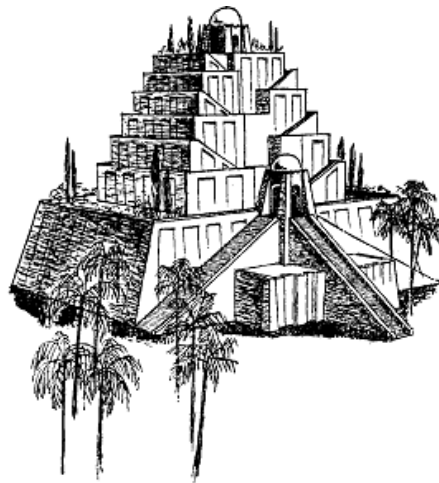


# **DANIEL**

## **The Apocalypse of the Old Testament**

**His life**



**His prophecies**

**An epigraphic, theological and practical  
commentary**

by

**Roland Kleger**

**Kreuzlingen, May 2022**

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CH-8280 Kreuzlingen (Switzerland)**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. Historical Context

*Daniel* means: “**God is my judge**” or “**My judge is God**”. Daniel came from a noble royal family (cf. Dan 1:3-6). He was born between 630 and 625 B.C. in Israel. It was in the time when King Josiah purified Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 2Ch 34:3). Possibly, Daniel should have been influenced by King Josiah’s purification of Jerusalem and Judah as well as the prophets like Jeremiah and Zephaniah before their deportation into exile.

At the age of about 20,<sup>1</sup> Daniel and other young Israelites from the royal family were taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. In Dan 1:4, we learn that Daniel was very well educated and was a naturally bright and handsome-looking young man. When he arrived in Babylon, he quickly learned to speak the Chaldean language.<sup>2</sup> God gave him and his three friends a great deal of wisdom (Dan 1:17); especially Daniel, who was talented in interpreting visions and dreams. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.), Daniel occupied a very strategic post in the Neo-Babylonian Empire: this as a reward for interpreting the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. chap. 2).

The kings that followed Nebuchadnezzar are not mentioned in the book of Daniel, except Belshazzar the son of King Nabonidus (chap. 5). It’s possible that Daniel didn’t play an important role during the reign of the kings that followed Nebuchadnezzar. Dan 5:10 tells us that Belshazzar was informed by his mother<sup>3</sup> that “there’s a man in your kingdom who knows enough to interpret the mysterious words written on the wall.” Consequently we believe that Daniel wasn’t as famous as he was during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. This does not surprise us for the son of King Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, was killed by his brother-in-law Neriglissor, who in his turn only governed for four years. His son Labashi-Marduk (Laborosoarkad) was also assassinated after nine months reign. His assassins replaced him with Nabonidus, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonidus reigned from 556 to 539 B.C. A Persian archive tells us that Nabonidus gave up his throne during the third year of his governance in the city of Babylon to his son Belshazzar. Belshazzar ruled together with his father Nabonidus. The latter went to reside in the Arab town of Tema. Tema was a fort in Arabia. Nabonidus waged war against the nomadic Arabs and the Medo-Persians. This explains why Daniel, at the time of Belshazzar, is believed to be the third highest person in the New-Babylonian Empire (Dan 5:16): of the three, Nabonidus was the first, the second being Belshazzar and the third was Daniel (cf. Dan 2:48; 5:7.16.29).

During the short reign of King Darius the Mede, Daniel occupied a place of honour. He was one of the three top ministers of the kingdom (Dan 6:2). It is very possible that Daniel had influenced King Cyrus’ decision to let the Jews go back to their motherland where they reconstructed the temple in Jerusalem and returned the sacred utensils that were looted by King Nebuchadnezzar. These utensils were made unclean by Belshazzar (Dan 5:3). The decree signed by King Cyrus was a fulfilment of Daniel’s prayer (cf. Dan 9:1) and was no doubt the highlight of his career. During this period, he

<sup>1</sup> He was perhaps even younger.

<sup>2</sup> This is Aramaic.

<sup>3</sup> It probably refers to Nikrotis, Nebuchadnezzar’s daughter.

must have been 90 to 95 years old. Daniel was a minister of the royal court of Babylon from the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (605-562 B.C.), up to the third year of King Cyrus of Persia (cf. Dan 10:1: in the year 536 B.C.); this is almost 70 years (605-536 B.C.)!

## B. The author of the book

5 Concerning the writing and the author of the book, Young says:

10 The book of Daniel is a product of the exile and was written by Daniel himself. We may note that Daniel speaks in the first person<sup>4</sup> and asserts that revelations were made to him (Dn. 7:2, 4ff.; 8:1ff., 15ff.; 9:2ff., *etc.*). Since, however, the book is a unity, it follows that the author of the second part (chs. 7–12) must also have composed the first (chs. 1–6).<sup>5</sup> The second chapter, *e.g.*, is preparatory to chs. 7 and 8, which develop its contents more fully and which clearly presuppose it. The ideas of the book reflect one basic viewpoint, and this literary unity has been acknowledged by scholars of different schools of thought.<sup>6</sup>

15 Daniel as a servant of the Lord is also mentioned in the book of Ezekiel (see Eze 14:14.20; 28:3). Actually, Ezekiel was a contemporary of Daniel. Here a striking parallelism can be observed between Daniel and John the apostle of Jesus. One could call the book of Daniel "*the Apocalypse of the O.T.*". What's also interesting is that Daniel had these revelatory visions when he was already 90 years old (Dan 7–10). John also had his when he was 90, when Jesus Christ revealed himself to him on the island of Patmos (cf. Rev 1:9ff).

## 20 C. The authenticity of the book

The reader of the book of the prophet Daniel ought to know that this is a book whose authenticity is particularly contested by liberal theology. In short, these are the two different views concerning the authorship of the book of Daniel:

- 25 1. Was the book really written by Daniel himself in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.? If the answer is yes, then the book contains authentic prophecies.
2. Or else, was the book written by an unknown writer during the period of the Maccabees in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.?

30 The first position is of course the one defended by the evangelicals. It insists on the integrity and the authenticity of the book. The second position is the one advanced by "biblical criticism". For those who have so far adopted the second position, the book of Daniel is just a "pseudo-epigraphy", a sort of fictitious writing of an anonymous author whose intention was only to encourage his Jewish contemporaries who were persecuted by the cruel regime of King Antiochus Epiphanes. The latter

35 was a ruler of the Seleucid kingdom (Syria).

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<sup>4</sup> We would like to clarify that this is the case only from Dan 7:2 onwards.

<sup>5</sup> We point out that the 1<sup>st</sup> part was written in the third person: see Dan 1:8; 2:14.

<sup>6</sup> Edward J. Young, 'Daniel' in *The New Bible Commentary Revised*, ed. D. Guthrie et al. (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), pp. 688-689. In the remaining part of the book the abbreviation NBC will be used for this commentary.

Concerning the question about the authenticity of the book of Daniel, modern criticism adopts the critical argumentation of the neo-platonic philosopher Porphyrios.<sup>7</sup> This opponent of Christianity affirmed a priori that prophecy (i.e. the capacity of forecasting things) does not exist. He wrote a work of several volumes against the Christian faith, beginning with... the book of Daniel! Why Daniel? Well, this is because he had known that Jesus was explicitly citing Daniel: see Mat 24:15 (cf. Mar 13:14). It is a quotation of Dan 9:27.

This question is very important for many reasons. Because if Porphyrios and those of the Higher Criticism who follow him are right in their allegation, then:

- The book of Daniel would have nothing to reveal to us about the monarchy and the sovereignty of God over all the nations of the world. But this is obviously the central theme of the book: cf. 2:21; 3:31-33; 4:31-34; 6:25-27. There is also the fact that if this were true, then all the visions of chapters 7–11 (where God reveals to Daniel all that will happen to the nations when the Son of man comes [Dan 7:13] to inaugurate the kingdom of God [cf. Dan 7:25-27]) would be doubtful.
- The book of Daniel would be “morally defiled”. Why do we say that? It’s because when you read the book, you clearly get the impression that it claims to be a prophetic message. It is true that the chapters 1–6 are historical<sup>8</sup> narrations but the chapters 7–11 are of course prophetic. Because all these visions prophesy what would happen from the era of Daniel (6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) up to the events of the messianic kingdom. All these chapters end by mentioning either the kingdom of God (Dan 7:26-27) or by expressions such as: “*the very end of time*”; “*the last days*”; “*the days to come*”, etc. (see Dan 8:17.19.26; 9:24-27; 10:14; 11:35.40). The passage Dan 12:1-2 even mentions the resurrection at the end of time (cf. Joh 5:24-29).
- If the book of Daniel were not authentically from the Daniel of 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., then Jesus would have either deceived himself or lied to us. Why do we say that? Because he cites the book of Daniel, witnessing clearly that the words of Daniel are prophetic and will be fulfilled: cf. Mat 24:15; Mar 13:14. If Jesus were to be wrong (which was the allegation of Porphyrios), then he would not be the Son of God. If Jesus had lied to us pretending that it was a true prophecy, and this knowing well that it wasn’t then Jesus would have been a deceiver. But this is unconceivable for a person of whom it is said that in him is no deceit (cf. 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15, etc.).

Here are some arguments put forward by the partisans of the position of the critics, that is of those who affirm the late dating of the book (i.e. in 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.) and affirm that the book of Daniel is a pseudo-epigraphy, which pretends to be prophetic even though it is rather “*vaticinium ex eventu*” (or “*vaticinia ex eventu*”):<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The official name in Latin: “Porphyrios”; 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.

<sup>8</sup> The vision of the statue in chapter 2 (which is of course in parallel with the four beasts in chapter 7; see below) is also prophetic in nature.

<sup>9</sup> This is a technical expression in Latin which means: Prophecies pronounced in the time (ex eventu = *out of the event*) when the described events happened or “*post eventum*” which means “*after the event*”. This means that it’s not real prophecy. If so then the author would have written things as if they were prophetic, whereas in reality the described events had already happened. This would imply that what the author wrote represents only an interpretation of what had already happened.

# 1. The position of the book in the Hebraic canon

The book of Daniel is found in the Hebraic canon among the “*scriptures*” (“*Kethubim*”),<sup>10</sup> but not among the prophetic books, the so-called “*Nebiim*”.<sup>11</sup> According to the Higher Criticism, the Hebraic canon of the prophets (“*Nebiim*”) had already closed before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., but not the one of the “*Kethubim*”. This should have been the reason why Daniel was not placed among the prophetic books, but among the “*Kethubim*” (the scriptures or the poetic books) of which the canon was (allegedly) closed later. Hence the assumption of the critics that Daniel had been written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.!

**Our (evangelical) objection to this allegation of the critics:** Though Daniel had a prophetic gift, he was a statesman. It is probably for this reason that his book is classified among those of the kings David and Solomon (“*Kethubim*”: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs etc., together with Ezra up to Esther). Consequently, there is nowhere in the Bible where we can find Daniel going to the Jews so as to announce the Word of God that was given to him. Yet, this is common with prophets: to be the spokesman of God to his people. Moreover, in the caves of Qumran, they found (among other manuscripts and fragments) also a good number of manuscripts or fragments of the book of Daniel and the Psalms which dated from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Therefore, if the book of Daniel had been written only in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. (164 B.C., in the Maccabean period, as the critics affirm), then the age of its original would be about identical with the one of the copies found in Qumran. But this is quite inconceivable.

## 2. Alleged “historical inexactnesses”

It is true that the passage of Dan 11:21-35 hints very much at Antiochus Epiphanes but does not concord with verses 40-45. It is perhaps the case of verses 36-39, but verses 40-45 do not have any relationship with Antiochus Epiphanes. Consequently, it's especially in these passages that the Bible criticism claims to find a decisive hint for dating the book of Daniel. The critics start out a priori that the author of the book was a contemporary of Antiochus Epiphanes and of the Maccabeans, yet, the author claims to be Daniel himself! We resume their (erroneous) reasoning: The author (whom they call *Pseudo-Daniel*) reported exactly **the history**<sup>12</sup> since the epoch of the Medo-Persians up to the era of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid. But he wrote (according to them) as if it would be a prophecy whereas in reality he reported only things that had already happened. The events related to in Dan. 11:21-35 have indeed been accomplished until 164 B.C. (Antiochus Epiphanes). On the contrary, the events related in the verses 36-45 were not fulfilled during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (in any case not the events reported in verses 40-45). This leads them to the conclusion that “*an unknown author*” had dared to prophecy from verse 36 to 45 (or at least from verse 40 to 45), that means he had tried to forecast things that will happen after the events reported up to verse 35 [or 39]). Since the events described in verses 40-45 (or even 36-45) have neither been accomplished during the era of Antiochus Epiphanes nor during the periods that followed later till the present time, the liberals conclude that the anonymous writer (for them “*Pseudo-Daniel*”) has been mistaken. Thus the critics conclude as follows: An unknown author has written the book of Daniel in 164 B.C. as if it were a prophecy. Right up to Dan 11:35, his report is

<sup>10</sup> “*Kethubim*” = plural passive participle *Kal* of the verb *kāthab*. The Hebrew Bible is divided into three parts: 1. The Law (Torah: the 5 books of Moses), 2. The prophets (*Nebiim*: Joshua to Malachi) and 3. The Writings (*Kethubim*: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentation, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles). Jesus confirms this triple division of the O.T. of his time (cf. Luk 24:27.44).

<sup>11</sup> “*Nebiim*” from the word *Nabi* = prophet.

<sup>12</sup> For liberal theology (cf. Porphyrios) it is not an authentic prophecy, but only alleged prophecy: *vaticinium ex eventu* (plural: *vaticinia ex eventu*), which means “a forecasting” of things at the very moment when they happen (at the same time) or even after (*post [eventum]*) they had happened.

exact and historical. Since the events reported in Dan 11:36-45 (or at least 11:40-45) have never been accomplished, it seems that the author had dared to forecast what would happen after the time of his recording. Since the things he had forecasted did not happen after him, he must have been mistaken. That's the reason why the liberals speak of "*historical inexactnesses*" in Dan 11:36-45 or (11:40-45).

**Our Objection:** We are hereby urged to give a general remark: The rationalistic view which asserts that prophecy (forecasting things) is not possible, denies a priori the divine revelatory character of the Holy Scripture. This is really the view of the enemies of the Bible and even of God. If God truly exists and is sovereign, then why couldn't he reveal to his people certain things in advance? About this point, the partisans of the Higher Criticism ought to prove to us their allegation. Some other alleged "*historical inexactnesses*"<sup>13</sup> will be treated in the commentary of the text. But to give an answer to this silly objection of the liberals, it would be worth remarking in advance that the author of the book of Daniel is not wrong in anything that he says in Dan 11:36-45. In truth the events related to in Dan 11:21-35 have reference to Antiochus Epiphanes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., whereas those described in Dan 11:36-45 refer to the Antichrist of the last days of whom Antiochus Epiphanes was simply a forerunner. We shall try to show this in our commentary on chap. 7–11 which appear again similarly in Rev 13 and 17, which obviously speak of the eschatological Antichrist.

### 3. The linguistic problem

The book of Daniel includes some Greek and Persian expressions. As it is said that Greek became an international language only after the military expeditions of Alexander the Great, consequently the book of Daniel should have been written after 330 B.C. The fact that there are also some Persian expressions in the book, presupposes a later date of recording than the time of Daniel (i.e. after the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). In short, the critics want us to believe that the presence of a few Persian words requires a later date than the foundation of the Persian Empire (539 B.C.), and that of Greek words even a date after the conquest of Israel by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.

**Our Objection:** If we analyse the question of languages seriously, then we will soon discover that these assertions of the critics are unfounded. Concerning the Aramaic text in the book of Daniel (chap. 2:4 to 7:28), the great scholar Kitchen declares that it matches well the Aramaic writings of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.<sup>14</sup> Concerning the 19 Persian expressions in the book of Daniel, it's worth noting that these expressions are in relation to the administration. Since Daniel wrote after the foundation of the Persian Empire (cf. Dan 10:1: "*in the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia*"), and this while he was an administrator of the royal court of Medo-Persia (cf. Dan 6:3ff), these 19 Persian words do not plead in favour of a later date of redaction of the book. It's nothing but normal that such expressions appear in a book that has been written during the Medo-Persian period. And what about the Greek expressions on which the liberals base themselves in fixing a later date of redaction? Actually there are only three Greek words in the text: the musical instruments<sup>15</sup> mentioned in chapter 3 of the book. It is good to know that in Egyptian texts of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Greek expressions were also observed. The exegete Yamauchi retorts rightly that if the book were written only in 165 B.C., then one would expect many more Greek expressions or even that the whole book would have been written in Aramaic or Greek, but surely not in Hebrew. In other

<sup>13</sup> Notably the mention of Belshazzar in Dan 5:1ff and of Darius in 6:1ff.

<sup>14</sup> K. A. Kitchen, 'The Aramaic of Daniel' in *Notes on some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, 1965, pp. 31-79; also mentioned in the NBC, p. 689. About this see also Stefan Bombeck, 'Die Verwendung der Präformativkonjugation im Aramäischen des Buches Daniel' in *Biblische Notizen*, Heft 83 (1996): pp. 5-8.

<sup>15</sup> Those translated by "*lyre, harp, bagpipe*" (cf. NBC, p. 692).

words: the linguistic argument in favour of a later date (Maccabean period) of the book is very questionable.

As we have already mentioned earlier, since the Qumran discoveries we have an even more convincing argument in favour of our evangelical position for dating our book by 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (and not 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.): Among other manuscripts in Qumran were found also some fragments of Psalms and of the books of Chronicles. This caused many liberal scholars to abandon the hypothesis of a late dating (i.e. in the Maccabean period) of these texts (Psalms and Chronicles). The abandonment of this critical view is logical: A text (allegedly) written so late (that is only about 165 B.C., as alleged by the Higher Criticism) could never have been so widespread (already) in 120 B.C. (assumed date for writing the manuscripts found in Qumran). Therefore, if those scholars were objective, then they would consequently come to the same conclusion for the book of Daniel, since among the manuscripts found in Qumran there were also some fragments of the book of Daniel. But, what a surprise, these critic theologians, haunted by their “rationalistic and incredulous Apriori” (that prophecy does not exist), are obliged not to accept the same thing for the book of Daniel. This is just one example among many others which reveals the lack of objectivity in many theologians who are advocates of the Higher Criticism.

## D. The message of the book

While the other prophets (like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea etc.) preached their messages, the revelations that Daniel received were generally related to the history of the nations of the world and they throw a special light on the world’s future. Daniel had to forecast the rising and the falling of four world empires, and above all that all the powers of the world would finally be destroyed by the triumph of a divine and eternal kingdom (Dan 2:37-45; 7:17-27).<sup>16</sup> Daniel does not only foresee the near future, but it is also given to him to know what would happen in the last days, because he announces the final victory of the one who will come with the clouds of heaven (Dan 7:13). **The key-message of the book of Daniel** is therefore the glorification of God throughout world history, his sovereignty over all human powers and the accomplishment of his plan of salvation (cf. Dan 2:21). In other words: **The sovereign God controls and reveals the course of world history.**<sup>17</sup>

## E. The symbolism in the book

The most important symbolic visions of the book are:

### The great statue of Dan 2:32-34

• The golden head	➔	Babylon
• The silver trunk	➔	Medo-Persia
• The bronze belly and thighs	➔	Greece
• The iron legs	➔	Rome
• The iron-clay feet	➔	Rome divided into 10 states
• The cut out rock	➔	Messianic kingdom

<sup>16</sup> For the identification of “the cut out rock” in Dan 2:35 and “the Son of man” in Dan 7:13, see our commentary below.

<sup>17</sup> Compare Ernst Aebi, *Kurze Einführung in die Bibel*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Winterthur/Wuppertal: Verlag Bibellesebund, 1973), p. 102.



**The four beasts and the Son of man in Dan. 7**

- |   |                                       |   |                                      |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|   | • The lion                            | ➔ | Babylon                              |
|   | • The bear                            | ➔ | Medo-Persia                          |
| 5 | • The leopard                         | ➔ | Greece                               |
|   | • The terrifying beast with ten horns | ➔ | Rome                                 |
|   | • The little horn (vv 8: 20-25)       | ➔ | Antichrist                           |
|   | • The Son of man (v. 13)              | ➔ | Christ who will come with the clouds |
- 10 For the other visions (notably on the ram and the he-goat in chap. 8), refer to our commentary below.

**F. The language of the book**

The book was written in two languages:

- 15 1. The following passages were written in **Hebrew**: Dan 1:1 to 2:3 and 8:1 to 12:13.  
 2. The following passages were written in **Aramaic**: Dan 2:4 to 7:28.

This induced some scholars to divide the book of Daniel as follows:

- 20 1. The personal history of Daniel: Chap. 1 (1:1 to 2:3 in Hebrew, because it concerns Israel).  
 2. The prophetic history of the nations: Chap. 2 to 7 (2:4 to 7:28 in Aramaic, because it deals with the heathen nations).  
 25 3. The prophetic history of Israel: Chap. 8 to 12 (in Hebrew, because it is about Israel).

Thus, where Israel is the centre of attention, the author writes in Hebrew; where the nations are the centre of attention, the author uses Aramaic, which was the official language of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

**G. The outline of the book****I. Historical part: Ch. 1–6**

- 35 A. The personal history of Daniel (chap. 1)  
 B. The first dream of Nebuchadnezzar: the great statue (chap. 2)  
 C. The fiery furnace (chap. 3)  
 D. The second dream of Nebuchadnezzar: the great tree (chap. 4)  
 E. Belshazzar's great feast (chap. 5)  
 F. Daniel in the den of lions (chap. 6)

**II. The prophetic part: Ch. 7–12**

- 40 A. The vision of the four beasts (chap. 7)  
 B. The vision of the ram and the he-goat (chap. 8)  
 C. Daniel's prayer and the vision of 70 weeks (chap. 9)

D. The last vision: from the Medo-Persian Empire up to the Antichrist (chap. 10–12)

Our first chapter thus deals with questions of introduction, the second chapter comprises “*the historical part*”, and the third chapter is “*the prophetic part*”.

## II. Historical part: Ch. 1–6

### A. The personal history of Daniel: Ch. 1

#### 1. Daniel's deportation: Vv 1-3

- 5 • Daniel's first deportation occurred in 605 B.C. Daniel says, concerning the date of his deportation → "*in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of King Jehoiakim*", whereas Jeremiah (25:1; 46:2) says "*in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim*". How can we explain this **difference**? **Explanation:** Jeremiah undoubtedly calculated in accordance with the Israeli calendar, while Daniel used the Babylonian one. In Babylon one starts counting with the year which follows the enthronement of a king. The first year according to Daniel corresponds with the second year for the Israeli historians. The third year according to the Babylonian calculation corresponds with the fourth year of the Israeli calculation. Therefore there's no contradiction between Daniel and Jeremiah.
- 10 • Here then begins the era of the heathen, which means the era of the nations (cf. Luk 21:24; 2Ki 24:1-4; 2Ch 36:3-4). In 1967 (after the famous six-day-war), the Jews reconquered the entire city of Jerusalem.
- 15

**V. 2:** → "*The utensils of the temple of Jerusalem*": compare Dan 5:3: Belshazzar defiled them; Thanks to the decree signed by Cyrus, the Jews later took the utensils back to Jerusalem.

- 20 → "*The country of Schinear*": (Babylon), cf. Gen 10:10 and Zec 5:11.
- "*The dwelling of his gods*": Probably of Bel and Marduk.

**V. 3:** → "*The royal family and the nobility*": Daniel and his three friends were therefore from noble families; Daniel perhaps had royal blood. Whatever these verses describe, they represent the fulfilment of the prophecies of Isaiah addressed to King Hezekiah (cf. Isa 39:7 and 2Ki 20:18).

#### 2. Nebuchadnezzar's plan about Daniel and his friends: Vv 4-7

- Nebuchadnezzar wanted the elite of the Jewish youth (noble, intelligent and handsome) for his royal court. It seemed as if he had the intention of training them according to Chaldean culture so that he could appoint them (establish them) as civil servants in Israel. Their re-education consisted of:
- 30
    1. Eating different types of food (unclean animals)
    2. The Chaldean language and literature
    3. Different names

35 As far as the food is concerned, it probably did not comply with the cleanliness rules of the Mosaic Law (cf. Lev 11; Deu 14). It is also assumed that the meat offered as sacrifices to the idols was meant. (cf. 1Co 8 and 10). Thus their names were changed to:

	<b>Daniel:</b>	<i>“God is my Judge”</i>	becomes	<b>Belshazzar:</b> <sup>18</sup> <i>“that Bel protects his life”</i> (in Akkadian: Balati-Shar-OSur).
5	<b>Hanania:</b> <sup>19</sup>	<i>“Yahweh is gracious”</i>	becomes	<b>Shadrach:</b> <sup>20</sup> <i>“the order of Akku”</i> ; Akku was the Babylonian goddess of the moon.
10	<b>Michael:</b> <sup>21</sup>	<i>“Who is like God?”</i>	becomes	<b>Meshach:</b> <sup>22</sup> <i>“who is like Akku?”</i> (the meaning of the Hebrew name <i>Michael</i> is simply applied to the Babylonian god Akku).
15	<b>Azaria:</b> <sup>23</sup>	<i>“Yahweh helps”</i>	becomes	<b>Abed-Nego:</b> <sup>24</sup> <i>“Nego’s servant”</i> (or <i>“the servant of the light”</i> ).

### 3. The abstinence of Daniel and his friends: Vv 8-16

Daniel and his friends decided not to defile themselves by disobeying the king’s order to eat the unclean food. This decision of faith was of course remarkable in the sense that refusing a royal dish would mean a capital punishment. Not agreeing to this was very risky on their behalf. Ashpenaz, the highest servant of the king, made it clear that his nonconformity to the rule could also have risked his life.

**Application:** The names of these confident servants of God could be changed; but not their hearts nor their behaviour.

- Daniel’s principle (v. 8): I will not defile myself.
- Daniel’s endeavour of faith (v. 12): Suggestion to try it for 10 days.
- Justification of undergoing the risk (v. 15): They looked better than all the others who had shared the king’s dishes and drank the wine offered to them by the king ☺.

Daniel and his friends are great examples for us: Remain faithful to the Word of God at all costs (cf. Dan 3:17-18; Mat 5:11; Joh 15:18-21; 2Ti 3:13).

Spiritual lesson from this passage: A Christian refuses conformity and compromise, especially if it makes him sin. For the glory of God, one ought to be courageous and swim against the tide!

### 4. Daniel is called to the king’s service: Vv 17-21

God awarded Daniel and his friends with supernatural wisdom. Like Moses who was taught the wisdom of Egypt for 40 years, Daniel and his friends also underwent an education in the culture of

<sup>18</sup> Actually *Beltshazzar* (בִּלְטַשְׁאֲצָר = *Bēlṭša’šsar*).

<sup>19</sup> Actually *Chananya* (חַנַּנְיָה = *Ch<sup>a</sup>nanyā<sup>h</sup>*).

