

An Unfolding Understanding

of

The End Times

by

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A booklet that considers the Book of Daniel in light of unfolding world events and other prophecies of scripture regarding the end of the age and the coming Kingdom of God.

An Unfolding Understanding Of The End Times

Introduction

As the end of this age draws near the need to understand what prophecy of scripture speaks of becomes more and more important because we are beginning to walk in the times of which these prophecies foretold. In this booklet we will consider prophecies which have to be interpreted correctly if we are to truly know what lies ahead.

Many have been led astray by misinterpreting what they thought God had said. So this search for understanding is not a matter of inquisitiveness, or just a search for knowledge. Scripture is clear that the Lord wants His sons to have insight, to not be unaware but be prepared and walking in the light, for their lives will be part of the prophesied events that are to unfold and He desires them to walk with Him in His purposes.

Daniel was told, regarding the visions, dreams and interpretations that he was given, "These words are concealed and sealed up until the time of the end." (Daniel 12:9) Now, because the end of this age draws near, we can expect to receive insight that has perhaps not been possible before. Jesus told us that the role of the Holy Spirit would be to "tell us of things to come." (John 16:13) Let us therefore look to the Holy Spirit to increase our spiritual understanding of what scripture foretells and ask Him to bring us revelation that only He can give, revelation we now need.

Let us remember, "God does nothing without first revealing His secret counsel to His servants, the prophets." (Amos 3:7) So let us ask the Teacher, the Holy Spirit, to confirm what is truth and

ask Him to protect us from error, and to disclose that which we now need to know.

Interpreting Daniel 2 Correctly

We begin in the book of Daniel. In Daniel Chapter 2 we are told of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in which he saw a huge statue, a dream which Daniel was able to interpret: "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendour, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay." (Daniel 2:31-33)

Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar that the statue represents different kingdoms, the first king being Nebuchadnezzar himself, that of gold, representing the Babylonian Empire, which Nebuchadnezzar ruled over.

Daniel explained that following the Babylonian Empire a kingdom would come that was represented by silver, then after this a kingdom represented by bronze, and following that a fourth kingdom represented by iron.

Although the dream gave no identity to the kingdoms that were to come it is to be seen from history that the kingdoms of silver and bronze represented Medo-Persia and then Greece, each of which conquered the next, though their identity was not given to Daniel.

The commonly held view is that the fourth kingdom is therefore Rome which subsequently conquered Greece but in this booklet we will consider if it could be the historic caliphate of Islam and

not the Roman Empire that is represented by the legs of iron. The answer to this question helps us see what is beginning to happen in the world today, events that we are seeing unfold daily on our news broadcasts. The correct answer to our question makes an important difference to how we understand what we now see unfolding in the Middle East and our expectation of how the end of this age will unfold. Our concept of Europe is shaped by whichever view we hold to.

The Coming Kingdom Of God

What is without doubt is that at the end of the fourth kingdom a stone will appear and strike at the feet of the statue causing the whole statue to shatter in pieces. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." (Daniel 2:34&35)

It is clear this stone represents the Kingdom of God that will replace all the other kingdoms upon the earth. It clearly speaks of Jesus' coming Millennial rule. Daniel's interpretation, we note, is not just historic as all the kingdoms are to be destroyed 'at the same time'. This dream still has a future fulfilment.

As we consider the dreams, visions and prophecies of Daniel we will see that they all span the time from Judah's captivity in Babylon to the very end of the age, each prophecy or dream overlapping the other and culminating with the future reign of Jesus when He comes as King to

reign upon the earth. Recognising this is a key to understanding the book of Daniel. Each vision or dream does not tell a new story but sheds increasing light on the whole future of Israel from the time of Judah's exile into Babylon to Israel's eventual full and final restoration when Jesus comes to set up His Kingdom on earth.

The Four Kingdoms

In Daniel 7, we next read of a dream that Daniel himself was given. In this dream he saw “four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. In scripture the ‘sea’ or ‘waters’ represents the peoples or nations of the world. (cf. Revelation 17:15)

The first beast “was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, ‘Arise, devour much meat!’ After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.” (Daniel 7:1-8)

It is clear that these four kingdoms correlate to the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream culminating in the rise of the antichrist at the end of the age. Our knowledge of history would indicate that the first three kingdoms represent, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece as these kingdoms did indeed follow after Babylon was defeated. But the correct interpretation of the fourth beast is not so easily understood. Historically it was Rome that immediately followed the kingdom of Greece but do we make an assumption if we think Rome is the fourth kingdom referred to in the dream? This booklet will suggest an alternative point of view.

The Coming Kingdom Of God

What Daniel dreamt in Daniel 7 also describes the stone that would crush the feet of the statue, that Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel 2: "I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, and the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him, and to Him was given dominion, glory and a Kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass

away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:9-14)

The dream clearly describes events that culminate at the very end of the age, the time when Jesus will come as King to reign upon the earth, destroying the beast with the breath of His mouth. Daniel’s dream correlates with the Revelation and we can compare these prophecies to gain more understanding. The Revelation tells us that Jesus’ reign will last for one thousand years. (cf. Revelation 20:4&6) This is after the first resurrection and the catching away of the true church, the subsequent wrath of God and the return of the church with Jesus to the earth, to reign with Jesus when His Kingdom will fill the earth.

Who Is The Fourth Beast - Different From All The Others?

