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GOD'S CHESSBOARD

THE STORY OF GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL PLAN AS
REVEALED IN HUMAN HISTORY

JOHN A. CLAUER



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God's Chessboard
The Story of God's Providential Plan as Revealed in Human History
by John A. Clauer

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Preface



The following notes are provided to help understand the sources of information and the choices of abbreviations used in the text.

- Historical texts utilized: Most of the historical issues discussed in this text are derived from a lifetime of reading and study. However, to fact check events and dates, the following books were used (for issues after 1968, and for some more recently discovered historical facts, some use of the Internet was utilized):
 - *An Encyclopedia of World History*, Compiled and Edited by William L. Langer, Coolidge Professor of History, Harvard University, published 1948.
 - *An Encyclopedia of World History* fourth edition, Compiled and Edited by William L. Langer, Coolidge Professor of History, Harvard University, published 1968.
 - *A History of the Christian Church*, by Williston Walker, Titus Street Professor Ecclesiastical History in Yale University, published 1952.
- Scriptural references: The scriptural references used in this text begin with study from the English King

James Bible and most cited references come from the KJV unless indicated otherwise. To supplement study of these texts, the following study guides were utilized:

- o *The Interlinear Hebrew and Greek English Bible* (Three Volumes), Jay Green, general editor and translator, published 1978.
 - o *Berry's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (King James Version), by George Ricker Berry, published 1977.
 - o *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, by James Strong, Published by Associate Publishers and Authors Incorporated, Grand Rapids, MI
- In noting dates in this text, the abbreviations BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, meaning in the year of our Lord) were used. Updated uses of BC would be listed as BCE (Before the Common Era), and updated uses for AD would be CE (Common Era). It was the author's preference to use the older BC/AD annotations.
 - The use of capital "C" when referring to the Church implies the universal body of believers. The use of a small "c" implies a denomination or individual church organization.

This text is the result of a lifetime of study of both history and theology. Critical to getting me started on investigating history from a "providential" viewpoint was one man, Mr. Ralph Gale. As one of my history professors at Cedarville University in the late '60s and early '70s, he inspired me to a greater understanding of European and ancient history from the perspective of the providence of God. Although I was originally a history major, I finished my education as a business major. The university did not permit double majors, so

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despite my completion of the history requirement, my undergraduate degree remains in business. However, my heart remains in history. Mr. Gale was a very unassuming man. As I remember, he was well into his 60s and had two master's degrees—one in theology and one in history. He had also spent over thirty years in Christian ministry. Because of his age he was unable to pursue a doctorate and left the university during the accreditation process. There was little that attracted people to Mr. Gale: He was an ordinary man, not overbearing, and not a dynamic public speaker. However, his love of God, his knowledge of history, and his *ability to demonstrate the providence of God in the unfolding of history* had a profound impact on me. I will be eternally grateful for his teaching, mentorship, and guidance. I am also grateful to the United States Marine Corps for the emphasis they placed on the study and mastery of both world and military history during my thirty-six years of service. The reading program they helped me begin as a junior officer in the early 70's led to a lifetime of discovery. I am also thankful for the strategy and policy package provided at the Naval War College during pursuit of my master's degree. The critical thinking demanded during this period of my education was vital to my intellectual development. Finally I want to acknowledge the contribution of the Chuck Colson Wilberforce Institute. This program challenged me to better understand worldviews and modern cultural philosophies, and compelled me to expand my reading of both modern and early church Christian philosophers.

Introduction



Chess is a game of strategy where the opposing players work a plan to capture the opponents king. Skillfully employing the capabilities of each piece, the Chess Master moves his pieces around the board until he achieves *Checkmate*, a situation where the opponents king can no longer move without being captured. Skillful Chess Masters can anticipate all possible moves of the opponent and pre-plan counter actions to assure victory. Like a chessboard, where the preplanned will of the Chess Master is worked out on the board, this is the story of God's working of His will in history, despite the opposition of His opponent, Satan. No matter what Satan does, God always moves to accomplish his planned will. This book will *show* how God's prophetic plan, *predicted* in Daniel and Revelation, has played out with precise accuracy in the pages of human history. This is the amazing story of fulfilled prophecy.

Let's be honest right up front: Talking about prophecy, God's guidance of history or God's plan for an end-of-days, makes people uneasy. If you are a humanist or atheist, you laugh at the naivety of those who believe there was a plan for creation, that God is involved in the history of mankind working his will through human government, or that there will be a planned end to creation. If you are the average busy human being, about the business of living life, whether

religious or not, you do not see the relevance of looking for God in prophecy and history, nor do you take seriously the issue of an end to creation. Even among theists, few of us really understand prophecy; fewer still have taken the time to understand history from the perspective of God, and most do not consider the possibility of anything approaching the events of end-of-days prophecy occurring in their lifetime. In short, those who talk about biblical prophecy and the End Times are considered a little off balance! In some respects, there is justification for this view. End Timers and teachers of prophecy have often had a negative impact on humanity.

The Montanists of the early Christian era were led by teachers who believed in the immediate return of Jesus Christ, the speedy end to the world, and the special baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were disruptive to the growth and unity of the early church and were opposed by most Christians/biblical church leaders. Many know of the preaching of William Miller in the nineteenth century and the people called by his name, Millerites, who followed him. Hosts of people were persuaded to sell all their possessions and prepare for the appointed day that Miller said Christ would return. More disturbing were the mass suicides and murder of nearly one thousand people by the Jim Jones sect in the 1970s and the murder/suicide of nearly 500 people in a Ugandan sect in the year 2000. Considered less of a Sectarian organization but perhaps even more volatile, are the more radical elements of the “Zionists” of the twentieth and twenty-first Century. As documented in his book *The End of Days—Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, Gershom Gorenberg documents how outspoken elements of this community are actively pushing Israel for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple over the top of the Islamic Dome of the Rock. These same activists have also helped in developing and shipping thousands of specially bred cattle to Israel. Their hope is that these cattle will be used to breed the perfect bull for Jewish sacrifice in this

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coming Third Temple. Many believe their activity is pushing Israel towards conflict with the Islamic world and is making a very dangerous situation even worse. Having lived in this region while serving as a UN Peacekeeper, I recognize the difficulty of achieving peace between the Islamic and Jewish nations. However, as Christians we should care as much for the “lost sheep of Ishmael and Esau” as we should for the “lost sheep of Israel.” We should be praying for the peace of Jerusalem, *not* advocating for the building of a Temple on a holy site claimed by two religions, a restructuring of the political order in Israel, or the expansion of national borders—events some Zionists believe will hasten the return of Jesus Christ. These activities by “radical” Christians are pushing the world closer to the brink of war rather than working for the peace of Jerusalem. I admit I do not believe there ever will be peace in the Middle East. However, I also do not believe it is our role to throw gasoline on an already volatile situation. Having lived in the Middle East, I have respect and love for the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the Arabs. I have made friends with people on both sides. They are all in need of the grace of God ... and are all part of the world that God so loved that he sent Jesus Christ to redeem them.

With that said, I want to strongly state that, while I do believe in the truth of biblical prophecy, the end of the world, and the return of Christ, I do not believe it is the role of Christians to advocate for restructured events in Israel or to “prepare their survivalist kits” in order to make war with the antichrist during the coming end of the age (as portrayed in recent Christian movies). The Bible says in Ezekiel that this coming “prince” will be wiser than Daniel and that there will be no secret that can be hidden from him (Ezek. 28:3). How can Christians ever expect to defeat or oppose such a powerful being? We cannot. That is the job of Jesus Christ. Then what is our role as Christians? First, I believe we need to be prepared, to be aware of the coming storm. *Those who*

are prepared will not be overwhelmed and defeated in their Christian faith when the world begins to deteriorate. Second, we need to know scripture so that we may be a witness to the truth, both before and during the coming events of the end of the age. Third, it is important for the faith of Christians to be able to look at the history of mankind and see the amazing fulfillment of prophecy and the providence of God. Most of all, we need to have faith like a rock and unwavering trust in God that he is solidly in control of all events and to take our marching orders from the Holy Spirit and not from those who believe it is their role to defeat the rising satanic kingdom.

So, with that said, I acknowledge that this book is written with a belief that there is a beginning to creation and that there will be an *end* to creation. This text is the story of the history between this beginning of human empires and the end of the age as *confirmed* by biblical prophecy. It is the story of mankind and his rule of earth. It is also the story of God and his providential rule over his creation. I make no apologies when I declare that the purpose of this book is to shed light on the providence of God in the affairs of mankind and to demonstrate that history is fully compatible with the prophetic visions given to the prophets of old. That means that I believe that history is a thread of continuity that declares the handiwork of God and fully sustains the prophetic pictures He revealed in the scriptures of the Bible. I will confess up front that I do not believe that prophetic revelations of history, as revealed in the scriptures, ended with the beginning of the Church. Nor do I believe that the prophetic writings of the biblical book of Revelation all lay in the future. I firmly believe the period between the establishment of the Church and the end-time events is part of the prophetic story. As you begin to read this book, you will realize that my view (or if you will, my paradigm) is different than what most have been taught by mainline Christian churches, and this story of history will take a significantly different view of secular

history from what most were presented while in schools of higher education.

It is important to understand that “paradigms” are not a creation of God nor are they part of the special revelation of scripture. Christian paradigms are the creation of mankind and are used to help make sense of the world around us and to give perspective to the Christian scriptures. When I share my paradigm in this book, I do not claim any “special” revelation when it comes to understanding the biblical prophetic passages (beyond what is available to anyone who is willing to listen to the Holy Spirit). After forty-five years of study, however, I am convinced that the ideas I present in this book are an accurate view of both history and scripture and provide a logical reconciliation of both our secular history and the prophetic scriptures. There are valid arguments and historical evidence for all of the eschatology paradigms held by the Christian Church (Premillennialism, Dispensationalism, Postmillennialism, Amillennialism, Preterism, Futurism, Historicism, etc.). I am not asking the reader to abandon his paradigm while reading this book. Instead, I am offering this as a new look at the old story of both history and prophetic scripture, and I am asking that it be prayerfully considered.

At the end of this book are appendices that provide further study on the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation. Of note in these appendices are the outlines of the two prophetic books. Far too often, those who study and those who teach Daniel and Revelation fail to take the time to fully explore the organization of the books. Consequently, they plunge ahead with a verse-by-verse linear chronological study and fail to take into account that the books are *not* always chronological. It will help in understanding this book if the reader will refer frequently to the outlines of Daniel and Revelation while reading this text. Also included in the appendices is a short justification of the “paradigm” used by the author in both studying and writing this book.