<sup>20</sup> Actually *Shadrach* (שְׂדַרְךָ = *Šadrak*).

<sup>21</sup> Actually *Mishael*, not *Michael*, as we are used to (מִישָׁאֵל = *Mīšā’ēl*).

<sup>22</sup> Actually *Meshach* (מֵשַׁךְ = *Mēšak*).

<sup>23</sup> Actually *Azarya* (עֲזַרְיָה = *‘Azaryā<sup>h</sup>*).

<sup>24</sup> Actually *Abed Nego* (עֲבֵד נֶגוֹ = *‘Abēd Nēgō*).

the Babylonians (vv 17.21): According to the heathen of those days, the interpretation of dreams and astrology were of paramount importance. But the Law of Moses prohibits the practice of astrology and the practice of magic (cf. Deu 18:10-14).

## 5 **Summary of chapter 1:**

1. We learn the historical context of Daniel's ministry.
2. We learn how and by what means Daniel happened to occupy a high position in the king's court.
3. We see how Daniel's faith was tested.
- 10 4. We see how Daniel's faithfulness was rewarded.

## **Four spiritual lessons from chapter 1:**

- 15 1. What seems tragic in the eyes of man may be a part of God's plan. The exile is a tragedy in the view of man, but God can turn it into something wonderful for the glory of his name.
2. The separation of a believer from his environment does not justify compromise or conformity.
3. The one who lives in our (the believer's) hearts is greater than the one who lives in the world (cf. 1Jo 4:4; 5:4; Joh 16:33).
4. God rewards faithfulness.

## 20 **B. The first dream of Nebuchadnezzar: Ch. 2**

### **1. Nebuchadnezzar conceals the dream: Vv 1-16**

#### **a.) The dream: Vv 1-3**

→ "In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign": Young comments as follows:

- 25 This phrase is thought by some to conflict with the three-year period of training mentioned in ch. 1. But the phrase 'three years' (1:5) need refer only to portions of years (cf., e.g., 2 Ki. 18:9, 10; Je. 34:14; Mk. 8:31), so that the first year of training could comprise part of the year of Nebuchadnezzar's accession, and the third year part of the second year of his reign (Babylonian reckoning).<sup>25</sup>

30 **V. 1:** Literally: "*Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams*".

**V. 2:** Nebuchadnezzar calls for the wise men for whom the following expressions are used:

- 35 • The חֲרָטֻמִּים (*khartummīm*): This refers to those who know how to read and write Hieroglyphics. They were also well known in Egypt: cf. Gen 41:8 and Exo 7:11. The Hebraic root of this expression (*cheret*) means "style" (for engraving). These words described the sacred elites or the scribes whose main work was to write and interpret the books about magic.

<sup>25</sup> Edward J. Young, 'Daniel' in NBC, p. 691.

- The אֲשָפִּיּים ('*aššāphīm*) denote in Chaldean and in Hebrew the magicians and the astrologers. This expression is only found in the book of Daniel and nowhere else in the O.T. In Hebrew the plural of '*aššāphīm* (Dan 1:20); in Aramaic אֲשָפִּינִי ('*āšphīn*; cf. Dan 2:27).
- 5 • The מְכַשְפִּיּים (*m<sup>e</sup>kaššphīm*) is a participle, plural masculine of the verb in *Piel* כִּשְׁפָה (*kiššēph*) which means “devoting oneself to magic [or sorcery]” (cf. Exo 7:11; 22:18; Deu 18:10; Isa 47:9.12). So we can therefore translate it with “magicians” or “sorcerers”.
- 10 • The word כַּשְׁדִּיּים (*Kašdīm*) itself means “Chaldeans”. It also means “the astrologers”. In Aramaic, it has the same root as in Hebrew, see Dan 2:10.<sup>26</sup> We can translate them with “astrologers”. The “*Kašdīm*” were priests who had come from one of the ancient races of the country (cf. Dan 1:4). They were perhaps the chiefs of all the sorcerers who are cited in the respective passage. Maybe that is why they spoke for everyone (cf. Dan 2:4.10).
- 15 • In Dan 2:27 and 4:4, we find again the term גְּזָרִין (*gāzrīn*). They are the ones who forecasted the future and read the horoscope based on the movement of the stars. Some people called them “augurs”, that means those who read the future using the intestines of dead animals (especially of birds) or by reading the periodical flights of birds.

## b.) The incapability of the magicians: Vv 4-11

- 20 **V. 4:** From this verse on, the text changes from Hebrew to Aramaic up to 7:28. We assume that the chapters 1 and 8–12 were written in Hebrew because they concern the future of Israel. The part of 2:4–7:28 concerns the future of the heathen nations; therefore the text is in Aramaic.

- 25 **V. 5:** There is a slight problem of translation in this text. Consequently, some people translate it with: “*The thing [the dream] had escaped my mind.*” That means → “*I have forgotten my dream*”, i.e. “*I have definitely decided that you have to die when you are not able to tell what I have dreamed.*” It should be admitted that even if Nebuchadnezzar had called it “*the thing that had escaped from my mind*”, certainly, he never did forget it. Moreover there is another logical argument that refutes the conception that Nebuchadnezzar had really forgotten the dream: If truly
- 30 Nebuchadnezzar had forgotten the dream, why was he then spiritually agitated (Dan 2:1)? A proverb says: “What I don’t know does no harm to me.” Pentecost comments on this adequately:

- 35 Though **the king** may have made such a demand on the wise men previously and been satisfied with their answers, he evidently had never asked them to interpret a dream that he discerned had such significance. So he decided to test them. If they could predict the future by interpreting dreams, they should be able to reconstruct the past and *recall* the king’s **dream**. So he refused to share his dream with them. This does not mean he had forgotten it. Had he done so, the wise men, to save themselves from death, could easily have fabricated a dream and then interpreted it. The king reasoned that if they could not recall the past, their predictions concerning
- 40 the future could not be trusted.<sup>27</sup>

**V. 11:** It seems that people who work with the occult and magical powers cannot know things which have happened in the thoughts of a person unless they were verbally expressed. One may

<sup>26</sup> In Hebrew: *Kašdīm*, in Aramaic: *Kašdā'in*. In Hebrew the masculine end of the plural form is “im”, in Aramaic it is “in”.

<sup>27</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, ‘Daniel’ in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty*. Old Testament, ed. by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck ([Wheaton, Ill.]: Victor Books, Scripture Press Publications Inc., 1985), p. 1333. In the remaining part of the book the abbreviation BKC will be used for this commentary.

assume that Satan and his demons are not able to recognize whatever is going on at the level of our thoughts, which have not been expressed in one way or another (with words, gestures or actions). Only God knows everything; he alone sees into our innermost being (cf. Heb 4:13).

### **c.) Nebuchadnezzar's severe order: Vv 12-13**

- 5 Nebuchadnezzar issued a strong order that his threat be implemented. Such a cruelty will obviously surprise us, but what we should know is that such despotism was common in Babylon and even elsewhere in other countries and cultures of the antiquity. It's worth noting that many countries of the world are still under the regimes of dictatorship and continue to experience such injustice to this very day.

### **10 d.) Daniel's faithfulness: Vv 14-16**

Daniel trusted God and therefore he was courageous enough to go before the king and ask for more time in order to interpret the dream.

## **2. God reveals the dream to Daniel: Vv 17-23**

### **a.) The prayer of Daniel, Hanania, Michael and Azaria: Vv 17-18**

- 15 In their prayer they asked God to intervene and give them wisdom so that they could interpret the dream (see Jam 1:5).

### **b.) Daniel glorifies God for the fulfilment of their prayer: Vv 19-23**

Amongst other things, these verses teach us the following spiritual lessons:

- 20
1. Let's not forget to praise God whenever he answers our prayers: cf. vv 20.23.
  2. God is sovereign: He enthrones and dethrones the kings: cf. Rom 13:1.<sup>28</sup>
  3. God knows everything and nothing is hidden from him: cf. Psa 139; Heb 4:13.

## **3. Daniel describes and interprets the dream before Nebuchadnezzar: Vv 24-45**

### **25 a.) Daniel appears before the king: Vv 24-26**

### **b.) Daniel witnesses before the king: Vv 27-30**

In that what Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar, he gives all the glory to God alone:

- 30
- What the king wanted could not be solved by a simple human being: V. 27.
  - Only God of the heavens (not idols) can know these secrets: Vv 28-30. This fact does not surprise us, for it was God himself who sent these dreams to Nebuchadnezzar.

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<sup>28</sup> More about that see our commentary on the epistle to the Romans.

- What Nebuchadnezzar dreamt of concerns the future and the last days (times of the end): cf. v. 28a: → “*The remaining period*”: cf. Dan 8:17; 10:14; 12:4. The utterances of Dan 2:35.44-45 show clearly that the vision concerns the whole future, until the end of time.

### c.) Daniel recounts the dream: Vv 31-36

5 The statue is huge, terrifying and... human!

### d.) The interpretation of the dream: Vv 37-45

The advocates of modern biblical criticism interpret the different parts of the statue as follows:

10	• <b>The golden head</b>	→	<b>Babylon</b>
	• <b>Silver trunk and the arms</b>	→	<b>Media</b>
	• <b>Bronze belly and thighs</b>	→	<b>Persia</b>
	• <b>Iron legs</b>	→	<b>Greece</b>
	• <b>Iron-clay feet</b>	→	<b>Maccabeans</b>

15 As a matter of fact, the interpretation of the liberals is not surprising and because of their prejudice they cannot go beyond the period of the Maccabeans. Why? As mentioned in the introduction, for them everything has to be historical because they do not believe in true prophecy. As they claim that the book of Daniel was written during the Maccabean period, consequently their interpretation must end with the Maccabeans (respectively the Maccabean period). For them, of course, none of  
20 the parts (phases) of the statue can point to a kingdom that concerns a time after the Maccabean period. Otherwise it would be *true prophecy*, not just a “*vaticinium ex eventu*” (or even *post eventum*).

25 Consequently, the interpretation of this vision supplies an excellent example that illustrates the damaging influence of rationalism on the objectivity of the theologians with liberal tendency. This interpretation by modern criticism is simply ridiculous. The relation between the visions in chapter 2 and chapter 8 requires another interpretation than what is proposed by the liberals. It is completely arbitrary to say that the Medes and the Persians compose two different parts (phases) of the statue. In the visions of Daniel, the Medians and Persians always represent one common kingdom. See for  
30 example the ram in chapter 8 which clearly represents the Medo-Persian kingdom. In **Dan 8:20** the interpretation is explicitly given: the two horns of the ram represent “*the kings of the Medes and Persians*”, respectively. The same thing is also true for Dan 7:5: the second beast, the bear, represents Medo-Persia, the third beast undoubtedly represents Greece: its four heads represent the four generals of Alexander the Great, whose Empire was divided among themselves, after his death  
35 (more about this later). The trunk and the arms of the statue naturally point to a division, therefore the Medes and the Persians belong together and do not represent two different entities.

40 Interestingly enough, the text identifies only the first kingdom, namely the golden head: This represents the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e. the Neo-Babylonian Empire (cf. v. 38). The order of the empires is clearly chronological; therefore the following interpretation is suggested:<sup>29</sup>

45	1. <b>Babylon:</b>	the golden head
	2. <b>Medo-Persia:</b>	silver trunk and arms
	3. <b>Greece:</b>	bronze-copper belly and thighs
	4. <b>Rome:</b>	iron legs

<sup>29</sup> We don't know any evangelical that does not adhere to this interpretation.



The following arguments plead for the interpretation that the two iron legs represent the Roman Empire:

1. The chronology of history: In history, Rome followed Greece.
2. The fourth kingdom will destroy everything: This of course applies to Rome.

Empires:	Babylon →	Medo-Persia →	Greece →	Rome →	Kingdom of God →
Year:	605 B.C.	538	331	168 B.C.	?

If we believe that Dan 2:44 hasn't yet been fulfilled, that means that the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom (the kingdom of God) has not yet come, consequently we have to admit that we still find ourselves in the fourth kingdom (or else in the second phase of the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom, i.e. the phase of the iron-clay feet). Many theologians propound that the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of God, was inaugurated by the first coming of Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup> Here are our objections against this allegation:

In Jesus' time, the 4<sup>th</sup> Empire, Rome was not at its end, but in contrary, it was at its peak. The Roman Empire officially ended only around 476 A.D. By that time, the Church existed already for more than four centuries. Therefore one cannot say that the Church had replaced Rome. Now the following question imposes itself on us: Since Rome collapsed in 476 A.D., there has never been another power which took over. What existed then were only small autonomous kingdoms. As we have said above, the Church did not begin only in 476 A.D. It began after the death, the resurrection and the ascension of Christ, on Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out; that means around 33 A.D. Therefore, to apply this 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom to the Church of Jesus Christ would be inappropriate. On the other hand, we must admit that the text doesn't talk of any interruption between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom. This is another "problem". But we believe that there are answers which correspond quite well with Daniel's visions.

In 476 A.D., Rome collapsed and there was no other kingdom that clearly claimed the position of world power. Till this day, there has never been a super-power like the four former empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome).

But the power of Rome continued simply in the smaller individual kingdoms that had earlier constituted the Roman Empire. This statement is well justified by the fact that Daniel points to (see Dan 2:41-43) the division of the kingdom into several smaller kingdoms: cf. v. 41: the feet with its toes. Two feet with five toes each = 10 toes = 10 individual kingdoms. This again we should compare with the 10 horns of the fourth beast in Dan 7:7 (see also Rev 13:1ff and 17:9-14). This interpretation is explicitly confirmed in Dan 7:23-25. This interpretation is also sustained by the following two facts:

1. **Dan 2:33:** "His legs", means two legs. History confirms that the Roman Empire was at a certain time divided into two parts: (1) the western kingdom with its capital city *Rome*. (2) The eastern kingdom with its capital city *Constantinople* (or Byzantium: today *Istanbul*). Thus, we can interpret the ten toes of the two feet in the same way: 10 toes = 10 kings = 10 kingdoms. The ten toes in Dan 2 correspond to the 10 horns of the fourth beast in Dan 7:23-24.
2. **Dan 7:6:** The four heads of the 3<sup>rd</sup> beast can also be historically well-explained: After the death of Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire was divided into four smaller kingdoms, each ruled by one of his four Generals: Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus (cf. Dan 8:5.8-9.20-22).

<sup>30</sup> Especially the followers of Saint Augustine who compared the Church to the millennial kingdom.

Thus the ten toes represent 10 nations or kingdoms!

**Application to the present Time:** After the fall of Rome in 476 A.D., one always spoke of the renaissance of the Roman Empire. This was a dream of many statesmen: for example, Charlemagne, Napoleon, Mussolini and Hitler. This dream exists even today in the minds of many people; this is particularly true for some protagonists of the European Community. The problem is that the individual countries never agree (we are tempted to say: fortunately they never agree with one another). Those who know the Bible, follow with critical eyes the evolution of the new European Monetary Union ("THE EURO"). Whatever the case may be, the continuous disagreement that prevails amidst these individual countries today reminds us of the expression "*iron and clay*" in Dan 2:41-43 and the *little horn* which pulls out three other horns (which represent three kingdoms) in Dan 7:20.24.

The diagram below represents these historical and eschatological events:

The statue of Daniel 2	// Rome exists in form	// the reunification	// 5 <sup>th</sup> kingdom
The two iron legs	// of individual kingdoms	// of Rome as 10 states	// kingdom of God
↓	↓	↓	↓
The Roman Empire	// this is the present era;	// Whose ruler	// inauguration by
↑	↑	↑	↑
pire up to 476 A.D.	// its duration is unknown	// the Antichrist, the "Neo-	// the Messiah when he
with the Caesars.	//	// Caesar" of the end time	// comes back in glory

Perhaps the world will soon see a new world power emerging which will represent a kind of '**Roma Renata**', the Neo-Roman Empire of the last days of which the Antichrist will be the last Caesar. Dan 7:20-25 suggests that the Antichrist will emerge from the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom, i.e. from Rome, and its ten horns represent the final phase of this kingdom in the end time: cf. the expression "*a time, times and half of a time*" in Dan 7:25; 12:7 and Rev 12:14.

**V. 44:** The 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom will be world-wide and eternal, and it will crush all the former kingdoms. It is the kingdom of God, the *Messianic kingdom*; the kingdom that will be inaugurated with the coming of the Son of man on the clouds. If we compare this passage of Dan 2 with Dan 7:13; Zec 14:3ff; Mat 24:30; Rev 1:7; 19:11ff, we conclude that the kingdom of "*the detached Stone which fills the entire world*" is the kingdom of Christ, the millennial kingdom which will lead into the everlasting kingdom.

## 4. Nebuchadnezzar promotes Daniel: Vv 46-49

**Vv 46-47:** In spite of Daniel's witness and the miraculous intervention of God which enabled Daniel to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Nebuchadnezzar still remained a polytheist. He considered the God of Daniel simply to be the most powerful god among many other gods.

**V. 48:** Daniel is exalted: He certainly never compromised himself to the magic of the Chaldeans. We have already seen in chap. 1 that Daniel refused, at all cost, compromise with the gods of the Chaldeans.

**V. 49:** The three friends of Daniel became governors at his request.

## C. The blazing furnace: Ch. 3

Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Dan 3:1) is a typical example (typos) for the persecution and preservation of Israel (and Christians<sup>31</sup>) during the time of nations (heathen).

- |   |   |          |
|---|---|----------|
| 5 | 1. The building of the statue:                              | Vv 1-7   |
|   | 2. The accusation against the three Jews:                   | Vv 8-12  |
|   | 3. The order issued by Nebuchadnezzar:                      | Vv 13-18 |
|   | 4. The rescue of the three Jews through God's intervention: | Vv 19-30 |

### 1. The correlation with chapter 2

- 10 The building of the statue was a regrettable reaction of Nebuchadnezzar after Daniel had furnished him with the interpretation of the dream about the statue (cf. Dan 2:31ff). Instead of giving God alone the glory, he wanted to be worshiped as God himself.

### 2. The shape of the statue: V. 1

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Height: 26.25m</li> <li>• Length: 2.62m</li> </ul> |
|----|---|

- 20 In the antiquity, it was common that rulers erected a monument and expected their subjects to worship it by bowing down before it. Let us compare this story with the one in Dan 6:7: the claim of the Medo-Persian king that his subjects should worship only him. The Roman Emperors also demanded worship or even adoration. Some few years ago, the Albanians were obliged to pay respect to the monument of Lenin. Enver Hoxha, a well known communist atheist, was since 1948 the secretary general of the communist party of Albania and ruled over the country as a despot until his death in 1985. He officially prohibited the practice of any religion in his country and boastfully declared that Albania was the only country without religion in the world. By the way, Hoxha died and communism lost its power in Albania; and the statue of Lenin is no longer worshiped there. In a great hall, where Hoxha proclaimed loudly "God doesn't exist", hundreds of Christians gathered for a service. Hoxha the blasphemer is dead and can no longer persecute believers. But God is still here, he is still always the same, unchanging and everlasting. Hallelujah (cf. Heb 13:8; 1Ti 1:17; Psa 14 and 53; 2Th 1:4-10)!

### 30 3. The fourth man in the blazing furnace: Vv 24-25

- Possibly he was only seen by Nebuchadnezzar. It is not strange that an angel (or even the Angel of the Lord, i.e. Christ himself, when he appeared to men of the Old Testament time, before his incarnation) could make himself visible to some (men) and remain invisible to others (cf. 2Ki 6:15-20).

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Rev 12: The woman persecuted by the dragon in vv 13-16 represents Israel in the time of the Antichrist. Those who hold to the testimony of Jesus in v. 17 are Christians (martyrs) who will live during the great tribulation, i.e. in the time of the Antichrist. Whether these are identical with the Church or whether they just represent people who will become converts to Christ during the great tribulation (in that case one would speak of *the martyrs of the great tribulation*: cf. Rev 7:13-14; 13:7) depends on the question of the moment of the rapture (of the Church). More on that see the chapter on the rapture (pre-, mid- or post-tribulational position?) in our brochure "Eschatology".

- Nebuchadnezzar describes him as → “*like a son of the gods!*” The text does not tell us clearly whether it was a Christophany (i.e. the Angel of the Lord) or merely an ordinary angel. One should not forget that the one who spoke here (Nebuchadnezzar) was just a pagan, not a Jew. In Dan 3:28, Nebuchadnezzar says that God had sent his angel (in Aramaic: מַלְאָכָה [mal<sup>a</sup>kēh] = “*his messenger*”). Did he possibly say that because Daniel’s three friends had explained it to him? Whatever. In Dan 6:22(23) we read that when Daniel was in the den of lions, he was protected by an angel of God. In Dan 9:21, it is said that Gabriel the angel of God appeared to Daniel in order to bring him God’s answer to his prayer.

#### 4. The good example of the three men

- They were in the service of an idolatrous pagan: v. 12; cf. Dan 2:49.
- They obeyed God rather than man: vv 12.18; cf. Act 5:29.
- First of all, Nebuchadnezzar thought that the three men did not worship the statue out of ignorance (cf. v. 14).
- With a “holy indifference”, they laid all the consequences of their obedience in God’s hands. The words of the three men in verses 16-18 are quite remarkable: “*If this be so, 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. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.*”

What confidence in God these men had! Even though we have to die... we should not forget that our kingdom is not here on earth, but with our Lord. We live in expectation of our eternal home: cf. Rom 5:2; 2Co 4:16–5:10; Phi 1:21; 3:7-8; Heb 10:32-39; 11:24-26; 13:14. The three friends of Daniel already testified what Jesus would say afterwards to his disciples: “*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*” (Mat 10:28; cf. Luk 12:4-5). Let us be courageous and follow their example in our Christian life whatever the cost. This life and this world will pass, but the other life in eternity will never end. Therefore, it is worth living in fellowship with God, consecrating this short life on earth to him, so as to be ready to await the day of his coming (cf. 2Pi 3:11-14; 1Jo 2:28–3:3).

#### 5. A prophetic interpretation of this event

We can discern parallels between this event and the great tribulation of the end time:

1. One world religion: Everyone must adore the statue: cf. Rev 13:7-8.15.
2. One will try to force all the people into conformity. Any opposition will cost one’s life: cf. Rev 13:15.
3. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego represent the believers preserved by God (the faithful remnant): cf. Rev 7:3ff; 9:4ff; 12:17; 13:7. In the Revelation of the apostle John, Babylon is only a code name for Rome (as well as in 1Pi 5:13).

#### Three climaxes of Babylon

1. The tower of Babel (Gen 11).
2. The era of Nebuchadnezzar’s Empire (Dan 3).
3. What is said about Babylon in Rev 13 and 16–19: The time of the heathen began and will end with the installation of a “false god”: compare Dan 3 with 2Th 2:4; Rev 13; 19:19-20; 20:10.

**Parallels between Dan 3 and Rev 13**

1. Life is at stake: compare Dan 3:11 with Rev 13:15.
- 5 2. A statue or an image must be worshiped: compare Dan 3:10-11 with Rev 13:15.
3. A minority of people tries to resist conformity: compare Dan 3:12 with Rev 7:9.14; 13:16-18; 15:2.
4. God intervenes to save his people: compare Dan 3:26-27 with Rev 7:14; 12:11.
- 10 5. It's the state, the government, which imposes the religion: compare Dan 3:2-4 with Rev 13:14-15.

**D. Nebuchadnezzar's 2<sup>nd</sup> dream: the huge tree: Ch. 4**

This is a typical example illustrating the pride of the great leaders of this time: The information about the reign of Nebuchadnezzar can be found in Dan 2–4 (that is between 605 and 562 B.C).

**1. Nebuchadnezzar addresses all the nations: Vv 1-3**

- 15 Some biblical translations consider this passage 3:31-33, instead of 4:1-3. The idea is to combine this doxology with the event of the blazing furnace (ch. 3). But with the "*Bible Annotée*",<sup>32</sup> we would rather say that these verses of the book of Daniel refer to the events in chapter 4 because in ch. 4:2 (or 3:32), it is said that God worked signs and wonders in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. In chapter 3, the actions rather concern the three friends of Daniel. So, it would be wiser to view 4:1-3
- 20 as a praise of Nebuchadnezzar for his personal life experiences; this is treated in ch. 4:4.

**V. 1:** This is a typical introduction or announcement of a decree.

25 **V. 2:** Nebuchadnezzar attests to all what God had done in his life.

**V. 3:** This praise must be understood in relation to the dream in chapter 2: the fifth kingdom is God's everlasting kingdom.

**2. The dream: Vv 4-18**

30 **V. 4:** He lived peacefully and was satisfied. He owned everything the world could offer.

**V. 5:** He was terrified by a (further) dream.

35 **Vv 6-7:** All his magicians were not able to interpret the dream for him. One asks oneself why Nebuchadnezzar did not call for Daniel right away, as – in contrast to all the wise men – he was the only one who was able to interpret his first dream (chap. 2). Perhaps Young is correct in saying that Nebuchadnezzar may have been afraid that what was said of "the great tree that fell down" could mean him and that he feared Daniel's God. Is it not true to say, "if the truth is not pleasing, none would like to hear it"? For example, considering the striking history of the profane King Ahab who never wanted to hear what the prophet Micah was saying (cf. 1Ki 22:8ff).

40

<sup>32</sup> Frédéric Godet, sous dir. *La Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8: Ézéchiél, Daniel, 2<sup>nd</sup> édition (St-Légier, Switzerland: P.E.R.L.E.; Librairie-Éditions Emmaüs, 1985), p. 266.

**Vv 8-9:** Finally, Nebuchadnezzar called for Daniel. This verse clearly shows that Nebuchadnezzar remained a polytheist: “...and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods.”

**Vv 10-14:** The details of the dream: the fallen tree.

5

**Vv 15-16:** The trunk of the tree has to eat grass... his human heart was taken, that means that instead of human reasoning he will have the mind of an animal.

**Vv 17-18:** The aim of Nebuchadnezzar’s experience is to show man (Nebuchadnezzar inclusive) that God alone is sovereign over everything.

10

### 3. Daniel explains the dream: Vv 19-27

Daniel was certainly shocked to learn that the most powerful man on this earth had henceforth to live like a beast. However, what seems more encouraging for us is that:

- 15
  - Daniel remains courageous: He tells the truth and acts wisely: v. 19.
  - The tree is Nebuchadnezzar himself: vv 20-22.
  - → “Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave in the earth its stump and roots, fettered with iron and bronze in the grass of the field”: v. 23: The chains symbolize probably the disease by which he will be struck.
- 20
  - → “...and let his portion be with the beasts of the field”: v. 23: See the explanation of this disease below.
  - → “...till seven periods of time pass over him”: probably seven years are meant: compare verse 23 with Dan 7:25.
  - This humiliation should be limited to a certain length of time.
- 25
  - Daniel makes it clear that Nebuchadnezzar will be struck in that way: vv 24-25
  - When he repents, the kingdom will be restored back to him: v. 26.
  - That is why Daniel pleads for Nebuchadnezzar’s repentance from his sins v. 27.