Whilst we are asking the question as to who is represented by the fourth beast we see that Daniel also sought to “know the exact meaning of the fourth beast which was different from all the others” and “the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and which before it three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and its appearance was larger than its associates.” (Daniel 7:19&20)

We begin to observe that from the fourth beast the antichrist will arise. As Daniel kept looking he saw the “horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them.” (verse 21)

We see that at the time of the end, the fourth beast persecutes the “saints of the Highest One” - the church who will eventually take possession of the Kingdom with Jesus. (verse 22) The persecution Daniel saw speaks of the persecution of the saints at the end of the age, the persecution that was seen by John in the

Revelation. (cf. Revelation 13:1-10) This persecution is during the great tribulation, when Satan is thrown down to the earth having great wrath because he knows his time is short. From the Revelation we see that it is then that the beast will persecute the saints. (cf. Revelation 12:12)

Legs of Iron With Feet of Iron Mixed With Clay

This fourth beast had legs of iron with feet made of iron mixed with clay. There are many scholarly interpretations of the significance of the feet that were made of iron mixed with clay. As the statue represents a time line from when Daniel lived to the end of the age it seems that the feet represent a manifestation of the kingdom made of iron in its last stages, at the time of the antichrist represented by the little horn.

As we consider these end-times prophecies it becomes clear that the little horn represents the antichrist, who Paul describes as 'the man of sin', who will sit in the temple as if he is God, (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:4) described in the Revelation as the beast who will persecute the saints, the end-time church. (cf. Revelation 13:7)

If we want to understand the last years of this age it is important to correctly identify the fourth beast, the legs of the statue made of iron. The answer to the question as to, "Who is the fourth beast?" is important.

There are those who believe that the feet of iron mixed with clay, on the legs that are made of iron, represent the historic Roman Empire which became 'Christianised' in the fourth century and spread throughout the world. But is this correct?

As we consider the statue in Daniel 2 we see :-

- the head ...is of..... fine gold
- the breast and arms ...are ... silver
- the belly and thighs ...are brass
- the legs ...are of iron
- the feet ...are part..... iron and part clay

“The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.” (Daniel 2:32&33)

The fourth kingdom is divided into two and although Daniel refers to “four kingdoms” the statue seems to have five divisions, a division occurring between the legs and feet.

Daniel was given the interpretation: “In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.” (Daniel 2:41-43)

The Western Viewpoint

Many have viewed history from a Western viewpoint thinking that Rome must fulfil the role of the fourth kingdom because it was Rome that succeeded Greece historically.

But in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, although he was told of three kingdoms that would succeed his, it seems that these kingdoms would be centred on Babylon. Many kingdoms have

arisen since Nebuchadnezzar's day but Daniel says of the fourth kingdom: "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces." (Daniel 2:40) Does Rome fit the criteria of Daniel's interpretation? Has an assumption been made by many that is incorrect? Is the assumption that Rome is the fourth kingdom actually correct?

In trying to prove the fourth beast is Rome there are some who consider that Babylon moved to Europe taking note that the gates of Babylon actually were moved by archeologists to Berlin in the early twentieth century, where they are still to be found in the Pergamum Museum.

But the Roman Empire only reached the actual city of Babylon for a few months in AD 116 and never actually gained a genuine foothold over Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom. Are we right to consider that Rome fulfilled the criteria to be reckoned as the fourth beast?

It is said that the fourth kingdom succeeded the three preceding empires, but Rome, whilst it did succeed the Greek Empire did not go on to occupy the majority of the Babylonian or Persian empires. The only world empire that fulfils this criteria is the Islamic Empire and caliphate that was to come later.

Some argue that because Rome immediately succeeded Greece, which succeeded Medo-Persia, which succeeded Babylon, that this is the correct interpretation of this vision. But was Nebuchadnezzar being told of coming kingdoms which would not necessarily be sequential but which would have full dominion over His empire; a coming empire from where the antichrist

would arise? Nebuchadnezzar's dream, of course, spanned the centuries until the very end of the age.

Rome or The Islamic Caliphate?

As we continue to seek the answer to our question we can turn to the Book of Revelation. In the Book of Revelation we see another picture of the end-time beast: "Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?' There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." (Revelation 13:1-7)

This beast we see was like a leopard, akin to the beast in Daniel 7 where a leopard represented Greece. It had feet of a bear, which in Daniel 7 represented Medo-Persia and a mouth like a lion, which in Daniel 7 represented Babylon. Does this description in the Revelation indicate that this beast is from the Middle East and not from Rome and Europe which is not mentioned?

The Seven Heads Of The Beast

John was told the meaning of the seven heads: “Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.” (Revelation 17:9-11)

We are told that the seven heads, which are seven kings or kingdoms, that span a portion of history. Five have fallen, one is in existence at the time John wrote down the Revelation and this is obviously Rome, but it is the seventh that will somehow re-emerge.

Who are these seven kingdoms? There are seven empires that Satan has used historically to persecute Israel whilst she dwelt in the land. Are these the seven kings?

1. Egypt
2. Assyria
3. Babylon
4. Medo-Persia
5. Greece
6. Rome
7. The Islamic Caliphate culminating in the Ottomam Empire

Are these the seven heads the scripture is referring to, which would indicate from where the eighth arises? Certainly the Roman Empire is one of those empires that Satan has used to try to destroy God’s purposes in the earth but it is the sixth empire in this list which was then in power at the time of John receiving the

Revelation, described as “one is”, but we see another kingdom was yet to come after this.

Of this seventh head we see that it fatally wounded but was healed; “One of his heads as if it has been slain, and this fatal wound was healed.” (Revelation 13:3) Seeking a satisfactory interpretation some look to the European Union as a re-emergence of Rome.