In the interest of brevity and because I do not wish to become involved in the writing of a history textbook, I will not always provide competing views of the historical facts used in this book. I am assuming that the careful reader will have engaged or will engage in study of history from other sources. I am not going to footnote all of the historical issues I present. When it is a unique view or is not well known, I will take the time to justify the facts presented. Otherwise, I present the historical facts as they are commonly held by most historians/students of history—with an interpretation aimed towards understanding the providential hand of God in the events.

I am also going to attempt to handle the sensitive issue of some of the dates revealed in both Daniel and Revelation. I believe that many of the days, weeks, and months mentioned in prophetic scriptures can be uniformly understood (i.e., the day = year concept may be uniformly applied). However, since not all events of history are complete and we still await the consummation of history by the King of Glory, some dates are simply not revealed or understandable (particularly the “times”). I believe we are close to the end of creation and the return of Jesus Christ. Of course, the exact date or time of Christ’s return is known only to God (see Matt. 24:36). However, it is also true that God has given us the ability to understand the prophetic writings and more of the signs of the times in which we live as we approach nearer to the end of the age (see Matt. 24:32–35; II Thess. 2:1–3; Rev. 1:3; Dan. 12:4). It is interesting to note that Christ told his disciples prior to his ascension in Matthew that “When you shall see all these things, know that He is near, even at the door” (speaking of Christ’s return). Yet, in the very first chapter of Acts, He tells them “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7). Clearly God was indicating to the Apostles that Christ’s immediate return was not an issue for

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them to dwell on, and that they needed to get busy being witnesses (Act 1:8). However, from Matthew, the message is clear that the Christian generation that *does see* the signs of Christ's impending return, as they view the events of their current age *and review their past history*, *should understand that they* are nearing the end of the age.

What is extremely important in this study of end times is that we *not* seek to go beyond what God has revealed to this point in history in an attempt to identify dates, places, or persons who have not yet been fully unveiled by God.

Chapter I

A Man Called Daniel



Approximately 2600 years ago, a man by the name of Daniel lived in the kingdoms of Israel, Babylon, and Persia. Almost all we know about Daniel is revealed in the Old Testament book of the Bible called by his name. Daniel identifies in the first few verses of his book that he is a member of the Jewish nation of Israel under the leadership of King Jehoiakim (seventh century BC). We know from history and other prophetic books that the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar (or as in some histories, Nebuchadrezzar) besieged Jerusalem and carried certain members of the Jewish race into captivity in Babylon in the year 605 BC (the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign). Daniel and his three close friends were among those carried into captivity.

It is evident from verse 4 of the book that Daniel and his friends met the criteria of those the king of Babylon wanted to have in his court. "Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored (gifted), and skillful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." (Daniel 1:4). Daniel was immediately renamed after arrival in Babylon as "Belteshazzar." He also quickly reveals that he

did have the character and courage desired of the king and that he was also a servant of God when he declares that he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the delicacies of the Babylonian palace, choosing instead to eat a vegetarian diet and to drink only water. After a test of their diet, approved by the chief officer, it was determined that Daniel and his three friends were healthier with this portion of food than with the prescribed Chaldean diet. The question I have always asked myself is why they felt a need to not partake of the meat and drink of the palace in order not to defile themselves (meat and drink, which had not been prohibited by their Jewish faith)? It appears that it was a matter of conscience. They were not going to eat food that they had no assurance was not from forbidden animals or had been used in the worship of false gods. But even more likely, they also were in grief for the nation of Israel and the peril that it remained in while they were in the king's palace. I suspect they also wanted to maintain a focused and clear mind so they would be an example of God's wisdom and grace to the unbelieving community in which they now lived. Regardless of their reasoning, the result of keeping their desires and passions in check was that Daniel and his three friends were held in the highest esteem by the king and his court and were given a great opportunity to declare the truth and wisdom of the true God.

The other aspect of Daniel's character that is so unique is his courage. He and his three associates all demonstrated unusual courage in the face of great adversity. Just consider the fact that as young teenagers they were taken from their families and hauled off to a foreign land against their will. They were placed in an environment where their lives depended on their cunning and skill while being reeducated in the Chaldean ways and stripped of all vestiges of their Hebrew existence. Over the next seventy years, all four of these daring young men would face the prospect of a sure

A Man Called Daniel

sentence of death if they did not deny their faith. Whether it was the fiery furnace of death or the prospect of the lion's den, all four showed amazing courage in defending their God under circumstances that would wilt the will of most people.

So why did God chose Daniel to reveal some of the greatest prophetic passages ever delivered to mankind? God chose and proved Himself trustworthy to a man who would not only tell the whole truth no matter the consequences, but one who believed God's message was unfailingly true. He also was in such a close personal relationship with God that he was constantly open to the leading and guidance of God's Holy Spirit. In short, Daniel was a unique man who was able to never let his passions and human desires overshadow his duty and allegiance to God.

Over the next seventy to seventy-five years, Daniel would serve three major kings that are mentioned in the biblical book of Daniel (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Cyrus/Darius the Mede) and a series of minor kings in between who are noted by archeologists and historians. The kings who appear to have had the most respect for and contact with Daniel were Nebuchadnezzar, whom he served for over forty years, and Cyrus the Great, also believed to have been known as Darius the Mede, whom he served in the last few years of his life.

Daniel is considered to be one of the most important prophets of the Old Testament. If we consider the impact of his prophecies, I believe he is the most significant prophet of the entire Bible. Why? First of all, Daniel's prophecies provide a road map to identify the time of the coming of Jesus Christ and the time of the coming of the evil empire in the end of the age. Secondly, his overview of historical kingdoms is the most complete in all of scripture and confirms that not only did God know the future but also God's hand was in history to accomplish his will and plan for humanity. The challenge with Daniel is identifying the pictures of kingdoms in comparison to those that have existed in history over the past

2600 years. His descriptions are often difficult to comprehend and the meaning of his choice of types are “debatable,” depending on whether you take a literalist view of scripture or whether you search for a deeper figurative understanding of the types. Often one’s paradigm will determine one’s willingness to compare these prophetic kingdoms to those that have existed in history. If you start from the perspective of Preterism—that most of the events of prophecy in Daniel and much of Revelation were fulfilled by the time of the first coming of Christ—then you may never take the time to fully examine the existence of these prophetic pictures in the history of mankind. This is true also of many Dispensationalists who have determined that few of the events of history in the “Church age” are part of prophetic history.

In examining the prophecies of Daniel, we note that there are three distinct themes. First there are four chapters, written under the time of three different kings, which reveal the *history* of the some of the greatest empires (with one empire still yet to come).

- Chapter 2 (under Nebuchadnezzar)—Image speaks of the history of the five kingdoms from Babylon to Rome to a final kingdom, which is identified as partly iron-willed and partly humanistic.
- Chapter 8 (under Belshazzar)—Vision speaks of the history of the conflict between Persia and Greece and how Greece devolves into four kingdoms and eventually, in the end of years, there will arise a “little horn” who will oppose himself to the Prince of princes (Jesus Christ).
- Chapters 10 and 11 (under Cyrus/Darius the Mede)—Vision given to help Daniel understand the history of his “people” in the latter days (Dan. 10:14). This vision will detail historic events from Persia until the rise of the willful king (referred to as the antichrist) who will oppose the return of Jesus Christ.

Second, there are four chapters that discuss the *difficult circumstances under which Daniel ministered*, and these passages serve as a prophetic picture of what the people of God's Church can anticipate if they are also faithful to Christ (chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6).

Finally, there are four chapters, given under three different kings, which provide a road map in understanding *events surrounding the first coming of Jesus Christ and in understanding events of the coming evil age at Christ's return*.

- Chapter 4 (under Nebuchadnezzar)—Vision of the proud arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon and God's punishment of the king. This vision includes references to and serves as a picture of the *future Babylon* that will be the seat of the coming antichrist (which God will also destroy).
- Chapter 7 (under Belshazzar)—Vision of the three beasts (kingdoms) that will exist on the earth in the end of the age which will be plucked up to make way for the fourth beast (vicious kingdom) of the coming antichrist.
- Chapter 9 (under Cyrus/Darius the Mede)—Vision of the seventy weeks of Daniel, given to help Daniel understand the times leading to the coming of the Messiah and the times until the coming of the antichrist (prince).
- The final chapter of Daniel is a still-to-be-revealed passage that talks to the times and circumstances of the period when Satan will rule the planet earth and when the victorious King of Kings will make an end of all things (of all of the visions of Daniel, this remains the most veiled).

In our study of Daniel, we will focus on the four-chapter section that discusses the greatest empires in history (chapters 2, 8, 10, and 11) and on the three-chapter section that serves

as a road map to the first coming of Christ and to the coming of the evil age at the time of Christ's second return (chapters 4, 7, and 9). Later, in the final chapter of this book, we will very briefly touch on the difficult twelfth chapter of Daniel.

I leave this section of the book with the words of a song I learned as a young boy nearly sixty years ago. As we face the collapse of Christian culture worldwide, the prospect of a developing attack on the rights and freedoms of all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, and a time of trouble for this planet that has never been seen in all of history, these words provide encouragement to those of us who may be faint of heart.

Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand-alone, Dare to have a purpose firm, Dare to make it known.

~ Phillip Bliss

Chapter II

Prophetic Empires and Kingdoms until the Time of Christ



In a study of the hand of God in the history of mankind, it is first and foremost important to determine what criteria God uses in writing His history. In other words, what kingdoms and empires of the world are significant in telling the history of the plan of God for His creation? Apparent in this statement is the assumption that history does not just “happen.” History, in the Church’s opinion and in the view of scriptures, is a story of human struggle and governance that pits the Good of God against the evil plans of God’s primary antagonist, Lucifer. Lucifer, from the beginning of mankind, has sought to usurp God’s plan and to create a world in which he is god ... as the supreme ruler. God on the other hand, is in the business of creating a people in His image, suffering the rebellion of that people, redeeming that people, and leading them through history in preparation for a planned eternity in His presence.