### 4. The fulfilment of the dream: Vv 28-37

- 30
  - A year after the dream, Nebuchadnezzar became proud and attributed to himself the honour of all that he had built (the kingdom of Babylon): vv 28-30. Nebuchadnezzar failed to repent from his sins.
  - A voice from heaven announced that the kingdom of Babylon no longer belonged to him: vv 31-32.
  - Nebuchadnezzar lives with the beasts: v. 34a.
- 35
  - After the predicted period (seven years; vv 23.32) had passed, his mind was restored: v. 34a
  - At last, Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself and glorified God the Almighty: vv 34b-35.
  - Nebuchadnezzar is finally reinstated in his position as king of Babylon: vv 36-37.

#### Nebuchadnezzar’s disease:

40

This disease is called “*insania zoanthropica*”, also called *lycanthropy*.<sup>33</sup> Nebuchadnezzar was temporarily punished by God with a mental sickness because of his pride. He imagined that he was a wild beast, which is a kind of mental confusion which has been known from antiquity. Berossus,<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> This is a kind of madness; a man thinks that he is an animal, e.g. a wolf.

<sup>34</sup> Contra Apionem 1:20.

a Babylonian priest of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., wrote that Nebuchadnezzar was suddenly seized by this sickness after having reigned for 43 years. One assumes that he alluded to a strange disease. The Church Father Eusebius mentions in his “praeparatio evangelica” (9:41) quotations from Abydenus, where it says that Nebuchadnezzar, after many years of ruling, was possessed by a demon, but which abandoned him again after he had prophesied the coming of a Persian conqueror. This shows once more that Bible criticism, as on other occasions, falsely discredits the Bible by calling this report in Dan 4 a fable. A text in a manuscript found in Qumran mentions that King Nabonidus suffered from the same sickness. Young<sup>35</sup> suggests that the author of the manuscript found in Qumran probably confused Nebuchadnezzar with Nabonidus. This should not surprise us, because this commentary found in Qumran was written approximately three to four centuries after the event reported by Daniel.

## E. The feast of Belshazzar: Ch. 5

This story offers a true insight into the true character of the royal court of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, just before its decline. Preliminary remarks: In chap. 5 and 6, we have to respond to so called (alleged) “historical problems”. Furthermore these two chapters contain practical lessons for our personal life.

### 1. The feast: Vv 1-4

#### The alleged “historical problem” in chapter 5:

**It’s about the mention of the King Belshazzar:** What’s the historical problem here? For decades, the Modern Critic claimed that the story of Belshazzar in Dan 5 was just a legend, because secular history did not know about a Babylonian King *Belshazzar* who came after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar’s successors were rather: Evil-Merodach, Neriglissor, Labashi-Marduk (Laborosoarkad) and Nabonidus, but not Belshazzar! This is only an example among others which the liberal theology used for decades in order to discredit the authenticity and the inspiration of the Bible. Newer knowledge attained through modern archaeology proves that the allegations of the opponents of the Bible are unjustified. The biblical story about Belshazzar is a good example of that. Cuneiform scripts were also found which confirm that Belshazzar was the son and also ruled with King Nabonidus. Texts dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> year of King Nabonidus’ reign were found which give evidence of oaths sworn on the names of King Nabonidus and of the crown prince Belshazzar. Nabonidus was the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (556-539 B.C.). A Persian report remarks that in the third year of his reign, Nabonidus abdicated the throne of Babylon to his son Belshazzar, so that he could reside in Tema, a fort in Arabia. The mention of Belshazzar in Dan 5 is therefore historically correct. By the way, this is only one example among many which illustrate that those who know the Bible are ahead of secular history because the latter has ignored also this historical fact for centuries.

**V. 1:** Such feasts were common in those days. They allowed the leaders to demonstrate their power.

**Vv 2-4:** During such a banquet (drunkenness, gluttony and fornication), Belshazzar ordered that the utensils which were brought from the Jewish temple to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar be brought (cf. Dan 1:2). This symbolical act should symbolise the victory of the Babylonian gods over “the God of Israel”! In fact, this was an act of blasphemy against the God of Israel, the only true God (cf. Gal 6:7).

<sup>35</sup> Edward J. Young, Daniel in the NBC, p. 693.

By the way, at that time Nabonidus, Belshazzar's father, had already perished in the war against the Persians.

## 2. The writing on the wall: Vv 5-8

- 5 • The effect of the writing on the wall on the king: Belshazzar was filled with fear (v. 6). Perhaps he didn't know what had happened to his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar.
- The reward for the one who could interpret the writing: He would become the third highest ruler of the kingdom (v. 7; cf. Dan 2:48). This fact is well understood in the light of historical facts: Number one was the titular King Nabonidus, number two was his son
- 10 Belshazzar, and number three was Daniel.
- All the Babylonian magicians were dumbfounded: v. 8.

## 3. Daniel interprets the writing on the wall: Vv 9-28

- Daniel was called in by the recommendation of the Queen mother (vv 9-12) to interpret the writing. She was certainly not one of the king's wives who were present at the feast (cf. v. 2), because she spoke with an authority that no wife of an oriental king ever had up to this
- 15 very day. Only the widow of a late ruler or a mother of a ruling king could exercise such an authority. Thus, it must have been either the mother of Belshazzar or the wife (or one of the wives) of Nabonidus or, more probably, a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar or even one of Nebuchadnezzar's widows. We should not forget that only 25 years separated this event with
- 20 Belshazzar (in Dan 5) and the death of Nebuchadnezzar. It is well known how young women are when they are given in marriage in the East (even today).<sup>36</sup>
- Daniel didn't want a reward: vv 13-17. This is one of the characteristics that distinguish a true man of God from the servants of the prince of this world (Satan). The world is always looking for profit, whereas a servant of God is characterised by unselfishness. Compare this
- 25 with the following words of Jesus: "*Freely you have received; freely you are to give.*" (Mat 10:8)
- Daniel rebukes Belshazzar: vv 18-24: (a) He knew what had happened to Nebuchadnezzar when he had become boastful (vv 18-22). (b) But Belshazzar lived nevertheless an unworthy life (vv 23-24): drunkenness, orgies, defiling the utensils of the temple of Jerusalem and the
- 30 veneration of idols.
- Daniel interprets the writings: vv 25-28: Daniel was more than just an ordinary interpreter of scriptures; he also was a messenger of God who should announce the judgment over the Babylonian Empire.

35 **The writing on the wall was in Aramaic: *M<sup>e</sup>nē' m<sup>e</sup>nē' th<sup>e</sup>qēl ūpharsīn* (מְנָא מְנָא תְּקֵל וּפְרָסִין).**

<i>M<sup>e</sup>nē'</i>	=	<i>counted!</i> (The word is repeated; that means that it is well counted!)
<i>th<sup>e</sup>qēl</i>	=	<i>weighed!</i>
<i>ūpharsīn</i>	=	<i>divided!</i>

40 There is a pun in this oracle: The Aramaic word "*paras*" means "*divide*", "*tear*" or "*separate*" (cf. Dan 5:28). The plural "*pharsin*" in 5:25 is probably an allusion to the division of the kingdom and to the Persians, by which the Babylonian Empire should be destroyed. In reality "*paras*" means

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Frédéric Godet, Bible Annotée, AT vol. 8, p. 276.



both “*Persia*” and “*to divide*” or “*to split*” (this in Hebrew<sup>37</sup> and in Aramaic). “*Pharsin*” is the participle plural, masculine of the Aramaic verbal stem ‘Peal’. Here is the meaning of this pun: “*Babylon, you have been well weighed and unfortunately found too light, that’s why you will be divided.*” The plural of the participle “*split*”, “*divided*” (“*pharsin*”) indicates very well that

Concerning the expression “*to weigh on the scales*” compare with Job 31:6; Psa 62:9-10.

- Daniel is rewarded and Belshazzar dies: vv 29-31.

**V. 29:** Belshazzar keeps his promise: Daniel is honoured and becomes the third highest ranking person in the Empire.

**V. 30:** In the same night, Belshazzar was murdered. Cyrus the Persian diverted the river by building a dam on it. By doing this, it was possible, within a few hours, to dry up all the waters of the river that flowed through the city of Babylon. When the work was finished, he waited until the day the Babylonians celebrated one of their great feasts and then he drained the water so that during the night his army could be smuggled into the city through the almost empty riverbed. If only some of the watchmen of the city would have remained on their guard, the Babylonians could have easily overpowered and killed the infiltrating Persian soldiers. But Cyrus counted on their negligence and was proved to be right in his cunning plan. He found the walls deserted and the gates unguarded; the watchmen had abandoned their posts to join in the feast. The war cry of the Persians rang out amidst the songs of the feast of the Babylonians, who were unable to defend themselves and were consequently massacred. Belshazzar died and the royal palace was set on fire. In the morning, Cyrus was the ruler of the city.<sup>38</sup>

**V. 31:** About *Darius* see our commentary on Dan 6:1.

## F. Daniel in the den of lions: Ch. 6

This chapter draws our attention to the reign of the Antichrist in the last days: We can compare it to Rev 13 and 2Th 2:4.

**The “historical problem”** of *Darius the Mede* mentioned in Dan 5:31 (cf. Dan 6:1): The problems are the following: The secular history of the antiquity (Herodotus, Berossus and the Canon of Ptolemy) does not mention Darius but refers to Cyrus as the one who has overthrown the last Chaldean monarch. Who then is this Darius in the book of Daniel?

Bible critics again consider this statement a “historical imprecision”. However, at least four propositions concerning the identification of Darius have been suggested by scholars:

1. Don’t confuse this Darius with Darius the Great, mentioned in the book of Ezra (Ezr 4:5ff). The latter was Persian (cf. Ezr 4:5), whereas the Darius in Dan 5:31 and 6:1 originated of Media.
2. D. J. Wiseman<sup>39</sup> claims this Darius to be no other than Cyrus the Great. Yet, Dan 6:28 suggests Darius and Cyrus to be two different people. Those who support Wiseman’s

<sup>37</sup> In Hebrew with the consonant “Samekh” (סָמֶךְ) or with “Sin” (שִׁין).

<sup>38</sup> According to Maspero, who comments the reports of the historians Herodotus and Xenophon (cited by Frédéric Godet, Bible Annotée, AT vol. 8, p. 278).

<sup>39</sup> Cited by Edward J. Young, ‘Daniel’ in NBC, p. 694 and by J. Dwight Pentecost, ‘Daniel’ in BKC, p. 1347.

opinion propose to translate the text in Aramaic from Dan 6:28 as follows: “*Daniel will prosper under the reign of King Darius; that is under the reign of Cyrus, the Persian*”. This translation is hardly convincing though: In the Aramaic text, the two names are linked by the “waw”, literally: “*During [or under] the reign of King Darius and during [or under] the reign of Cyrus the Persian*”.

3. Others think that Darius was identical to general Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium, who conquered Babylon. Cyrus supposedly attributed him the title of ‘King’ over the province of Babylon, but several days later, Ugbaru died at the age of 62 years. ‘Ugbaru’ would be another way of calling the name ‘Gubaru’ (in Greek *Gobryas*).<sup>40</sup>
4. Cyrus, the Persian, is believed to have entrusted Darius the Mede with the governance of the province of Babylon (Babylon was merely a small portion of the great Medo-Persian Empire). Darius would then be the second name of Gubaru. This is the conviction of Whitcomb,<sup>41</sup> which was later shared by Unger and many others. The fact that it was common for a person to have many names during those days must be considered. La Bible Annotée refers to Josephus who claimed that the Greeks called Darius the Mede by another name. This wouldn’t be much of a difference for “Darius” means “*dominator*” and Cyaxares (another name for Gubaru) means “*potentate*”, both names probably being royal titles.

In any case, the accusation of “historical imprecision” is hardly justified, as several remarkable solutions to this problem have been offered. We believe number 3 or 4 to be most probable.

## 1. Daniel’s position in the Medo-Persian Empire: Vv 1-4

Meanwhile, Daniel was about 90 years old!

**V. 1 (or 2):** *120 satraps*.<sup>42</sup> They were so-called “protectors of the kingdom”: “*Satraps*” is one of several expressions in the book of Daniel which relate to Persian administration.

**V. 2:** There were three superiors for 120 satraps; Daniel was one of them.

**V. 3:** Just as under Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Daniel was blessed with heavenly wisdom when Darius was in power. That is why Darius wanted to place him over all the others. Darius knew why: see v. 4b.

**V. 4:** Daniel was loyal, his lifestyle and duty were untainted. People who are blessed by God should expect jealousy from others. Be aware of defamations!

**Application:** Even though he served a heathen government, Daniel always refused to compromise his beliefs. What would happen if all Christians in our countries and in our churches were as consistent as Daniel?

<sup>40</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, ‘Daniel’ in BKC, p. 1347, seems to have a tendency towards this solution and he cites W. H. Shea who has proposed this hypothesis.

<sup>41</sup> John C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974) cited by Edward J. Young, ‘Daniel’ in NBC, p. 723 and by J. Dwight Pentecost, ‘Daniel’ in BKC, p. 1347.

<sup>42</sup> Always in plural: in Aramaic in *constructus*: אַחַשְׁדַּרְפָּנַיָּא (*ʾaḥšardarṣanayyā*”; cf. Dan 3:2; Est 3:12).

## 2. The plan of Daniel's enemies: Vv 5-9

Daniel was irreproachable. His enemies, raging with jealousy, were looking for a reason to discredit him before the king. As they couldn't find anything to accuse him of, they first had to create a new law in order to do so (cf. Dan 3:1ff).

## 5 3. Daniel's prayer: Vv 10-11

- Daniel prayed three times a day. Regularity is a good thing but beware of routine...
- His window remained open, as it always had. He obviously wasn't scared of the abominable law that had been established. What an example this Daniel is! As the Scripture says, "*One ought to obey God not men*" (cf. Act 5:29). Daniel sets a good example for us and our prayer life. Though he served the government and surely bore a lot of responsibility, he still managed to find (or *make*) time for prayers. By the way, this experience of Daniel fulfils Salomon's prayer in 2Ch 6:38-39!

## 4. Darius' embarrassment: Vv 12-19

15 **V. 12:** → "*The law of the Medes and of the Persians*": To this day, this proverbial expression has the following meaning: *It's written and won't be changed; there's no way around it... even the king is bound to follow it* (cf. v. 15).

20 **Vv 13-14:** The king tried to protect Daniel but could not disobey the law of the Medes and of the Persians... which he had signed himself!

25 **Vv 15-19:** The king was forced to hand Daniel over to the court. He had been circumvented by his evil, jealousy-driven counsellors. God was the only one capable of intervening at this point. In verse 16, it seems that even King Darius was hoping for Daniel's God to rescue his servant. His attachment to Daniel is clearly demonstrated by the fact that he could neither sleep nor eat and didn't receive any women (v. 18).

**Application:** Darius became a prisoner of his own inconsiderate words. Let us think twice before we implement our thoughts. Let's first of all ask God for his opinion. To act precipitously can lead to fatal consequences (cf. Jos 9:14).

## 30 5. The divine protection of Daniel: Vv 20-23

**V. 20:** Darius' hope was for God to protect Daniel. Daniel's faith must have impressed King Darius.

35 **Vv 21-23:** Daniel was protected by an angel of God.

**Application:** God blesses those people who do not give in to shady compromises. He can at any time intervene in a miraculous way (cf. Mat 28:18).

## 6. The order of the king: Vv 24-28

**V. 24:** Those who had schemed to get rid of Daniel died in his place along with their families (collective penalties were common in those days: cf. Achan in Jos 7). Compare also to Est 7:9-10: Haman was hanged on the gallows he had put up for Mordecai, the Jew (see Pro 26:27; Ecc 10:8; Gal 6:7!

**Vv 25-27:** The decree of King Darius that the God of Daniel be honoured is similar to that of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 3:28-33!

### Three practical lessons from this chapter

1. A believer shouldn't expect to be spared from the conspiracies of this world. Can we manage to keep calm and confide in God even when we are wrongly accused?
2. When we have to choose between sin (compromise) and testing (suffering), let us always choose the latter. God will take care of the rest. We must not forget the wonderful promise in 1Co 10:13: *"God who is faithful and loyal will not let you be tempted beyond your ability."*
3. Nothing in this world should keep us from praying: cf. Act 5:29; 1Th 5:17.

### III. The prophetic part: Ch. 7–12

#### A. The vision of the four animals: Ch. 7

This chapter reflects the same message as the one in chapter two (it's a counterpart): The four beasts of Dan 7:3-7 correspond to the four parts of the statue and ought to be interpreted in the same manner. An interesting observation: The vision in chapter two was seen by a pagan; that is why the four empires are seen in their earthly glory. Chapter 7 talks about a vision received by Daniel. The four beasts which he sees represent the same four earthly empires, like the four phases of the statue in chap. 2, but he as a man of God sees them the way they really are: brutal and terrifying.

The following connections exist between chapter 2 and 7: Both of them speak about five succeeding kingdoms:

	<u>Chapter 2</u>	<u>Chapter 7</u>
15	➤ Nebuchadnezzar had a dream	Daniel had a dream
	➤ Daniel interprets the dream in a general manner	An angel interprets the dream in a detailed manner (v. 16)
20	➤ A splendid statue is composed of four different metals and clay	Four fierce beasts

This chapter contains probably the most extended prophecy of the Old Testament. It depicts the history of the world from 600 B.C. until the beginning of eternity.

#### 25 1. Daniel's vision: Vv 1-14

**V. 1:** → "*During the first year of the government of Belshazzar*", that is from 541 or 540 B.C. He probably reigned for 3 years, as he was killed in the Medo-Persian invasion in 538 B.C. (cf. Dan 5:30 and 8:1).

30 **Vv 2-3:** → "*The four winds from heaven*": In the Bible, this is often an expression for the four points of the compass: cf. Jer 49:36; Eze 37:9; Dan 8:8; 11:4; Zec 2:6; Rev 7:1 etc.

Keil<sup>43</sup> thinks this refers to heavenly powers that influence the nations of the world: cf. Dan 10:13; Eph 6:12.

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<sup>43</sup> C. F. Keil 'The Book of Daniel' in *Commentary on the Old Testament in 10 Volumes*, translated from German, reprint (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), vol. 9, p. 222.

→ “*The great Sea*”: The text does not give any specifics about the sea in question. It’s probably safe to say that it isn’t the Mediterranean Sea. Most likely, the vision talks about “*the sea [or waters] of nations*”: cf. Rev 17:1-2.15.

5 **Vv 3-8:** The four beasts represent the four kings and four nations respectively: cf. vv 17-23.

### a.) The first beast: Babylon (v. 4)

10 The **lion** with the eagle wings: In Jer 4:7, Babylon is illustrated with a lion, in Eze 17:3 with an eagle.<sup>44</sup> These aspects can be applied well to Nebuchadnezzar. Its wings were torn off, it was lifted up from the ground so that it stood on its two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it – all of this describes the seven years of Nebuchadnezzar’s sickness and his recovery as well (cf. chap. 4).

### b.) The second beast: Medo-Persia (v. 5)

15 The **bear** that stood erect on one side: This image reveals that this Empire actually consisted of two kingdoms: Media and Persia. Compare this to the second phase of the statue in Dan 2:32: The chest with the two arms also implies that there were two parts. That the bear was bent on one side indicates that Persia was superior to Media, which has been confirmed by the secular history. Confer Dan 8:3: One of the two horns of the ram was longer than the other, and in Dan 8:20, it’s made clear that the two horns represent “the kings of Media and Persia”. All these visions complement one another and build an entity.

20 • **The three ribs in its mouth, between the teeth:** The Bible Annotée interprets this as follows: The Medo-Persians had directed their conquest towards (1) the West, (2) the North, (3) the South, but not towards the East (cf. Dan 8:4). Other exegetes think that this could point to three great war victories:

- 25
1. 539-538 B.C.: against the Babylonians
  2. 539 B.C.: against Egypt
  3. A bit later: against Lydia (Asia Minor, today’s Turkey)

30 We rather tend to the first proposition of interpretation, i.e. the conquest campaigns in three points of the compass.

### c.) The third beast: Greece (v. 6)

35 The **leopard (panther)** corresponds to the phase of the bronze belly and thighs in Dan 2:32.39. It is the Greek Empire. The leopard is known for its agility and quickness (cf. Hab 1:8). This image brilliantly matches the speed of the Greek conquests under Alexander the Great (cf. Dan 8:5: the flying goat, representing Greece as well).

- 40
- **With four bird-wings:** This further reinforces its swiftness. In fact, in only a few years (13 precisely), Alexander the Great not only conquered Asia Minor and Egypt, but also the entire Asian Continent up to the ‘Indus River’ in India.
  - **Four heads:** This certainly points to the fact that after the sudden death of Alexander the Great, his Empire was governed by four “kings”. This means that his great Empire was divided into four different kingdoms. His successors were four generals of his army who bestowed on themselves the title of king: cf. Dan 8:8: When the great horn broke, four other

<sup>44</sup> Eze 17:3 refers to Nebuchadnezzar who represents his Neo-Chaldean Empire.

horns grew on the head of the he-goat. Dan 8:21-22 explicitly confirms that these four horns represent the four kings; that is four kingdoms. The four kings and their kingdoms were:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 5 | 1. Cassander:<br>2. Lysimachus:<br>3. Seleucus:<br>4. Ptolemy: | Macedonia and Greece<br>Thrace and Bithynia<br>Syria, Babylon, Persia<br>Egypt, Palestine and Arabia <sup>45</sup> |
|---|--|--|

#### d.) The fourth beast: Rome (vv 7-8.19-26)

- 10      • This beast has no specific name, but it is more ferocious than the three preceding ones. It corresponds to the two iron legs and the iron and clay feet (statue: Dan 2:40-43). Here are some indications to confirm this: (1) The beast has iron teeth (cf. the iron legs in ch. 2). (2) The beast has ten horns (cf. the two feet with 10 toes). More about this later.
- 15      • Its ferocity (v. 7) matches well with the description of the iron phase of the statue in Dan 2:40.
- 15      • Compare the parallel in Rev 13:2-3, where it is said that this fourth beast incorporates all the ferocities of the preceding ones.
- 15      • The head of this beast: Ten horns and another little horn which talks in an arrogant manner. For the interpretation of this 4<sup>th</sup> beast, see below the commentary to verses 15-28.
- 20      **Vv 9.13.22:** “*The ancient of days*”: This is the God of eternity, God the Father: cf. Deu 33:27. For descriptive purposes compare Eze 1:26. In the verses 18.22.25.27, he is called “*the Most High*” (in Aramaic ܥܠܝܢܐ [‘Elyōnān]: that’s the emphatic form of the plural). We can also translate it by “*God the most high*”, or by “*the almighty God*”.
- 25      • → “*Thrones were set up*” (v. 9): → “*the court sat, and the books were opened*” (v. 10): probably the glorified believers who will also judge: cf. Mat 19:28; 1Co 6:2-3; Rev 20:4.
- 25      • → “*Thousands upon thousands . . . and myriads upon myriads*” (v. 10): One myriad normally represents ten thousand. Louis Second (1975) translates it by “*mille milliers . . . et dix mille millions*”. Sander and Trenel propose a 100 million. TOB suggests “*dix mille myriades*”. Well, the Hebraic and Aramaic root רבב (ribbō) can either be translated by *ten thousand* or by *a myriad*. When the two are multiplied (ten thousand times ten thousand), we get 10 million. But the text says רבב רבב (ribbō ribwān; maybe ribbān [Qere]): “*myriads of myriads*”. If we interpret the second form in plural, we can definitely consider a 100 million as Sander and Trenel<sup>46</sup> propose. See also Rev 5:11: “...thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.” One myriad equals ten thousand, and in the Greek text, the word “myriad” is both times in the plural. Should we then conclude that it doesn’t only mean 10,000 times 10,000, but 10,000 times 10,000 multiplied by 10,000 times 10,000, that is to say 10 million times 10 million? The Zurich Bible translates Dan 7:10 as follows: “zehntausendmal Zehntausende”. The first expression “ribbō” is a singular, while the second (“ribwān”) is a plural: 10,000 times tens of thousands. But “tens of thousands” are how many exactly? It doesn’t seem so important to answer that question, as in other parallel

<sup>45</sup> For more about that, see ch. 8.

<sup>46</sup> N. Ph. Sander and I. Trenel, *Dictionnaire Hébreu-Français* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1987), p. 667. The *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, edited by Willem A. Van Gemeren (Carlisle, GB: Paternoster Press, 1997), vol. III, p. 1036 (article on “rebabab” [= 10,000] by P. P. Jensen), says, with reference to Dan 7:10; 1 Enoch 1:9; 14:22 [this is the extra-canonical book Enoch]: “A double multiplication and heightening (thousands of thousands to ten thousands of ten thousands) tends towards infinity in the portrayal of the number of God’s servants in the heavenly throneroom...” [sic]

passages (O.T. and N.T.) it is simply said that “their number cannot be counted”.<sup>47</sup> These figures are used to express the number of the heavenly army (angels) as well as the number of believers that are glorified. Here in Dan 7:10, we could refer to them as saints, since according to the other passages, they are the ones who will judge people together with the Lord (cf. Rev 20:4<sup>48</sup>). The fact that people sit in order to judge lets us think of the glorified saints, for they are the ones who will also judge, not the angels (Dan 7:10).

**Vv 11-12: The little horn** (the Antichrist), the (fourth) beast and the other beasts (empires of the world) are destroyed: see our explanations to the verses 24-26.

### **The coming of the Son of man with the clouds (v. 13)**

Compare Rev 1:7; Mat 24:30.

- He is not “the Ancient of days”, for he comes to the latter.
- He will be given supremacy over the whole world (v. 14): We believe this to be the Messianic, earthly (millennial) kingdom (cf. the rock that filled the whole earth in Dan 2:35; see also Zec 14:9).
- This definitely refers to Jesus Christ coming back. The context leaves no room for doubt. Jesus repeatedly calls himself “the Son of man”: cf. Mar 8:20; 10:45; Mat 24:30. Have a look at the words of Rev 1:7, which are a combination of Zec 12:10 and Dan 7:13. The Father handed over the judgment of the world to him (cf. Joh 5:24-29).

### **The saints that are in Heaven**

- Cf. the vv 13.21.22.25.27.
- They are the ones who will inherit the kingdom of God: v. 27 (cf. Mat 25:34; Rev 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5).

## **2. The interpretation of the vision: Vv 15-28**

### **a.) General explanations of the vision: Vv 15-18**

**Vv 15-16:** Daniel was scared, maybe because he realised the saints would suffer (v. 21). So he asked → “...one of them who was standing...”: probably an angel.

**V. 17:** The four beasts represent four kings. In v. 23, we learn that the four kings represent at the same time four kingdoms → “four kings who will arise from the earth”: Cf. v. 2, from where it follows that this means the majority of humanity (and its powers).

