

# Daniel's Prophetic Outline of World History

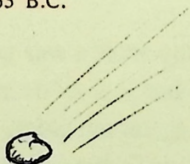
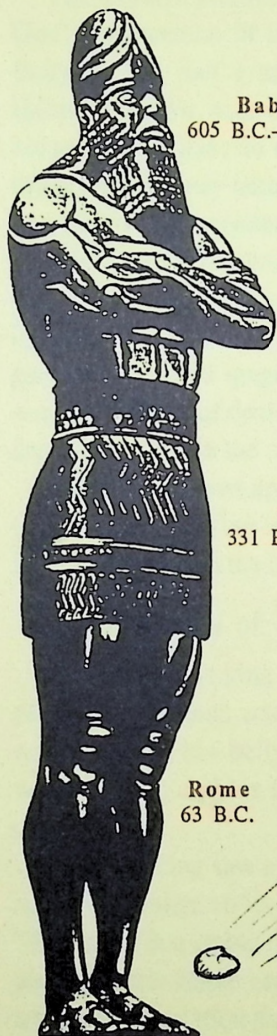
Babylon  
605 B.C.—538 B.C.

Medo-Persia  
538 B.C.—331 B.C.

Greece  
331 B.C.—63 B.C.

Rome  
63 B.C.

By  
*Pastor Hollis Partlowe*





## DANIEL'S PROPHETIC OUTLINE OF WORLD HISTORY

The Book of Daniel opens about 605 B.C. Daniel was God's spokesman in the palace of the heathen king of Babylon. He had a unique ministry. Ezekiel, another Hebrew captive, was God's voice to the captives in the country. Jeremiah, an older man but a contemporary of the other two, was taken captive to Egypt by Jews rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar; he probably died there.

Daniel 2:1-30 records a dream which Nebuchadnezzar had, but could not remember—much less know the meaning of it. Therefore, he called the wise men of his heathen government—the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, etc.—and on threat of death he demanded that they recall the dream and explain the meaning. They failed miserably.

Then Daniel was approached for the job, and through God's Spirit working in him, he made known to the king his dream and also the interpretation.

### **Interpretation of the Dream—Daniel 2:31-45**

Daniel told the king that he saw a great metallic image of a man. His head was of fine gold; his breast and arms were of silver; his belly and thighs were of brass; his legs were of iron; and his feet were part of iron and part of clay.

Then the king saw a stone cut out without hands which struck the image on its feet and the image was destroyed. "The stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king" (2:35, 36).

## Details of the Prophecy

1. "Thou art this head of gold" (v. 38). Babylon, the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, was clearly the first kingdom of the four.

2. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (v. 39a). This would be Medo-Persia, a dual kingdom represented by the arms and shoulders.

3. "And another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth" (v. 39b). This would be Greece, another world kingdom which replaced Medo-Persia.

4. "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron" (v. 40). Rome was the fourth kingdom from Daniel's day. The iron kingdom was more brutal than the others as iron is stronger than the other metals.

Many students believe that the toes of iron and clay (v. 41) represent the revived form of the Roman Empire which is still future. The iron and clay make a poor mixture which suggests that the future form of the Roman Empire will be partly strong and partly weak. Some students also see the re-emergence of democracy in Eastern Europe as a probable sign of the start of the union of iron and clay (pottery).

Moreover, most students believe that the ten toes represent a coalition of ten kingdoms that will be in existence when Jesus comes to set up His Kingdom. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for

ever" (v. 44). "The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (v. 45b).

The Common Market may well be the beginning of this coalition, in the thinking of many students.

At any rate, four great world empires were to succeed each other. History stands as evidence that Daniel correctly interpreted the king's dream. Most literal expositors believe that the church age fits in between the ancient Roman Empire and the revived form of it at the close of the age. I agree.

The study of Daniel is an indispensable introduction to the Biblical foreview of world history. Through this Hebrew prophet came the revelation of the major events which would mark the progress of what Jesus called "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:44).