In God’s providential leadership of history, some empires and kingdoms have been much more significant and influential in accomplishing His plan. As I have studied history and theology, there seems to be two criteria that are essential ingredients in God’s history:

- First, these significant empires have played a definitive role in God's plan for the coming of His Messiah (Jesus Christ), in His plan for the spreading of the gospel, and in His plan for the second coming of Jesus Christ, making an end of all things and bring in the eternal kingdom.
- Second, these empires have also played a significant role in opposing the rule of Christ in His earthly creation and have been the tool of Lucifer in his evil plan to lead humanity in a war of opposition to God.

Many other kingdoms and empires in history have played both a good and evil role in the history of mankind. However, in my opinion, only *seven* empires meet both of the criteria above for inclusion in God's history.

We find the identification (the key if you will) of these seven empires clearly mentioned in the book of Revelation. The prophet John says he saw a beast that had seven heads who was given power to make war with God's chosen people (saints), to overcome them, and to have power over all tongues and nations (Rev. 13). This *same* beast is described in chapter 17 of Revelation (when John was writing in the first century AD), as having been in the *past* (was), has diminished power *now* (is not and yet is), and will ascend in the future out of the "bottomless pit" and go into doom. As we will see later on when examining Revelation, this beast represents satanically controlled world empires (the beast is a picture of the Satanic Kingdom). The seven heads are described as seven empires or kings, *five have already ceased to exist, one presently is (in the first century AD), and a seventh must come* for a short time in the future. *The beast himself is described as the eighth* and final evil satanic empire that will exist prior to God making an end of all things. Since John was writing in the midst of the Roman Empire, we know with certainty that the sixth empire in this beastly collection of empires is

Rome. To find some of the other empires, we will turn to our study of Daniel. In chapter 2 of his prophecy, we see revealed a five-fold image of prophetic earthly empires beginning with Babylon. The image is described as having a gold head, breast of silver, belly and loins of brass, two legs of iron, and feet that are mixed of clay and iron. Daniel, through the power of the Holy Spirit, reveals that the head of gold is Babylon, the breast of silver is the next kingdom after Babylon, the brass loins represents a kingdom that will conquer the entire world, the two legs of iron represent a fourth empire that will rule the world with a will of iron. The final kingdom, feet of clay and iron, is identified as an empire that is partly strong but also partly fragile, one that will mix its authority and governance with the common people. Since we know from the Apostle John that the sixth empire was Rome, we can work backwards and forwards to determine what the other kingdoms may be. In Daniel's image, Rome must be the two legs of iron, representing both the western empire and the eastern Byzantine Empire. Rome ruled the world with a brutal fist of iron. The kingdom before Rome we know from history was Greece—specifically Alexander the Great who conquered nearly the entire civilized world; then the empire continued for centuries in four segments under his principle subordinates. The kingdom before Greece and between Babylon and Greece was the great Persian Empire. So, we can conclude that the third kingdom is Babylon, the fourth kingdom is Persia, the fifth kingdom is Greece, the sixth kingdom is Rome (which existed as John wrote), and the seventh kingdom is yet to be revealed (and will be discussed much later in this story). Do all of these kingdoms meet the criteria of revealing the coming of Christ (first and second) and also show themselves to be tools for Satan's attempt to thwart the rule of God? I think the answer is a resounding yes, and that is what we will study in the pages to come. So, what are empires one and two? To find the answer we simply need to be a student

of Old Testament history. The two empires that played the *greatest* role in the history of God and man, take up a great deal of the story of the Old Testament and meet both criteria for inclusion in God's history are: the first, Egypt, and the second, Assyria (this will be defended in the pages to come). With that background, let's begin an examination of the history of these empires to see history from both God's perspective and from the perspective of the prophets.

Egypt. The part of Egyptian antiquity that is referred to as the empire is the eighteenth dynasty and the early nineteenth dynasty. This is during a period called the New Kingdom. By the middle of the eighteenth dynasty, the Egyptian rule extended to most of the civilized world, nearly to Libya in the west, including nearly all of Sudan in the south and reaching to the Euphrates River to the north (dominating the Hittite nation and a good deal of the fertile crescent). It truly was an empire that dominated the civilized world from the sixteenth to the thirteenth centuries BC. The two most notable Pharaohs to expand the empire were Thutmose I and Thutmose III. Biblical history reveals that Israel was present in Egypt during the eighteenth Dynasty, and it is probable that the nation of Israel was placed into slavery by the Egyptians, (perhaps as a result of the invasion of Egypt by the Semite Hyksos people) under this Dynasty. During the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries BC (just prior to the beginning of the eighteenth Dynasty), secular history tells us that the Hyksos people controlled the delta and northern part of Egypt, an area the scriptures tell us was also occupied by the Hebrew people. It was during the reign of Ahmose I at the beginning of the eighteenth Dynasty (around the year 1525 BC) that the Hyksos were defeated by the Egyptians and reportedly driven out of Egypt. Several historians have equated the Hyksos people with the Hebrew people. However, the historical evidence shows the Hyksos included some Semitic

tribes that were non-Hebrew. It is also of note that the cities of Pithom and Raamses that the Jews were forced to build were built over the ruins of Hyksos capital cities (meaning Israel was there after the departure of the Hyksos). If the Jews were present and associated with the Hyksos and did *not* exit Egypt with the Hyksos leadership, it would be a reason for the enslavement of the Semitic Hebrews by the Egyptians—done to prevent any domination of their country in the future.

So how can we confirm exactly when Israel was in Egypt? That task becomes very difficult given the disparity in the times revealed in the scriptures. First Kings 6:1 says that it was the 480th year since they had come out of Egypt in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. History records that Solomon's rule began in the year 970 BC. Therefore, 966 BC would have been his fourth year of rule. If we add 480 years to that figure, we get 1446 BC. However, one ancient text translates the period in first Kings 6:1 as 440 years! Other problems arise with dates when we examine Acts 13. It indicates that the period of Judges was about 450 years. If that is accurate, and we add Saul and David's reign of 72 years and the 40 years of wilderness time, we have over 550 years from Solomon to the Exodus. If we attempt to reconcile the period revealed by Japheth in Judges 11:26 that 300 years had expired from the conquering of the cities until his judgeship, then add the 40 years in the wilderness – 65 years of follow-on judges – Eli and Samuel's leadership (both were old men when they died...perhaps a 100 years judgeship combined) – Saul's and David's 72 years, we arrive at a date between Solomon and the Exodus that is well into the high 500s. Historians have also interpreted other scriptural texts to imply that Israel was in Egypt during the reign of Ramesses the Great as late as the 1200s BC. It is clear that Scriptural date references will simply not let us pin down the exact year of the Exodus. Consequently, I am going to attempt to defend

the periods of time in Egypt based upon the known history of Egypt and the known time Israel spent in Egypt.

Israel's exit from Egypt was an extremely disruptive affair. It would have had a significant impact on the Pharaoh lineage and on the nation as a whole. The only period I see as compatible in Egyptian history is the end of the 18th Dynasty under Amenhotep III and his son Akhenaten. If Israel left Egypt during Amenhotep's rule, they would have exited under one of the last powerful Pharaohs in the 18th Dynasty. He ruled Egypt from approximately 1391 until 1353 BC. He is also noted for the fact that his rightful first-born son to the throne, Prince Thutmose, died at a very young age of unknown causes. His next born son, Akhenaten, ascended to the throne of Egypt and was responsible for one of the most disruptive periods of history in Egypt, during which he tried to establish monotheism, that is, the worship of one true god. If Akhenaten were knowledgeable of the powerful events demonstrated by Jehovah God's miraculous delivery of Israel from Egypt and the possible death of his older brother Prince Thutmose at the Passover, it may have been the impetuous for his rejection of the Egyptian gods and acceptance of monotheism. Interestingly enough, if Israel left Egypt between 1391 and 1380 BC, then it would mean that Moses was born eighty years earlier during the rule of Thutmose III, the most powerful ruler during the "empire period" of Egypt. Moses would have been nearly forty years old at the death of Pharaoh Thutmose III. If Moses was raised under the tutelage of the great Thutmose III (called the Napoleon of Egypt), it is not surprising that he developed the strength of character and leadership skills that he exhibited when he was called upon by God to do the nearly impossible task of leading the nation of Israel. Finally, if we choose the date 1384 BC (between 1391 and 1380), that would place the Exodus 418 years before Solomon's fourth year of rule. It is conceivable

that a scribe exchanged four hundred and eightieth for four hundred eighteenth.

If we use this timeline, *and* we accept the scriptural evidence that Israel spent 430 years in the land of Egypt, that would place their entry into Egypt in 1814 BC under the rule of Amenemhat III during the twelfth Dynasty. Interestingly enough, one of the surviving archeological finds of Amenemhat III is the Sehetepibre Stela, praising him in verse and saying: “The treasures which he gives are food for those who are in his following; He feeds those who tread his path. The King is food, His mouth is increase. He is the one creating that which is.” This description of Amenemhat III is historically compatible with the biblical account of the time in which Israel entered Egypt. While this timeline is just one of many theories of when Israel was in Egypt, and we may never know the exact dates of their sojourn, scripture does affirm the reality of their time in Egypt.

Can we Biblically confirm that the period spent by Israel in Egypt was 430 years? Exodus 6:16 tells us that Levi (son of Jacob and brother of Joseph, went with his father into Egypt) was the progenitor of Kohath who was the progenitor of Amram who was the progenitor of Aaron and Moses. Understand that not all the generations are listed for the time they were in Egypt (there were certainly more than two generations between Levi and Moses). Instead, they listed the entire lives of Levi, Kohath, and Amram, but not the multitude of generations between. Exodus tells us that the years of the life of Levi were 137, Kohath 133, and the years of the life of Amram were 137. We also know that Moses was eighty years old when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. If we add Moses age (80) to Amram’s (137), Kohath’s (133) and to Levi’s (137) we get 487 years. However, we also know that Joseph, the younger brother of Levi, was forty-four years old when his father and Levi entered Egypt. If we fairly assume that Levi, as an older brother, was approximately fifty-seven

years old when he entered Egypt and subtract that from the 487 total years, we get 430 years that the children of Israel were in Egypt! Since it is reasonable to assume that Israel was only enslaved for a portion of the time in Egypt and that it may have very likely occurred after the expulsion of the Hyksos people from Egypt, it is reasonable to assume that they lived as free people in Egypt from 1814 BC until around 1525 BC (289 years) and were enslaved/oppressed for approximately 141 years from 1525 until 1384 BC.