**V. 18:** → “The saints of the Most High”: Cf. vv 18.22.25.27: The dispensationalist Unger<sup>49</sup> thinks that these represent the remaining Jews (the remnant of the Israelites who will survive during the great tribulation). The Bible Annotée suggests that this term designates all the Messianic people of that time, as described by the earlier prophets, including the faithful Israelites and the gentiles that the Lord called to join them. As the saints mentioned here have already been made perfect (because

<sup>47</sup> In the O.T. see e.g. Gen 13:16: “...so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.” (Hebrew: *אִם-יִסְפָּק אִישׁ לִמְנוֹת אֶת-עָפָר הָאָרֶץ גַּם-יִרְעֶה יָמֶנָּה*). In the N.T. see e.g. Rev 7:9: “...which no one could count” (Greek: *ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο*).

<sup>48</sup> The world and the fallen angels (cf. 1Co 6:2-3).

<sup>49</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Bibel Aktuell*, vol. 3: Die Propheten, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Wetzlar: Verlag Hermann Schulte, 1970), p. 150.



they judge [v. 10], and they rule [v. 27]), it would probably be better to include the believers of all times (whether of Jewish or of heathen origin: cf. Rom 9–11, Gal 3:28; Eph 2:11-16). A Jew does not inherit the kingdom because he is a Jew; no, he inherits it only through his faith in the Son of man, the Messiah. A Jew who does not believe in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, will not inherit the kingdom of God (cf. Rom 9:1-5). Dan 7:13-14 shows us that they will reign under the supremacy of their king, the Son of man.

## **b.) A special interpretation concerning the fourth beast and the reign of the Son of Man: Vv 19-28**

**Vv 19-20:** Daniel would like to have more specific information about the fourth beast which:

- is very different from all the other beasts and distinguishes itself through particular cruelty (cf. v. 7)
- had ten horns (cf. v. 10).
- And an eleventh little horn which grew upwards in the middle of the 10 horns (cf. vv 8.20). This horn had eyes and spoke with arrogance. In addition, it tore out three of the ten horns (cf. Rev 13:3ff).

### **(1) Whom does this fourth beast represent (Empire)?**

The historical chronology makes one think of Rome. But not only secular history implies that it is Rome, no, also the descriptions in the respective verses speculate in favour of Rome. This opinion is represented incidentally by all evangelical interpreters, as already mentioned.

### **(2) Whom do the ten horns represent in verses 20 and 24?**

Compare it with the parallels of Dan 2:33.40-41 (the [ten] toes and the two feet of the statue). In this regard, we mentioned above that those phases relate to the Roman Empire which will later be divided into 10 individual kingdoms. Dan 7:24 confirms that these ten horns represent 10 kings. Compare the three horns that were pulled out (kings and kingdoms) in chap. 7 with Dan 2:41-43 → “*iron and clay*”, which symbolizes the lack of unity, in other words internal rivalry!

### **(3) Suggestions of interpretation regarding the identity of the 10 horns (kings)**

**Calvin** thought about 10 kingdoms which had then formed the Roman Empire. The little (eleventh) horn would have been Julius Caesar.

**Other interpreters** believe that the 10 provinces of the Roman Empire after the fall of Rome are meant, i.e. the Roman Empire was eventually divided into 10 individual kingdoms.

**The so-called Anglo-Saxon interpretation:** this interpretation is the one accepted by most of the evangelical theologians today.<sup>50</sup>

These ten horns represent 10 future kings (kingdoms) which will emerge from the old Roman Empire to collectively form a confederation of ten nations. Thus, they will form the Roman Empire of the last days (*Roma Renata*). The little horn represents the Antichrist who will head this future Empire. Here are some arguments that support this interpretation:

<sup>50</sup> This is also the position preferred by the author of this brochure.

- 5 The context of chap. 7 (in chap. 8 we see the same with the he-goat that eliminates the ram) shows that each beast eliminated its predecessor (see v. 7). History confirms that: Medo-Persia eliminated Babylon, the Greeks in turn caused Medo-Persia to fall, and Rome crushed and assimilated all of them. The same thing will come about with the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom that shall follow the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom i.e. after Rome. But the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom which should replace the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom has obviously not yet appeared. The kingdom of Christ on earth (which will be the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom) has after all not yet really begun: cf. Act 1:6-7; 3:21; Heb 2:8; 1Co 15:24-28 and Rev 20:1-6. Still no peace prevails on earth; but exactly this will characterise the kingdom of Christ on earth (compare e.g. Isa 11:1-10). The kingdom of the Son of man will be worldwide (cf. Dan 2:35, Zec 14:9), and he shall reign with an *iron rod* (Psa 2:9; Rev 12:5) and his people (followers) will reign with him. These (followers) are not yet glorified, as they are not yet risen from the dead. Only at the end of their time (life) will they reign with the Lord i.e. when they will have overcome: cf. 1Co 4:8ff; Rev 2:26-27. In 1Co 15:23, it clearly states that the resurrection of the faithful will only occur at the second coming of Christ. Rev 19:15 also clearly confirms this term: The kingdom of Christ begins with the second coming of Christ at the end of time. In other words, the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom i.e. the Messianic kingdom has not yet really started in its whole abundance.
- 20 Numerous theologians (especially the Catholic Church, following Augustine) maintain that the Church represents this 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom which – thanks to evangelisation and missionary activities – will spread gradually over the whole world. One look at the world affairs today lets us hardly believe the correctness of this interpretation. No, the Church cannot be identical with the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom, because:

  - 25 1. The Church was born in 33 A.D., on Pentecost (cf. Act 2). At that time, Rome was not at its end, on the contrary, Rome was then at the height of its power.
  - 30 2. Rome fell only in 476 A.D. As mentioned, the Church had not just begun to exist at this time. At this point in time, the Church was already over 400 years old. Daniel's vision with the beasts and the secular history show, however, that each kingdom was succeeded by another, while the new one eliminated the old one. The Church, however, did not bring the Roman Empire to fall. Rather, the Roman Caesars persecuted the Church for almost three centuries (up to Constantine the Great at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century).
- 35 The 10 kings will reign at the same time: cf. Dan 7:24-25 and Rev 17:13-14. They are not 10 successive kings (cf. the four horns of the he-goat in Dan 8:8.22, who reign at the same time). The 11<sup>th</sup> horn (the little horn) will conquer 3 of the 10 horns (Dan 7:8.20.24); those that remain will collaborate with the little horn, which will be the chief over all of them (cf. Rev 17:11-14).
- 40 The parallels in Rev 13:1 and 17:7.11-12 suggest also that these kingdoms are yet to come.

In other words, Rome still exists. Its influences are noticeable everywhere. The character of Rome continues today. Here is just one example: The so-called "*Lex Romana*" (the Roman law). That the Roman Empire *was* and at the end of time *must return again* is confirmed by the following parallel sections: Rev 17:8 → "...*The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder . . . when they see the beast, that it was and is not and will come.*" Also Rev 13:3: A head of the beast was wounded lethally, has been healed again however (as if by a miracle), which means it will return back to life again. The vision of the statue in Dan 2 suggests the same. The fourth phase, i.e. Rome, is also subdivided in two "stages" or "phases": first the two legs of iron (the then Roman Empire: the western Empire with Rome as its capital, the eastern Empire with Constantinople as its capital) and then the two feet with the (ten) toes made of iron and clay. The "iron-clay phase" is the final stage of the fourth beast, i.e. the phase of the individual 10 kingdoms, as the 10 horns in Dan 7 (cf. Rev

13 and 17). That this block of 10 kingdoms must be put chronologically in the “*end of time*”, is obvious for the following reason: In Dan 7:25, it says that the kingdom of the little horn (and the others with it) will last “*a time, [two] times and a half time*”. This time period is again mentioned in Dan 12:7 and it clearly emerges from the context (refer to the previous and following verses) that it deals with the end of time. Indeed, this expression and the indication of the period of time, respectively, are also mentioned in the book of Revelation, namely Rev 12:14. There the connection leaves no space for doubt that the end of time is meant, i.e. the period of the Antichrist. Compare it with the reference of the 1,260 days in Rev 12:6. 1,260 days are 3½ years; this is exactly equivalent to the period of time stated: “*a time, [two] times and a half time*” = 3½ years. This in turn corresponds with the 42 months of Rev 11:2. In Rev 11:3 the 1,260 days are also mentioned. The fifth kingdom, the Messianic kingdom, has not yet begun because the Roman Empire still continues to exist in the form of the individual small kingdoms and the day will come where they will form the revived Roman Empire (cf. Rev 17:8).

#### (4) Whom does the little horn in vv 8.20.21.24-25 represent?

As we already mentioned above, it is certainly the apocalyptic Antichrist: cf. 2Th 2:3-8; Rev 13:1-8. These parallels speak strongly for this identification, because in Dan 7:25 it says that the little horn (the Antichrist) will act during 3 ½ years which is also confirmed in Rev 13:5: 42 months = 3 ½ years. Another argument is the fact that the little horn persecutes the saints: cf. vv 21.25 (see the beast as well in Rev 13:7.15).

Dan 7; 2Th 2 and Rev 13 offer a good description of the character of the Antichrist.

#### (5) The development of the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom

<p>The 3<sup>rd</sup> Empire: the 4<sup>th</sup>: in 476 A.D.<sup>51</sup> Rome disappeared →<sup>52</sup> <b>Roma Renata:</b> 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom</p> <p> Greece ☹   the fall of Rome ☹     Rome newly formed ☹   1000 years</p>	<p>The leopard Dan 7 Rev 17:8: Rev 17:8: Rev 17:8: millennium</p> <p>The he-goat Dan 8 <i>that was</i> <i>and is no more!</i> <i>and reappears</i> Dan 2:35; 7:</p> <p>Rome of the current situation the little horn = 11-14.26-27;</p> <p>Caesars Antichrist (Rev 13: Rev 20:4-6;</p> <p>3-5); the 70<sup>th</sup> week 5:10;</p> <p>in Dan 9:27; 7:25: = 3 ½ years; cf. Rev 11:</p> <p>2-3; 12:6.14; 13:5</p>
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#### (6) Supplementary notes

All eschatological/apocalyptic visions of chap. 7; 8; 9 and 11 end and culminate with the Antichrist: cf. 7:25; 8:23-25; 9:27; 11:36-45. This is also true for the ending of the book of Daniel: refer to Dan 12:7.11. Also compare the mentioning of the “*abomination of desolation*” in Dan 9:27 and 12:11 with the extremely important prophecy of Mat 24:15, where Jesus relates these words to Daniel! Here it very much concerns the last days, the time of the Antichrist.

<sup>51</sup> In 476 A.D., Rome the capital city was defeated by the Germans.

<sup>52</sup> We do not know when the kingdom of the Antichrist will begin. We can only observe the signs of the times.

**V. 25:** → “*A time, [two] times and a half time*”: cf. Dan 9:27; 12:7.11-12; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6.14; 13:5: These passages deal with the second half of the *great tribulation*: the time when the Antichrist will persecute Israel and the Christians in that time.

- 5 **Vv 26-27:** The 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom begins subsequent to the destruction of the Antichrist: compare it with the passages Dan 2:34-35.45; 11:45 and Rev 19:11-21, which render details about the end of the Antichrist through the intervention of Christ during his second coming (cf. 2Th 2:8). The 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom in Dan 2 and 7 corresponds exactly to the chronology of the Revelation of the apostle John: after the second coming of Christ (19:11-21) follows the millennium (20:1-6).

10 **Vv 28:** Daniel is frightened: cf. v. 15. The Aramaic part of the Book of Daniel ends here. From chap. 8:1, the text is again in Hebrew, as it now deals especially with the future of Israel.

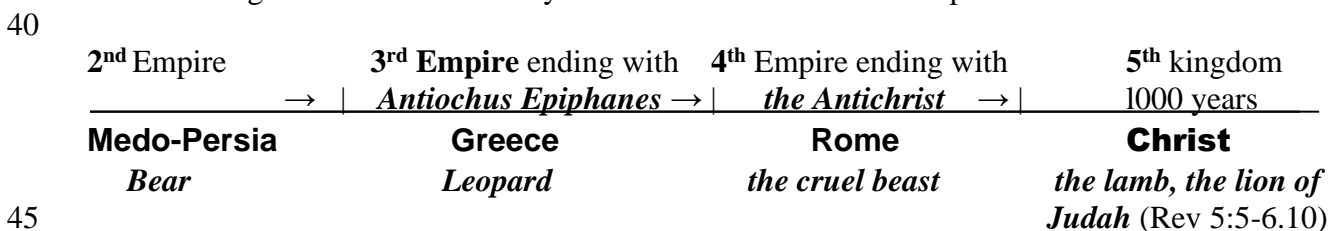
## B. The vision of the ram and the he-goat: Ch. 8

This chapter deals with Israel under Medo-Persia and Greece!

- 15 **A distinction is drawn between the following three interpretations:**
1. **It deals with the history of Antiochus Epiphanes:** That is, in particular, the interpretation suggested by the critical interpreters. They allege that the book of Daniel had been written during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (i.e. in the period of the Maccabeans) by an anonymous author and in such a way as if it would appear a prophecy whereas in truth it would be only a report of things that had already happened. In other words, the author wrote about events which he had seen with his own eyes.
  - 20 2. Daniel prophesied well, but in the meantime all his prophecies have already been fulfilled: **all illustrated events already belong to the past.** It is maintained, this prophecy would concern no event after the epoch of Antiochus Epiphanes. In other words, it all has nothing to do with our future.
  - 25 3. Daniel has **prophesied both about Antiochus Epiphanes and about the Antichrist of the last days.** The evangelical theologians defend this position: compare Dan 7:8.20.24-25, the little horn which will arise from the Roman Empire (from the 4<sup>th</sup> beast) with Dan 8:9-12.23-25, the little horn which will arise from the Greek Empire (the 3<sup>rd</sup> beast from Dan 7 corresponds to the he-goat in chap. 8).
  - 30

35 The Antichrist: cf. 1Jo 4:3: “...of whom you have heard of his coming and who is now already in *this world!*” (cf. Mat 24:24: antichrists [plural] have always existed, but the true Antichrist [singular] has still to come). It will be the Antichrist of the last days, the beast from Rev 13, the son of perdition, the son of lawlessness from 2Th 2:3-4.7-8.

Here is a diagram which shall clarify the consecutiveness of the empires:



# 1. The vision: Vv 1-14

**V. 1:** Compare in addition Dan 7:1. Daniel had this vision (Dan 8) two years after the one of the four beasts (Dan 7).

5 **V. 2:** → “...and it was while I was looking, as if I were in the castle Susa, which lies in the province Elam...”: It was a fort, about 400 km from Babylon. Later on, it became the capital city of Medo-Persia.

10 **V. 3: The ram with the two horns** represents **the Empire of Medo-Persia** (cf. v. 20). A historical detail: it began with the Medes, who were then joined up by the Persians. The Persians were stronger than the Medes in the end. That is exactly as indicated in Dan 8:3: One horn was longer than the other. Pay attention to the parallel with the bear in Dan 7:5 (the second beast) that leant on one side, which naturally implies the side that was stronger. Compare this with our interpretation of chap. 2 and 7, where we have identified the second Empire as Medo-Persian.

15 **V. 4:** Interesting: the three cardinal points mentioned (West, North and South) are, as already mentioned above, also confirmed by the secular history: the conquests of the Medo-Persians were all conducted against the North, the South and the West, but not against the East. Compare this with the *three ribs* in the mouth of the bear in Dan 7:5.

20 **V. 5:** The he-goat with the great horn cf. v. 21: the king of Javan, i.e. Greece.

- → “*The horn*” is Alexander the Great, the famous conqueror.
- He came → “*from the West*”: Greece lies in the West (as seen from Israel) and Medo-Persia in the East.
- → “*...without touching the ground*”: This means with high speed; compare this with Dan 7:6: the leopard which is also very quick. As mentioned, Alexander the Great conquered successively, within 13 years, all the countries from Greece up to the doors of India (the River Indus was the eastern border). His greatest battles were:

- |    |                    |             |   |
|----|--------------------|-------------|---|
| 30 | 1. Granikos:       | in 334 B.C. | Asia Minor (today's Turkey) against Darius III.     |
|    | 2. Issos:          | in 333 B.C. | at the border between present day Turkey and Syria. |
|    | 3. Tyre and Egypt: | in 332 B.C. | founded the city of Alexandria.                     |
|    | 4. Gaugamela:      | in 331 B.C. | in the territory of early (ancient) Assyria.        |

35 After that he conquered Babylon, Susa, Persepolis and the remaining territory up to river Indus. Exhausted, he returned with his army to Babylon, where he died at the age of only 33 years.

40 **Vv 6-7:** The he-goat destroyed the ram: Alexander the Great defeated the Medo-Persian army in several great wars.

**V. 8:** → “...*its great horn broke*”: At his peak, Alexander the Great died unexpectedly and suddenly, shortly after his rapid conquests. → “*and four great horns grew in its place*”: After his death, his Empire was divided into four kingdoms. As his son was still too young to rule, his four  
45 generals divided the conquered territories amongst themselves (cf. v. 22).

**V. 9:** → “*And from one and the same grew a smaller horn*”: All interpreters agree that it is Antiochus Epiphanes IV who reigned from 175-164 B.C. This was the first pagan king who had not only conquered Canaan and wanted to demolish the political powers of the Jews [of Israel], but at  
50 the same time to also eliminate what distinguished Israel from all other nations, namely the cult of

Yahweh. That is why in 1Ma 1:10 he is called an “*impious shoot*”. From Antioch, his capital city, he went on voyages of conquest against the South (Egypt) and towards the East (Babylon and Persia).<sup>53</sup> He was the 8<sup>th</sup> king of the Syrian dynasty. Concerning his conquests in the South, East and the “Beautiful Land” (Israel is meant), the Antichrist of the last days will do the same (see Dan 11:40-41).

By the way, only two of the four kingdoms were of paramount importance for Israel: Egypt (the Ptolemeans) in the south and Syria (Seleucids) in the north.

**V. 10:** → “*The Army of Heaven*”: compare with the parallel 2Ki 6:17: the angels who fight for Israel. In Exo 12:41, Israel is called the *army of the Lord*. Here, the “*army of heaven*” refers primarily to Israel (cf. vv 24-25). Indeed, there are also interpreters who believe that the expression → “*the army of the stars*” could also include angels who were protectors of Israel (cf. Dan 10:13.21). But we do not think so as some from the “*army of the stars*” should be trodden to the ground. Here the “*stars*” could perhaps mean the chiefs of the Israelites (cf. vv 11-12). Compare Rev 2–3 where the Church leaders are also referred to as “*angels*”. A better part of the expositors interpret the “*angels*” there to be the Church leaders.

**Vv 11-12:** It has been discussed whether by the “*army chief*” Yahweh or the high priest in Jerusalem is meant. Be that as it may, as Antiochus Epiphanes proceeded against the Yahweh cult in the temple, he ultimately also attacked God. Christ is the chief of the Lord’s army (cf. Jos 5:15). The Antichrist of the last days will also oppose Christ (cf. 2Th 2:4.8; Rev 19:19): → “*and it removed the regular sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was thrown down*”: In the year 170 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes went up to Jerusalem and had the golden altar, the candle stick, etc. removed from the temple. In 168 B.C., he erected an idolatrous altar in the temple, in honour of god Zeus Olympus. → “*And the horn threw the truth on the ground*”, i.e. the cult and the law of Moses, “*and it had success*”: Unfortunately, many Jews became apostate by refusing to obey the laws of Moses, thus accepting paganism, which Antiochus Epiphanes welcomed with great enthusiasm. That should not surprise or even astonish one. Is it not true that times of temptation and persecution reveal who the true followers are (cf. Mat 13:20-22; 1Jo. 2:19)?

**Vv 13-14:** The sacrifice will be abolished for a period of 2300 days and nights; this corresponds to about 6 years and 4 months. This time period probably elapsed from the beginning of the persecution (murder of Onias III, the high priest: cf. 2Ma 4:3ff) up to the time of the purification of the temple (cf. 1Ma 4:53: that is 171 to 165 or 164 B.C.). In the year 164 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes died of a terrible disease. The death of this tyrant brought the Jewish people freedom once more. Because Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited God’s people from worshiping their God, he is also referred to as a type (forerunner) of the Antichrist during the period of the Old Covenant.

## 2. The interpretation of the vision: Vv 15-27

**Vv 15-16:** The man who stood in front of Daniel was the angel Gabriel (cf. Dan 9:21; Luk 1:19.26). The one who spoke from the middle of the river was probably superior to Gabriel (cf. Dan 10:5-6 and 12:6), because he issued him an order. It is most probable that it was (the pre-existent) Christ (thus a Christophany).

**Vv 17-18:** Daniel is numbed. The same thing happened to the apostle John when Christ appeared to him on the island of Patmos: cf. Rev 1:17. **V. 17:** “*...the vision pertains to the time of the end*”: See also the following verse in Dan 8, which also indicates that this prophecy applies not only to the period of Antiochus Epiphanes (the Maccabeans), but also to the last days (cf. vv 19.26).

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Frédéric Godet, *Bible Annotée*, AT vol. 8, *ad loc.*

**The Interpretation:**

**V. 19:** The information that this vision concerns especially the end.

**V. 20:** The ram represents the Medo-Persians (cf. v. 3).

**V. 21:** The he-goat represents Greece (Jawan); his horn Alexander the Great.

**V. 22:** The four successors of Alexander the Great (who were not as strong as he himself) were, as already mentioned above:

1. Cassander      Macedonia and Greece
2. Lysimachus    Thrace and Bithynia
3. Seleucus       Syria, Babylon and Persia (Antiochus Epiphanes was one of his successors)
4. Ptolemy        Egypt, Israel and Arabia

**Vv 23-25:** Antiochus Epiphanes: All information in these verses has been fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes. He was truly a type (forerunner) of the Antichrist of the last days:

- He was impudent and cunning: v. 23b.
- He was very powerful: v. 24a.
- He ravaged: v. 24b (He destroyed, looted and blasphemed Israel, especially Jerusalem and tried to kill all those who remained faithful to the law [of Moses]).
- He succeeded in his endeavours: v. 24c (He won wars and the unfaithful Jews followed him).
- He destroyed the powerful and the people of the saints: vv 24d-25a (He conquered other countries and exterminated many of the faithful Jews).
- He was cunning: v. 25a (At first, he was friendly to the Jews and then suddenly attacked and ravaged Jerusalem).
- He was arrogant: v. 25b.
- He caused the death of many people: v. 25c.
- He rose against the King of Kings: v. 25d (cf. Rev 19:19).
- He was shattered, without help from human hand: v. 25e (He was the victim of a terrible disease: cf. 1Ma 6:10-16; 2Ma 9:5ff<sup>54</sup>).

**V. 26:** It is clear: The vision about Antiochus Epiphanes represents at the same time a prophecy which reflects the events of the last days, i.e. the period of the *great tribulation*, the time of the Antichrist: cf. vv 17.19. → “*But keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future*”: The vision is of paramount importance for the end time, that is why Daniel is urged to keep it sealed, i.e. a secret (cf. Dan 12:4).

**V. 27:** → “*...and no one was there who understood it*”: Presumably it means that no one in his neighbourhood could know which deep impression this vision had made on Daniel, so that he actually became ill.

<sup>54</sup> We recommend the reading of these two passages of the apocryphal books of Maccabees. One ought to know that the books of Maccabees belong to the most important witnesses of the history of Israel of the so-called intertestamental period (between Malachi and the gospels). The historical information in these books are quite precious and do complete certain passages of the canonical books of the Bible (e.g. Dan 8 and 11:21-35). Concerning doctrine, however, the books of Maccabees are to be read with reservation. We would like to remind the reader that in the books of the Maccabees it is spoken (among other things) about prayers for the dead etc. (which is contrary to the teaching of the canonical books of the Holy Scripture). Let us then follow the recommendation of Paul in 1Th 5:21.

## C. Daniel's prayer and his vision of the 70 year-weeks: Ch. 9

This vision concerns the chronology of the future events of the people of Israel.

### 1. The reason for the prayer: Vv 1-2

5 **V. 1:** *"In the first year:* That was in 538 B.C., when the second Empire had just overthrown the first one: Medo-Persia destroyed Babylon. → *"Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede":* cf. our remarks on Dan 6:1. → *"...who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans",* that means neither by heritage nor by a personal conquest, but he had received this power from Cyrus who had conquered Babylon as the General of the Medo-Persian army.

10 **V. 2:** The study of the words of the prophet Jeremiah drove Daniel to pray: **The 70 years predicted by the prophet Jeremiah:** cf. Jer 25:11-12; 29:10 (cf. 2Ch 36:21). Daniel believed that God's promise would be accomplished and as he saw that the 70 years predicted by the prophet Jeremiah drew nearer and nearer, he asked God to intervene in favour of Israel.

### 15 2. Daniel's prayer: Vv 3-19

**V. 3:** By putting on sack cloth and covering himself with ashes, Daniel expressed an inner attitude of humility.

20 **Vv 4-14:** As Young says: "Daniel makes acknowledgement of Israel's guilt, and in this acknowledgement includes himself."<sup>55</sup> Pentecost comments this as follows:

Daniel evidently was fully aware that the years in Babylon were a divine discipline on Israel. Knowing that confession was one requisite to restoration, he **confessed** the sin of his people, identifying himself with their sin as though he were personally responsible for it.<sup>56</sup>

25 Though Daniel was a faithful servant of God (he was even ready to lose his life for God's sake: see chap. 1 and 6), he identified himself with all Israelites. This is really a true fruit of humility. Here are the details of his confession:

30 **V. 4:** He admits that God is merciful.

**V. 5:** He confesses all the sins and the unfaithfulness of Israel.

**V. 6:** They didn't listen to the prophets that God had sent to them.

35 **Vv 7-8:** God always remains faithful and just, but Israel acted evilly. The aim of the judgement is that God's people might accept its faults, repent and change its attitude.

**Vv 9-14:** He again admits that the judgement that came over them was the inevitable consequence of their unfaithfulness. In verses 11-13, he says that this judgement was the fulfilment of the curse

<sup>55</sup> Edward J. Young, NBC, p. 698.

<sup>56</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, BKC, p. 1360.



pronounced by Moses on Israel in case of apostasy: cf. Lev 26:14-39; Deu 27:15-26; 28:15-68. Without confession and repentance, there is no forgiveness, nor restoration (cf. Pro 28:13; Act 2:38; 1Jo 1:9).

- 5 **Vv 15-19:** Here Daniel pleads to God for grace and forgiveness. His words are exemplary. That's how we ought to pray as well.