The seventh kingdom, a kingdom that was and is not, would however more exactly fit the description of the Islamic Caliphate, that culminated in the Ottoman Empire, that rose up in the 7th century to overspread the Middle East and beyond.

There have been many empires that have arisen upon the earth other than these seven, of course, but these seven heads seem to represent those linked to the end-time beast. As in Daniel 2 and 7 it is a limited picture of the kingdoms that would arise on the earth following that of Babylon, kingdoms linked to the people of Israel and linked to the Middle East. But Daniel was to receive yet more understanding and more detail that gives us a clearer picture of what is yet to unfold.

The idea that Daniel’s prophecies are pointing to the Roman Empire as being the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream has been the common view, despite it is seemingly being an impossible candidate according to the events that are to unfold and which are described in more detail in Daniel 11 & 12. It seems clear from the final chapters of Daniel that the end-time kingdom of the beast will centre on the Middle East, amongst the Islamic nations, not emanating from Europe.

The Great Harlot - Mystery Babylon

Introduced in the Revelation, as an extra player at the end of the age, is the “Great Harlot who sits on many waters.” (Revelation 17:1) No mention of the Harlot is found in Daniel except that these prophetic dreams begin in Babylon and written upon the Harlot’s head was “Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth”. This woman is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” and is described as “the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (Revelation 17:5,6&18) The waters where the Harlot sits are “peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues.” (verse 15) We see the woman sits on many nations whilst she will also ride the beast that arises from these nations.

Though she rides the beast she will be destroyed by it: “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the Harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.” (Revelation 17:16&17)

Some would consider the Harlot as only representing the counterfeit church of Rome riding a Roman/European beast. The church of Rome is indeed found among the nations world-wide but the description of Mystery Babylon and her destruction would suggest something far wider because her destruction drastically alters the economy of the whole world bringing a change in the ability to buy and sell. It suggests Mystery Babylon is not just a religious entity.

Is a Different Interpretation Required?

We can read of the time when the whole world used the same language after the flood, when they said, “Let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly,” and they used them like stone with tar for mortar saying, “Let us build for us a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name.” (Genesis 11:3&4)

Seeing this, God confused their language knowing nothing would be impossible for mankind, and scattered them over the face of the whole earth. Thus they stopped building the city which was named ‘Babel’ or ‘Babylon’, from the Hebrew word ‘balal’ meaning, ‘confuse’. (verse 9)

So it is we see the spirit in man acting as if he is able to be as God, acting without reference to God and considering himself as being his own means of salvation, bearing his own name. And we still see this spirit in the world today, not just in false Christianity and false religions that replace faith with works and deny God’s true order, but also in all political, and economic structures. With the world elite creating their own agenda’s, and the world banking system putting mammon first, men deny God and continue to try and build with man-made uniformity just as they did in the days of Noah. Is this ‘Mystery Babylon’ in all her fulness, a religious-political spirit that denies God?

Whatever, Mystery Babylon is going to be judged by the beast with ten horns, who “will hate the Harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire, for God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 17:16&17)

John is told, “The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (verse 18) It seems it is the same city that man began to build in the land of Shinar in Noah’s day, (cf. Genesis 11:2) the city that was built in man’s rebellion to his Maker, is a spiritual city, one that is clearly evident today.

Babylon’s Fall

In the Revelation John saw the fall of Babylon; “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great! And she has become the dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit... for all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.” (Revelation 18:2&3)

The fall of Mystery Babylon is extremely great. She will be paid back “double for all her deeds,” and in the “cup that she has mixed” there will be mixed “twice as much for her.” (verse 6)

“In one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning, and famine, and she will be burned up with fire.” (verse 8)

“The kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’” (verse 9)

Will the judgement be seen in what was historically Babylon, but also worldwide wherever the spirit behind the Harlot is found?

“And the merchants of the earth *will* weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more, cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.” (verses 11-13)

This is the day that James wrote of, when the “rich, weep and howl,” for their miseries have come upon them: “Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! Behold, the pay of the labourers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.” (James 5:1-6)

The judgement of Mystery Babylon will see all things that were luxurious and splendid pass away. “The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, *will stand* at a distance, and *will be* crying out as they see the smoke of her

burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?'... 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'" (Revelation 18:15-19)

The judgement of Mystery Babylon brings a huge economic collapse from which the world cannot recover and it paves the way for a new world-wide economic system.

The world system as we know is dealt a swift blow. John saw a strong angel take up a stone, like a giant millstone, and throw it into the sea saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth." (verses 21-24)

The Charge Against The Harlot

It is necessary to rightly understand this charge against the Harlot. Jesus declared against the lawyers in His day, "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them. So you are witnesses and approve the deeds of your fathers; because it was they who killed them, and you build their tombs. For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may

be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.” (Luke 11:47-51)

As part of the Harlot, false Christianity shed the blood of the saints as seen in the historic acts of the false Christian religion. Man-made false Christianity, built by the tares sown among the wheat at the beginning of the church age, will have been separated at the end of the age, as Jesus foretold, at the time of harvest. Gathered into bundles, false Christianity - the tares - are now also burnt along with the Harlot. (cf. Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-42)

The true church, the body of Christ, having been separated to escape this judgement, will remain after this judgement, remaining on earth through the great tribulation to come, when, as Jesus foretold, “The righteous will shine forth in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears let him hear.” (verse 43)

The voice from heaven will have gone forth, “Come out of her My people, that you may not partake of her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4) Is this just a call to just come out of false Christianity or to come also out of all the world holds dear?