Major attention is directed to the fourth empire as being of supreme prophetic importance. It precedes the final Kingdom which comes from God. The image had two legs which anticipated the division of Rome into the eastern and western divisions. Observe, also, that major attention is directed to the weakness of the feet and toes which leads to the complete downfall of the Roman Empire in its final form. This is yet future. Daniel 2 reveals a sudden catastrophic event which destroys Gentile power and replaces it with the Kingdom of God. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15b).

Daniel, more than any other book in the Bible, gives an overview of prophecy and "the times of the Gentiles." His

God-inspired interpretation of the image implies that prophecy speaks to every generation. The four world kingdoms symbolized in this image extend from Daniel's day to the end of time. The fifth kingdom will be the Kingdom from heaven. That is to say that some form of the Roman kingdom will be in existence when Jesus comes to judge the nations and set up His Kingdom.

The prophetic outline of world history in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar was remarkably fulfilled except the consummation. As is the usual case in the Old Testament, the prophecy takes no notice of the many centuries separating the first and second advents of Christ. It anticipates a future empire in the Mediterranean area which is a continuation of the Roman Empire.

The fact that God could foretell the future course of world dominion with complete accuracy demonstrates His

A Comparison of Daniel 2; 7; and 8			
Daniel 2 Metals-Image	Daniel 7 Beasts	Daniel 8 Animals	Kingdom Represented
Head of gold	Winged lion		Babylon
Arms and breast of silver	Bear	Ram	Medo-Persia
Belly and thighs of bronze	Winged leopard	Male goat	Greece
Legs of iron, feet and toes of iron and clay	Indescribable beast with ten horns		Rome
Stone that becomes a Great Mountain	Messiah and Saints given a Kingdom		Kingdom of God

sovereignty over kingdoms and history. Messiah's reception of the rulership of the earth was the last thing portrayed in this dream. This implied that the Kingdom of God would be the goal or grand climax of world history.

### **The Roman Little Horn—Daniel 7:1-8**

In chapter 2 we took a look at the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. Now in chapter 7 let's look at a dream and visions Daniel himself had.

He saw "four great beasts" come up from the "great sea." This term in the Old Testament nearly always refers to the Mediterranean Sea, which adds to the belief that this revelation is connected with the Mediterranean world. Ancient people held the sea in mystical reverence. To them the sea was a place of evil monsters.

The Hebrew prophet saw a lion, a bear, a leopard with four wings and four heads, and a fourth unnamed beast described as "dreadful and terrible," having "great iron teeth" and "ten horns." The ten horns correspond to the ten toes of chapter 2. Moreover, a "little horn" came up among the ten and plucked up three of the ten.

The details of chapter 7 far exceed chapter 2 and in a sense is a commentary on the earlier revelation. Chapter 7 is a recapitulation of chapter 2 and covers the same four kingdoms, the ten toes corresponding to the ten horns out of which comes the "little horn" which represents the coming Roman antichrist. Many students believe that the European Common Market may be the entity that will produce the antichrist, the final ruler of the earth in the times of the Gentiles. No one is certain about the size and shape of the

“new Europe” or how it will function, but the students who hold this view are probably on the right track.

### **Daniel’s Interpretation of the Four Beasts— 7:15-28**

One of the amazing things about the Book of Daniel is its self-interpreting nature. The Hebrew prophet is going to reveal to us now the secret of the “four great beasts.” They represent “four kings which shall arise out of the earth” (v. 17). Special focus is given the fourth beast with ten horns out of which comes forth the “little horn.” What is the meaning of the fourth beast? “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces” (v. 23).

The fourth empire from Daniel’s time would have to be Rome, starting with Babylon which was in existence at the time. (Compare 2:38b.) The fourth kingdom will be revived and suffer its fatal judgment at the second coming of Messiah. Rome is clearly the fourth kingdom. It was during this period that Jesus was born. All during Jesus’ earthly ministry Israel was under the heel of Rome. Christ was taken to the cross by Roman soldiers. In A.D. 70 the city and temple were destroyed. The Romans dragged harrows over the site of the temple as if to say, “Nothing ever existed here.” A few Jews continued to revolt, but finally in A.D. 135 those who remained were dispersed to the four winds.