10 **V. 15:** Daniel confesses again the sins of his people to God and witnesses that God is still the same who brought them at that time out of Egypt (cf. Heb 13:8)! It is as if Daniel would say: *"Lord, as you showed your power by delivering Israel out of its servitude in Egypt, you can also deliver us from our present exile!"*

**V. 16:** Because of its sin Israel and Jerusalem have become subjects of mockery among the nations.

15 **V. 17:** Daniel supplicates God to intervene for his own name's sake (that means for the sake of his holy name "Yahweh"). God's honour is at stake. Certainly, Israel has dishonoured Yahweh in front of all the nations. Therefore God had to punish Israel. Sin must be condemned. But now it looked as if God was not the master of his own people. Through God's intervention, the nations ought to recognise that Yahweh was still in control of everything (cf. Psa 79:10; 115:1-2). By the way, it is in this way that we ought to understand the following (frequently repeated) typical statement in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel also wrote during the Babylonian exile!): *"And you will know that I am the Lord!"* See Eze 6:7.10.13.14; 7:4.9; 11:10.12; 12:15.16; 13:9.14.21.23 etc.: Israel should again learn to recognise its God. But the nations should also come to know Yahweh, when he intervenes in favour of his people: cf. Eze 28:22.23; 29:6.9.16; 30:8.19.25.26; **36:23; 37:28; 38:16.23; 39:6.7** etc. But in the same time the restored Israel should again recognise the Lord as it sees how it has been saved by the wonderful intervention of the Lord: Eze 39:22.28. Above all, God intervenes for his own name's sake which has been exposed to mockery by his people before the nations: cf. Jer 14:7; **Eze 20:9.14.22; 36:22; 39:25** etc. (see also verse 19 below).

30 **V. 18:** Daniel does not trust in the merits of his people but rather in God's mercifulness.

**V. 19:** May the Lord intervene in favour of Jerusalem (and Israel), for they bear the name of the Lord (Yahweh). If they are devastated then the name of the Lord is blasphemed among the nations (see commentary on verse 17 above).

### 35 **3. God's response to Daniel's prayer: Vv 20-23**

**Vv 20-21:** When Daniel was praying, Gabriel the messenger of God appeared to him in order to bring him the Lord's answer to his prayer. → *"Gabriel whom I saw earlier in a vision"*: Compare with Dan 8:16, where it speaks of Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat.

40 **Vv 22-23:** Gabriel explains to Daniel clearly that the message he brought was God's response to his prayer. The answer of God consisted of **the promise of salvation in verses 24-27**.

### **4. The prophecy of the seventy year-weeks: Vv 24-27**

45 These four verses belong to the most important passages (mainly concerning *Eschatology*) in the Bible. It is perhaps one of the reasons that make it an object of several controversies. Let therefore the reader of this brochure not blame us if he finds no equilibrium in our commentary about these verses that cover about one fourth of the brochure. The reader will easily understand the direct

relationship existing between these four verses and those of Dan 7 (cf. v. 25); Dan 12 (cf. vv 7-13); Rev 11 (cf. vv 2-3); Rev 12 (cf. vv 6.14); Rev 13 (cf. v. 5) and Mat 24:15.

### a.) Five different interpretations can be counted over the 70 year-weeks

#### 5 (1) Fulfilment during the period of the Maccabeans

That means the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes. For the proponents of this position, Dan 11:31 constitutes the fulfilment of this “prophecy”! **Our objection** (it imposes itself): According to Dan 12:11, “*the abomination of the desolation*” mentioned in Dan 9:27 will be fulfilled only during the last days. Jesus clearly confirms that this event will be fulfilled by the end of time (cf. Mat 24:15).  
10 The events that took place during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes represented thus only a first or a partial fulfilment and therefore they could be considered as a type of the final accomplishment that will take place later under the rule of the Antichrist in the end of time.

#### (2) The fulfilment through the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D. under Titus, the Roman

15 This position is also known as “*the Jewish interpretation*”. **Our Objection:** The calculation of the 70 year-weeks from 444 B.C. (or else 445: see our commentary below) obviously does not lead to this date: 444 B.C. plus 490 years (70 year-weeks times 7 years) takes us up to a time between 30 and 40 A.D., but not to 70 A.D., the year when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Titus the Roman and his army.

#### 20 (3) The 70<sup>th</sup> year-week (Dan. 9:27) symbolically represents an indefinite time period from Christ up to the last days

**Our Objection:** Our arguments in favour of the 5<sup>th</sup> position constitute our objection against this third position!

#### 25 (4) The 70<sup>th</sup> year-week runs from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus (his baptism) up to 3 ½ years after his death

The proponents of this hypothesis interpret thus the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week in a literal manner. This actually pleases us. But here is **our objection** against this position: The statements in Dan 9:27 can hardly be applicable to the time of Jesus Christ’s ministry on earth and the period that follows his death. In addition, Jesus himself mentioned these events in connection with the last days (cf. Mat 24:15).  
30 Hence, this hypothesis also should be excluded. In fact, we are convinced that only the 5<sup>th</sup> interpretation can harmonise itself with all the respective texts.

#### (5) The 70<sup>th</sup> year-week stands for the period of the great tribulation

I.e. the period of the reign of the Antichrist during the last days that immediately precedes the second coming of Christ: Without a doubt, this is the position preferred by the majority of  
35 evangelicals. Here are the names of some well-known authors who have adhered to this position: René Pache, M. F. Unger, John F. Walvoord, J. D. Pentecost, H. C. Thiessen, etc. While it is true

that this position is backed-up by all dispensationalists, there are also some adherents to classic-historic Premillennialism that defend this position.

5 The author of this brochure wrote an exegetical and theological commentary on 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 and had it presented as a final thesis for his Master's degree (Mémoire de maîtrise) in theology at the "Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique" in Vaux-sur-Seine, France. 2Th 2 is one of the central texts that speak about the Antichrist. While working on this text, we found that it was extremely important to study it parallel with Dan 9:24-27 (and Dan 12:7-13) and the parallel passages in Rev 11-13. In our dissertation on 2Th 2, we have consequently included an excursus of  
10 more than 20 pages about the 70 year-weeks in Dan 9:24-27. We think that this excursus will be helpful to those who will study our commentary on Daniel. To simplify the reading, we have omitted in our commentary those quotations of our excursus in the "Mémoire" which we judged not to be essential for our argumentation. This excursus aims at proving that only the fifth interpretation (the one that affirms that the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week in Dan 9:27 is a reference to the period of the  
15 Antichrist of the last days: see above) is acceptable.

## **b.) Here are the reasons why we are convinced that the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week in Dan 9:24-27 corresponds to the period of the Antichrist**

We are convinced of the accuracy of the interpretation that each of the 70 year-weeks (in Hebrew: שָׁבָעִים, [šābu'īm]) represents a period of 7 years. The last year-week (cf. Dan 9:27) corresponds to  
20 the eschatological period of the Antichrist that precedes the second coming of Christ. This excursus aims at explaining and justifying this interpretation.

It is naturally not possible to evaluate in detail all the interpretations of the "70 year-weeks" in Dan 9:24-27 that have been made during the course of history.<sup>57</sup> However, we propose to mention the  
25 most important ones so as to discuss the pros and the cons of our position.

God revealed to Jeremiah that Israel will experience 70 years of captivity in Babylon because of her unfaithfulness (cf. Jer 25:11-12; 29:10ff and 2Chr 36:19-21). Dan 9:1-2 says that in studying the Holy Scriptures Daniel discovered that the duration of the exile in Babylon will last 70 years. He  
30 then prayed to God (Dan 9:13-19) and asked him to intervene for his people. God responded to his prayer through the angel Gabriel (Dan 9:20-23). This answer is written in Dan 9:24-27: → "Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your holy city..."

The words "šābu'īm šib'īm" (שָׁבָעִים שִׁבְעִים) literally mean: 70 weeks. The Hebrew root "šeba'" (שָׁבַע) means *seven*; from here the word "šābū'" (שָׁבוּעַ) is derived (the so-called *plene* or absolute form; the *constructus* form sounds "šēbu'" [שָׁבֻעַ] and it means „week“). The same word also appears in Dan 10:2-3. It is interesting to see that following the words "šēlošā' šābu'īm" (שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׁבָעִים = *three weeks*) in verse 2 or "šēlošet šābu'īm" (שְׁלֹשֶׁת שָׁבָעִים = *three weeks*) in verse 3, the expression "yāmīm" (יָמִים = *days*) follows. Young<sup>58</sup> argues that the aim of adding "days" (yāmīm) in Dan 10:2-3 is not to make it clear in this passage that – in contrast to the (year)-weeks in Dan 9:24-27 – ordinary weeks (each seven days) are meant. According to Young, rather the idea of a period of time should be emphasised: *three consecutive weeks* or *three full weeks*. But would it not be more logical to consider this, with Pentecost,<sup>59</sup> as a hint indicating that in Dan 10:2-3 *three normal weeks* (= 21 days) are meant, whereas in Dan 9:24 for "weeks" another meaning should be taken into  
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<sup>57</sup> A summary of the different hypotheses can be found in the commentaries of Edward J. Young, 'Daniel' in *The Geneva series of commentaries*, 2<sup>nd</sup> British edition (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1978), p. 191ff and of Joyce G. Baldwin, 'Daniel' in *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, edited by D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1978), p. 172ff.

<sup>58</sup> Edward J. Young, 'Daniel' in *The Geneva series of commentaries*, p. 224.

<sup>59</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, BKC, p. 1361.

consideration? By the way, if we calculate the time period indicated in Dan 9 with “seven-day-weeks”, we come to a total of 490 days (70 weeks of 7 days each). But it is obvious that the events mentioned in Dan 9:24-27 couldn’t be fulfilled in such a short time. For us, it seems more natural (with all the commentators of different convictions which we have studied) to consider the weeks in Dan 9:24-27 as year-weeks, because in his prayer Daniel spoke of 70 years! It is well known that it was common in Israel to count in periods of seven years: compare the passages Lev 25:1-8ff, where it talks about the Sabbath Year and in Lev 25:8ff about the Year of Jubilee.<sup>60</sup>

In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.), the two words “*šābu’īm šib’īm*” are translated with “*hebdomēkonta hebdomádes*” (ἑβδομήκοντα ἑβδομάδες = 70 weeks).<sup>61</sup> The Vulgate<sup>62</sup> translates the 70 weeks with “septuaginta ebdomades”, that means it simply transcribes the Greek word “hebdomádes”. The different versions and modern Bible commentaries propose different translations for “*šābu’īm*” in Dan 9:24. “*Septaines*” (Bible Annotée), “*Sevens*” (E. J. Young, Pentecost), “*Septénaires*” (TOB), *Jahrwochen* (= year-week, Zürcherbibel, Lebram) or simply “*weeks*” (Louis Segond, G. L. Archer<sup>63</sup>). Consequently, we shall use the expression “year-week”.

Pentecost gives a very interesting remark on this:

Also since Israel and Judah had failed to keep the sabbatical years (every seventh year the land was to lie fallow, Lev. 25:1-7) throughout her history, the Lord enforced on the land 70 “sabbaths” (cf. Lev. 26:34-35). Thus 490 years would be required to complete 70 sabbatical years with one occurring every seventh year.<sup>64</sup>

The fact that Daniel in his prayer referred to Moses (Dan 9:11-13), could thus indeed suggest this.

Hence, 70 x 7 years = 490 years are decreed on Daniel’s people and the holy city (Jerusalem). These 70 year-weeks are divided into three unequal periods: (1) 7 x 7 years = 49 years, (2) 62 x 7 years = 434 years, and (3) 1 x 7 years = 7 years.

This leads us to the first disputed issue:

### c.) From which date should we calculate the 70 weeks?

→ “*Since the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was issued...*” (v. 25a) But which “word” (i.e. which command or edict) is meant here? Many suggestions have been made by commentators: 606 B.C. (the year when Jeremiah announced the exile in Babylon: cf. Jer 25:11-12; 29:10); 588 B.C. (the year when Jerusalem was destroyed). These two propositions can easily be rejected because it is well-known that in those years no edict was issued for the reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem. In addition, it must be noted that when we calculate 69x7 years, we arrive at 123 or 105 B.C. In this case, who would be the *Messiah-Prince* who was “cut off” by the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week (v. 26a)? Taking this calculation into account, we do not even end up in the epoch of

<sup>60</sup> The critic Louis F. Hartman, ‘The Book of Daniel’ in *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 23 [ch. 1–9 by L. F. Hartman and ch. 10–12 by Alexander A. di Lella] (New York: Doubleday, 1978), p. 244, adopts also this explanation and he proposes to relate this to Lev 26:18. Indeed, if one multiplies the 70 years (predicted by Jeremiah; cf. 2Ch 36:21 [not 37:21 as Hartmann erroneously writes]) with 7 then we reach the period we are interested in, i.e. 490 years.

<sup>61</sup> By the way, Flavius Josephus used this Greek word for “Sabbath” (Cf. Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, reprint of the 5<sup>th</sup> revised and augmented edition, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971, col. 421).

<sup>62</sup> The Latin translation of the Bible.

<sup>63</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 289. When we cite G. L. Archer in this excursus, we always refer to his *Encyclopedia* and not to his “*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*”.

<sup>64</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, BKC, p. 1361. Joyce G. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 170, mentions also the jubilee year of Lev 25:8-24 and uses the expression “seven sevens”.

Antiochus Epiphanes, around 170 B.C., although many critics wish this were the case<sup>65</sup> because they identify the *Messiah-Prince*, mentioned in verse 26, with the *high priest Onias III*, and the *devastator* in verse 27 with Antiochus Epiphanes. Therefore, we ought to reject these propositions without any hesitation.

5 Young, Baldwin and the Bible Annotée (among others) propose 538 B.C., the year of the edict (decree) of Cyrus. Archer,<sup>66</sup> referring to Ezr 7:6ff proposes 457 B.C. Going by Neh 2:1ff, the dispensationalists generally prefer 445/444 B.C. Archer and those who propose 445/444 B.C. object to the date 538/537 B.C. and argue that according to 2Ch 36:23 and Ezr 1:1-3, Cyrus only ordered  
10 the reconstruction of the temple, not the entire city. We support this view. Nevertheless, Young defends his hypothesis (538 B.C.) by citing Isa 45:1.13 and 44:28, where Cyrus is not only associated with the reconstruction of the temple, but also of the city. To support Young's argument, we could mention another hint: It says in Dan 9:25: → "*From the time that the decree to restore and to build [or rebuild] Jerusalem was issued...*" Whoever sees in the Hebrew verb "*šūb*" (שׁוּב)  
15 an allusion to the return of refugees from exile,<sup>67</sup> says that it harmonises better with 538 than with 445 B.C. It must also be said that this verb can also mean "*to restore*", i.e. to restore to the original condition. Gesenius also proposes in this passage the idea of "*restoring*" (a city).<sup>68</sup> It is therefore difficult to decide only on the basis of these biblical texts. However, history reveals that the reconstruction of the city didn't begin by 538 BC; by that time they had only laid the foundation for  
20 the second temple (so-called *postexilic*). The restoration of the Jews started under King Cyrus' reign but this resettlement was done in several stages (even the reconstruction of the temple was interrupted because of conspiracy of the enemies of the Jews: cf. Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai). It is true that the slander from the enemies of the Jews mention reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem (Ezr 4:12ff) but that does not prove that the Jews had already begun the work at that time. That is  
25 based on the fact that in Ezr 4:3, the enemies of the Jews proposed the idea of reconstructing the temple together but did not mention the city. This is also typically not mentioned in the answer from the Persian king. (Ezr 4:24). But for us, there is another reason why we reject the year 538: when we add to 538 B.C. 483 years (69 x 7 years), we end up with 55 B.C. Who should then be the "*Messiah-Prince*" who will be eliminated towards the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week? Young who  
30 prefers 538 B.C. is obliged to say that 7x7 years (i.e. the first year-week) covers the whole period from the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Cyrus' reign through the era of Ezra and Nehemiah. He acknowledges the value of our objection to which he can only give the following answer:

35 True enough, but the burden of proof rests with those who insist that sevens of years are intended. Of this I am not convinced. If these sevens be regarded merely as a symbolical number, the difficulty disappears.<sup>69</sup>

40 If these numbers are to be understood merely symbolically, how do things stand with the 70 years of exile mentioned in Dan 9:2, of the three weeks in Dan 10:2-3, and of the 1290 years in Dan 12:11, etc.? Then should we not also consider these (merely) symbolically? As we (all!) consider the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity to be true years, we believe that the 490 years in Dan 9:24-27 must be viewed as true years and not as a mere symbolic period. We therefore prefer to reject this hypothesis.

<sup>65</sup> For example M. Delcor, 'Le Livre de Daniel' in *Sources Bibliques* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1971), p. 198; Norman W. Porteous, 'Daniel' in *The Old Testament Library* (London: SCM Press, 1965), p. 141 and L. F. Hartman, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>66</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia*, p. 290.

<sup>67</sup> For example M. Delcor, op. cit., p. 197. He says: „*Pour faire revenir*', '*pour le retour*', ce qui constitue une allusion au retour de l'exil." ("To let come back', '*for the return*', which constitutes an allusion to the return from exile.

<sup>68</sup> Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, reprint of the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of 1915 (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1962), p. 812 ("wiederherstellen, eine Stadt" [= "estore, a city"]). In the same way Gerhard Maier, 'Der Prophet Daniel' in *Wuppertaler Studienbibel*, Reihe: Altes Testament, ed. Gerhard Maier and Adolf Pohl (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1982), p. 345.

<sup>69</sup> Edward J. Young, 'Daniel' in *The Geneva series of commentaries*, p. 206.

Archer thinks Neh 1:1-4 suggests that already in earlier days a decree had been issued that the city should be restored. We are not convinced of this. Archer refers to Ezr 7:6, and he sees it as a parallel to Neh 2:8. This argument is under no circumstances conclusive, because from Ezr 7:6 up to the end of this chapter it refers only to the temple and never to the walls or the city. Because he takes the year 457 B.C. as "*terminus a quo*",<sup>70</sup> Archer ends up with the year 27 B.C. The statement "*up to a Messiah-Prince*" in verse 25a, therefore designates the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ (his baptism) and not his death. Since the death of the Messiah is not explicitly mentioned (v. 25a) this hypothesis cannot be excluded a priori.

The Bible-Handbook of the Jehovah Witnesses<sup>71</sup> also proposes the date of the baptism of Jesus (the time when he was anointed by the Holy Spirit) as "*terminus ad quem*"<sup>72</sup> for the verse 26a; only that it would concern the year 29 and not 27 B.C. as Archer had proposed. This book distinguishes itself as it has an original hypothesis: The *terminus a quo* should be the edict (decree) signed by King Artaxerxes Longimanus in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his reign; nevertheless this event did not take place in the year 445 (a date that generally appears in the Chronologies) but in 455 B.C. The above mentioned Bible-Handbook<sup>73</sup> bases its conclusion on the witnesses of several outstanding historians of the antiquity (Thucydides, Nepos and Plutarch) according to which the Athenian General Themistokles, on the occasion of his escape to Persia around the year 473 B.C., was not received by Xerxes but by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus. We therefore ought to conclude that the latter had already come to power by 474 B.C. (not in 464 B.C.). His 20<sup>th</sup> year of power was therefore 455 and not 445 B.C. When we use this year, one reaches with the 483 years (69 weeks x 7 years) 29 A.D. as "*terminus ad quem*". Jesus died in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week; the alliance made with Abraham was then also extended to the heathens. The end of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week coincides with the incorporation of the non-Jews (Cornelius: cf. Act 10–11) into the Church of Christ in the year 36 A.D.

This calculation is quite interesting and also very original. However, we must object to this hypothesis that the events mentioned in verses 26b-27 which concern the time after the 69<sup>th</sup> week and during the 70<sup>th</sup> week (war, devastation, etc.) hardly apply to the year 36 A.D. Consequently, this hypothesis must therefore also be rejected.

As already mentioned, all the dispensationalists propose as "*terminus a quo*" 445/444 B.C. But they are not the only ones who prefer this date. Even the critical commentators Lebram<sup>74</sup> and Hartman<sup>75</sup> propose that only the time of Nehemiah can be considered. Lebram mentions the date 445 B.C. It is also the date that McCall/Levitt,<sup>76</sup> Tatford,<sup>77</sup> Thiessen,<sup>78</sup> Pentecost, and Unger have

<sup>70</sup> A technical term in Latin which means: "The date from which you start counting". We make use of this term so that we are not obliged to give explanations every now and then.

<sup>71</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society & International Bible Students Association, 1971), pp. 1473-1474.

<sup>72</sup> That means: *The date up to which you must count* (date limit).

<sup>73</sup> From the Jehovah's Witnesses.

<sup>74</sup> Jürgen-Christian Lebram, *Das Buch Daniel* in Zürcher Bibelkommentar, AT 23 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984), p. 109. For him the book of Daniel was written during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He even speaks of different writers (cf. p. 110: for him 9:27 is an addition of a "Red. II" [2<sup>nd</sup> writer], see also p. 22ff of his introduction to his commentary).

<sup>75</sup> Louis F. Hartman, op. cit., p.251. Because he knows well that with this date like "*terminus a quo*" one cannot end at the period of Antiochus Epiphany, he finds himself compelled to say: "We ought to doubt of whether our author had any further knowledge about this dark phase of the history of Jerusalem than the modern historians." This "excuse" is so ridiculous, that we find any comment to be unnecessary.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas McCall and Zola Levitt, *Le troisième temple sera-t-il construit?* Translated from the English *Satan in the Sanctuary* in French by Marie-Hélène Assier (Strasburg: Echos de la joie, 1982), p. 51. The English title was not available.

<sup>77</sup> Frederick A Tatford, *Prophetie und die Zukunft der Welt*, translated from the American *God's Program of the Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Wetzlar: Verlag Hermann Schulte, 1972), p. 55. The English title was not available.

adopted, just to name a few. Supposedly, the scholar Sir Robert Anderson<sup>79</sup> was the first to propose the following calculation which was then adopted by scholars such as Harold Hoehner<sup>80</sup> and Alva J. McClain:<sup>81</sup>

- 5 69 (year-)weeks x 7 years = 483 years; 483 years x 360 days (according to the Jewish calendar: cf. Gen 7:11.24; 8:4; Rev 11:3; 12:6; 13:5) = 173,880 days. This would correspond to 476 years of the Gregorian calendar (solar years): 476 x 365.24219879 days = 173,855 days. We therefore take the first Nisan (the first ecclesiastical year) i.e. the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 444 B.C., as “*terminus a quo*” then we end up with 30<sup>th</sup> March 33 A.D., for the number of days that correspond to 483 Jewish years, or else
- 10 to 5<sup>th</sup> March 33 A.D., with the 476 solar years which correspond to 173,855 days. To the latter, we add again the 25 years of difference (so as to arrive at 173,880 days of 483 Jewish years). Consequently, we end up with the 30<sup>th</sup> March 33 A.D.<sup>82</sup> According to the partisans of this hypothesis this date corresponds to the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem.
- 15 We admit that we do not have the necessary education to prove or judge the questions of these time calculations. At the same time, we don't want to hide our fascination with Anderson's calculations. However, we consider it questionable if it is really possible to be able to calculate such a precise date (as explained about the 30<sup>th</sup> March of 33 A.D.). Also the conversion of the 70 year-weeks from Jewish years into solar years, to come up to 483 years (Gregorian calendar) instead of 490 years
- 20 (Jewish calendar) is uncertain.<sup>83</sup> For this reason and because of the small uncertainty regarding the “*terminus a quo*”, we choose to be cautious in making a precise date. It is also known that the dates of the birth and death of Jesus (also among the scholars) are still disputed, therefore it seems that the fixing of an exact “*terminus ad quem*” of the 69 year-weeks in verse 26a is at least questionable. Nevertheless the correspondence between the 69 year-weeks (interpreted as periods of
- 25 each 7 years) and the period that separates the reconstruction of the city of Jerusalem and the death of the Messiah (in any case around 30 A.D.) allows us to conclude that it corresponds to the biblical statements, if we understand the 69 weeks of Dan 9.24-27 are true year-weeks and not only mere symbolic numbers. Consequently, we also see the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week in Dan 9:27 as a period of 7 actual years. Nevertheless, this verse 27, where it speaks of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, is very controversial.

### 30 d.) Who will make a firm covenant and when?

We have just seen that the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week ended with the death of the *Anointed Prince*. Therefore we do not consider it necessary to give an answer to the so-called Maccabean<sup>84</sup> hypothesis which says that the alliance referred to here is the one that Antiochus Epiphanes made with a number of

<sup>78</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, revised by Vernon D. Doerksen, revised edition (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 360.

<sup>79</sup> Robert Anderson, *Daniel in the Critics' Den: An Investigation as to the Accuracy of the Book of Daniel. A Reply to Professor Driver of Oxford and the Late Dean Farrar*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Glasgow and Edinburgh: Pickering & Inglis, n. d.), pp. 124-134.

<sup>80</sup> Mentioned in “*Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*”, cited by Stanley A. Ellisen, in *Von Adam bis Maleachi: Das Alte Testament verstehen*, translated from the American (Dillenburg: Christliche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988), p. 204 and J. D. Pentecost, BKC, p. 1363.

<sup>81</sup> Alva J. McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*, cited by Edward J. Young, 'Daniel' in *The Geneva series of commentaries*, pp. 210-214 (several times) and J. D. Pentecost, BKC, p. 1363.

<sup>82</sup> J. D. Pentecost, BKC, p. 1363, calculates the Gregorian years in the following manner: 476x365 = 173,740 years and he adds 116 days explaining: “A total of 476 years divided by 4 (leap year every 4 years) gives 119 additional days. But 3 days ought to be deducted from 119 days, because the centennial years are not leap-years, but however, every 400<sup>th</sup> year is a leap-year”. (translated from American) In addition to this, we add 24 days for a period of 5<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> March, thus ending up with a total of 173,800 days.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. the passages with 1,260 days that correspond to 42 months x 30 days: cf. Rev 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5.

<sup>84</sup> In fact, history shows that the abomination caused by Antiochus Epiphanes didn't last for 3 ½ years but only for 3 years and some days (cf. 1Ma 1:54 and 4:52). See also the adequate refutation by Frédéric Godet, *Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8, pp. 310-312. Moreover the end of the prince described in vv 26b and 27 does not match the death of Antiochus Epiphanes who was assumed to have died of a mysterious illness.

renegade Jews (cf. 1Ma 1:11ff). For us, it is simply a matter of finding out whether this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross (the so-called *Messianic interpretation*) or whether the prophecy is referring to a yet future event (the so-called *futurist* [or *eschatological*] *interpretation*).