The last days ministry of the church now lies ahead when “those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.” (Daniel 12:3) This is concurrent with the distress coming upon all the nations.

This time of victory for the true church will inevitably also bring persecution. As Jesus declared, “If they persecuted Me, they will

also persecute you.” (John 15:20) Yet the church will overcome; “And they overcame him - the devil and Satan now thrown down to the earth with his angels with him - because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.” (Revelation 12:10&11)

After this judgement of the Harlot the blood of the saints will be shed by the beast for their fight is not yet over. But God says when the Harlot is judged, “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgement for you against her.” (Revelation 18:20)

The beast, however, will then persecute the saints for the last battle of the true church in this age is not yet over. “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.” (Revelation 14:9-12)

Contrary to the beliefs of those who think the church is not here during this great tribulation John sees, “the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4) The first resurrection, we see, includes those who have not worshipped

the beast or received his mark! But their reward follows; “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.” (verse 6)

So we see that it is given to the beast “to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.” (Revelation 13:7&8) Those written in the book of life - the true believers - will not worship the beast!

It seems an Islamic conflict will effect the whole world although the battles as described in Daniel 11 are fought in the Middle East. The full import of what scripture tells us some try to avoid by refusing to believe what scripture says, foolishly thinking that by denying the church goes through great tribulation this can be avoided. Yet the wonder of this victory of the true church who will know and experience the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ at this time, being conformed to His death in love, will demonstrate the reality of the Kingdom as never before. (cf. Philippians 3:10)

Who Are Represented By The Ten Horns?

In past years great excitement was created as the European Union grew in number and approached being made up of ten nations but the number of nations in the union grew to far exceed ten.

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the

beast for one hour. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. (Revelation 17:11-13)

Scripture tells of ten nations that will try to remove Israel from being a nation: "They have said, 'Come let us wipe them out as a nation; that the name of Israel be remembered no more.'" (Psalm 83:4) The ten nations are listed; Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, Philistia, Tyre and Assyria. (cf. Psalm 83:6-8) These are the nations that surround Israel, all of which are Islamic.

The Islamic Caliphate

Islam began in the early 7th century originating in Mecca. It quickly spread in what is now Saudi Arabia but from its very beginning was troubled by factions. By the 8th century the Islamic empire extended from Spain in the west to the Indus river in the east. The Islamic 'Golden Age' refers to the period traditionally dating from the 8th century to the 13th century when much of the Islamic world was flourishing scientifically, economically and culturally.

Most Muslims are of one of two denominations. Sunni and Shi'a Islam are the two major divisions of Islam, the two legs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, perhaps. The historic background of the Sunni - Shi'a split lies in the schism that occurred immediately after Muhammad died in the year AD632, leading to a dispute over succession to Muhammad as a caliph of the Islamic community spread across various parts of the world.

Between 1299 and 1453 the Ottoman Empire rose up from within Islam dominating the Middle East until its defeat and dissolution between 1908 and 1922. Becoming a secular state at that time, is this the fatal wound that is now being healed as Turkey turns

back to its Islamic roots with aspirations to be the seat of a caliphate that will unite Islam?

With this understanding we can now consider Daniel 8 in light of present day world events.

Daniel 8

Described in Daniel 8, in the reign of Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's successor, Daniel had another dream. He saw a ram which had two horns, one longer than the other, the longer coming up last, butting westward, northward and southward, that none could stand against. Daniel then saw a male goat coming from the West, "over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes." (Daniel 8:5)

In the dream, the male goat struck the ram in his anger, shattered the two horns and flung the ram to the ground and trampled on him.

The horn then magnified himself exceedingly but as soon as he was mighty the large horn was broken and in its place came four conspicuous horns towards the four winds of heaven. Then, out of one of them came a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great towards the south, toward the east and to the "beautiful land"; towards Israel. From this description we see the antichrist, magnifying himself to be equal with the Prince of the host, removing the regular sacrifice from him and throwing down the place of His sanctuary. (cf. Daniel 8:1-14)

Seeking to understand the vision, the angel Gabriel is sent to give Daniel understanding. First of all, Gabriel declares that this vision "pertains to the time of the end." It is not an historic battle that is being described. Gabriel tells Daniel that he will tell him

what “will occur at the final period of indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.” (Daniel 8:17&19)

We clearly see that this is a future battle, at the time of the end, although many bible scholars have rightly seen the similarity to when Alexander the Great overthrew Medo-Persia.

Gabriel explained that the ram represented Medo-Persia, now modern day Iran and Iraq, and Gabriel explains the ‘shaggy’ male goat is the kingdom or king of Greece. This is the first times the actual names of the empires are used in the God-given interpretations that we find in the book of Daniel.

We need to note, however, that ‘Greece’ is in fact translated from the name, ‘Javan’, that more accurately aligns with Western Turkey today. To think that this prophecy refers to modern day Greece is misleading. As regards the location of Javan, biblical maps show Javan as being in Western Turkey.

The four horns, Gabriel explains, are four kingdoms that “arise from the first horn’s nation, although not with his power.” (Daniel 8:21-22)

It is in the “latter period of their rule” that a “king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue, His power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people and through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency.” (Daniel 8:23-25) We are reading a description of the antichrist, the ‘son of perdition’, the beast of Revelation! (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and Revelation 13:1-10)

This 'little horn' is described in a similar way as in Daniel 7, the one which arises from among the ten horns that speaks boastful words, from before whom three horns are broken off? "While I was contemplating, behold another horn, a little one, came up among them - *the ten horns* - and three of the first horns were pulled out by its roots before it." (Daniel 7:8)

We see that each vision and dream that we read of in Daniel are all referring to the rise of the antichrist, each vision overlapping the other.