So why is Egypt significant enough to be mentioned as one of the seven empires that met the criteria for God's history of kingdoms? First, they were the instrument God used to shape Israel from a large family group into a large nation. Additionally, Israel's enslavement for nearly one and one-half centuries and God's miraculous demonstration of power and love for them in the exodus from Egypt, prepared the hearts of the people for the acceptance of God's leadership and scriptural law as the governance of the nation. God was preparing Israel to understand their sin and their need for a redeemer/Messiah. But at the same time, Egypt was used as a powerful tool by the forces of evil to not only enslave Israel, but to also blind millions of Egyptians and the many countries under Egyptian domination with a false concept of God, eternity, and the meaning and purpose of life. When exposed to the awesome one true God Jehovah, the response of Egypt was to harden their hearts to truth and to attempt to invent their own monotheistic form of religion with a new sun-disc god. In essence, Egypt became the battleground between Satan and God. God demonstrated his providential care by protecting a people who would be the defenders of the true message of God and the lineage from which would be born the redeemer of all mankind. God's message to Satan: "Check." Satan on the other hand must have felt some degree of victory for his protection of the dark/evil system that ruled over the nation of Egypt and by extension, its empire.

Assyria. After the exodus, Israel lived in the land of Palestine (after crossing Jordan) for nearly 600 years before they faced a serious threat from the Neo-Assyrian Empire. While they had been frequently at war with neighboring states, the ascent of the revived Neo-Assyrian Empire posed the first real threat of the utter destruction of the nation. To understand the impact of Assyria, we first must examine the condition of Israel. By this time in history, the nation was a divided kingdom. Shortly before 900 BC, the northern ten tribes of Israel, under the leadership of Jeroboam, rebelled against the leadership in Jerusalem (which became known as the kingdom of Judah). Regardless of how you view Jeroboam's intent, the ultimate result of his leadership of the northern ten tribes was to take their heart away from the true worship of the true God. Jeroboam practiced idol worship, created his own priesthood, and had the tribes of the north worship at Bethel instead of at Jerusalem. God, in I Kings 14, refers to him as a "prince" who had created false gods and had "repudiated/cast God behind his back." The word "prince" in this passage is only used to refer to *willful evil princes* who exalt themselves against God (i.e., Satan referred to as the prince of Tyrus in Ezekiel 28, The antichrist prince of Daniel 9 and 11, and Job when he said he would exalt himself to God as a prince to justify himself in Job 31:37). Clearly the ten tribes of northern Israel and its leadership were in full-scale rebellion against Jehovah God.

Despite their rebellion, all was not evil in the kingdom of Israel. As you read the book of I Kings in the scriptures, it is evident that there were many in the northern kingdom that still faithfully served the Lord God. During the century after the division of Israel, Elijah and Elisha both prophesied from the northern kingdom. However, the evil leadership of the rulers of the northern ten tribes muted their spiritual effect on Israel. It was during this time that the wicked King Ahab of Israel, the king who so opposed Elijah, made an alliance

with the kingdom of Assyria against neighboring states. Additionally, less than a century later, the prophet Jonah ministered from Israel. Interestingly enough, Jonah was called by God to go to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh during a period in which Assyria was in political turmoil. Jonah so despised this northern nation that he resisted the Lord. Ultimately, true spiritual revival broke out in the city of Nineveh, and many were converted to the God Jehovah. Amazingly, *just a generation later*, things had drastically changed! Assyria had become the dominant power in all of Asia and was now on the prowl against any and all surrounding nations. Any spiritual revival that had taken place a generation earlier in Assyria appeared to have been set aside, and the worship of false gods prevailed. Under the leadership of Tiglath-pileser III, the Assyrians forced the submission of Israel and carried some into captivity. Under the succeeding kings Shalmaneser V and Sargon II, Israel and Samaria were besieged for three years and eventually were totally destroyed (722 BC). As was the practice of the Assyrians, they carried many of the Jews into captivity to cities of other countries they had conquered and brought the people from those lands to Samaria/Israel in return. Thus began the mixed race we observe 750 years later during the time of Christ. Today the northern kingdom of Israel is frequently referred to as the lost ten tribes.

Judah was not immune from the onslaught of the Assyrian Empire. Just twenty years after the northern kingdom was completely destroyed, a new king in Assyria, Sennacherib, carried the fight to the Kingdom of Judah. By this time, the king in Judah was a man by the name of Hezekiah. Second Kings 18 records that he trusted in the Lord God of Israel, such that before him and after him there was none who exhibited such faith. Scripture records that he “walked closely with the Lord and departed not from following Him.” History records that in 701 BC, Sennacherib took many of the northern cities of Judah and surrounded and besieged the city of Jerusalem.

He even claimed the authority of the Lord God as justification for coming against Judah and claimed Hezekiah had transgressed against God. Clearly his association with the Jewish faith must have come from those he carried into captivity and from the influence of those in Nineveh who had been touched by Jonah's ministry a generation earlier. All Jerusalem and Judah were in a situation that they could clearly not escape by human power. So, what happened? In the history texts, all that is recorded is that Sennacherib failed to take Jerusalem. However, in the Old Testament, we read the amazing story of God's miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem and Judah. With no hope of defeating the Assyrians, all Hezekiah and the nation of Judah could do was pray. God answered in a mighty way, sending his angels through the camp of the Assyrians at night and killing over 185,000 of the army. Sennacherib fled home to Assyria in shame and despite future victories against Babylon, he was eventually assassinated while worshipping in the house of his false God in Assyria.

Just as with Egypt, we see that Assyria became a tool in the hand of the Lord for the refinement of Israel and for the preservation of a portion of the nation. God made it perfectly clear to the surviving members of Israel (those in Judah) that there was no compromise for worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Even though there were many in the northern kingdom who had true faith in Jehovah, they had corrupted the worship of God, disobeyed His design for life, disregarded and abandoned God's word, and turned faith and their relationship with God into something of their own design. Those who remained in Judah were a protected, small portion of a once great nation, saved in order to provide the people and spiritual heritage from which the Messiah would be born. Assyria also demonstrates, that despite greatness of power, despite the fact God used them to punish the wickedness of Israel, God's power, authority, and will, cannot be defeated by the evil satanic forces of the earthly kingdom. Assyria,

like Egypt, had been offered the knowledge of the true God, both by assimilation of believing Jews and by the word of the prophets (Jonah). They rejected that truth. God's kingdom and his providential will for mankind prevailed. God's message once more to Satan is "Check." However, what we also see is that Satan is never deterred. He was not deterred by the failure of Egypt, and he was not deterred by the defeat of Assyria. Within a very short period, a new antagonist will arise in the north to oppose God's people.

Babylon. We return now to the nations that are specifically mentioned in the prophecies of Daniel chapter 2. In the 100 years following Sennacherib, the Assyrian Empire slowly declined. By the end of the seventh century (608 BC), a new power was rising to replace Assyria: the Babylonians. In many respects they are not new. They had ruled Mesopotamia over a thousand years earlier under the leadership of Hammurabi. Now a new and powerful king named Nebopolassar was going to bring the Babylon Empire back to a position of power and glory. In 608 BC, Babylon crushed the Assyrians and ended their empire. By 605 BC, the Assyrian Empire ceased to exist and Nebuchadnezzar (Nebopolassar's son) had ascended to the throne in Babylon. Over the next forty-seven years, Nebuchadnezzar would defeat the Egyptians (605), conquer Judah (605, 597 and 586), destroy the city of Jerusalem (586) and carry the Jewish people into captivity in the kingdom of Babylon (605–586). In Daniel chapter 2, Babylon is called the "head of gold" in the image revealed in that passage. The other kingdoms that were to follow Babylon were also prophesied to be inferior to Babylon. Many have taken this to imply that Babylon had a greater rule than those who followed: Persia, Greece, or Rome. That is not historically correct. However, if we consider the prophecy of Daniel 2 and understand that the message to King Nebuchadnezzar from Daniel was that he was "king of kings," given great

power and glory by God, we can grasp that the superiority of Babylon was not in the extent of its rule but in the absolute authority and power of its king. The Babylonian king was an absolute monarch, and all power and leadership flowed directly from his spoken word. On the other hand, the Persians who would follow Babylon, had over twenty-one provinces in their kingdom led by governors who were subordinate to the king. Greece was divided into city-states, and eventually the kingdom was parted into four distinct districts/kingdoms. The Romans lived by a rule of law and were governed by a senate. Even after the rise of the emperors, the senate and consuls/proconsuls in outlying provinces retained great power and authority. So Babylon was, in the sense of the power of the king, greater than the kingdoms to follow.

What makes Babylon really fascinating is that it serves as a type for the final kingdom that will exist on the earth (just prior to the satanic worldwide rule of the eighth and final kingdom). This seventh kingdom (new Babylon), spoken of in the book of Revelation, will give rise to the beast/antichrist (the final ruler on earth who will oppose Christ's Kingdom and the return of Jesus Christ). Babylon of old, is remembered for its immense wealth and the splendor of the capital city. It is believed to have been the most beautiful city to have ever existed in antiquity. All of the delicacies of antiquity were available in the streets of Babylon, and her commerce exceeded that of all previous kingdoms. Its walls were the thickest of any defensive structure ever built: over 85 feet across and had a circumference of thirteen miles, encompassing a population of nearly a half of a million people. It was considered impenetrable. The palaces and "hanging gardens" were among the ancient wonders of the world. Babylon was truly the envy of the entire civilized world. Babylon also served as a melting pot for cultures and ideas and people groups. Daniel tells us that one of the reasons he and his friends were taken to the king's palace was to bring men from

foreign nations with learning, wisdom, and understanding into the Babylonian kingdom. We also know from both the Bible and also from history that Babylon settled captured people into its provinces in an effort to create a unified and cohesive population. It was, in a sense, a new nation created from the amalgamation of many different nations and peoples. If we want to understand the seventh kingdom mentioned by the Apostle John in Revelation, we can find a type of this future kingdom in the Babylon of antiquity, the kingdom that will eventually become the source and seat of a rising world ruler who opposes himself to God (becoming the eighth and final kingdom on earth).

Babylon came to a sudden end in about 538–536 BC, about twenty years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Its decline was both rapid and stunning. The city is said from historians and from the biblical account to have been taken with little resistance. An impenetrable city with eighty-five-foot thick walls was taken by Persian and Mede forces that diverted the river that ran under the city walls and infiltrated Babylon nearly unopposed. What happened next is also amazing. The Persian ruler, Cyrus the Great, by decree, permitted the Jewish captives who desired to return to their land to go free. A once-great Hebrew nation, reduced to a small remnant, marched back across the desert to Jerusalem to begin the task of rebuilding their temple and the walls of the once-great city of Jerusalem. However, it was a remnant who had their faith purified by fire and who were willing to follow the godly leadership of Ezra the priest, submitting to the law of the Old Testament scriptures and to the authority of Jehovah God.