5

With regard to the adherents of the *Messianic interpretation*, we note that their explanations of verse 27 vary slightly. They agree, however, by saying that the one who is making a firm covenant with many is Christ, who abolished the Jewish sacrifices by his sacrificial death and at the same time inaugurated the New Covenant. Those believing in the *eschatological interpretation*, the dispensationalists in particular, interpret it as referring to the Antichrist, who will make a covenant with the Jews for seven years at the end of time, but will break it after three and a half years. For the reasons stated below, we believe that the Biblical text allows only the second view:

10

What or who is the subject of the expression "he will make a firm covenant" or "he will strengthen a covenant" (or something like that) in verse 27a? Evidently the prince (נָגִיד [nāgīd] = *the prince*) mentioned in the previous verse 26b and not the *Messiah* (מָשִׁיחַ [māshi'akh] = *the Anointed One, i.e. the Messiah*) mentioned in verse 26a. In verse 26b, a prince of a destructive people is mentioned (cf. the verb יָשַׁח [yašḥ] in verse 26b, = *he will destroy*). This fits in well with 27b, where destruction following the breaking of the covenant in the middle of the (seventieth!) week is mentioned.<sup>85</sup> The argument that it cannot be the prince mentioned in 26b since a collective subject is alluded to there (עַם נָגִיד [‘am nāgīd] = *people of the prince*),<sup>86</sup> cannot confuse us. By the way, if the one making a covenant here (v. 27a) was indeed the Messiah (v. 26a), why is it then that verse 26b (i.e. between the reference to the cutting off of the Messiah [v. 26a] and the breaking of the covenant) mentions the people of a ruler who is devastating the city and the temple? If the one who is making the covenant was indeed the Messiah, why is destruction mentioned later again in verse 27c... after the reference to a (presumably saving) covenant in verse 27a? Such an interpretation does not seem to make sense. Is it not much simpler to assume that war and destruction will follow the death of the Messiah? And that war and destruction will reach their climax when a prince breaks the covenant which he had made with many? Someone might be tempted to object that in the book of Daniel it is God who normally makes a covenant with his people and therefore it is not logical to suddenly think of a different type of covenant. This remark should then also apply to the book of Isaiah, since there (see Isa 28:14-15) a covenant of the people of Israel with death is mentioned. Some expositors<sup>87</sup> think that there a covenant between Israel and Egypt against Assyria (the aggressor) is referred to. As mentioned above, history confirms that Antiochus Epiphanes offered to the Jews a covenant with rewards for those who would accept it. If we consider Antiochus Epiphanes as a precursor and type of the eschatological Antichrist, then the following interpretation of verse 27 is an obvious one: The Antichrist will make a covenant for a year-week with a large number of Jews and break the same in the middle of the year-week.<sup>88</sup> But let us now return to the expression "the people of a prince" mentioned in 26b. The Bible Annotée says the following:

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<sup>85</sup> See also J. Dwight Pentecost, BKC, p. 1364 and Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia*, p. 291.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. the identification of the 4<sup>th</sup> kingdom with its ruler in Dan 7:23-26; Rev 13:1; 17:12-13.17.

<sup>87</sup> E.g. Merrill F. Unger, *Ungers Grosses Bibelhandbuch*, translated from the American *The New Unger's Bible Handbook* and revised by Samuel Külling and Joachim Hoene (Asslar: Schulte + Gerth, 1987), p. 253.

<sup>88</sup> The word "šēṭeph" (שֶׁטֶף = *inundation, overflow* etc.; verb שָׁטַף [šāṭaph] = *inundate*), which is used in Dan 11:22.26 (v. 22 substantive; v. 26 verb) for describing the invasion of the enemy of the people of Israel, appears also in 9:26b for depicting war. This verb (šāṭaph) is also used to narrate the history of the invasion of the Holy Land by the Antichrist in the end of time in Dan 11:40. For us, there is no doubt that Dan 11:40-45 describes the final battle in Israel (cf. Zec 14:1ff; Rev 16:12-16; 19:11ff; Joe 4:1ff). The invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes and his army represents thus a kind of type or foretaste of the attack of the Antichrist at the end of time. In Dan 9:26b, it is about the destructions perpetrated by the Antichrist, whereas verse 27 announces his own destruction. Compare the pun between "šōmēmōt" (שׁוֹמְמוֹת = *from the route "šāmēm" [שָׁמַם] = to be destroyed or devastated*) in v. 26b and "mēšōmēm" (מְשׁוֹמֵם = *participle poel = devastator*) in v. 27c on the one hand, and "šōmēm" (שׁוֹמֵם = *participle Kal = devastator*) in v. 27d on the other hand (see also the pertinent notes in the TOB, O.T., pp. 1707-1708 on this issue). One could suggest the three following



This would be the people of the fourth Empire, dominating the world. If we would translate . . . the people of a ruler yet to come, then this ruler would have to be the ruler of this Empire, who has to arise one day, in order to fulfil this judgement.<sup>89</sup>

Hence the people would be the Roman one. But, is here reference made to Rome at the time of Emperor Titus in 70 A.D., or to the “*Roma Renata*” (the re-born Rome), of which the Antichrist will be the head at the end of time? That is the question. In view of the course that history has taken up to the present time, it seems more appropriate to relate this to the Antichrist and the re-born Roman Empire at the end of time rather than relate it to Rome at the time of Titus. In fact, the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt again (cf. the expression “*w<sup>e</sup> ‘ad qēš*” [וְעַד קֵץ] = *up to the end* in v. 26b). However, one could say that the destruction by Antiochus Epiphanes and by Titus are so to say foreshadowing (are a type of) what will happen during the reign of the Antichrist before the return of Christ. We know that Flavius Josephus mentioned a double fulfilment of this prophecy of Daniel: a first one at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and a second one at the time of Titus.<sup>90</sup> And we add a third one, namely the one at the time of the Roman Empire under the Antichrist; and in doing this we consider the expression “*until the end of time*” in verse 26b. We are convinced that Rev 13:3.12; 17:8; Dan 7:24 and 2:32-34.41-43 (the transition from the iron legs to the feet of iron and clay) indicate that the ancient Roman Empire will arise once more at the end of time under the rule of the Antichrist – the little horn.<sup>91</sup>

By the way, verse 26a clearly says that the Messiah will be cut off *after* (אַחֲרָי: [‘ah<sup>a</sup>rê]) 62 weeks (plus the seven weeks which have elapsed already) and does not say that this will happen during the 70<sup>th</sup> week. That week is mentioned in verse 27 only. It is therefore highly problematic to maintain that the making of a firm covenant refers to one which Christ made with many as he died on the cross. Admittedly, the Hebrew text allows two possible translations: “*for one week*” or “*during one week*”, since there is no preposition before the expression “*one week*” (שָׁבוּעַ אֶחָד: [šābū‘a ‘ekhād] v. 27a). But what sense would it make to say: “*Christ will establish a covenant for many during one week and in the middle of the week he will bring to an end the sacrifices and offerings.*”? If the first three and a half years of the year-week were indeed referring to the public ministry of Christ, what would the second three and a half years refer to? Such an interpretation simply does not make sense. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans did not happen 3 ½ years after the death of Jesus, but only in 70 A.D., i.e. nearly 40 years later!

If, however, verse 27 refers to the Antichrist making a covenant with a large number of Jews, then it can easily be explained. Furthermore, this interpretation would agree with parallel verses in the Scriptures: “*the abomination of desolation*” is quoted by Jesus in Mat 24:15 and Mar 13:14.<sup>92</sup> In Mat 24:15 Jesus says: “*When you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...*” How will those who maintain that Dan 9:27 has to do with the covenant of Christ explain these words of Jesus and the phrase “*...and on the wing [on the pinnacle of the temple] are abominations of one who makes desolate*”? The Bible Annotée suggests the following paraphrase: “*In the temple of Jerusalem, deprived of the presence of God,*

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accomplishments: (1) The covenant of the renegade Jews with Antiochus Epiphanes; (2) the agreement between the unfaithful Jews with the Roman Emperor as they rejected Jesus Christ (cf. Joh 19:14-16; Act 4:25-27); (3) the agreement of the incredulous and renegade Jews with the eschatological Antichrist (cf. Dan 9:27; Joh 5:43).

<sup>89</sup> Frédéric Godet, *La Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8, p. 311. (French text: “Ce serait le peuple du quatrième empire, dominant alors sur la terre. Si l’on traduit . . . le peuple d’un chef qui viendra, ce chef est le dominateur de cet empire, qui doit venir un jour pour accomplir ce jugement.”)

<sup>90</sup> Compare this with Gerhard Maier, op. cit., p. 338.

<sup>91</sup> Compare with Frederick A. Tatford, op. cit., p. 61: Talking about the same passages, he speaks of the *revivified Roman Empire*. J. Dwight Pentecost, BKC, p. 1364, goes even beyond this as he speaks of the „head of the confederation of 10 European (Roman) nations“ [We emphasise by underlining]

<sup>92</sup> See also Luk 21:21-24.

one who makes it desolate breaks in because it has degenerated into a mere shrine of idols.”<sup>93</sup> This rendering does not satisfy. To us it seems more natural to relate these descriptions to an event which is similar to the things that happened in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. In 168 B.C., the latter set up an altar for Zeus Olympus (cf. 2Ma 6:2) on top of the altar of burnt offerings in the temple of Jerusalem. Could it be that the image of the beast in Rev 13:14-15 refers back to this event? Such an interpretation would explain in a perfect way the expression of Jesus in Mat 24:15: *"hestos en tōpō hagiō"* (ἕστος ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ = *to establish* [or else: *to stand*] *in the holy place*). We do not think that it is possible to apply this expression to the tearing of the temple curtain in the sanctuary (after Jesus' death) nor to the desecration of the temple by the Romans in 70 B.C. The words of Jesus convey much more the idea of an erected idol. Therefore, as Antiochus Epiphanes set up an altar to Zeus (cf. the abomination of desolation in Dan 11:31) so will the Antichrist set himself up as the centre of worship (cf. 2Th 2:4; Rev 13:14-15). This leads us to the last question in this matter.

### e.) Is there a gap of time between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week?

If the one who makes a covenant with many (in verse 27) is the Antichrist of the end of time and not Jesus Christ, then there has to be a large gap of time between the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week. Since we have just maintained that the 7 and the 62 year-weeks are following each other without gap, are we not inconsistent in suggesting that there is an interval of time between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week? Those holding a Messianic interpretation of verse 27 accuse us of exactly this. So for example Henri Blocher in his evaluation of Dispensationalism asks: “Is it logical to separate the seventieth week of Daniel from the other 69?”<sup>94</sup> We say yes! Why? Because the text itself suggests it: In Dan 9:25, the 7 year-weeks and the 62 year-weeks follow successively without anything happening in between. In the transition from the 69<sup>th</sup> to the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week, things are different. At the beginning of verse 26, it says that after the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week (i.e. 7 + 62) an Anointed One shall be cut off. Please note, that nothing has yet been said about the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week, because it is not mentioned until verse 27. After the reference to the death of the Anointed One in verse 26a, the following events are mentioned in 26b, events, preceding the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week: “*And the people of a prince will come and destroy the city and the sanctuary, but then the end will come with a flood, and until the end war and desolation will reign, which have been ordained long before.*” Even if one maintains, that by this destruction (merely) the one brought about by the Romans in 70 A.D. was meant (and not the one to be brought about by the Antichrist at the end of time), one would nevertheless have to admit a gap of time between the 69<sup>th</sup> (the cutting off of the Messiah) and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week! Ellisen is right when he says:

Between the cutting off of the Anointed One and the destruction of Jerusalem, we have to allow a time gap in between (33-70 A.D.); if we can admit a short period of time why not a longer one?<sup>95</sup>

Similar time gaps can be found elsewhere in the Bible: (1) When Jesus read from Isa 61, in the Synagogue of Nazareth (cf. Luk 4:14-20), he stopped in the middle of the second verse. By stopping there, he hinted at the beginning of the dispensation of grace. By leaving out the second half of the verse, he indicated that the time of judgement will come later on. (2) Zec 9:9 speaks of the first coming of Jesus (his triumphal entry in Jerusalem, cf. Mat 21:4-5) while verse 10, as we believe, speaks of his appearing (war and judgement). (3) Rev 17:8 also implies a time gap. The list

<sup>93</sup> Frédéric Godet, *La Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8, p. 313. The French text: „Sur le temple de Jérusalem, privé de la présence de Dieu et réduit ainsi à n'être plus qu'un temple idolâtre, fond le désolateur.”

<sup>94</sup> Henri Blocher, *La doctrine du péché et de la rédemption*, série Fac-étude (Vaux-sur-Seine, France: Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique, 1982), 1<sup>st</sup> vol, p. 126. The French text: „Est-il naturel de séparer la soixante-dixième semaine de Daniel des 69 autres ?“

<sup>95</sup> Stanley A. Ellisen op. cit., p. 204 (we have translated from German); same with Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia*, p. 291.

could be prolonged. The consideration of a time gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week should therefore not appear strange.

5 But let us return to the words of Jesus. According to the context of Mat 24, the expression "*the abomination of desolation*" (mentioned in v. 15) clearly refers to the last days. In the preceding verse 14, Jesus says "*and then the end will come.*" The verses 16ff make this clear as well. The parallel passage in Dan 12:7-13 confirms the eschatological interpretation; compare the expressions "*the abomination of desolation*" in verse 11, "*a time, times and half a time*" in verse 7, "*up until the end of time*" in verse 9, "*1,290 days*" in verse 11 as well as "*at the end of the age [or days]*" in  
10 verse 13.

Furthermore, we should mention that in view of these verses quite a few of the supporters of the Messianic interpretation of Dan 9:27 admit a later eschatological fulfilment. So for instance Gerhard Maier:<sup>96</sup> He situates the first 7 year-weeks (= 49 years) between 588 (or 587) and 539 (or 538) B.C. He then introduces a time gap (a delay) until 440, the period during which the temple and the city were rebuilt. During this interval of time, the year-weeks are not counted. He places the 62 year-weeks (= 434 years) between 440 and 6 B.C. (Maier says that Christ was born in 6 B.C.). Between 6 B.C. and 27 A.D. the counting of the year-weeks is interrupted again. According to  
15 Maier, the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week has to be placed between 27 and 34 A.D. In the middle of the year-week, Jesus dies on the cross. At that point of time, the New Covenant is inaugurated and the time of missionary outreach to the heathen begins. However, Maier sees a further fulfilment of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week between 66 and 73, i.e. during the Judeo-Roman war and even another one, a third one, at the time of the Antichrist! Well, we cannot follow Maier's way of placing the 69 year-weeks nor can we accept his statement that verse 27 was fulfilled for the first time when Christ suffered and  
20 died. Nevertheless, for us Maier's view that the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week will yet have a fulfilment during the eschatological time of the Antichrist is significant. He says:

We could stop our difficult hike through the mountain ranges of the prophecies regarding the 70 year-weeks, if there weren't two observations that demanded our attention for a few moments. The first one concerns Mt 24,15, where Jesus speaks  
30 about »the abomination of desolation in the holy place« which would yet come. This shows that our interpretation of Dan 9,27 is not a complete one. The second observation concerns the interesting fact that Dan 9,27 ends without giving any indication of the contents of the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week. Does this not mean that the future has things in store that we have not noticed before? Added to  
35 these two observations from the Bible, there is one from Church History: During the above survey we noticed that the Church Fathers generally related the last 3 ½ years to the period of the Antichrist.<sup>97</sup>

Further down,<sup>98</sup> Maier mentions parallel passages in Rev 12:6.14; 13:5 (we could also add Rev 11:2-3 and Dan 7:25), which dispensationalists keep pointing to in order to justify their view that  
40 the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week will be fulfilled at the time of the Antichrist only, because the time frames of 1,260 days, 42 months or *a time, times and half a time* (mentioned in these passages) correspond exactly to half of a year-week (i.e. 3½ years). Baldwin, who is not a dispensationalist either, admits on the basis of Rev 11:2 and 13:5 that a further fulfilment of Dan 9:27 at the end of time is inevitable if the Book of Revelation was written after the fall of Jerusalem, which the majority of  
45 scholars believe to be the case.<sup>99</sup> Maier's proposal of a three-fold fulfilment of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week

<sup>96</sup> Gerhard Maier, op. cit., p. 354, where a résumé of his dating can be found; for details see pp. 337-353.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 352 (translated from German).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>99</sup> Joyce G. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 175. ("If this book was written, as most scholars claim it was, after the fall of Jerusalem, it makes a further application of our passage to an end-time yet to be.")

shows the weakness of the Messianic interpretation of verse 27. But how is the phrase “*and he shall make a firm covenant with many*” to be understood, if it is applied to the salvation wrought by Christ on the cross and to the time and the work of the Antichrist? Maier replies as follows: “It is precisely during the stormy times of the Antichrist that the Church will experience special grace and protection.”<sup>100</sup>

This explanation is not convincing. We believe that we have given sufficient evidence as to why we are convinced that the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week refers to the last days, i.e. to the time of the Antichrist. That is why a time gap has to be introduced between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week. As Israel had rejected the Messiah, it was set aside. Since the 70 year-weeks were fixed upon the people of Daniel, i.e. Israel and its city Jerusalem (v. 24), the counting of year-weeks stopped with the crucifixion of Jesus, at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week. By that time, a new age or dispensation was inaugurated, the one of the Church of Jesus Christ, in which there is no longer a distinction between the Jews and the heathen (Gal 3:38: cf. 1Co 10:32 and Eph 2:14-15). From that time on, anyone who is without Christ, including the Jew (cf. Rom 9:1), is lost. Salvation can only be found in and through Jesus Christ. (Joh 14:6, Act 4:12). But the apostle Paul affirms the following: It is true that God has set aside his people Israel because it has rejected his Son, but the day will come when the full number of the gentiles will have entered, and then the clock will tick again for Israel, and all Israel<sup>101</sup> will be saved (cf. Rom 11:25ff). However, Israel will go through a time of terrible tribulation (cf. e.g. Zec 13:8-9). Jeremiah calls it “*the time of Jacob's distress*” (Jer 30:7). And this time of great distress refers to the time immediately preceding the return of Jesus Christ (cf. Zec 13:8–14:4). It is then that the counting of the year-weeks will set in again, i.e. the counting of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week. Hence God will allow a remnant of Israel to go through the fire of tribulation – together with the heathen nations. Then, when Christ returns, the Israelites who are still living at that time will at last recognise their Messiah, that is when they see him coming on the clouds, him whom they have pierced (cf. Zec 12:10; Dan 7:13 and Rev 1:7). Then they shall be saved, while the oppressor, the Antichrist, will be thrown into the lake of fire together with the False Prophet. Then the 70<sup>th</sup> week will end: Israel will be saved and the one who caused destruction will be destroyed (cf. Dan 9:24 and 27d).

For a deeper understanding of the important vision of the 70 year-weeks, we consider it helpful to revise the whole matter by means of a summary about Dan 9:24-27.

## f.) Explanatory comments about the prophecy of the 70 year-weeks

- The prophecy concerns Israel and Jerusalem, the Holy City: v. 24.
- At least two princes are mentioned: (1) The Anointed One, the Messiah: vv 25-26. (2) A prince who will destroy the city of Jerusalem (Titus) and another prince who will make a covenant: vv 26-27 (that is the Antichrist of the end of time, of whom the Roman Emperor Titus was a type).
- The 70 year-weeks are divided up as follows:  $7+62+1 = 70$ .
- The 70 year-weeks begin with the decree that Jerusalem should be rebuilt: v. 25a.
- By the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week, the Messiah (or *a Messiah*) is cut off: v. 26a. Then the city (Jerusalem) and the temple will be destroyed by the prince of the people of the future prince (Titus the Emperor of Rome, which represents the imperial power, from where the eschatological prince, the Antichrist, will come). The Antichrist will originate from Rome (cf. in particular the *little horn* in Dan 7 and the beast in Rev 17).
- The 70<sup>th</sup> year-week will begin with the making of a covenant: v. 27.

<sup>100</sup> Gerhard Maier, op., cit., p. 353.

<sup>101</sup> In the context it is about the rest (remnant) of Israel that will be still alive when Christ returns.

- In the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week, the prince (the Antichrist) will banish the sacrifices and the offerings, which means he will break the covenant and will, as a devastator, be responsible for the most sacrilegious abominations (cf. Mat 24:15; Dan 12:11).
- After the 70 year-weeks, Israel will experience great blessing: The blessings will be those of the Messianic Kingdom (the millennium).

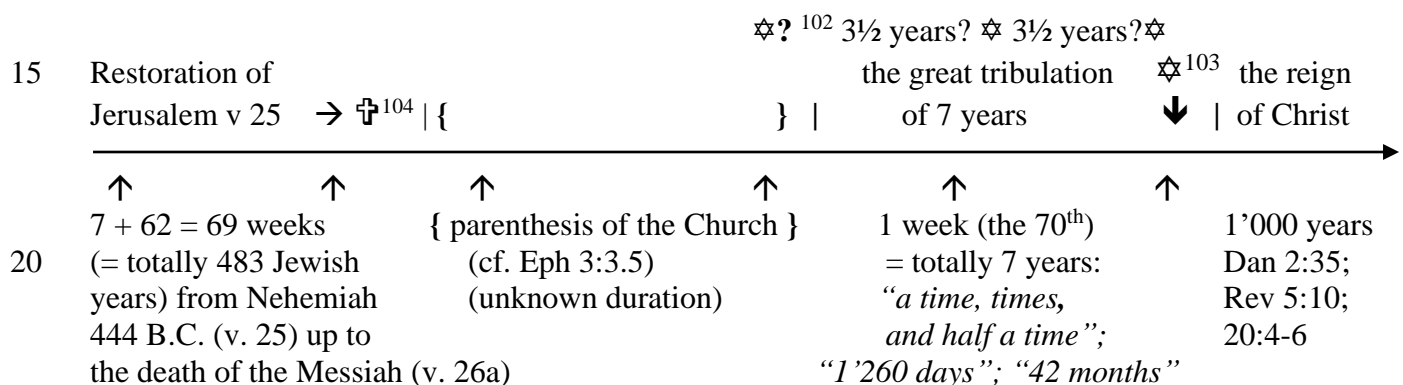
## g.) Important considerations regarding interpretation and exegesis

### (1) What type of hermeneutics should we apply?

We insist on the literal interpretation of all the 70 year-weeks and refute the assertion of a literal interpretation of the 69 year-weeks (7+62) and a (merely) symbolic or allegoric interpretation of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week. In our opinion, such an exegesis is inconsequent (as well as inconsistent).

### (2) Why do the 70 year-weeks refer to Israel?

**V. 24:** “*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and for your holy city. [Jerusalem]*”. Below is a diagram which explains the 70 year-weeks:



### (3) Why do the 70 weeks represent 70 times seven years?

The Hebrew phrase “šābu’īm šib’īm [שָׁבָעִים שָׁבָעִים] have been decreed”: What does the figure 7 represent here? It can hardly mean “days” because 1½ years would not fit the context at all. When we add 1½ years to 539 or from 444 B.C., we do not arrive at a date when an Anointed One was cut off, which is mentioned in verse 26a. For this reason, the 70x7 can hardly mean “days”. When Daniel refers to ordinary days, then he says it in his book: cf. Dan 10:2: “three weeks” (followed in Hebrew by the word *yāmīm* = days); in Dan 10:4: the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the first month; in Dan 10:13: 21 days. Israel was familiar with “weeks that represented 7 years”. In the *Nouveau Dictionnaire*

<sup>102</sup> The three question marks and the three Stars of David respectively symbolize the rapture of the Church. Concerning the controversy of whether the Church will be raptured before (pre) or at the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (= the pre-tribulational position), in the middle (mid), i.e. after 3 ½ years (= mid-tribulational position) or else by the end, i.e. after (post) the great tribulation (= post-tribulational position), thus by the end of the reign of the Antichrist, is discussed in our brochure on *Biblical Eschatology*.

<sup>103</sup> The Star of David symbolises the visible return of Christ by the end of the great tribulation (cf. Rev 19:11-21; 2Th 2:8; Zec 14:3ff; Mat 24:30ff; Rev 1:7; Zec. 12:10, and Dan 7:13). His appearing will set an end to the Antichrist and the False Prophet (cf. Rev 19:20-21), Satan will be bound (Rev 20:1-3), and the Messianic kingdom of 1,000 years will begin (cf. Rev 20:4-6 and 5-10).

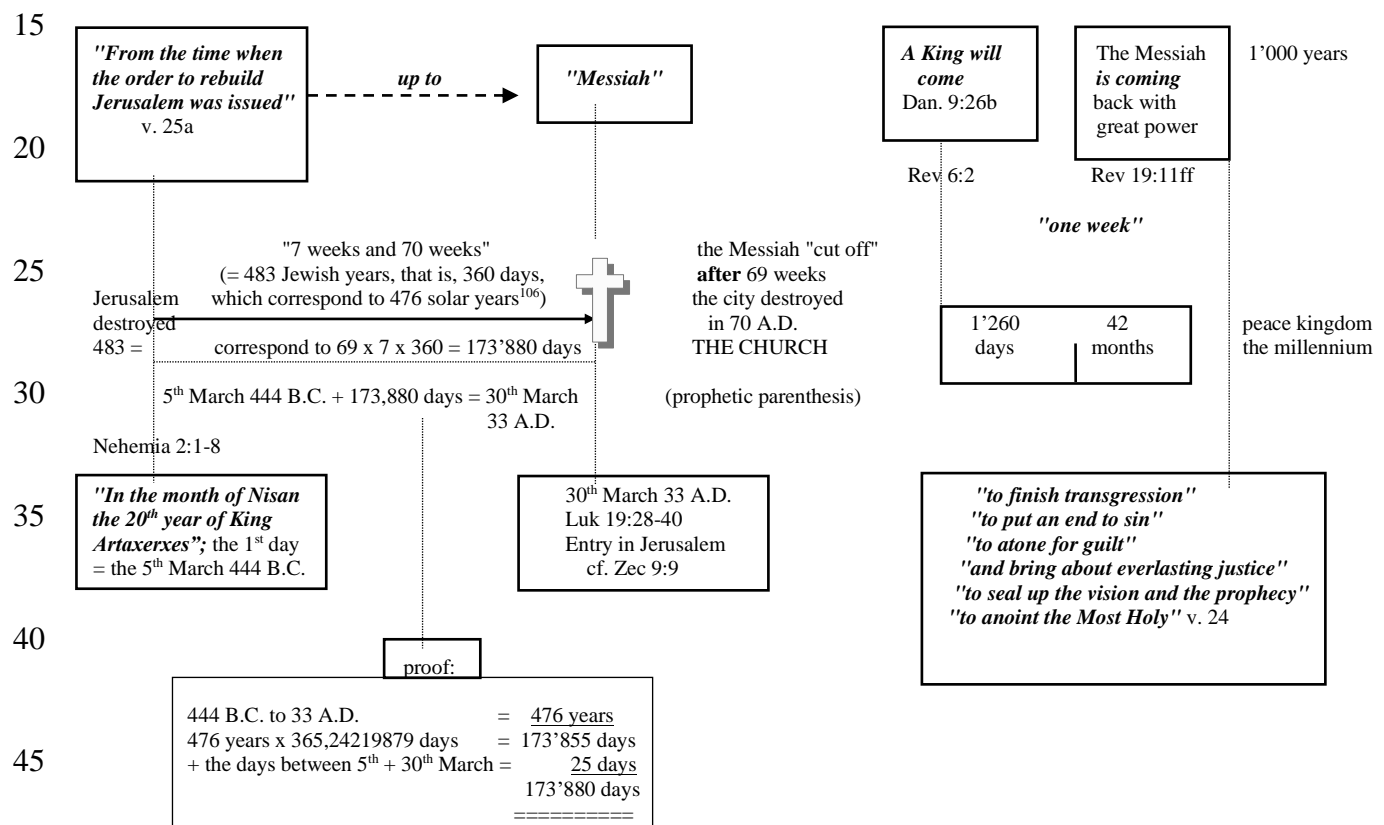
<sup>104</sup> Christ is cut off by the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week. Some days later (50 days), namely on Pentecost (the pouring out of the Holy Spirit: Act 2; cf. 1Co 12:13), the dispensation of the Church of Jesus Christ begins.