The interpretation that Daniel was given of his earlier dream, in Daniel 7, says, "The meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts and which was larger in appearance than its associates. I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favour of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the Kingdom. Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints

of the Highest One; His Kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.” (Daniel 7:20-27)

In Daniel 8 we begin to see detail of a coming conflict in the Middle East, a conflict that is beginning to indicate that the he-goat of Daniel 8 could be modern day Turkey (Javan) as it begins to return to its Islamic roots and regain the power that it lost as the Ottoman Empire declined at the beginning of the twentieth century, now stretching its influence to an Islamic Caliphate that will cover the Middle East. One of the heads of the beast that had a fatal wound which was healed; “One of the heads of the beast appeared to be fatally wounded. But the mortal wound was healed, and the whole world was astonished and followed the beast.” (Revelation 13:3)

The Revelation and Daniel Concur

We see in the Revelation “the great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns,” (Revelation 12:3) the beast that comes “up out of the sea having ten horns and seven heads.” (Revelation 13:1) This equates to the beast of Daniel’s dream. It is scripture that interprets scripture.

Daniel 9

In Daniel 9 we read of Daniel’s prayer for his people, Israel, after realising that Judah’s 70 year captivity in Babylon had come to an end in accordance with Jeremiah’s prophesy. (cf. Jeremiah 25:11 and Daniel 9:1-19) Gabriel comes to Daniel once more, to give Daniel insight and understanding of his earlier vision in Daniel 8. (cf. Daniel 9:21-23)

This time Gabriel explains that “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.” (Daniel 9:24)

What Gabriel explains spans the period from Israel’s historic promised restoration after her captivity in Babylon to the coming of Jesus to reign as their King on earth when Jerusalem will be fully restored and Jesus will return there as King.

Daniel is told that from the “decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty two weeks... then after sixty two weeks the Messiah would be cut off.” (Daniel 9:25)

This period of sixty nine weeks, or ‘sevens’, or ‘weeks of seven years,’ deals with the period until Jesus’ first coming and His crucifixion. This calculation when considered historically spans from the agreement of Artaxerxes to the rebuilding of the temple in approximately 444BC to the crucifixion of Jesus. (cf.Nehemiah 2:1-8)

Daniel received this understanding whilst in Babylon, bringing him confirmation that Jerusalem would be built again: “*Jerusalem* will be built again with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.” (verse 25)

Daniel is being given the timing of the first coming of Christ, but informed that He will be cut off and that Jerusalem would be destroyed again, for, “the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary and its end will come with a flood, even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.” (verse 26)

Praying for the restoration of Jerusalem Daniel is told of Jerusalem's future far beyond the 70 years of captivity in Babylon prophesied by Jeremiah, her captivity that was then coming to an end. The understanding of 70 weeks went far beyond the rebuilding of the temple in his own day, beyond the building of Solomon's temple and its further destruction, to the very time of Jesus' return to the earth, when He sets His feet on the Mount of Olives. (cf. Zechariah 14:4)

The Prince Who Is To Come

The destroyers of the final temple are "the people of the prince who is to come." (verse 26) We can be confused by the fact that Jerusalem would have two times of destruction, one in AD 70 when the Roman General, Titus and his armies, would besiege and destroy Jerusalem, and another when those in Judea would be warned to flee again from Jerusalem in a hurry at the very end of the age after the abomination of desolation is seen, a time still future for us. (cf. Matthew 24:15&16)

It is the destruction of Jerusalem at the end of the age that Gabriel refers to when he speaks of the 'prince who is to come', not Rome's destruction of the temple in AD70. Gabriel says of the 'prince who is to come', "He will make a firm covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (verse 27)

Much confusion is also caused by those who assume the 'week of the covenant with many' is the seventieth week that Gabriel decreed, but it isn't. **The seventieth week does not begin until**

the abomination of desolation is seen standing in the holy place and the abomination of desolation occurs in the middle of the week of the covenant made with many. The seventieth week, therefore, cannot be the same week as the week of the covenant with many.

The seventieth week will see three and a half years of great tribulation followed by three and a half years when God will pour His wrath out upon the earth, natural Israel being here on earth throughout this last week unlike the church who are caught away before the wrath of God begins. The church is not destined to wrath: “For God has not destined us for wrath...” (1 Thessalonians 5:9) and “...Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:10) (I explore this in my booklet, “Trying To Understand The End Of The Age and The Ages To Come”.)

Natural Israel goes through the time of great tribulation and the wrath of God, the whole last seven years of this age. For natural Israel this is the Seventieth Week.

The ‘great tribulation’ is not the last three and a half years of Daniel’s 70th week but the first half of this week.

This explanation by Gabriel we therefore see is referring to the final destruction of Jerusalem which is yet to come, not the earlier destruction of the temple by the Romans in AD 70 and we would be wrong to assume that it is Rome who destroys the city a second time. I would suggest it is the people of the antichrist who is to come, who will destroy Jerusalem a second time, and the antichrist who comes to sit in the temple is not from Rome but an Islamic antichrist, an interpretation that fits with Daniel 11 but which is difficult to apply to Rome.