### **Revelation 13:1-10**

The first ten verses of this chapter is a revelation of the



revived Roman Empire in its period of worldwide dominion. John reminds us of the beast with ten horns which was like a leopard, a bear, and a lion. The language is recognizably drawn from Daniel 7. The beast here also had seven heads, one of which received a deadly wound which was healed. Most prophetic students believe this refers to Rome which disintegrated but will be revived in the end time. They are probably on the right track.

Moreover, this kingdom is referred to as Babylon, which can be confusing. (Rev. 17:5; 18:2.) The reason seems to be that Babylon was the first world government to dominate Israel. Babylon is not only a place but a symbol—a symbol of heathenism. It was the nation that took the Jewish people into captivity. Consequently, any captivity thereafter may be referred to figuratively as Babylon.

It should be kept in mind that the term “Babylon” applies to pagan Babylonian religion; but it also applies to the city of Babylon and to the empire of Babylon. Some students believe that Revelation 18 teaches the rebuilding of the city of Babylon. While it is possible, it seems highly improbable. It may be better to see the spirit of Babylon as symbolic of apostate religion and the world political system in rebellion against God.

The background of Babylon goes all the way back to Genesis 10:8-10, where we learn that Nimrod founded the kingdom of Babylon. Then in Genesis 11 we learn of the post-diluvial civilization and the building of the tower of Babel. The confusion of languages was a divine judgment upon the pride and rebellion of the Babel-builders. Ever

since, Babylon represents the extreme pride and rebellion of fallen man. Even Jews held captives in communistic countries in the twentieth century were said to be in Babylon because they were in a Babylonian-like captivity. Babylon refers to paganism and heathenism, a false religious and political system.

The pagan rites of Rome came from Babylon. Babylon is actually a counterfeit, a source of counterfeit religion, the most confusing form of which is found in Rome. Although the kingdom in view in Revelation 13 and 17 is called Babylon, it is fairly obvious that Rome is meant.

In much the same way, Jerusalem is called Sodom and Egypt, and Sodom and Gomorrah. (Rev. 11:8; Isa. 1:10; 3:8, 9.) The Holy City had become as corrupt as Sodom and Gomorrah.

At any rate, both history and prophecy affirm that the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2 and 7 is Rome, and its final form is future and will be in existence when Jesus comes.

### **Three Stages of the Roman Empire**

1. The ancient Roman Empire. (Dan. 7:7, 23.)
2. The ten horns or ten-kingdom stage. (Dan. 7:24.)
3. The "little horn" or antichrist stage. (Dan. 7:24, 25.)

By the way, the Greek prefix *anti* means against or in place of. The coming Roman antichrist will not only be against Christ but will sit "in the temple of God shewing himself that he is God . . . whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thes. 2:4-8). Since he is to be destroyed at the coming of Christ, he is an eschatological person, not a historical one.

## The Grecian Little Horn—Daniel 8:2-9

In this vision Daniel saw a ram with two long horns. The significant thing was that one horn was longer than the other. The longer one arose after the shorter one. The two horns of the ram speak of the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia, often referred to as Persia because Persia was the dominant power in the coalition. Babylon fell (Dan. 5), and Medo-Persia became the world power corresponding to the bear. (7:5.)

Then Daniel saw a goat with a powerful horn between his eyes arise suddenly. His speed was so great that he did not touch the ground as he ran. The goal of the goat was to destroy the ram, which he did with great speed. The ram was totally defenseless before him. Medo-Persia was destroyed and Greece became the world power, corresponding to the third beast in chapter 7, the leopard with four wings and four heads. (7:6.)

Daniel then saw the great horn of the goat broken and

Little Horn Daniel 7	Little Horn Daniel 8
1. Comes from fourth kingdom	1. Comes from third kingdom
2. Eleventh horn uprooting three of the ten	2. Fifth horn coming out of one of the four
3. Persecutes God's people 42 months	3. Persecutes God's people 2300 days (over 6 yrs.)
4. Future	4. Historical

replaced with four prominent ones. Out of one of these four horns came forth a "little horn." Is this the same "little horn" as the one in chapter 7, verse 8? I believe not. At least there is a lot of evidence against it.

Remember the center of interest here is Medo-Persia and Greece. The "little horn" of chapter 8 comes out of an entirely different context than the one in chapter 7. The beasts are drastically different and the horns differ in number.