*Bible*, we find under the heading “*temps – semaine*”: “It is generally accepted that Daniel uses the word ‘shabua’ (week) for a ‘period of 7 years’ (Dan 9.24–27; cf. Lev 25.8). The 70 weeks in Dan 9.24 are year-weeks, thus 490 years.”<sup>105</sup> Compare 2Ch 36:21, which clearly shows that the 70 years mean 70 “Sabbath-years” =  $70 \times 7 = 490$  years.

- Dan. 12:11 confirms that “*the abomination of desolation*” refers to the last days.
- The statement of Jesus in Mat 24:15: Here, Jesus refers to (the book of) Daniel and confirms at the same time that “*the abomination of desolation*” is yet to come. So, it is clear that this event could not be completely fulfilled at the time of the Maccabees (that is to say in 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.). By the way, the promises or prophecies given to Israel in Dan 9:24 have not been fulfilled either.

#### (4) Why is the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week yet to come?

“*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city*”: (v. 24)



As proposed by: Robert Anderson,<sup>107</sup> Alva J. McClain and Harold W. Hoehner.

#### (5) Why does the first week begin in 444 B.C.?

Compare with Neh 2:1-8:

<sup>105</sup> *Nouveau Dictionnaire Biblique révisé* (Saint-Légier, Switzerland: Editions Emmaüs, 1992), p. 1264. (The French text: "Il est admis en gén. que Daniel emploie *chabhoua* [sic] (semaine) pour «période de 7 ans» (Dan. 9.24–27; cf. Lv. 25.8). Les 70 semaines de Dan. 9.24 sont des semaines d'années, soit 490 ans.").

<sup>106</sup> Also called "Gregorian years" that is *years of 365 days*. For further information see *excursus* above about the 70 weeks in Dan 9.

<sup>107</sup> Sir Robert Anderson, *Daniel in the Critics Den: An Investigation as to the Accuracy of the Book of Daniel*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Glasgow, Edinburgh, London: Pickering & Inglis, n. d.), pp. 112-123.

- During the reign of Cyrus in 539 B.C.: Ezr 1:1-4: the order to rebuild the temple (only the temple).
- During the reign of Darius in 518 B.C.: Ezr 5:3-17: the temple.
- 5    • During the reign of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C.: Ezr 7:11-26: the temple.
- During the reign of Arthasastha in 444 B.C.: Neh 2:1-8: the city (the gates and the wall to be rebuilt).

10    Because the restoration of the city began with Nehemiah (Ezra only rebuilt the temple), we should commence the calculation of the year-weeks from 444 B.C. All earlier dates are to be excluded as “terminus a quo”.

## (6) How are the figures in verse 25 to be understood?

KJV, NAS, NAU, Zurich and Elberfelder translate: *seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*:

15    7        +        62        =        69 weeks

With regard to the 7 year-weeks, it is well possible that the reconstruction of the city lasted  $7 \times 7 = 49$  years. We could, therefore, interpret this verse in the following way: from 444 B.C. up to the death of the Messiah, 7 + 62 year-weeks of 360 days (i.e. Jewish years) have passed.

## 20    (7) When did the 69 weeks come to an end?

Just before or at the death of Jesus, in 33 A.D. approximately.

- We do not know the exact date when the reconstruction of Jerusalem was started in 444 B.C.<sup>108</sup> Likewise, the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem is unknown: cf. Neh 2:1.
- 25    • The date of the birth of Jesus is a matter of controversy.
- Even for the date of the death of Jesus, different dates are suggested.

Hoehner says that the 69 year-weeks ended when Jesus entered Jerusalem (cf. Luk 19). But this is a possibility only, i.e. it is speculation.

## 30    (8) Why a parenthesis between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week?

35    **V. 24:** Israel’s salvation is not accomplished yet. It says the Messiah will be cut off at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week and that Israel will be saved. But up to the present time Israel is still waiting for its salvation. Hence, we must conclude that an interruption of the process has occurred, i.e. that a parenthesis of time (of unknown length) must have been introduced between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week:

- Verse 26 mentions what will happen **after** the 7 + 62 = 69 weeks, and not what would happen **during** the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week. What would happen in the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week is mentioned only in verse 27. In this way, the text itself suggests the idea of a parenthesis between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week.
- 40    • Jesus links the events of the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week with what would happen just before his return: cf. Mat 24:15.21.30-31! The quotation in verse 15 makes this quite clear.

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<sup>108</sup> We would like to point out that some scholars prefer 445 B.C.

- Dan 9:26,27 predicts that there will be war up to the end of time; this points to the persecution, which Israel will suffer up to the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom (cf. Rev 12:13-14).
- Several parallel passages support the introduction of a parenthesis of time between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week:

1. Dan 2:40-45: Rome was the 4<sup>th</sup> Empire, which was finally defeated in 476 A.D. But Rome will be resurrected: cf. Rev 17:8: “*The beast that you saw was and is not and is about to come up out of the abyss*”: Between the disappearance of the Roman Empire and its reappearance there has to be a time gap, an interval of time. Dan 7 (the 4 beasts and the 5<sup>th</sup> kingdom) shows this clearly. By the way, the 10 horns in Dan 7 illustrate the final phase of the 4<sup>th</sup> beast (cf. v. 25); the parallel passage in Rev 17:12 confirms this interpretation – again indicating an interval of time. “*The mystery*” of the restoration of Israel in the last days (Rom 11:25-27) points in the same direction, i.e. to the fact that the Church is a sort of parenthesis and means that we do well to continue making a distinction between the Church and Israel as a nation (cf. 1Co 10:32 and probably Gal 6:16 as well).

2. Here one further argument, which is so convincing that we ask ourselves why there are still people who do not go for the “future (eschatological) interpretation”: Dan 9:27 divides the 70<sup>th</sup> (year-)week into two parts. The parallel references in Dan 12:7,11 confirm that the *abomination of desolation* of Dan 9:27 has to do with the last days. The fact that in Revelation (cf. Rev 11:2-3; 12:6,14; 13:5; cf. Mat 24:15) there are references to as a period of time of 3½ years is an almost conclusive proof that this period of time has to be referred to the time of the great tribulation, i.e. the time preceding the return of Christ, and not the time of Christ's death on the cross nor the time of the Maccabeans (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., what is propounded by liberal scholars).

### (9) Who is meant by the one “*who will make a firm covenant*” in verse 27?

- To suggest that he is Christ would be grammatically wrong because the text that precedes verse 27 (which mentions the covenant) speaks of one who will destroy and not of the Messiah (cf. v. 26b): verse 27a is linked with 26b (to one who will destroy) and not to 26a (the Messiah cut off). Therefore, the objection of the proponents of the Messianic interpretation of verse 27 against our eschatological (futurist) interpretation is not only unfounded but it is also grammatically wrong.<sup>109</sup>
- It is not the Messiah, because he has nothing to do with “*the abomination of desolation*”. When Jesus referred to it in Mat 24:15, he certainly did not speak about himself.
- The following indications (in the verses 26b-27) suggest clearly that the prince is to be identified with the Antichrist:

1. He will destroy the city and the sanctuary.
2. He will make a covenant and then break it.
3. He will commit abominable deeds (which exclude an application to Christ).
4. Christ did not destroy the city of Jerusalem.
5. Christ cannot be the one who made the covenant mentioned in verse 27, because he was cut off after the 69<sup>th</sup> year-week (v. 26a) and will return only after the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week (i.e. after the *great tribulation*; during the battle of Armageddon: cf. Rev 16:16; 19:11-21). To attempt to apply this to the fact that Christ has abolished all the sacrifices by his own sacrifice is not possible, since the destruction of the city is mentioned (see vv 26b,27).

<sup>109</sup> Above, we quoted Henri Blocher who adheres to the “Messianic interpretation”. This applies also to Edward J. Young in the NBC.



## (10) The connection between the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week of Daniel and the Revelation to John

Rev 12:14: "...a time, times, and half a time": cf. Dan 7:25 and 12:7.

### 5 The first half of the *great tribulation*:

Rev 11:3      1'260 days      3½ years.

### The second half of the *great tribulation*:

10

Rev 13:5      42 months      3½ years

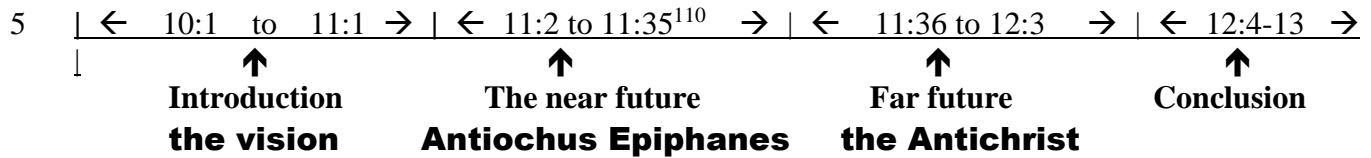
Rev 6–19 = *the great tribulation* = 70<sup>th</sup> year-week = 7 years.

### 15 The 70 year-weeks of Dan 9:24-27 could be summarised in the following way:

The prophecy of Jeremiah (25:11-12; 29:10) regarding the Babylonian captivity, which lasted 70 years, is the point of departure for the entire "forecast of Jewish history" (i.e. the history after the return from Babylon). It starts with the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem and carries through to the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom on earth. The 70 weeks denote 7 years each. 70 "*šābu'im*" = 70x7 years = 490 years. This vision is the complete answer of God to the prayer of Daniel (9:1-19). It covers the entire history of Israel and of the nations up to the last days. At the end of the 70 year-weeks, when the sin of the nations has reached its climax, the chastisement of Israel will come to an end and the nations will be devastated (cf. Isa 27:6-11; Act 3:21). Israel will then share the eternal righteousness of God when it welcomes the returning Messiah (cf. Zec 12:10; Dan 7:13; Rev 1:7). The 70 year-weeks are divided into three different periods. The first period consists of 7 year-weeks, i.e. 7x7 = 49 years (v. 25). At the beginning of these 49 years there is the decree of the Persian king, Artaxerxes I about the restoration of the city of Jerusalem (month of Nisan, March/April 444/445 B.C., cf. Neh 2). During this period of 49 years (444-396), the streets and the wall of Jerusalem were to be reconstructed (but "*in difficult times*"). The second period consists of 62 year-weeks i.e. in 434 years (62x7; v. 26). After these 62 year-weeks (including the 7 preceding year-weeks, cf. v. 25), the Messiah (the Anointed One) will be cut off (434 years counted from 396 B.C. gets us to 33 A.D. if we convert the solar [Gregorian] years into Jewish years: 360 days instead of 365 per year). The 62 year-weeks end with the death of the Messiah (v. 26a). This period is followed by a period that cannot be calculated during which Israel as a nation is set aside; this will be a period of time in which "*the people of the future prince*" will appear (v. 26b, cf. the little horn in Dan 7, also Rev 17:8ff) and when the city and the sanctuary will be destroyed (v. 26b). Under Titus, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem (cf. Luk 21:24: through the gentiles). Then the Jews were dispersed throughout the whole world and from then on the history has been characterised by war (cf. v. 26b). The last (70<sup>th</sup>) year-week (of 7 years) represents the climax of the suffering of Israel (v. 27; cf. Zec 13:7-9) in Jewish history before the beginning of the Messianic kingdom. It is divided into 2 parts of 3½ years each. At the beginning of this final "*week*", the prince (the little horn in Dan 7:8.24.25: the Antichrist), will make a covenant with those Jews who will have returned to Israel (as was done by Antiochus Epiphanes, in those days), and meanwhile resumed the worship in the temple. But in the middle of this *week* (i.e. after the first 3½ years), the Antichrist will break the covenant and cause the worship in the temple to be stopped (cf. 2Th 2:3-4; Mat 24:15; Dan 12:11). It is at this time that the *great tribulation* will begin for Israel (cf. Jer 30:7: *a time of trouble for Jacob*). The return of Christ will put an end to this time of tribulation for Israel and bring peace and justice (v. 24; cf. Rom 11:25-27). The one causing destruction, however, i.e. the Antichrist, will be destroyed (v. 27c; cf. Rev 19:20; 20:10; 2Th 2:8).

## D. The last vision from the Medo-Persian Empire up to the Antichrist: Ch. 10–12

Below is a diagram which summarises and explains the content of the last three chapters:



### 1. The preparation of the prophet: Ch. 10:1–11:1

10 The Bible Annotée introduces this section well:

15 This chapter prepares the revelation of chap. XI, indicating the circumstances under which it was produced and the appearance of the heavenly character who is in charge of communicating it. This takes us into the spirit world that governs the part which the nations and kingdoms of the world are playing in history. It teaches us that the fight which takes place on earth between light and darkness occurs between God's people and the worldly empires, whose arena is the invisible world. This teaching should strengthen and encourage the religious Israelites by showing them that they are not alone in their fight for victory and that, although it is true that they have invisible enemies who hide behind their visible ones (comp. Eph. VI, 12ff),

20 they can count on the heavenly principalities and powers to be their allies.<sup>111</sup>

#### a.) Daniel's fasting: Vv 1-3

25 **V. 1:** → “*the third year of Cyrus*”, that refers to his power in Babylon: It was in the year 534 or 535 B.C., therefore 4 years after having received the vision of the 70 years (Dan 9:24-27) and 2 years after the signing of the decree by Cyrus which announced the liberation of Israel (cf. Ezr 1:1-3). Why did Daniel not go back to Israel with Zerubbabel?

- The Medo-Persian king might have asked him to stay.
- He thought perhaps by staying in the court of the king, he could serve his people Israel better.
- 30 • Or else, because of his old age (90-95 years old)?

<sup>110</sup> Or else 11:2 to 11:39. Some people think that the verses 30 to 39 can also be applied to Antiochus Epiphanes, others in reverse do not accept it. What is true is that from the 11:40, it is certainly the Antichrist of the last days. The expression “at the time of the end” in this verse shows that also.

<sup>111</sup> Frédéric Godet, *La Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8, p. 316. We translated into English. The French text: „Ce chapitre prépare la révélation du ch. XI en indiquant les circonstances dans lesquelles elle se produisit et l'apparition du personnage céleste chargé de la communiquer. Il nous transporte dans le monde des Esprits [sic; mieux: *esprits*] qui président au rôle que jouent dans l'histoire les peuples et les royaumes d'ici-bas. Il enseigne que le combat qui se livre sur la terre entre la lumière et les ténèbres, entre le peuple de Dieu et les royaumes du monde, correspond à un combat analogue dont le monde invisible est le théâtre. Cet enseignement devait fortifier et encourager les pieux Israélites en leur montrant qu'ils n'étaient pas seuls pour lutter et pour vaincre, qu'ils avaient sans doute des ennemis invisibles cachés derrière leurs ennemis visibles (comp. Eph. VI, 12 et suiv.), mais qu'ils pouvaient compter pour alliés les principautés et les puissances célestes.“

Why does he say: → “*Daniel who was named Belshazzar*” although the Babylonian Empire (where he was given this pagan name) was in the meantime overthrown? Young says:

5 It may be noted that Daniel mentions his Babylonian name Belteshazzar, apparently out of a desire, now that the Babylonian Empire has been overthrown, to preserve his identity among his own people.<sup>112</sup>

**Vv 2-3:** After 3 weeks of fasting (cf. v. 13: 21 days) and certainly also praying (cf. Dan 9:1ff), Daniel received a vision. Was he perhaps mourning, because he had just heard that the first Jews who had returned with Zerubbabel were in trouble?

## b.) The vision of a heavenly creature: Vv 4-9

10 **V. 4:** → “...on the banks of *Hiddekel*”, that means the Tigris (cf. Gen 2:14).

**Vv 5-6:** Who is this “*man dressed in linen*”? It is certainly not an angel, but probably Jesus himself: therefore, a Christophany (appearance of Christ before his incarnation). The following parallel passages speak in favour of this interpretation: Jos 5:13-15: “*the prince of the Lord’s army*, and especially the resemblances with Rev 1:13-17 (perhaps also Rev 10:1-2), where the shining person is explicitly identified as Christ. Therefore, in Dan 10:5-6 we have to deal with an appearance of Christ before his incarnation. One compares with it the appearance of *the Angel of the Lord* in the O.T., which always is identical with the Son of God before he became human.<sup>113</sup> We see that the Angel of the Lord was sometimes adored and was even brought sacrifices. This does not apply to an “ordinary” angel or a man (see Rev 19:10; 22:8-9; cf. Act 14:8ff). The Angel of the Lord is identical to God who also appeared to Abraham (cf. Gen 18:1.22; 19:24). For further information on this, see our brochure on *Angelology* (the paragraph about the *Angel of the Lord*).

25 **V. 7:** Only Daniel saw the vision. The fact that the men around him were afraid, proves that they had heard a noise or had seen a sort of light: Compare the experience of Paul on the way to Damascus in Act 9:7; 22:9; 26:23.

**Vv 8-9:** Like John, who became unconscious on the island of Patmos when he saw Christ (Rev 1:9ff), Daniel also suffered a feeling of weakness.

## 30 c.) The revelation (in the vision): Vv 10-14

**Vv 10-12:** The man spoke to Daniel after he had touched and encouraged him. The vision was the answer to Daniel’s prayer (v. 12, cf. Rev 1:17).

35 **V. 13:** → “*The chief of the kingdom of Persia*”: That means an evil angel (a demon), because he is in opposition to the angel Michael. It is about a war between a prince of the fallen angels and a prince of the holy (good) angels. The evil powers obviously influence the governments, the human authorities. That is why Paul says that we not only fight against flesh and blood, but against “*the powers, the world rulers of darkness and against the evil spirits in heaven*” (cf. Eph 6:12ff): Perhaps “*the prince of the kingdom of Persia*” wanted to hinder *the Jews* from returning home to Israel, although this was God’s will. This war lasted 21 days (cf. v. 3; compare this with the encouragement to intercede for our leaders in 1Ti 2:1-2).

**V. 14:** The vision is about the end of time: cf. Dan 8:17-19; 12:4.9.

<sup>112</sup> Edward J. Young, NBC, p. 700.

<sup>113</sup> There is one exception: Hag 1:13: Here the *angel of the Lord* (i.e. the messenger of the Lord) is the prophet Haggai himself.

## d.) Daniel is strengthened and finds out the meaning of the vision: Ch. 10:15–11:1

**Vv 15-19:** Daniel gains courage and receives new strength. We are not sure if the man who instructs Daniel here is identical to the one mentioned in verses 4-9 (i.e. Christ).

**Vv 20-21:** → “*to fight against the prince of Persia*”: The Bible Annotée comments:

*Fighting against the Persian ruler:* so that this angel doesn't win the power over the heart of the king of this state. We know through the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther that many obstacles have alternately hindered the restoration of the state of Israel . . . after having taken victory over the angel of the Persians. Exactly at that moment a new opponent will appear; the Persian leader will be succeeded by the ruler of Javan (Greece), who will be more hostile to the Jews than the preceding one. Comp. VIII, 9–14; 23–26.<sup>114</sup>

**V. 21:** “*The book of the truth*” is the book of godly decrees (decisions) in which the historical events and the end to which they lead to are recorded in advance (cf. Dan 2:21; Psa 139:6; Rev 5:1). Michael is the responsible protector of Israel. He alone helped “*the man dressed in linen*” in this fight.

**Ch. 11:1:** This verse actually belongs to chap. 10. It is only one among many examples which shows that the division of the chapters and verses happened later. Only the text as such is inspired, but not the sub-division into different chapters and verses. This verse means: *As Michael supported me in the fight against the rulers of Javan (Greece) and of Persia (cf. 10:1), I also supported him in the first year of King Darius the Mede.*

Why was Michael in the need of the army chief of the Lord? About this issue, compare Dan 6; Isa 41:1-5; 44:28; 45:1-4, etc. and also with the book of Esther, where we find out that the Persian kings decided to think well of Israel. This was obviously possible because of divine intervention.

This spiritual war in heaven (let us not forget that Satan is the prince of the air: cf. Eph 2:3) will continue till the coming of Jesus when Satan and his forces will be bound so that peace on earth will reign (Rev 20:1-3).

## 2. The prophetic history of the 69 year-weeks: Ch. 11:2-35

In these verses, we can count approximately 150 details (events) which have taken place since the days of Daniel up to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. No one would oppose the historical exactitude of all (!) these statements. One should not forget this: Porphyrios (see introduction) said the following: The book of Daniel is a forgery because it is not possible that man can predict so many events. The author of the book (Daniel) must thus have been an eyewitness of the described events, that means they must have been written *a posteriori* (*post eventum*). So far the rational thoughts of the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian thinking of Porphyrios!

<sup>114</sup> Frédéric Godet, *La Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8, p. 320. We translated into English. The French text: „*Combattre avec le chef de la Perse : afin que cet ange ne reprenne pas le dessus dans le cœur du roi de cet Etat. Nous connaissons par les livres d’Esdras, de Néhémie et d’Esther, les obstacles nombreux qui entravaient tour à tour la restauration d’Israël . . . après avoir remporté la victoire sur l’ange de la Perse. A ce moment-là même, il se présentera un nouvel adversaire ; au chef de la Perse succédera le chef de Javan (la Grèce), qui sera animé d’un esprit hostile aux Juifs bien plus encore que le précédent* Comp. VIII, 9–14 ; 23–26.”

This passage represents a historical summary which covers the period from the beginning of the Medo-Persian Empire up to the period of the Maccabees and Antiochus Epiphanes the Seleucid (between 538 and 165 B.C.). The following events are reported in verses 2-35:

- 5 **V. 2:** Three Persian kings: after Cyrus came Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius I Hystaspes. The fourth was Xerxes I (also called Ahasuerus in Est 1:1). He recruited an army of 2 ½ million warriors from 40 nations in order to fight against Greece. In the battle of Salamis, in 480 B.C., his fleet was defeated and in 479 B.C., his infantry was also overpowered in Plataiai.
- 10 **Vv 3-4:** This powerful king was Alexander the Great, from Macedonia. He died in Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of only 32 years. As explained earlier (in chap. 8), after his death, his four generals divided up the Empire among themselves. It seems that during that time his own son (Alexander) was not yet born and his illegitimate son, Heracles of Barsina was still too young. Neither of them nor his blood brother Philip Archidaeus could hold the throne.
- 15 **V. 5:** The king of the South was: Ptolemy I “Soter”, son of Lagus, one of the seven bodyguards of Alexander the Great. He was the founder of the Ptolemaic Empire (Egypt). One of his generals was Seleucus I Nicator; he became independent and founded the Greco-Syrian Empire, known as the Seleucid Empire, which stretched from Phrygia to the Indus River. At that time, Syria and Egypt
- 20 were constantly at war with one another and since Israel is situated between these two empires, the Jews fell under the Egyptian or Syrian domination, depending on which one was the strongest at the moment.
- V. 6:** Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.) fought as the second Seleucid king against Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 B.C.). The latter had 200,000 men in his infantry, 20,000 cavalymen, 2,000 chariots and 400 elephants. Ptolemy offered Antiochus II his daughter Berenice into marriage if he would leave his first wife and sister Laodicea. But the peace that was expected to prevail after this marriage didn't last very long. Antiochus II tried to reconcile with Laodicea after the death of Ptolemy. The latter had him poisoned and also murdered Berenice and her son.
- 30 Consequently, the agreement that Ptolemy had hoped to establish through this marriage was broken and a new war erupted.
- V. 7:** After that, the brother of Berenice, Ptolemy III Euergetes (the successor of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 246-221 B.C.) conquered almost the whole Empire of Syria (Seleucid) up to the other
- 35 side of the river Tigris. His opponent Seleucus II Callinicus escaped to the mountains of Taurus.
- V. 8:** Josephus writes that Ptolemy III Euergetes brought 40,000 talents of gold, precious vessels and 2,500 idols, which were stolen, from Syria to Egypt.
- 40 **V. 9:** In 242 B.C., Seleucus II attacked Egypt by both sea and land. But a strong storm and a stubborn Egyptian army defeated him. After that, peace prevailed for 10 years.
- V. 10:** → “*His sons*” = Seleucus III Ceraunus and Antiochus II the Great (223-197 B.C.). After the death of Ceraunus, Antiochus continued to fight alone against Ptolemy *Philopator*, son of
- 45 Euergetes. He reconquered the whole of Syria up to Gaza with 72,000 soldiers, 6,000 cavalymen and 102 elephants and pushed the coward Ptolemy Philopator back into Egypt.
- V. 11:** Philopator defeated Antiochus in Raphia, in 217 B.C. with 70,000 soldiers.
- 50 **V. 12:** Philopator didn't profit from his victory but he let Antiochus escape. He continued to lead his wild life (he killed his parents and his brother, married his own sister and then fell in love with another woman).

**V. 13:** After a campaign to India, like Alexander the Great, Antiochus returned to Arabia with a strong and experienced army. Strengthened with elephants, he invaded Egypt and defeated the weak Ptolemy V Epiphanes in 198 B.C.

**V. 14:** In this time several conquered countries and many violent Jews revolted against Egypt. They revolted against the king of the South (Egypt), their legitimate master, and joined Antiochus III. They had probably hoped, in this way, to become independent from both of these powers. Their hopes were destroyed → “*They will collapse*”, which means that their revolt would be the start of the suffering which Israel could expect under the rule of Syria.

**V. 15:** Antiochus III defeated Skopas the Egyptian commander in Sidon and also conquered Israel. → “*...and the forces of the South will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops...*”: The three Egyptian generals, Europus, Meokules and Hamoxemus did not succeed in re-conquering Sidon. This victory made Antiochus III master of all the possessions (wealth) of Ptolemy in Asia.

**V. 16:** Judah remained under the leadership of the Seleucids (Syrians) until 142 B.C.

**V. 17:** Antiochus III gave his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to the 7 year old Egyptian King Ptolemy V Epiphanes. He also gave Ptolemy Israel as a wedding gift. With this alliance, he hoped to have more influence in Egypt, so that he could once take the country under his control. But his strategy did not succeed because Cleopatra took sides with her husband rather than with her father!

**V. 18:** Antiochus went west and conquered some territories in Asia Minor and also the islands of Rhodes and Samos. He offended a Roman envoy and was defeated in two battles by the Roman General Cornelius Scipio.

**V. 19:** In 187 B.C., Antiochus III tried to loot a temple at Elam so that he could pay the great tribute imposed on him by the Romans. The population became very angry and killed its own king who had reigned for 36 years.

**V. 20:** His son, Seleucus IV Philopator reigned in his place and sent his treasurer Heliodor to Jerusalem to seize the treasures from the temple (cf. 2Ma 3:7ff). After about one year, Heliodor deviously murdered Seleucus IV Philopator. One assumes that he was poisoned.

**V. 21:** Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.) the brother of Seleucus IV, named himself “*Theos Epiphanes*” (the appearing God). But his enemies changed the Greek letter “*phi*” to “*mu*” and named him “*Epimachus*” which means “*insane*”! He was not the legitimate heir to the throne. When he heard of the death of his brother, he returned from Rome (some say from Athens) and through tricks and bribery took the throne for himself at the expense of his nephew Demetrius (the legitimate heir), who was at the time detained in Rome as a hostage.