Babylon, as with Assyria and Egypt, was a tool in the hand of the Lord God, used to purify the hearts of a nation that had rejected His authority. The remnant that returned under Ezra, and those that would return later in the Persian Empire, laid the foundation of a Jewish nation that would

serve as the portal for the first coming of Jesus Christ. But just as Babylon brutalized Israel and hauled off most of its people, treasures, and wealth, God would also punish them for their failure to be shaped by the truth made available to them by the presence of the Jewish nation in their midst. We know from the biblical account that Nebuchadnezzar was personally influenced and humbled by the truth of God (Dan. 4), but there is little evidence that this impacted the population as a whole. In fact, the willingness of Babylonian officials to consent to the persecution and attempted execution of Daniel shortly after the arrival of the Persians shows that God's truth had little influence on Babylonian habits. Just as Babylon was used of God to chasten His own people for good, it was used by the forces of evil to kill and persecute God's people and to attempt to annihilate them by total assimilation into the Babylonian race. Once again, we see the providence and power of God in His victory over evil and His destruction of a nation that opposed itself to Jehovah God. The message once again to Satan is "Check."

Persia. The Persian Empire is the fourth empire in the kingdoms mentioned by the Apostle John and the second mentioned by Daniel in the image described in chapter 2 of his book. In Daniel, Persia is represented by a breast and two arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Interesting that it has two arms. The Persian Empire is forged from a merger of the older Median Empire with the Persians of Mesopotamia. In fact, the first ruler of the Persian Empire is Cyrus the Great, the grandson of the last truly powerful Median king. Many historians believe that the Darius mentioned in the sixth, ninth, and eleventh chapters of Daniel is, in fact, also Cyrus—and that Daniel used the Median "given name," one that the scholars of Babylon would have easily known (Daniel also uses his Persian title, Cyrus, in chapter 10). Other historians have claimed that the Darius in Daniel was the fourth ruler

of Persia (Darius I—the Great), a man who came to power eight years after the rule of Cyrus. However, this would have made Daniel over 100 years old at the time of the beginning of the rule of Darius I. It is more probable that the Darius mentioned in Daniel, called the son of the king of the Medes in chapter 9, is also Cyrus the Great (a Median by birth and the grandson of the last great Median king). This also would have made Daniel in his mid-eighties at the time Cyrus conquered Babylon—and at the time of his confinement to the Lion's Den (a much more probable scenario).

The Persian Empire would hold rule over most of the civilized world from North Africa in the south to Asia Minor in the west and as far as India in Asia. They would rule for nearly two hundred years before being defeated by the Greeks. The Persians, like the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, would have a significant impact on the Jewish race and nation. First, it was Cyrus, presumably influenced by seeing his name in biblical prophecy in the book of Isaiah (44:28), who would free the Jewish people to return to Israel and begin reconstruction of the destroyed temple. This prophecy, that specifically named Cyrus as the one who would free the Jewish people to rebuild the temple and resettle Jerusalem, was written nearly 200 years before the beginning of Cyrus' rule. Instead of enslaving or destroying Israel, Persia was used by God to restore a remnant of believing Jews to Jerusalem and to reestablish the worship of Jehovah in the temple. Not only were they permitted to return, but they were also provided with the provisions and materials to accomplish this task (first during Cyrus' rule and then again during Artaxerxes' I rule nearly 100 years later). Even more profound is how God uses the Persian King Xerxes to save the Jewish people from destruction. We read this story in the book of Esther. In a beautiful story of providence, God brings Esther to the king's palace as his new queen. After attempts by a powerful evil man in the Persian Empire to destroy the remaining Jews residing

under Persian rule, God uses Queen Esther to provide a way for the Jewish people to both defend themselves and protect themselves against those bent on their destruction. This victory, by the Jewish people over their enemies, is celebrated to this day in the festival of Purim. Finally, we believe from both historians and from the gospels that the “wise men” who visited Christ as a young child were from the eastern regions near Persia. If this is accurate, it is fair to conclude that the presence of the Jewish exiles in Persia left a lasting influence on Persian thought and religion (as seen by some similarities to Judaism/Christianity found in the writings of Zoroaster during the period around 400 BC). God used seeds of truth, planted in the Persian Empire hundreds of years earlier, to have foreign rulers rise up and call His son Jesus blessed.

The above-mentioned events truly show the providence of God. However, the most profound and significant events in Persian history are the events that surround Nehemiah the scribe (mentioned in the book of Nehemiah) and the prophecies given to Daniel in chapter 9 of his book. Writing near the end of his life and during the first year of the rule of Darius the son of the Medes (Cyrus), God explained to Daniel that seventy weeks were determined upon the people of Israel. These weeks are nearly unanimously believed by Bible scholars to represent seventy weeks of seven years each or 490 years of history upon the people of God. Daniel reveals that the weeks apply to “his people and the holy city.” Since we know that the Church is called the Israel of God in the New Testament in several passages, and that Christians are the spiritual sons of Abraham, it is fair to conclude that this prophecy does *not* just refer to Jews and the physical nation of Israel, but to all of the body of Christ (Old and New Testament saints). If we approach it from that perspective, the times and events given in the ninth chapter of Daniel make perfect sense in understanding both the *first* and *second* comings of Christ. Daniel is told that the seventy weeks will accomplish six things: finish

the transgression (sin), make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity (redemption), bring in everlasting righteousness, complete the prophetic vision and prophecy, and anoint the most Holy (depicted in Rev. 21 and 22). Clearly the first three refer to the work of Jesus Christ at his first coming while the second three seem to refer to the second coming of Christ. Daniel tells us six things about this vision: From a command given to (1) restore Jerusalem and (2) rebuild Jerusalem; to the coming of (3) the Messiah and (4) prince; will be (5) seven weeks (7 x 7 or forty-nine years) and (6) sixty-two weeks (62 x 7 or 434 years). He then goes on to *specifically tell us that after the sixty-two weeks event, the Messiah will be cut off (crucified)*. Just as the previous six events that encompass the vision are divided between the first and second coming, I believe these six elements of the vision are also divided between the first and second coming. I am taking a highly controversial position by separating the two commands given in Daniel into two separate events, separating the two time frames into two separate events, and then making a distinction between the Messiah and the prince referred to in this prophecy. I will defend the distinction between the separation of the Messiah and prince into two distinct persons later in the book when I deal with the second half of this prophecy. However, given that the *purpose* of the prophecy revealed in Daniel 9:24 clearly refers to two separate events (the first and second comings), I believe I stand on firm ground in evaluating the prophecy in this way. As we proceed, we will see that trying to make the prophecy refer to only the first coming is not feasible, given the evidence for Christ's birth known from the Gospels.

In evaluating the "command" portion of the prophecy, we know that a command was given by Cyrus the Persian to let Ezra rebuild the temple, but we also know this was not completed during Ezra's lifetime. Additionally, Cyrus' command did not restore Jerusalem as a capital of Israel, and it did not

rebuild the city. It only dealt with the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra 1:1–4). We also know from the book of Nehemiah that a command was given by the Persian King Artaxerxes I to allow Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city (streets and gates), which were in ruin—even giving him the resources to do this task. I believe this is the command to rebuild that Daniel is talking about. What we *do not* have is a command to restore Jerusalem (implying restoring it as the capital of a nation as it had been before the captivity). The Persian kings were allowing freedom of worship and tolerance to captured peoples but not *independence* from their rule. Nehemiah tells us that the command was given to rebuild in the month of March in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I's rule. History reveals the following about Artaxerxes' rule:

- His father Xerxes was assassinated in 465 BC by Antabanus of his royal guard.
- Antabanus also killed Xerxes' eldest son Darius (blaming the assassination of Xerxes on Darius).
- Antabanus is believed to have ruled for less than one year before Artaxerxes discovered the truth about his father's and brother's deaths and killed Antabanus. Artaxerxes took the throne of Persia in mid-464 BC.
- Since the first year of a king's rule in Persia was considered a "year of ascension" and not a year of historic numbered rule, the first calendar year of Artaxerxes I's rule would have commenced a year later in mid-463 BC.
- That means March of his twentieth year would have been March 443 BC.

We now must advance 434 years if the sixty-two weeks applies to the coming of the Messiah (as Daniel indicates in chapter 9 of his book). But what kind of years were they: Jewish religious calendar or the solar calendar? We are told by many biblical scholars that these years must be Jewish

religious calendar years of only 354 days. It may be true that it is from the religious calendar, but what they then “omit” is the extra month Veadar which was *added back in* every three years to keep the religious calendar in sync with the solar calendar. So, 434 Jewish religious calendar years (with Veadar added in every three years) would equate to *exactly* 434 solar calendars years. If we subtract 434 from 443, we come to March of 9 BC. Is that when Christ was born (or conceived)? If we consider the events surrounding his birth (revealed in the Gospels) there is no other logical conclusion than the period from 9 to 8 BC: (1) Caesar Augustus had to give a command for taxation. History records they were only given every fourteen years. The earliest taxation for which any archeological physical evidence can be found is 6 AD (and many after that date). Fourteen years before 6 AD would be 9 BC (no zero year); (2) Herod had to be physically well and on the throne in Jerusalem. We know he died in March of 4 BC after a protracted illness. If he were to interact with the events of the gospels, Christ’s birth had to be 5 BC or earlier; (3) We know that the wise men came to Herod two years after seeing the star of Christ’s birth and that Christ was a young *child* upon their arrival and that they met with Herod. That would place the birth at least two years before Herod’s meeting with the wise men or around the winter of 7 BC; (4) We also know Cyrenius (called governor) had to have been an active ruler in Syria when Christ was born. History tells us he was only governor in Syria after 6 AD! However, history also tells us he was the proconsul in Syria at the head of four campaigning legions in 10 to 8 BC; (5) To accommodate all of these clues, we are driven back to a time of 10 to 8 BC; (6) Since as Christians we believe that life begins at conception, and the Church believes historically that the birth was in the winter months, a March 9 BC conception makes sense for a December 9 BC/January 8 BC birth. We are left with only one conclusion; Christ must have been born around 9–8

BC. Where the confusion comes is that the New Testament reveals that Jesus was about thirty years old when he started his ministry and ministered for a period that lasted for nearly three years. We know, fairly certain from history, that Christ's ministry and death occurred somewhere between the dates 27 AD to 34 AD. Most biblical scholars accept a death in 29 AD/30 AD (meaning his ministry started in about 27 AD). A birth in December 9 BC/January 8 BC, with no-zero year would have made him about thirty-five years old at the start of his ministry. I see this as no conflict since the New Testament says he was *about* thirty years old—implying he was at least thirty years old, a strict requirement for Christ to claim the title of rabbi in first century Israel. Being thirty-five years old, he would have been at least thirty and less than the “not yet fifty years” mentioned by the lawyers when debating him. (If we attempt to hold fast to a thirty-year-old Jesus at the start of his ministry in 27 AD, that would require a birth in December 5 BC/January 4 BC, two months before Herod's death. That is simply *not feasible* given the age of Christ at the coming of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, a period of residence in Egypt, the Syrian rule of Cyrenius and the date of the taxation). So, if the command to rebuild, the coming of the Messiah and the sixty-two weeks refers to Christ, what does the seven weeks, restoration of Jerusalem, and the prince refer to? I will hold that question for answering later in this book. If this analysis of Christ's birth is accurate, then we can conclude that God used the Persian Empire and its rulers to forecast the coming of Jesus Christ.