Daniel 10

Daniel was greatly distressed by the visions he saw and set his heart again on being able to understand what lay ahead for Israel. After three weeks of fasting he saw “a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult. Sent from heaven amidst great spiritual opposition to give Daniel understanding, Daniel is told, “I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth.” (Daniel 10:21)

We read of this understanding in Daniel 11.

Daniel 11

In the 11th Chapter, Daniel is given detail of what is going to unfold in the Middle East. It give a picture of historic events as well as future events that have yet to come. We read of the historic power struggles that ensued in the Middle East, events that can be attributed to recorded historic events dating back to 480BC.

Having begun with historic events, however, part way through, the explanation moves to the end of the age, and the rise of the antichrist again like all of the prophecies in Daniel. The description, “At the appointed time” that Gabriel used in Daniel 8, is used again to begin to describe the timing of the abomination of desolation that Jesus told us would indicate the beginning of the great tribulation, which event begins the last seven years of the age: “And forces from him would arise, desecrate the

sanctuary fortress and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.” (Daniel 11:31)

It seems that a temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices restored by Israel who do not acknowledge the first coming of Jesus and His sacrifice for the sin of the whole world upon the cross. Continuing to deny the first coming of Jesus Christ the setting up of another temple upon the temple mount is itself an abomination, but when the antichrist sits in this temple as if he is God it brings about an abomination that will bring desolation.

The Abomination of Desolation

Jesus told His disciples, “When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place,” THEN “those in Judea *should* flee to the mountains” and THEN, “there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world.” (Matthew 24:15,16&21)

Daniel was told that in the “middle of the week” of the covenant with many the ‘prince who is to come’ will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering and on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.” (Daniel 9:27)

In Chapter 11 Daniel is told again of the abomination of desolation when forces will arise and “desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation,” being told that “from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up there will be 1290 days.” (Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11)

Daniel 12, Matthew 24 and the Revelation

Daniel is told that “at that time”, when the abomination of desolation is seen, “Michael the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise and there will be a time of distress such has never occurred since there was a nation until that time.” (Daniel 12:1)

Jesus speaks of the same event: “When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place... then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall.” (Matthew 24:15&21)

The abomination of desolation is the event that Jesus tells us will see the commencement of great tribulation. It is not to be confused with the wrath of God that comes after Jesus returns for His elect.

As we have mentioned, this is a time when those who are in Judea will need to flee to the mountains, not even stopping to get things that are in their houses. Those who are working in the fields will have no time to even “turn back to get their cloak.” Unlike the attack on Jerusalem by Titus that was by a slow siege, this attack comes “as a flood”. (cf. Matthew 24;16-20)

Then, “if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short.” (Matthew 24:22) Contrary to much wrong teaching, the church goes through this time of great tribulation. This is not the wrath of God but great distress caused by Satan who knows he only has a short time left. (cf. Revelation 12;12)

At this time many will be looking for the Messiah, for Christ, but Jesus warned that no heed should be taken of reports that He is anywhere, for His coming will be in the sky as the lightning flashes from one side of the sky to the other: “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him, for false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them, for just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (Matthew 24:22-27)

It is during this time of great tribulation that the “gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations” and THEN, “the end shall come.” The ‘end’ is the end of the great tribulation, the end of the church age, the age of grace, not the end of the world. (Matthew 24:14) Thereafter, despite the awesome wrath of God men will not repent. (cf. Revelation 9:19-21) This time of great tribulation will see the final glorious ministry of the true church in this age when, under great persecution, the good news of the Kingdom is preached in all the world.

We see from Daniel’s prophecy that the antichrist will “by smooth words... turn to godlessness those who act wickedly towards the covenant,” but it is also a time when “those who have insight among the people who know their God will display strength and take action, and those who have insight among the people will give understanding to many; yet they will fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days.” (Daniel 11:31-33) This is the last battle of the righteous, the true sons of

God who are the church, whose end-time ministry lasts three and a half years just as Jesus' ministry did. It is the time of ministry of Jesus through His body that will bring great persecution but offer grace and salvation to those who receive the good news of the Kingdom of God.

The persecution of the saints by the beast is described to Daniel, "Now when they will fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join them in hypocrisy. And some of those who have insight will fall in order to refine, purge, and make pure until the end time, because it is still to come at the appointed time." (Daniel 11:34&35)

As already mentioned, before the first resurrection and the catching away of the church (often referred to as the 'rapture' from the Latin for catching away) John saw "the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or His image, and had not received the mark of *the beast* upon their forehead or upon their hand... they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Revelation 20:4) From this scripture alone it is clear that the church is here during the time of the beast for these martyrs who are part of the first resurrection refuse the mark of the beast.

Daniel is told that the antichrist will at this time, "Do as he pleases and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods, and he will prosper until the indignation is finished. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. But instead he will honour a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honour him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the

strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honour to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price. And at the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. But rumours from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.” (Daniel 11:37-45)

We see that these battles are not world-wide as we know it, but across the Middle East, across the area of Nebuchadnezzar's rule, yet “authority over every tribe, and people and tongue and nation will be given him, and all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.” (Revelation 13:7-8)

Reconciling the descriptions in Daniel and the Revelation requires spiritual understanding that only the Holy Spirit can grant us, understanding yet to be given as we ask for this spiritual understanding and revelation. It surely requires wisdom from above that we must also ask the Lord to grant us. Such is the need for us to now ask the Holy Spirit for clarity for this time draws near.