**V. 22:** Antiochus Epiphanes defeated the Egyptian army of Ptolemy Philometor that was led by Heliodor. → “*The chief of the alliance*”: Here is probably meant the high priest Onias III, who was the political and religious leader of the people of the covenant. Antiochus Epiphanes had him discharged and later killed (172/171 B.C.).

**V. 23:** Must one think about Jews, who made a pact with Antiochus Epiphanes, but who were dropped by him (like Jason, the brother of Onias III)? Or does this point to the hypocritical and crafty actions of Antiochus Epiphanes with Ptolemy VII Physcon, so that he could take over the leadership of Egypt? The context more likely speaks for the first suggestion.

**V. 24:** Even during the times of peace, he took over some territories and used the booty to bribe others so that he could win their favour.

5 **V 25:** Antiochus undertook several military expeditions against the Egyptians. The second one is probably meant here (cf. 2Ma 5:1ff). The Egyptians could not resist them, even though they had a big army.

**V. 26:** Internal sabotage led to the Egyptian defeat and Antiochus took advantage of this.

10 **V. 27:** Philometor (Antiochus' nephew) and Antiochus allied secretly against Physcon (the brother of Philometor). Physcon was declared king by the inhabitants of Alexandria in the place of his brother Philometor. The latter was dependent on Antiochus and pretended to be obedient to Antiochus. Antiochus tried to play the selfless one. This tactic didn't work. They did not succeed in overthrowing Physcon: The latter remained the ruler over Alexandria and also kept Egypt's crown.

15 **V. 28:** The news of a revolt in Cilicia (today's Turkey; later the home country of the apostle Paul) and a rumour in Jerusalem that he was dead arrived and made Antiochus turn back. While he was passing through Israel, he caused a lot of damage, violated and also looted the temple (cf. 1Ma 1:20-29; 2Ma 5:11-17).

20 **V. 29:** The two sons of Cleopatra, Philometor and Physcon, allied together and received help from Rome. Consequently, Antiochus did not succeed in overthrowing them.

25 **V. 30:** When Antiochus besieged Alexandria, the Roman general Gaius Popillius Laenas confronted him with a letter from the Roman Senate, prohibiting him from waging war against the Ptolemeans. Angry about the letter, Antiochus retreated and returned to his country and again let his frustration out on the Jewish people. A party of renegade Jews, among which was Menelaos, the brother of Simon (cf. 2Ma 4:23ff), supported Antiochus in his heathen endeavours. Antiochus replaced Jewish worship in the temple with pagan idol worship (cf. 1Ma 2:18; 2Ma 6:1).

30 **V. 31:** He prohibited the Mosaic sacrifices, the celebration of the Sabbath and circumcision. He also ordered heathen celebrations. He erected "*the abomination of the desolation*", that means that the temple of God was consecrated to Zeus Olympus and the altar of Zeus was placed on the altar where burnt offerings were made (cf. 1Ma 1:45-55; 2Ma 6:2) and pigs were sacrificed on it!

35 **Vv 32-33:** Although Antiochus tried to tempt the Jews to give up their faith, many resisted him (cf. 1Ma 1:62-65 and 2:3ff). A spiritual awakening, among the Jews, occurred in this difficult time (cf. 1Ma 1:57; 2:38; 3:41; 5:13; 2Ma 6:11). → "*And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many*": Among these were also Matthatias and his sons (cf. 1Ma 2:1ff) and Eliezer (cf. 2Ma 6:18).

40 **V. 35:** The main purpose of the persecution is our purification: cf. 1Pe 1:7! → "*Up to the last days*": Probably the end of the persecution and also the death of Antiochus in the year 164 B.C. are meant. The story of Antiochus Epiphanes ends here. Most of the interpreters (also the liberals) agree with this. From verse 36, a future king (an eschatological ruler) is talked about who will bear the characteristics of Antiochus Epiphanes and who will be even worse. The fact that the statements from verse 36 have not yet been fulfilled, make many critic expositors claim that the author of verses 1-35 wrote the story as if it were a prophecy (but in reality, all this had already happened before the recording of these verses in Dan 11: i.e. *vaticinium post eventum*<sup>115</sup>) and from verse 36,

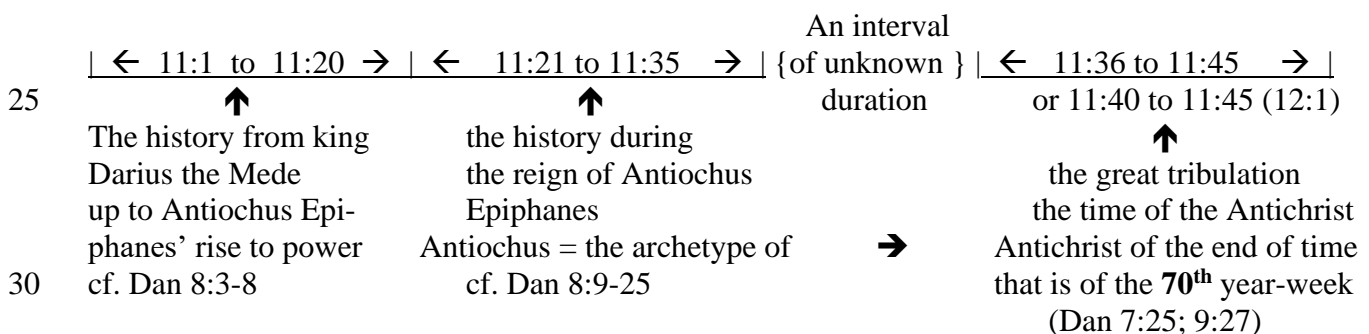
<sup>115</sup> So for example Norman W. Porteous, 'Das Danielbuch' in *Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, vol. 23 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), p. 142 („Im 40.V. geht der Verfasser von seiner Pseudoweissagung über zu echter Vorhersage...“ [„In v. 40, the author changes from pseudo-prophecy to real prophecy...“]).

he tried to predict the future but did not succeed because the statements of verses 36-45 did not yet happen. It is clear then that the author was mistaken. As we had already said earlier, we shall react to this (critic) assumption as follows: It is true that the events in verses 36-45 have not yet been fulfilled, because these events are related to the last days, that means to the Antichrist who will reveal himself in the time of the great tribulation and that Antiochus Epiphanes of whom is spoken of in verses 21-35 is a true archetype.

### 3. The prophetic history of the 70<sup>th</sup> week: Ch. 11:36–12:3

Between Dan 11:35 and 11:36, we should consider a space of time:

- 10 • **The critical interpreters generally say:** In Dan 11:1-35, the author (for them the *pseudo-Daniel*) writes the history from 538 up to 164 B.C. (the year when Antiochus Epiphanes died). From Dan 11:36 up to 11:45, he attempts to prophecy but does not succeed, because his statements were never fulfilled.
- 15 • **Calvin** said that the verses 36-45 refer to Rome.
- **Jerome** and **Luther** interpreted these verses – as we do – to concern the Antichrist. They therefore refer to the 70<sup>th</sup> year-week, i.e. the time of the Antichrist. This implies that between verse 35 and verse 36 there is a gap of undetermined time: i.e. between the historical fulfilment by Antiochus Epiphanes and the victorious Maccabeans up to the still unfulfilled coming of the eschatological (end time) events described in the verses 36-45, which at the same time represent the fulfilment of the promise in Dan 10:14.
- 20 • **Therefore we believe this:**



#### a.) Who is the king in chapter 11:36-39?

Many interpreters think that the statements in these verses hardly refer to Antiochus Epiphanes.<sup>116</sup>

- 35 • Some think of a secular Jew who changed over to the side of the Roman Emperor.
- The Bible Annotée also refers these four verses to Antiochus Epiphanes. With Young and others however, we have trouble applying the statement in verse 37 to Antiochus Epiphanes because Antiochus worshiped the (heathen) gods of his people. This would explain why he set up a shrine in the temple of Jerusalem in the honour of Zeus Olympus. The Antichrist of the last days will even go further: He will set himself up as a god to be worshiped by the people (cf. 2Th 2:4 and Rev 13:11).
- 40 • We believe these statements apply to the ruler of the (revivified) Roman Empire of the last days:

- 45 1. The little horn in Dan 7:8.11.20-21.24-25 (cf. Rev 17:8ff).

<sup>116</sup> For example Edward J. Young, NBC, p. 701.



2. The future ruler (chief) who will close an alliance with the Jews and will set up “an abomination that causes desolation”: cf. Dan 9:27; 12:11; Mat 24:15.
3. “*The man of lawlessness*” (ὁ ἄνομος [*ho anomos*]) of 2Th 2:3-9.
4. The beast that comes from the sea: Rev 13:1-10.
5. “*The beast that was, and is no longer, and will reappear . . . it is itself the eighth king and is one of the seven who will go to the perdition*” (Rev 17:8-11).

The descriptions of vv 36-39 fit well to the text mentioned above. Thereby Antiochus Epiphanes would merely be a sort of archetype, respectively a forerunner of the Antichrist of the last days, like Titus (of Dan 9:26b) is a type of the ruler of the Empire (Rome) which is to reappear at the end of time, that is the Antichrist of the Roman Empire still to come at the end of time (Dan 9:27).

### **The description of the king mentioned in vv 36-39 (the Antichrist):**

- He will do as he wants: v. 36a.
  - He will magnify himself above all the gods and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods: v. 36b (cf. Dan 8:25; 7:3.25; Rev 13:5-6; 2Th 2:4).
  - → “*He will prosper until the anger [of God: cf. Rev 12:12: the time of the Antichrist and of Satan is limited] is consumed, because what was said must be accomplished*”: cf. Rev 19:19-20; the end of the Antichrist will be the lake of burning sulphur, that is hell.<sup>117</sup>
  - → “*He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women nor will he regard any god...*”: v. 37a: Now who would be meant with the “*one desired by women*”? Many interpretations have been proposed:
1. In those days the desire of every Jewish woman was to be the mother of the Messiah. This, however, does not fit into the context at all.
  2. It is Tammuz who is especially adored by women: cf. Eze 8:14. Tammuz was considered as the god that brought nature to new life in spring.
  3. Or should it be a homosexual who has no desire for women? This interpretation poses a grammatical problem, because it is not said “*the desire for women*” but rather “*the desire of women*”.

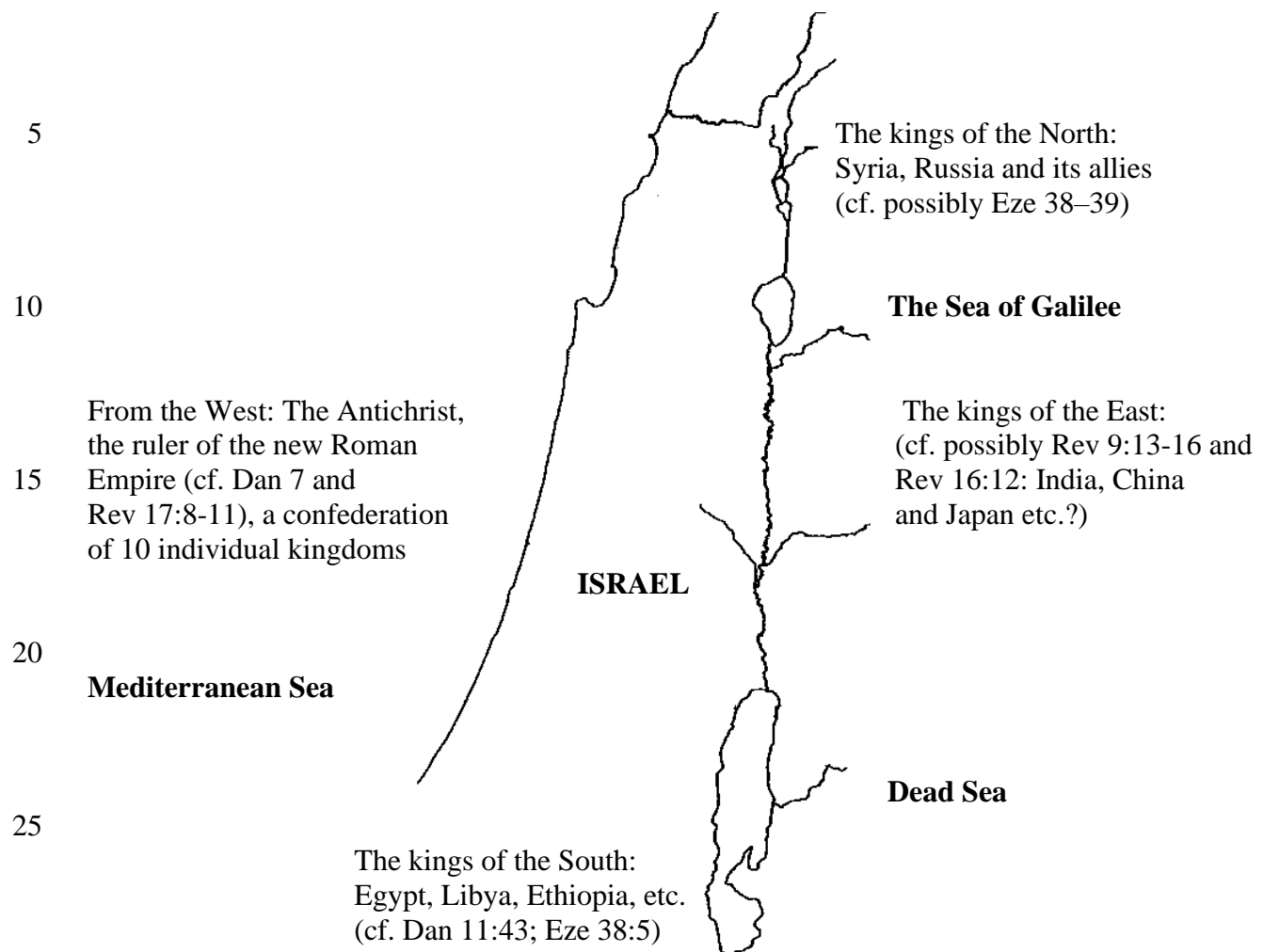
However, many interpreters think of Tammuz. Some expositors (e. g. Pentecost) interpret the phrase of verse 38 “... *he honours the God of fortresses*” in the sense that the attitude of the Antichrist will be materialistic and that he is confident in himself and in his military power.

In our view, we think that these verses may perhaps partially refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, but the final fulfilment will only take place through the Antichrist. Compare the parallel in Dan 8:26 where it says that the preceding descriptions refer to a future king of the end of time. So we should not only consider Antiochus Epiphanes, but also the Antichrist of whom Antiochus is only a forerunner or archetype. Furthermore, verse 40 speaks of the “*time of the end*” which certainly cannot be applied to the time of Antiochus, but rather to the time of the Antichrist, i.e. the great tribulation.

### **b.) The war of the end of time (Armageddon): Ch. 11:40-45**

**V. 40:** → “*at the time of the end*”: This describes an event yet to come (an eschatological event: cf. Dan 12:4.9.11-13). **Vv 40-45:** This little map should illustrate the final battle that is to take place in Israel at the end of time:

<sup>117</sup> He with the False Prophet. The devil will join in after his last rebellion, after the 1,000 years (Rev. 20:10).



Here are some explanations to this map:

- The kings of the South: In v. 43, in addition to Egypt, also Libya and Ethiopia are mentioned. These countries are also mentioned in Eze 38 as being the allies of the enemy coming from the extreme North (Russia?).
- The kings of the North: Probably Russia and its allies. It is very possible that it is the attack of Gog and Magog (described in Eze 38–39) that will provoke the intervention of the king of the West, i.e. the Antichrist.

**V. 40:** The king of the South and the king of the North will attack **him!** Who is meant by “him”? Together with many other interpreters, we think that it is the Antichrist. Why? Because he will come from the 4<sup>th</sup> Empire, which is Rome! In this passage (vv 40-45), all but one of the four directions are mentioned: the **South** (v. 40), the **North** (vv 40.44) and the **East** (*sunrise*: v. 44; cf. Rev 16:12)... but **not the West!** From where then, shall the prince emerge from whom it is said that he will be attacked from the north and the south (v. 40) and alarmed because of rumours from the North and the East (v. 44)? We therefore think that he can only emerge from the West.

**V. 44:** → “*The reports from the East*”: Presumably the news that the armies from the East are marching towards Israel to wage war (cf. Rev 16:12 and possibly Rev 9:13-16). → “*...and of the North*”: When Russia and its allies see that the army of the Antichrist has started to invade the Middle East and Egypt (cf. Dan 11:41-43), they will get mobilised for war.

**V. 45:** → “*Yet he will come to his end and no one will help him*”: Presumably this takes place at the same time as the events reported in Rev 19:17-21: The returning Christ will put an end to the Antichrist and his allies during the battle of Armageddon: cf. Rev 16:16; 19:11-21; 2Th 2:8; Joe 3:12-16 [others 4:12-16]). No one will touch him. Moreover, Christ himself will overthrow him with “the breath of his mouth” (cf. 2Th 2:8).

It is possible that the attacks emerging from the South, East and the North are attempts at preventing the predominance of the fourth (re-emerged) Empire, the confederation of the Antichrist (the 10 horns of the 4<sup>th</sup> beast in Dan 7 and the beast in Rev 13).

### c.) The salvation of Israel: Ch. 12:1-3

**V. 1:** → “*At that time...*” (twice: in v. 1a and v. 1c): Which time is meant here? Compare Dan 11:40: It concerns the “time of the end”. It appears logical that the events of Dan 12:1-3 either coincide with those in 11:40-45 or immediately follow them. → *Michael* (the archangel) is the defender of Israel (cf. Dan 10:13.22). → “*It will be a time of anguish*”: The Jews have (even more) difficult times ahead of them: cf. Deu 4:30; Mat 24:15ff; Jer 30:7; Zec 13:7-9. → “*Those of your people who will have their names recorded in the book of life shall be saved*”: According to Zec 13:8, two thirds (of Israel) will die, one third will survive (cf. Eze 20:35-38: Israel shall be purged).

**V. 2: The resurrection:** When reading this verse, we could deduce from it that all humans will be resurrected at the same time: believers and non-believers. We also gain this impression when reading the words of Jesus in Joh 5:24-29: Verse 29 corresponds exactly to Dan 12:2. The Amillennialists (those who do not believe in an earthly millennial [thousand years] kingdom) refer to this fact and to these passages and claim that the return of Jesus will end everything: that means simultaneously the resurrection of all humans and the last judgement, followed by eternity. But such a claim bases on a disregard of the progressive revelation of God through his Word. The prophets of the Old Testament often did not know which era their prophecies applied to or when these should be fulfilled. (cf. 1Pe 1:11). Many truths were revealed for the first time to the apostles. One of these is the time of the resurrection of men. To Daniel both resurrections seemed to take place at the same time. However, we find already in the book of Isaiah (a first) evidence that the faithful and the unfaithful will not be resurrected at the same time: cf. Isa 26:14 and 26:19. These two verses do not contradict each other (as many critical interpreters claim; cf. our dissertation). The premillennialists explain it as follows: While the non-believers (the unjust) must still remain in Hades (realm of death; cf. Isa 26:14; 14:20-21: to await judgement: cf. Isa 24:22), the believers (the just) will already be resurrected (cf. *your dead* in Isa 26:19). That the non-believers will be resurrected later is already suggested in Isa 24:21-23: They first have to wait for their judgement. At the time when Yahweh will reign in Zion, the unjust will not yet have been judged and therefore also not have been resurrected. Their resurrection will only take place after a great number of days (יָמֵי רַבּ [wūmerob yāmīm], see Isa 24:22). In Rev 20:4-6 this interval becomes defined: Christ returns, the just will come back to life and will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev 20:4-6) *on earth* (Rev 5:10). During this period (the millennium), the unjust will remain in the realm of death; they will only be resurrected after a thousand years (cf. Rev 20:5-6.13-14). The apostle Paul suggests the same thing in 1Co 15:22-28: All people will be resurrected, but each in his own turn: First Christ will be resurrected, thereafter we (the believers) who belong to him when he appears (his return). Only after this, the end will come, that is the resurrection of the unjust (the context of 1Co 15 deals with the physical resurrection of men). For more information about this, see the chapter about the resurrection in our brochure on *Eschatology*.

**V. 3:** The reward for the faithful witnesses: cf. Eze 3:18; 1Cor 9:16; 2Ti 4:2.8, etc.

## 4. The conclusion of the Book of Daniel: Ch. 12:4-13

- V. 4:** → “*But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end*”: Daniel was to keep the message secret. Since the death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus this has changed. The apostle John, the apocalyptic seer (prophet) of the New Testament, was told not to seal the things told to him, that means, not to keep them secret (Rev 22:10). → “*Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book*”: The final revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John. That is why it is written in Rev 22:18-19 that no one may add or take away from the book. This applies to “revelations” like (for instance) those allegedly received by Joseph Smith (the book of *Mormon*) or Mohamed (Koran). Since the apostle John received the final revelation, this message ought not to be kept sealed (secret) anymore. Much more, we are called on to delve into these words and to understand them (cf. Rev 1:3). It is God’s will that the believers are not only informed of events taking place in the world now, but that they may also know what is awaiting them and mankind in the future.
- Vv 5-6:** → The two angels and the man dressed in linen: The man dressed in linen is undoubtedly Christ (cf. Dan 10:5-6). The angels are messengers of God. They probably have the role of witnesses as the man dressed in linen swears an oath (cf. Deu 19:15).
- V. 7:** The end will come after “*a time, times and half of a time*”: As already explained in chap. 7 and 9, this period represents 3½ years, that is to say 1,260 days (cf. Dan 7:25). The last words of this verse suggest that here the second half of the great tribulation is meant for it speaks of the end of the power of the holy people. Of course, the 3½ times correspond with the 1’260 days in Rev 11:3; 12:6 and the 42 months in Rev 11:2 and 13:5. The 3½ times are also mentioned in Rev 12:14.
- Vv 8-10:** Again it is said that the prophetic words will only be understood at the end of time. We believe that since God revealed these truths to the apostle John on the island of Patmos, we believers can also understand the prophecies in the book of Daniel. This is also expressed in Rev 22:6,10.
- The two aims of prophecy:**
1. Joh 14:29: The strengthening of faith at the fulfilment of prophecy.
  2. 2Pe 3:11: He who believes in prophecy will strive for holiness!
- Vv 9-10:** Daniel himself does not understand the content of this prophecy, but at the end of time the wise (the faithful) will understand it. It may not surprise us if the non-believers are not interested in these prophecies. Only a person renewed and therefore led in truth by the Holy Spirit can fully understand and perceive these prophecies (cf. 1Co 2:14).
- Vv 11-12:** 1’290 days and 1’335 days: Compare this to the 1’260 days in Rev 11:3; 12:6. How shall we understand these additional days?
- The *Bible Annotée* proposes: “These stages in the victory of the divine principle can repeat themselves in different eras. Originally taken from the history of the Maccabeans, they can also point to the successive phases of divine victory over the reign of the Antichrist.”<sup>118</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Frédéric Godet, *Bible Annotée*, A.T. 8, S. 333. We translated into English. The French text: „Ces degrés dans la victoire du principe divin peuvent se reproduire à diverses époques. Empruntés primitivement à l’histoire des Maccabées, ils peuvent indiquer aussi les phases successives de la victoire divine sur le règne de l’Antichrist.”

- Young<sup>119</sup> thinks that these figures are only symbolic. We already pointed out in our excursus on Dan 9:24-27 that interpretations constantly hiding behind “symbolisms”, just because the literal interpretations do not fit their eschatological preconceptions, are meaningless to us.
- Perhaps the 30 days (the difference between 1,260 and 1,290) are to be brought into context with the duration of the judgement of Israel and the nations after the return of Christ?<sup>120</sup>

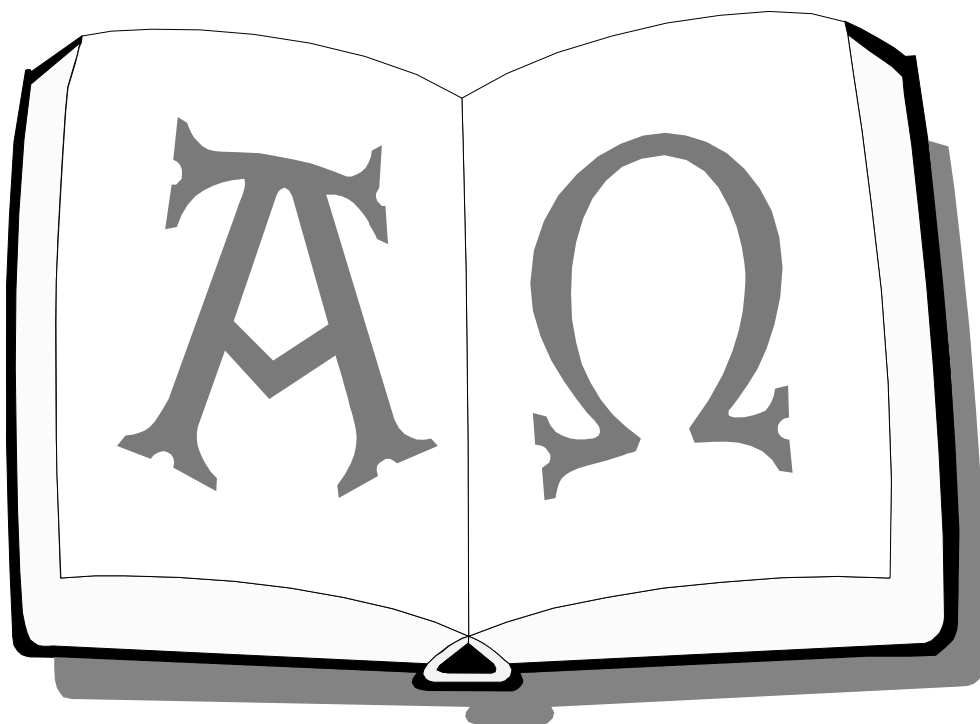
We do admit that we also hesitate. The proposition that the difference between 1’260 and 1’290 days (1 month) and 1’335 days (a further 1½ months) respectively represents a short judgement period at the end of the *great tribulation*, that is at the threshold to the millennium, would seem evident to us.

**V. 13:** Young’s conclusion of his commentary on Daniel reflects our own views. He writes:

Daniel himself is assured of his salvation, and that he shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. May this same destination be that of all who read these words!<sup>121</sup>

In the following passages we find valuable exhortation and encouragement on this theme: 1Co 9:24-27; Phi 3:7-14; 2Ti 4:6-8; Heb 10:32-39; Jam 5:7-8; 2Pe 3:11-14; 1Jo 2:28; 3:3.

**He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!”  
Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev 22:20-21)**



<sup>119</sup> Edward J. Young, NBC, p. 700.

<sup>120</sup> E. g. J. Dwight Pentecost, BKC, p. 1374.

<sup>121</sup> Edward J. Young, NBC, p. 702.

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Kreuzlingen, May 2022

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