God's Chessboard

(Jan Dec Time)	9 BC	6 BC	4 BC	6AD
←				
Luke says Quirinius was Gov. in Syria.	Proconsul in Syria 10-8 BC & mil cmdr	Not in Syria	Not in Syria	Gov in Syria 6 AD +
Luke says there was a taxation & census	9 BC is 14 yrs prior to historic evidence of 1st recorded census	Too close to 6 AD	Too close to 6 AD	1st <i>known</i> census by Caesar -every 14 yrs after
Matthew talks of the visit of the Wise men to Herod and <i>child...star seen two years earlier</i>	March 7 to 9 BC only possible dates before Herod's death	Early 6 BC possibility if Magi visited Christ in 5 BC	Herod dead by March of this year	Herod dead
Matt talks of trip to Egypt— <i>stay</i> in Egypt until Herod's death (a massive journey in antiquity)	6-9 BC only possible dates after Magi visit	Only Possible if Magi visited at birth		Herod dead
Return of Child/family to Nazareth <i>after</i> death of Herod	9 BC birth & Magi visit in Dec 7 BC	Fleeing to Egypt after Magi visit	Herod dies & after 2 yrs in Egypt—return	Herod dead[end tab]e]

Just as we have seen with all other empires, God used Persia for His good and His providential preparation of the coming of Jesus Christ. However, just as with the other empires, we also observe the forces of evil at work trying to destroy the Jewish race and to thwart God's plan for His creation. God once again places Satan in "Check" with the release of His people, the providential protection of His people when threatened with extinction, and the accuracy of the prophecies that foretell the coming of Jesus Christ.

Greece. The transition from Persia to the next empire in God's history is a fascinating story that is also well documented in several of the prophetic visions of Daniel. In chapter 2 we see a kingdom identified as brass hips and loins and are told it will replace the Persian kingdom of the silver breast and arms. We are also told it will rule over all the earth. A second vision is given under King Belshazzar in chapter 8 of Daniel in which he sees the conflict between the Persian Empire and the Greek Empire. In chapter 8, Daniel sees a ram with two distinct horns that stood before the river Ulai

in the province of Elam (Persia). The two horns represent the most significant kings of Persia. As he watched, a goat came from the west with one notable horn and stamped the ram to the ground, defeating the ram. When the goat became strong, the goat's horn was broken, and out of it came four other horns. (An additional part of this prophecy in chapter 8 discusses a little horn that will arise out of one of the four horns. We will save discussion of this portion of the prophecy for later in the book). A third prophecy, in the first few verses of Daniel chapter 11, also refers to these two empires: Persia and Greece. Daniel says that during the first year of Darius the Mede (believed to be Cyrus), he is told there will be three other kings of Persia that will stand up and then a fourth that will be richer than them all. The text implies that the third and fourth kings after Cyrus will make war with Greece. After this, Daniel tells us a mighty king will stand up who will rule with great dominion, and his kingdom will be broken and divided to the four winds (indicating that the division of his kingdom will come after his death and the four new kingdoms will be ruled by others). So how do these prophecies compare with the history of the conflict between Persia and Greece (remember, Daniel wrote these visions two hundred years before the events would occur)?

Trouble between the Persians and the Greeks began early in the Persian Empire. History tells us that Greece (located west of Persia) was under the leadership of a number of independent city-states, which opposed the rule of Persia. This opposition led a Persian king by the name of Darius I (the Great) to cross the Aegean Sea and attack Greece. Darius was the third king to take the throne after the death of Cyrus (Cambyses and Bardiya both ruled for short periods between Cyrus and Darius I). However, at the now-famous battle of Marathon, the Greeks repelled the Persians, and Darius was forced to retreat. After his death, Xerxes, the fourth king in succession after Cyrus and the husband of Queen Esther, took

the throne of Persia and continued the war with the Greeks. He was successful at the battle of Thermopylae in defeating the Greeks and subjugating the city-states for a very short period. This victory was not long lived and the Greek states retained their independence. After a long period of struggle between the city-states, Macedonia gained the upper hand under the leadership of Phillip II and assumed supremacy among the city-states of Greece. However it is Phillip's son, Alexander the Great, who would be the most famous of all Greek leaders. Under Alexander, the Greeks conquered North Africa and the Egyptians, defeated the Persians, and extended the Greek Empire as far as the country of India. The clash between Alexander and the Persians occurred under another Persian king by the name of Darius: Darius III. In 334 BC, Alexander began to campaign in Asia Minor and eventually engaged the Persian King Darius III at the battle of Gaugemela/Arbela in 331 BC. With a force said to be only comprised of about fifty thousand men, Alexander took on the whole Persian Army, believed to be in excess of a quarter of a million men and equipped with 200 chariots. Alexander's aggressive spirit and his pinpoint attack at the center of the Persian Army and the royal guard of Darius III, resulted in Darius III fleeing the battlefield and the collapse of the ill-led Persian Army. Alexander pursued Darius, eventually killing him and settling in the palace of the defeated Persians at Susa. Alexander is said to have married in Persia and to have taken up Persian dress and customs. He then quickly continued his conquest of Asia by going all the way to the Indus River of India. However, at a very young age, after returning to Persia, Alexander died, ironically at the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (most likely from assassination) in 323 BC. At Alexander's death, the *four generals*, Antipater, Antigonus, Craterus, and Ptolemy, refused obedience to Macedonia. Eventually the conquests of Alexander devolved into the four kingdoms of the Seleucids (Middle

Prophetic Empires and Kingdoms until the Time of Christ

East and Asia, including the kingdoms of the Arsacids, and the Bactrians) the Ptolemies (Egypt and some land on the rim of the Mediterranean), Macedonia (which included dominance over the city-states of Greece), and Pergamon (in Asia Minor—a kingdom constantly being redefined by war with the Seleucids and Ptolemies). For the next 200 years, the Hellenistic world would rule Greece, Asia Minor, North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia all the way to India. By the middle of the second century BC, their rule would come to an end with the rise of the Romans. As the Romans were achieving dominance over Greece, the Jewish population in Palestine was also achieving a limited period of independence from Greek rule with the rebellion by Judas Maccabeus (a source of the celebration of Hanukkah). This freedom, although short-lived and constantly challenged by the Seleucids, would continue until the Roman Pompey conquered Israel and placed Aristobulus and then later Herod the Great on the thrones of the Jewish kingdom.

The legacy of the Greek rule for both the Jewish state and for the Christian Church is profound. As all who have studied history know, the conquest of the Greeks gave the world not only the arts and philosophy of the great thinkers, but also the common Greek language. It would be the common Greek language that would become the conduit for the preservation and distribution of the Christian scriptures in the centuries after the time of Christ. During my time as a UN peacekeeper in the Sinai during the late 1980s, I had the privilege to become acquainted with one of the monks at St. Catherine's Monastery at the base of Mount Sinai. On several visits I was privileged to go to the library in the monastery. Of the thousands of texts in that building, I was told that more than half predated the Guttenberg Press. Many of those I was allowed to view were written in the Greek language. This is also the original home of the famous Codex Sinaiticus, for years the oldest known written copy of the

scriptures, handwritten in the Greek language. It is also significant to note that a portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls, written in the first century BC were also produced in Greek. The importance that the Greek language played in the preservation of the scriptures and the spread of the gospel cannot be overstated. In the Greek conquests, we can see the providence of God in preparing the way for the coming of Jesus Christ and the distribution of the message of the gospel worldwide. But just as God meant it for good, satanic evil forces were still at work. Under the rule of the brutal Hellenistic Seleucid Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), Judaism was declared illegal and all types of cruelties were heaped upon the Jewish people. Despite the efforts of those who wished to destroy God's people and his message to mankind, God providentially protected the Jewish nation and His covenant with Israel (by allowing Judas Maccabeus to achieve a limited period of autonomy and protection from the cruel Seleucids). As we have seen with each of the Empires mentioned, there were attempts to destroy the nation of Israel, eliminate and kill the Jewish people, swallow the Jewish people and their faith into the nations in which they were taken captive, destroy all vestiges of their cities, temple, and civilization, and eliminate and outlaw the message and practice of the Jewish faith. All these failed to stay the hand of God in His preparation of the world for the first coming of His Son Jesus Christ. Once more Satan is placed in "Check."

Rome. We now come to the sixth of the Empires listed by the Apostle John when speaking of the beast in the book of Revelation (chapter 17). Remember, John clearly identified the sixth empire as existing at the time of his writing. Returning to the image of Daniel chapter 2, the next kingdom after Greece (loins of brass) is represented as the two legs of iron. Daniel describes this kingdom as being strong as iron, crushing and breaking all its opposition. Most scholars agree

that this is a representation of the Roman Empire— successor to the Greek Empire and noted for being divided much of the time between the Western Empire in Rome and the Eastern Empire in Constantinople. The other vision in Daniel that speaks of a kingdom that follows after Greece is Daniel 11:5 where it refers to a “strong king of the south” who will replace Greece. In Daniel chapter eleven, after describing the division of the Greek Empire into four parts (v. 4), the passage goes on to speak of a “king of the south who will be strong” (v. 5). It further states that one of the princes of this kingdom would be especially strong and would extend the dominion of the empire. I believe this passage also represents Rome, and the prince who extends the dominion is the first emperor, Caesar Augustus (successor to Julius Caesar).