We are told, “If any is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes, if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and faith of the saints.” (Revelation 13:10)

The Time Of Harvest

But Satan does not have it all His own way. It is a spiritual war played out on the earth as it is the time when there is “an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue and people.” (Revelation 14:6) John heard a voice saying, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!” ‘Yes’, says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labours, for their deeds follow with them.’” (Revelation 14:13)

It is the time of the last great harvest by the Lord of the Harvest: “Put in your sickle and reap,” One like the Son of Man having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand was told, “Because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.” (cf. Revelation 14:14-16)

It is a time, as Daniel prophesied, when “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever,” which Jesus also spoke of, “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father,” (Daniel 12:3 and Matthew 13:43) all tares, the stumbling blocks and those who commit lawlessness, having been taken out from among the sons of the Kingdom.

Daniel was told that this time of distress, this great tribulation, “would be for a time, times and half a time”; three and a half years. (Daniel 12:7) “Many will be purged, purified and refined,

but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.” (verse 10)

As we have seen it is the time when Satan will have been cast down to the earth itself, “and his angels *will be* thrown down with him,” Satan “having great wrath because he knows he only has a short time.”(cf. Revelation 12:7-9 &12) It is Satan who causes the great tribulation.

The Day of the Lord - The Wrath of God

Paul reassured the church in Thessalonica, “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you be not quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

Paul is referring to the abomination of desolation that will see the beginning of the great tribulation and the revealing of the antichrist, the man of sin.

“Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to

an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12)

We see from Daniel's 12:1 that it is Michael who restrains and it is when he stands up or taken out of the way, that allows the time of great distress and tribulation. His restraining influence being removed it is then that the antichrist will be revealed. (cf. Daniel 12:1)

So Daniel's prophecy draws to an end but the Revelation continues to describe the wrath of God that will be poured out upon the world after the church is caught away on the day of the resurrection of the righteous dead: "and many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake" - the righteous - "these to everlasting life." (Daniel 12:2a)

Paul spoke of the first resurrection and the catching away of the church: "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will 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 Thessalonians 4:16&17) The first resurrection is also the day when the saints are caught away, the event so often referred to as the rapture.

It will be after the Millennial reign of Christ, after another thousand years, that the second resurrection of the unrighteous takes place, “to disgrace and everlasting contempt.” (Daniel 12:2b)

But at the end of this age the wrath of God comes to cleanse the earth of all unrighteousness before Jesus’ earthly reign. The Revelation describes this awesome judgement of the Day of the Lord that was prophesied by the prophets of old, the time God pours out His wrath: “For the day of the Lord draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head... But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy.” (Obadiah 1:15-17)

Natural Israel, those of Israel who are not saved before Jesus returns, go through this time of God’s wrath, sealed as it begins, for this is the last half of Daniel’s 70th week that was decreed for Daniel’s “people and *his* holy city”, Jerusalem. (cf. Revelation 7:4-8 and Daniel 9:24)

Because Israel is here during the day of the Lord, the Old Testament prophets prophesy of this time. Zephaniah prophesies, “Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly; Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. I will bring distress on men so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; And their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord’s wrath; And all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His

jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.” (Zephaniah 1:14-18)

The wrath of God is the great and awesome Day of the Lord, that Joel prophesied would “come as destruction from the Almighty.” (cf. Joel 1:15) It brings seven trumpet judgements that are also described by seven bowls of wrath in “the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants... and communicated by His angel to His bond-servant John.” (Revelation 1;1)

The last trumpet judgement of the seven trumpet judgements in the time of God’s wrath being poured out must not be confused with the “last trumpet” that announces Jesus’ return for His church, (1 Corinthians 15:52) when Jesus sends “forth His angels with a great trumpet and they gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” (Matthew 24:31) The trumpets giving warning of Christ’s return are to be distinguished from the trumpets announcing God’s great wrath.

And we need to understand the wrath of God is not the great tribulation. These terms are never used interchangeably in scripture. The wrath of God brings an awesome judgement from God through which a remnant from natural Israel must go before Jesus returns to the earth with His Church to set up the Kingdom of God here on earth for 1000 years. Scripture is clear, Israel’s full restoration occurs in the Millennium, not in this age.

So as to be safe, those of natural Israel who do not become part of the body of Christ in this age, the times of the gentiles, are sealed on their foreheads; “And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand,

from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed; (Revelation 7:4-8) sealed it seems, so they are not harmed during the coming wrath of God.

It is during the wrath of God that the great stone Nebuchadnezzar saw destroys the statue representing the kingdoms on earth. (cf. Daniel 2:44&45) The wrath of God culminates with Jesus return to the earth with His saints - the church.

A Judgement Of The Nations

Going through the wrath of God to populate the world with natural Israel during the Millennium are those God judges righteous. It is by their works these are saved from God's wrath, not all being killed during this time of God's anger. In just one trumpet judgement a third of mankind is killed, such is the awesomeness of God's wrath. (cf. Revelation 9:18)

Jesus spoke of this judgement of the nations that takes place after His return for his church. When Jesus returns for the church at the end of the great tribulation a judgement of the nations takes place, the separation of sheep from the goats in which Jesus will put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left. Counted righteous are those who acted towards "one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me." - "I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you invited

Me in; naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you visited Me.” (Matthew 25:31-46) Those who treated the church well during the great tribulation will get their reward whilst God brings His judgement on the rest of the nations!

