before “that day,” which is before the advent of the Lord (v. 3).

6. His ending: he will be destroyed on the appearing and coming of the Lord (v. 8).

Note: The people in the past always believed that the prophecies would be fulfilled during their generation. As such they became excited and stayed alert. In fact, it refers to the distant future. “The lawless one” will be destroyed by the glory of the Lord on his second coming. He will emerge at the end-time, a time when man will depart from the truth.

C. The Antichrist As Revealed by the Lord Jesus

1. The desolating sacrilege

The Lord Jesus said to his disciples: “So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Mt 24:15–16). “The desolating sacrilege” spoken by the Lord Jesus not only refers to the Roman soldiers, but also refers to the emergence of the antichrist before the advent of Christ. For further study, the following are Bible verses from the Book of Daniel relating to the above subject:

Daniel chapter 8:

- a. "Out of one of them came forth a little horn" (v. 9).
- b. "It grew great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them" (v. 10).
- c. "It magnified itself, even up to the Prince of the host" (v. 11).
- d. "The continual burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown" (v. 11).
- e. "And truth was cast down to the ground, and the horn acted and prospered" (v. 12).
- f. "His power shall be great," but his ability comes from Satan and not from his own (v. 24).
- g. He shall cause fearful destruction, and destroy mighty men and the people of the saints (v. 24).
- h. "He shall even rise up against the Prince of princes" (v. 25).
- i. "But, by no human hand, he shall be broken" (v. 25).
- j. "The vision is for the time of the end" (v. 17).
- k. "For it pertains to the appointed time of the end" (v. 19).

Daniel chapter 9:

- a. "And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (v. 26).
- b. "And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week" (v. 27).
- c. "And for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate" (v. 27).

- d. “Until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator” (v. 27).

Daniel chapter 11:

- a. The king of the north will be defeated in battle and return “enraged and take action against the holy covenant” (v. 30).
- b. “Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate” (v. 31).
- c. “And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is determined shall be done. He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women; he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all” (vv. 36–37).

Note:

According to the above Bible verses, prophecies of Daniel concerning “the desolating sacrilege” are as follows:

- a. It refers to Antiochus Epiphanes (a little horn) who came from Syria, which branched out from Greece (Dan 8:9). He raised an army to attack the holy city, defiled the holy temple and killed many chosen people.
- b. It also refers to the year A.D. 70 when the Romans attacked Jerusalem, burnt down the holy temple and killed many Jews.
- c. It also especially refers to the impending emergence of the antichrist at the end-time. Below are some of his special features:

- 1) He gives no heed to the gods of his fathers (Dan 11:37).
- 2) He will appear at the end-time, before the second coming of Christ (Dan 8:17, 19).
- 3) He exalts and magnifies himself above every god and speaks astonishing things against the God of gods (Dan 11:36).
- 4) He opposes the truth, destroys and profanes the temples and fortresses, prohibits burnt offerings and persecutes the saints (Dan 11:31).
- 5) The horn acted and prospered (Dan 8:12; 11:36).
- 6) His power comes from Satan (Dan 8:24).
- 7) Finally, he shall be destroyed by God (Dan 8:25).

According to the revelation of the Lord, when the desolating sacrilege appears, he will bring with him great tribulation that has never been before nor after, and the Lord Jesus will come after the great tribulation (Mt 24:15, 21–22, 29–31). Whether the antichrist of the desolating sacrilege of the last days has already emerged is an important matter to watch for!

2. The beast with ten horns and seven heads

After the Lord's ascension, the apostle John saw in a vision a beast with ten horns and seven heads rising from the sea. This beast is the antichrist. Following are several points relating to it:

- a. It is an instrument of Satan: "And to it the dragon gave its power and his throne and great authority" (Rev 13:2).
- b. The ten horns and seven heads refer to a group of nations (Rev 13:1). A "head" symbolizes a king, and a king represents a country. The "seven heads" refer

to many nations. The “horn” symbolizes power, and ten horns means that it has great power. This beast symbolizes a group of great and powerful nations. It is the greatest instrument utilized by Satan in the last days.

- c. It suffers a mortal wound but is healed. Though this organization experiences great internal conflicts, it will later be united and become stronger than ever. At that time those “who dwell on earth” shall follow it and all nations will be subdued by it (Rev 13:3–4, 7, 14).
- d. It shall blaspheme the name of God [Jesus], and his dwelling [the Church], and those who dwell in heaven [spiritual believers]. But it is only allowed to exercise authority for 42 months (Rev 13:5–6).
- e. Those whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb will worship it; whoever refuses to worship it will be slain (Rev 13:5–6, 15–17).
- f. Its ending: the beast which opposes Christ shall be captured and thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev 19:19–20, 20:10).

3. Gog and Magog

According to Rev 20:7–10, the greatest persecution in history will occur before the coming of the Lord and this persecution comes from Gog and Magog. Related contents are appended below:

- a. When the one thousand years are over, Satan will “deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle” (vv. 7–8).
- b. Their number is like the sand of the sea and they will march up over the broad earth (vv. 8–9).