It is important at this time to discuss the significance of the “kings of the south and kings of the north” discussed throughout the eleventh chapter of Daniel. I believe that first of all, the terms apply to the relative location of the kingdoms in reference to their main opposition, meaning the king of the south would be geographically south of the king of the north (in the case of Rome, they are south of their main antagonist throughout history, the Germanic tribes). However, I also believe it refers to the nature of the kingdom, that is, the degree of toleration/degree of autocratic authority of the kings/kingdoms. (The kings of the north clearly appear throughout the chapter to be more aggressive, authoritarian, and destructive). As we proceed through this study of Daniel 11 and compare these kingdoms to actual history, I believe we will find this description of the “king of the north” as more autocratic to be historically true.

The other important thing to note about Daniel 11:5–6 is that there is a distinct break between the first king of the south mentioned in the text (v. 5) and all of the subsequent kingdoms in the remainder of the chapter. Verse 6 starts with the term “in the end of years” implying there is a *great break in time between verses 5 and 6* and that all those after verse 6 refer to kingdoms at the end of the age/years. However, that is unfortunately not the prevailing view of many prophetic writers. Following the lead of the great Dr. Ironside, most writers on eschatology are Preterists who place most of the events of Daniel 11, up to the introduction of the “willful king,” in the time of the rule of the Seleucids/Ptolemies from the first to third centuries BC. I disagree with that on several accounts: first, and primarily, the historical events of the wars of the Diadochi do not fully or faithfully match the events of Daniel chapter 11; and second, the text makes a significant break in time in verse 6. I will show later in the book that all of the kingdoms in Daniel chapter 11 after the description of Rome in verse 5, refer to kingdoms that will exist in the end of years, well after the fall of Rome (but within the history of the Church).

Of all the empires we will talk about, Rome is the most well known and provides the most significant impact on the coming of Christ and on the status of the saints and the Kingdom of God. As a kingdom, Rome existed for over one thousand years. The Republic, which was ruled by law and a Senate, has traditionally been listed in history as starting about 500 BC. Rome existed, most of the time that Persia and Greece ruled the world, as a fringe state outside the sphere of influence of these empires. Most of the opposition to Rome, both during the period of the Republic and even after the rise of the emperors, came from the uncivilized Germanic and Celtic tribes that inhabited Europe and Northern Asia Minor. Rome’s expansion to the east and its conquest of Greece, Persia, Egypt, and the eastern civilized world did not begin until the mid-first century BC. The whole nature of Roman government changed in the mid-first century

BC when Julius Caesar began to rise to power. As a consequence of differences between the three competing members of the First Triumvirate, the Roman Senate declared Caesar a public enemy. Determined to retain power, Caesar crossed the Rubicon River in 49 BC with his legions (in opposition to Roman law) and marched on Rome, declaring “*alea iacta est*, the die is cast.” This ended the period of the Republic and ushered in the age of the emperors. After Julius Caesar’s assassination, a temporary Second Triumvirate of Mark Anthony, Lepidus, and Octavian co-ruled Rome. Within twelve years, all opposition to Octavian was eliminated, and he ruled as Emperor Caesar Octavianus, better known to most as Caesar Augustus. It was this man who ruled the civilized Roman world and presided over the land of Palestine when Jesus Christ was born. Yet, as we will see, he and the other rulers of Rome were providentially guided in such a way that events that seem Godless and evil, ended up bringing about the will of God.

- It was Caesar Augustus who oversaw the actions of King Herod the Great. It was his Roman Senate that placed evil Herod in power. It was Roman power that enabled Herod to “birth the conditions” under which the coming of Jesus Christ would occur—events that fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and established the conditions for the ministry of Jesus.
- It was Augustus who issued a decree of taxation and census that caused Joseph to take Mary to Bethlehem, thus fulfilling the requirement that the Messiah be born in Bethlehem.
- It was the murderous Roman-installed King Herod the Great, who attempted to kill the baby Jesus, slaughtered the innocents of Bethlehem, drove Joseph and Mary into Egypt, and whose eventual death led to their return and settlement in Nazareth, all events foretold in Old Testament prophecies.

- It was the Roman-installed King Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great) who, in collusion with the Roman government, presided over the crucifixion of Jesus, fulfilling Satan's desire to "strike at God's heel" (Gen. 3:15) but also fulfilling God's plan to "crush Satan's head" by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.
- It was the Roman network of roads and their toleration of thought/religions that permitted the rapid and initial spread of the gospel during the first century AD. Just as the Greeks gave the world a common language, the Romans provided the roads and stable conditions within the empire for the spread of the good news of redemption.
- It was Roman law and Roman citizenship that allowed the Apostle Paul to appeal to Caesar and thus take the gospel right to the heart of the Roman Empire.
- It was the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD that forced the fledgling church to flee Palestine and spread throughout the then-known world.
- It was the severe persecution of Christians under Nero, Diocletian, and other Roman emperors that helped to refine the Church and maintain its purity of purpose during the critical first 400 years of growth.
- It was the conversion to the Christian faith of Emperor Constantine that permitted the widespread acceptance of the Church, the establishment of the Church councils, development of the Church creeds, establishment of the Christian Canon of Scriptures, and the promulgation of the gospel throughout the empire in the fourth and fifth centuries AD.

It was this Rome in the hand of the providential God, doing the determined will of God to redeem mankind and bring in the Kingdom of God. What they (the Jewish kings

and the Romans) meant for evil, God meant for good. God has once more “Checked” Satan.

When most of us think of Rome, we have visions of fine clothes, fine culture, just laws, good education, modern cities and roads, and powerful militaries that fought off the hordes of uncivilized and ignorant tribes from central and northern Europe. We see Rome as modern and tolerant—and the subsequent times of history after Rome as dark and backwards. We see it that way because that is what “enlightened humanists” want us to believe. In reality, Rome was a cruel and iron-willed civilization that rose to power and glory on the backs of captured nations. Historians believe as much as 50 percent of the population of Rome was comprised of slaves—not just indentured servants; they were brutally taken and brutally treated slaves. Roman women had few rights, often could not inherit property, and were frequently sexually exploited. Newborn children, who were unwanted or were not the proper sex or who were physically deformed, were cruelly left to die in city squares (unless claimed by someone else). Their leisure time was taken up with horrendous and brutal activities. Hundreds of thousands of human beings (approximately 500,000) were slaughtered for the entertainment of the masses in the infamous coliseums; a significant number were Christians. While Roman law protected Roman citizens, noncitizens were subject to summary execution for accused crimes, often by the most brutal of means. While “glory, honor, and power” drove men to heights of virtue early in Roman history, immorality and greed, by Christian standards, was rampant in the later empire. Disease and plague were common, and several times epidemics raged through the Roman world (generally only mentioned in history in reference to the Middle Ages). Finally, Roman thought and philosophy are seen as tolerant, not condemning moral or religious practices of the captured nation—*unless*, a religion declared there was a God outside of Roman authority to whom all

mankind was accountable. This is what got the Jewish faith and Christianity into hot water with Roman authorities. It is this Rome, from the first century to the time of Constantine, that attempted to stamp out Judaism and Christianity, brutally slaughtered and persecuted Christians, and was the tool of satanic evil intentions. It was this Rome, up until the fourth century AD, that attempted to stop the spread of the Kingdom of God.

So, what can we conclude? Rome was both a tool of God for good and a tool of Satan for evil and for opposition to the Kingdom of God. Rome was a tool used by God to bring about His plan for the redemption of all mankind and the spread of His gospel worldwide. However, it was also a tool used by the forces of evil to advance the kingdom of Satan and his evil plan for opposition to God. Clearly, in all six kingdoms we have observed thus far, there is a battle between good and evil, a battle for the souls of mankind, and a battle for the fulfillment of the will of God in history. The inclusion of these six kingdoms in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are not an accident, and they are not random. These empires have been the conduit for God's providential plan for mankind and the test bed for the evil intentions and plans of Satan.

Before we proceed any further with our examination of history and the prophecies of Daniel (yes, there are more to come from passages in chapters 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 11), it is important to take the time to introduce the other significant man in this story and his visions, the Apostle John.

Chapter III

A Man Called John



Approximately 2000 years ago, a man by the name of John grew up under Roman rule in the nation of Israel and lived out his life in both Palestine and other parts of the Roman Empire. The man we are talking about is called John the Disciple, John the Apostle, and John the gospel writer. (He is distinguished from John the Baptist, a man who was the cousin of Jesus, his forerunner in preparing the path for his ministry and who was executed by King Herod.) John the Disciple and his brother James are referred to as the “Sons of Thunder,” evidently meaning they were aggressive men of spirit. John is also referred to in the Bible as the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who sat next to him at the last supper/Passover. John is credited with the authorship of the Gospel of John, the first, second, and third books of John, and the book of Revelation. John also became one of the most significant leaders of the early Church. He is mentioned along with Peter three times in the book of Acts, is believed to have lived in Ephesus after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and was eventually exiled by the Romans to a remote island called Patmos in the southern Aegean Sea.

Of all of the gospels and books of the New Testament, John’s writings are the most significant texts in understanding

the true nature of Jesus Christ and how to have a relationship with Christ. That is not surprising given John's relationship with Christ. His Gospel is the preeminent text on the argument for the Deity of Jesus Christ. A study of his Gospel will reveal that all ten of the miracles are designed to demonstrate the power of Jesus Christ over all of creation, life, death, and all of our spiritual needs. Given John's depth of understanding about the character of Jesus Christ, it is not surprising that Christ would choose him to be the author of his Revelation to the Church about the events that would impact the history of the Church over the next 2000 years. So, what do we know about John's authorship of the book of Revelation?