These two horns have many similarities, but similarity does not prove identity. Two men or events or beasts may be alike in many respects, but are distinguished by one definite dissimilarity.

To fail to see these two "little horns" as symbolizing two different men at two different periods in history is to bring confusion to prophetic study. Only typically can the "little horn" of 8:9 be construed as the future antichrist. The "little horn" of 8:9 presents a person whose coming was yet future in Daniel's day, but who has already crossed the stage of history as far as we are concerned. The future antichrist emerges from the revived Roman Empire. Scripture says nothing about his nationality or racial connections beyond that, but he is to be of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (Dan. 9:27.)

### **Interpretation of the Ram and He Goat —Daniel 8:20-23**

Daniel explains that the ram with two horns represents Medo-Persia; the goat is the king of Greece, and the great horn between his eyes is the first king. Very plain—no

problem here! Alexander the Great was the first king.

The Hebrew prophet goes on to reveal that the great horn between the goat's eyes is broken and four other horns take its place. "In the latter time of their kingdom . . . a king of fierce countenance . . . shall stand up" (v. 23). Notice carefully that this "little horn" comes out of Greece at the end of that kingdom, not out of Rome at the end of our age. A mistake often made is to assume that "the end" or "last days" always refer to the end of our age. It doesn't. See Hebrews 1:1, 2; 9:2; Isaiah 2:2-4.

Nearly all conservative scholars believe that the "little horn" here in Daniel 8 represents Antiochus Epiphanes who ruled Syria from B.C. 175-164. Syria was one of the four divisions of Alexander's Grecian Empire. The same man is in view through the end of the chapter. He is only a type or illustration of the coming antichrist. The two have many similarities but also some distinct differences.

It is said that the man in view in Daniel 8 will stand up against the "Prince of princes" (v. 25). This does not necessarily mean that he is living when Jesus comes. It probably means that he will rebel against God and God's representatives as Pharaoh of Egypt did. The word "prince" is used in various ways in the Bible. It sometimes refers to a leader as given to Michael and princes of Israel as head of the tribes. (Dan. 12:1; Num. 7:2.) In fact, it is used of the Grecian "little horn" (Dan. 8:11). In Ezekiel 38:2 the head or leader of Meshach and Tubal is referred to as "chief prince," etc. So the argument that the "Prince of princes" refers to Jesus at the end of the world doesn't hold up very well. We should not confuse

the title "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6) with "Prince of princes" in Daniel 8:25. Daniel 10:20 speaks of the "prince of Persia" and the "prince of Greece."

If the "little horn" of 8:9 is the antichrist, then he must live from B.C. 175 till Jesus comes, which is absurd. The best way to interpret the passage is to see one as foreshadowing the other. To assume that the two horns are one and the same because both are "little horns" is to interpret the matter on assumed similarities without giving due consideration to the contradictions. Besides, Scripture says nothing about a revival of Greece, but a great deal about the revival of Rome. The New Testament certainly seems to follow this interpretation. I believe that it is only fair to say that liberal students generally insist that the fourth beast is Greece, while conservative students with few exceptions identify the fourth beast as Rome.

Chapters 7 and 8 occur in the time period between chapters 4 and 5 and are out of chronological order. It appears certain that Daniel had received the revelations of chapters 7 and 8 before he came to Belshazzar's feast. Chapter 5 records the fall of Babylon in one night. The prediction of the fall would come before the fall, not after it.

### **The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks —Daniel 9:24-27**

While the seer at Babylon was in prayer confessing the sins of his people, no less than the angel Gabriel came to give him a comprehensive program for God's covenant people Israel (vv. 21, 22). The angel revealed that 490 years were decreed upon Daniel's people and the holy

city, Jerusalem. Incidentally, to read the church into this prophecy is without any justification whatsoever. The entire period of 490 years is decreed upon Daniel's people (Israel) and Jerusalem.

The starting point of this prophecy is B.C. 445, a date pretty well accepted by conservative and liberal scholars alike. It is based on Nehemiah 2:1-8 when Artaxerxes, the Persian king, gave the decree for the Jews to return from captivity. He began his reign in B.C. 465, so the twentieth year would be B.C. 445.