- c. They will surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city—the true church (v. 9).
- d. But fire will come down from heaven and consume them (v. 9).
- e. And the devil who had deceived them will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophets are, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (v. 10).

VI. CONCLUSION

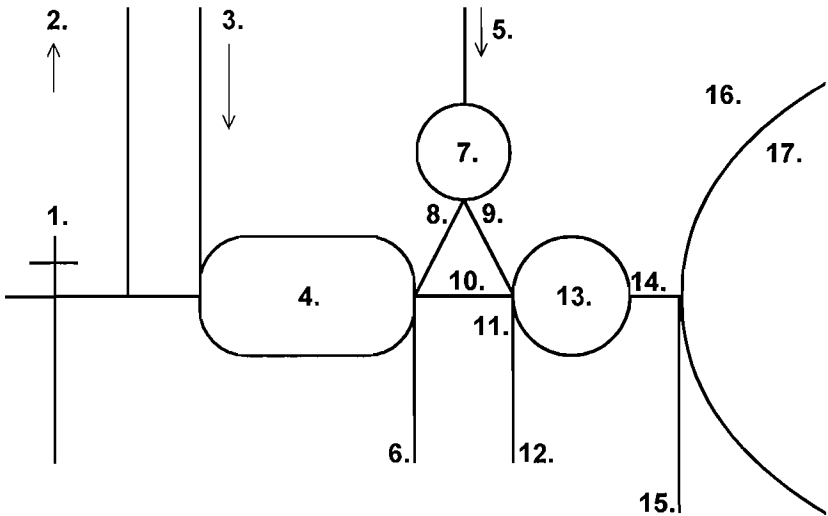
In a broader sense the antichrist includes all religions, culture, political powers, theories, etc., which oppose Christ. During this end-time, his foremost job is being implemented by “the lawless one,” “the desolating sacrilege,” “the beast with ten horns and seven heads” and “Gog and Magog.”

The similarities of these antichrists are:

- they will appear in the last days before the coming of Christ.
- they are instruments used by Satan.
- the antichrist will oppose Christ and persecute the Church.
- the antichrist will finally be destroyed by Christ.

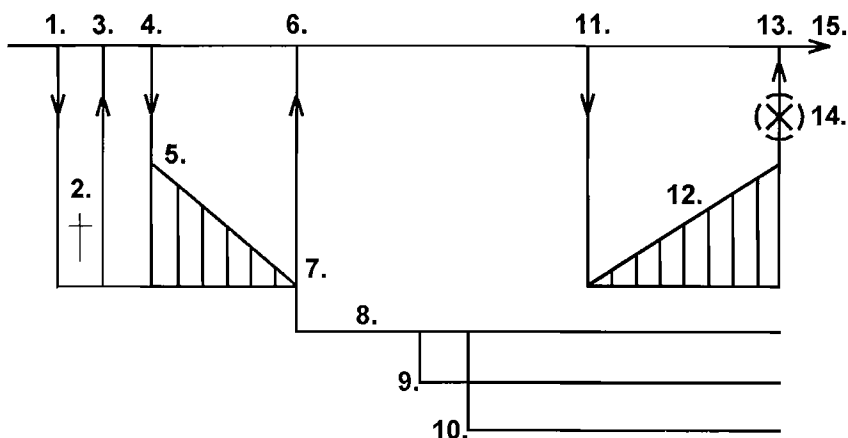
Obviously, they are atheistic groups which will rise into prominence at the end-time! At the present moment, many churches are under extraordinary fiery ordeals and are facing various trials. We must do our utmost to pray for them. We should grasp hold of the opportunities and rely on the Holy Spirit to preach the perfect gospel of salvation to all people on earth. We should also lead a holy life, love our fellow men and be prepared to receive the Lord when he comes again (Rom 13:10–11; Rev 2:10, 18:7–9).

Diagram of the End-time According to the Pre-Millenium Interpretation



1. The Lord died for all humankind
2. Ascension of the Lord
3. The Holy Spirit descended
4. Era of the Church
5. The Lord's second coming
6. Resurrection of the righteous ones
7. The Church meets the Lord in the air
8. The Church is taken up
9. The Lord appears with the saints
10. The great tribulation
11. Judgment of all nations
12. Resurrection of the righteous ones during the great tribulation
13. The thousand year reign
14. Satan is released
15. The final resurrection
16. Judgment of the last day
17. Everlasting life

Diagram of Christ's Second Coming According to the Interpretation of the True Jesus Church



1. Birth of the Lord Jesus
2. The Lord died for all humankind
3. The Lord ascended into heaven
4. Descent of the Holy Spirit of the early rain
5. The true church was established
6. The Holy Spirit departed from the church
7. The church was captured
8. The Roman Catholic Church
9. The Greek Orthodox Church
10. The reformation
11. Descent of the Holy Spirit of the latter rain
12. The true church is revived
13. Christ's second coming
14. The church is taken up
15. Entry into the heavenly kingdom