The Final Battle of this Age

The wrath of God finishes with a battle outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem. The beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gather at Armageddon, (Revelation 16:16) north of Jerusalem, assembling to make war against Jesus as He returns to the earth with His saints, the church that is His body. (Revelation 19:19)

As Jesus returns to the earth, this time with His saints, “From His mouth comes a sharp two edged sword, so that with it He may smite the nations”... and He will tread in the “wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.” (Revelation 19:15) It is described as the “great supper of God” for all the birds that are in midheaven will “eat the flesh of commanders, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.” (cf. Revelation 19:17&18) This battle is often wrongly called the ‘battle of Armageddon’. The armies gather there but the battle is actually fought at Jerusalem when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives.

It is a battle prophesied by Ezekiel: “As for you, son of man,’ thus says the Lord God, ‘Speak to every kind of bird and to every beast of the field, “Assemble and come, gather from every side to My sacrifice which I am going to sacrifice for you, as a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the

blood of the princes of the earth, as though they were rams, lambs, goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, from My sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. You will be glutted at My table with horses and charioteers, with mighty men and all the men of war,” declares the Lord God. And I will set My glory among the nations; and all the nations will see My judgment which I have executed and My hand which I have laid on them. And the house of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God from that day onward. The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I dealt with them, and I hid My face from them.” (Ezekiel 39:17-24)

We see this final battle is with the antichrist - the beast - and the false prophet, who are “thrown alive into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 19:20) “The rest *are* killed with the sword that comes from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.” (verse 21)

Gog, of the land of Magog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, is the satanic angel over the geographical region that is now Turkey, as most biblical atlas’s clearly show. Gog & Magog will be released for a short time at the end of Christ’s Millennial rule when Satan is also released. (cf. Revelation 20:7&8) Neither Gog or Magog are the beast although they help to give him power.

The Millennial Reign Of Christ Jesus

With the wrath of God over, the Millennial reign of Christ will begin. Jesus has returned to the Mount of Olives to enter

Jerusalem by the Eastern Gate that is now shut. (cf. Ezekiel 44:1&2) The stone that Nebuchadnezzar saw smash the feet of the statue, “the stone that struck the statue” which “became a great mountain and filled the whole earth,” (Daniel 2:35) will now be fulfilled. At last the Kingdom of God has come upon the earth with Jesus as King.

Just as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 2 the whole statue is destroyed suddenly, as the stone, representing the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, strikes the feet of the statue and the whole statue is shattered and its residue is blown away. The coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ fills the whole world leaving no trace of the previous kingdoms. All four of the kingdoms are destroyed “at the same time.” (Dan. 2:40)

“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up *His* Kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that Kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.” (Daniel 2:44)

Conclusion

We have seen what scripture tells us of the days that lie before us, days in which prophecy is now beginning to be fulfilled. We are not given the detail of how Satan and the rulers, powers and world forces of this darkness and the spiritual wickedness in heavenly places effect the world whilst wars, focused on Jerusalem and engulfing the Middle East, plays out. How Islam will bring the battle to all nations we can perhaps speculate but the nations will not be immune from Satan’s wrath.

But let us be assured; in this end time the true church will arise from her slumber and captivity: “Now the salvation, and the power, and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been

thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. (Revelation 12:10-12a)

Let us also be assured that in what is coming upon the earth the sons of the Kingdom “overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

These prophecies tell us of what lies ahead. The Lord does not want us to be unaware of these things for, as sons of light, we will not to be taken by surprise. We are not to be in darkness “that the day would overtake *us* like a thief; for *we* are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-10)

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Table Of Prophesied Future Events In Chronological Order

- Iran as a Medo-Persian ram with two horns butting westwards, northwards and southward. (Daniel 8:3&4&20)
- Javan (Turkey) responding as a goat with one horn, coming across the earth without touching the ground, shattering the two horns. (Daniel 8:5-7&21)
- The goats horn is broken off and four horns from its nation arise. (Daniel 8:8&22)
- Out of the four horns will come a small horn - the antichrist. (Daniel 8:9-14 & 23-25)
- Jerusalem surrounded by armies. (Matthew 24:16-20)
- The abomination of desolation will be set up. (Daniel 8:11,9:27, 11:31, 12:11, Matthew 24:15)
- The Antichrist, the man of sin will sit in the temple as if he is God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
- Great tribulation for 3½ years. (Matthew 24:21, Revelation 12:14)
- No peace - quarter of earth's population killed. (Revelation 6:4&8)
- Harlot judged by the beast. (Revelation 17:1&16) Economic collapse - buying and selling only with the mark. (Revelation 13:17)
- The saints persecuted by the beast (Revelation 12:17, 13:10)
- The Gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed to the whole world. (Matthew 12:14) A great harvest. (Revelation 7:9, 14:6)
- After the great tribulation Jesus returns with His angels for the saints - the church. (Matthew 24:29-31, 1 Corinthians 15:52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16&17)
- The great and awesome 'Day of the Lord' - God's wrath poured out. (Revelation 6:16&17, Revelation 8&9) A third of the trees burnt up, (Revelation 8:70 a third of mankind killed, (Revelation 9:18)
- Jesus returns to the earth with His saints - the church. (Revelation 19:11&14) The stone smashes the kingdoms of the earth, (Daniel 2:35) and Jesus sets up His Kingdom to fill the whole earth. (Daniel 2:44, Daniel 7:14)
- The beast and false prophet thrown alive into the lake of fire. Satan chained for 1000 years. (Revelation 19:20 and 20:2&3)
- Jesus reigns on earth for 1000 years. (Revelation 20:4) Jesus reigns on earth with His saints with a rod of iron.
- All Israel is saved. (Ezekiel 39:25-29)
- Jesus Kingdom has come on earth.