When did or will this time period end? Here we have a timetable for the first coming of Messiah. Verse 26 states that Messiah would be cut off (a clear reference to the death of Christ), after 483 years and before the 490th year. The 483 years ran out during the earthly ministry of Christ. Some students believe the 483 years were terminated on Palm Sunday; others at the cross. Take your choice.

At any rate, the first 483 years of the prophecy are now history with seven years (one week) still to go. God counts time only when He is dealing with Israel. The church age is not counted as a part of the 70 weeks of prophecy. God's prophetic clock as seen in the Old Testament stopped at the crucifixion or thereabout, a point often overlooked or rejected by many. God's whole program centers around Israel.

Let me say again that one week (seven years) of this prophecy concerning Israel is still future. In this time frame Israel will fulfill her prophetic destiny. Jesus called this final week "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21), and Jere-

miah called it "the time of Jacob's trouble" (30:7).

The tribulation period is the final seven years of God's determined dealings with Daniel's people and the holy city, "to finish [Israel's] transgression, and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness . . ." (Dan. 9:24).

The purpose of Israel's tribulation is to bring her to her knees so she will cry out for her Messiah, whom her ancestors crucified so many centuries ago. Premillenarians believe that that is the future for national Israel. A great deal of Scripture is focused on the future restoration and conversion of Israel.

### **The Willful King—11:36-45**

Many scholars point out a natural literary break between verses 35 and 36. Another king, they say, is introduced in verse 36, while verses 21-35 have to do with Antiochus Epiphanes who ruled Syria B.C. 175-164. In verse 36 the prophecy shifts from Antiochus of the past to antichrist of the future, the former being a type of the latter. It appears that they are on the right track.

The break in the prophecy seems to be introduced by the phrase "the time of the end" in verse 35. The passage (11:36-45) should be considered as contemporaneous with the climax of world history in the destruction of the image in chapter 2 and destruction of the "little horn" of chapter 7. This same time period is the focus of Revelation 6-18.

In this prophecy one observes that this willful king (v. 36) is a different person from either "the king of the



north” or “the king of the south,” both of whom fight against him.

This willful king is the antichrist; “the little horn” (Dan. 7:8); the beast of Revelation 13:1-10 and 17; the “man of sin . . . the son of perdition . . . whom the Lord shall consume with spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thes. 2:3-8).

The king of the south pushes at him; the king of the north comes against him like a whirlwind; the kings of the east (v. 44; Rev. 16:12) come across the dried-up Euphrates River to engage in the war of Armageddon. This man gets it from all sides. This prophecy reveals three strong national powers contemporary with antichrist, who is the end-time Roman ruler.

### **The Great Tribulation of Israel—12:1, 2**

Scholars seem to pretty well agree that there is no literary break between chapters 11 and 12. “At that time” clearly indicates that what is to follow is connected to the preceding chapter. The period in view is Israel’s time of trouble which Jesus called the “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21, 22). In view is a period of unprecedented trouble for Daniel’s people. They are referred to twice in verse 1 as “thy people.” This period is a time of chastening by the wicked hands of antichrist to prepare the Jewish people for Messiah’s coming. This person is clearly an eschatological ruler, the final ruler of earth and especially the Middle East in the times of the Gentiles. He emerges from the geographical location of the old Roman Empire and gains control of that part of the world and eventually of

the whole earth. (Rev. 13:7, 8.)

Well, I've laid a lot of material on you in this study. Some of it is pretty heavy stuff. Please don't be discouraged, because no one grabs onto all of this the first time around. It may take several times around for one to even clarify the basic outline of what Daniel the prophet has written.

Now I'd like to say a word about the purpose of prophecy. The basic purpose of prophecy is not just for us to know the future and pride ourselves in that. Its main purpose is to comfort and edify us; to encourage and assure us; to strengthen our faith (1 Cor. 14:3). What God has spoken is equivalent to fulfillment. Prophecy is an intriguing subject. At least 25% of the Bible is prophecy, or was when it was written.

During these last days, let us remember that "we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

**Atlanta Bible College/  
Church of God General Conference**  
Box 100000  
5823 Trammell Road  
Morrow, Georgia 30260-7000  
Phone (404) 362-0052