The author of Revelation is identified as John. Most biblical scholars have also identified this as the Apostle John. The name John is listed several times in the book. It is also addressed to the seven churches in Asia. Because it was so widely read, there was extra-biblical evidence that shows that the early Church also credited the authorship of this book to the Apostle John. Because the date of this book is placed about 100 AD, it would have been written when John was extremely old, perhaps in his nineties. We said that John identifies himself as being on the Island of Patmos because of his testimony and witness about Jesus Christ. Historians believe, from this statement and other evidence, that he was exiled to the island against his wishes or will. Persecution of Christians during the second half of the first century is legendary. Nero, who blamed the fire in Rome on Christians, is said to have burned Christians in his garden as torches to provide light. At the time of his exile to Patmos in the late-90s AD, Rome had just finished with the emperors of Titus and Domitian. Both of these rulers were present at, and responsible for, the destruction of Jerusalem (Titus being the senior general). Domitian is also known for elevating the Roman gods back to a status of preeminence and demanding that he (the emperor) be worshiped as deity. Domitian is recorded in history as being a

severe tyrant who ruled with an iron will. It is not surprising then that John and other Christians (and Jews) were experiencing persecution during this period of history. There are those who argue, because of the writing style, against the John of Revelation being the same as the Apostle John. However, there appears to be ample justification for attributing it to the Apostle John (considering he was in his nineties and isolated from others, his writing style would have been less polished, and help with his Greek grammar by others would not have been possible as it may have been with his other writings).

As we mentioned earlier, the book is addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor. Because of this, it is important when reading the book to understand that there is a dual message to much of the text. Clearly John (and the Holy Spirit) intended for the letters to the churches to convey a message for the first-century congregations. However, much more significant is the message that is embedded in the text that is for the universal Church that would exist over the next 2000 years. I believe the Holy Spirit used the message to these churches and the situations of these first-century churches to prophetically represent similar situations and conditions that would exist throughout the 2000-year history of the Church. Therefore, to us today, the real purpose and utility of the book is to discover the prophetic meaning of all of the texts and to see the providential hand of God in fulfilling these prophecies through past history. By doing so, we gain confidence in the truth of God's Word and also gain insight into our present condition in history and a portal into the events that we are *soon* to experience as a universal Church.

In order to understand the prophetic message of Revelation, it is important to realize a few significant truths about the book. First, Revelation is *not* sequential in time from chapter one to chapter 22. Second, it is divided into sections that convey specific messages about specific subjects. The book is divided into a series of three revelation messages,

each of which is also divided into four sections (see Appendix C for a *detailed* explanation of the outline of Revelation). The first seven chapters of Revelation are clearly a message from the perspective of Jesus Christ. We see Him introduced in chapter one and speaking to His Church in the subsequent two chapters. We see Him on His throne in chapter 4, preparing to reveal the witnesses who will carry His message to the world. We see Him in chapter 6 as the Lamb, preparing to tell His Church of the conditions they will face in the coming age. As we study the book, it is evident that each of these sections mentioned above have their own message to convey, and all individually cover the broad timeline of the history of the Church.

- Chapter one is the resurrected Christ in the midst of His Church as part of His Kingdom, preparing to shepherd them through the coming age.
- Chapters two and three describe the condition of the Church throughout the coming age and the spiritual struggles the Church will face in the coming age.
- Chapters four and five show Christ commissioning/unsealing of the two witnesses that will carry His message to the lost world: the Church and the Word of God.
- Chapters six and seven describe the Seals that reveal the condition of the earthly world kingdom for the 2000 years in which the Church will be required to labor—a kingdom dominated by rule from sinful mankind under the leadership of evil forces.

The second section of Revelation is chapters 8 through 14. In this seven-chapter section, we see a God who is prepared to intervene on behalf of the prayers of the Church and prepared to lead and guide them through the conflict they will face in the earthly kingdom (a work assigned to the Holy Spirit in John chapter 17). This section appears to take a more

focused view of Church history near the latter part of the history of the Church.

- The Trumpets of Chapters 8–9 parallel in style the Seals of chapters 6–7. While *before* (Seals), we saw the 2000-year overview of the *results* of the rule of sinful mankind, *now* (Trumpets) we observe the *direct destructive effects* of the rule of mankind and the rule of Satan on both the physical universe and on the souls and spirits of all humanity.
- Chapters 10–11 parallel chapters 4–5. Where we saw the commissioning of the two witnesses earlier, now we are told of the opposition of the earthly kingdom/Satanic kingdom to the work of the Church and the witness of the Word of God.
- Chapters 12–13 parallel chapters 2–3. In chapters 2 and 3, we are given an overview of the Church throughout the age (2000 years). Now we are given a brief overview of Satan’s history, his defeat and casting out of heaven after the resurrection of Jesus, the nature of his kingdom, and his ultimate (but thankfully temporary) *war on the Church* and *victory over the Church*.
- Chapter 14 parallels chapter one. Here we see Christ’s redemption and *ongoing* harvest of the Church (something that is still happening with the death of every saint), the announcement of the three angels of the conditions immediately prior to the return of Christ, and the gathering of the Church prior to the final reaping of the earth.

The third section of Revelation is from the perspective of a God who is about to mete out his justice and judgment of a rebellious earthly kingdom and world.

- Chapters 15 and 16 (Vials) are parallel chapters to 6–7 (Seals) and 8–9 (Trumpets). Here we observe

the final Vial judgments of the almighty God. Where before we saw the earthly kingdom destructively and autocratically ruled by mankind (6–7) and the earth systematically destroyed by its own evil actions (8–9), now we see God's direct and final judgment of this earthly kingdom.

- Chapters 17 and 18 are parallel to chapters 4–5 (Commissioning of the two messengers, Christian witnesses and the Word of God) and 10–11 (Proclamation of the Word of God, labor of the witnesses, war on the witnesses, and defeat of those proclaiming God's message). Now in chapters 17–18 we observe God's judgment of the two earthly evil influences that made war with the Church and opposed the two messengers of God's Kingdom. These two evil worldly influences that oppose God's people and God's Word are described as the *Harlot* and *Babylon* (note: that just as the Church and the Word of God cannot be separated—the Word resides in our hearts and comes out of our mouths, so the Harlot and Babylon cannot be separated. The Harlot is the message and philosophy of the evil Babylon.)
- Chapters 19 and 20 are parallel chapters to 2–3 and 12–13. Where as before we saw an overview of the history of the Church (2–3) and the history of Satan and his attack and defeat of the Church (12–13), now we see God's destruction of the satanic kingdom, the antichrist, and Satan—the ultimate victory for the Church (marriage of the Lamb). Chapter 19 tells the story of the defeat of the satanic worldly kingdom and its leader, the antichrist. Chapter 20 tells the story of the personal defeat of Satan. Simultaneously, the Church is married to the Lamb and vindicated by Christ's victory over His enemies and over those who opposed the Church.

- Chapter 21 is parallel to chapters 1 and 14. Whereas before we saw Christ on his resurrected throne in heaven and Christ's redeeming and harvesting of the Church (from his resurrection to his return), now we see Christ in eternity—a new heaven and new earth.

I realize that this is a lot to comprehend in just a few paragraphs. I would ask that the readers take the time to study Appendix C and also wait until we complete a more detailed discussion of the prophetic pictures of Revelation as we march through the history of the Church in the next chapter of this book. So, now that we have introduced John and his written Revelation, it is time to see how the story of his book and the remaining stories from Daniel that we have not yet unpacked are fulfilled in history.

Chapter IV

From Rome to Today



We will continue the story of God's history by returning to the image revealed in Daniel chapter two. Verse 41 of this chapter tells us that the kingdom of iron (Rome), represented by the two legs, will stand upon feet and toes made of clay and iron mixed together (the next kingdom after Rome and the seventh described by John in Revelation). We are further told that this kingdom of clay and iron mixed together represents a kingdom that is partly iron willed and partly fragile (the meaning of the Hebrew word used for "broken"). We are further told that the iron/clay mix represents the mixing of iron will (I believe implying autocratic rule) with the humanity of mankind (I believe implying human/democratic rule). Finally we are told, a stone *not* cut by human hands will break the feet. Daniel explains that this represents the God of heaven destroying the worldly kingdom and setting up His Kingdom, a kingdom that shall rule forever. We certainly know that Christ told His followers that the Kingdom of God was among them during His time on earth (see Luke 17:21). However, we also know from experience and many other New Testament scriptural references (including Revelation) that Christ will make an end of the old universe and establish an eternal kingdom in

a new heaven and new earth at His second coming (II Peter 3:12–13; Rev. 21:1). The destruction of the earthly kingdom (crushing of the feet, Dan 2:34, 44–45) and the setting up of a heavenly kingdom (great mountain that filled the whole earth that will rule forever Dan 2:35, 44) strongly implies that this reference is to the events at the end of the age—at the time of Christ’s second coming. If this is correct, that means the feet of clay and iron must exist at the end of the age. Since we know Rome (the two legs of iron) ceased to exist in the first millennium AD, we can fairly conclude that there is a significant break between the legs of iron (Rome, the sixth Kingdom) and the feet of clay and iron (the seventh kingdom of the Apostle John).

Daniel 11:5–6 also supports this idea of a break in time between the rule of Rome as the sixth kingdom of God’s History and the coming of a seventh kingdom when it inserts the words “in the end of years” between the reference to Rome in Daniel 11:5 and the remainder of the chapter in verses 6 to 45. If this is true, are there any passages of scripture in Daniel or Revelation that fill this gap in history between the Rome of antiquity and the coming of the seventh and final empire on earth? I think the answer to that question is a resounding *yes!*

- First, however, we must go to the gospels and hear the explanation of Christ about the conditions and events of history that will shape this gap between Rome and the final kingdom. Using the words of Christ, we can examine the history of the last 2000 years to see the fulfillment of Christ’s predictions.
- Second, after understanding the events described in the gospels, we will look at the book of Revelation to see if any of its revealed prophecies also match the historic events of the last 2000 years.
- Finally, we will return to Daniel 8 and Daniel 11:6–45 to discover both pictures and descriptions of the empires that exist after the fall of Rome and

during the final seventh kingdom (just prior to Satan setting up his eighth kingdom).

Gospels. In Matthew 24 (and the parallel passages of Mark 13 and Luke 21), Jesus is asked two questions by his disciples: when would be the destruction of the Temple, and what would be the sign of Christ's coming and the end of the world? In all three passages Jesus does *not* give any dates nor does He *directly* answer the questions, rather He describes the conditions and events that will fill the gap of the time we refer to as the Church age and the events just prior to His second coming. (While He does refer to Jerusalem being surrounded, this event is placed just after the abomination of desolation in Daniel during the time of the antichrist, so it could *not* possibly refer to Titus' destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD). Comparing all three gospels, we observe the following in Christ's reply:

- Jesus says there will come those attempting to imitate Christ and dilute the truth of the gospel (Jesus says to not follow those compromising His truth);
- He says there will be a plethora of wars;
- He accurately depicts the history of the last two millennia when he says nations will oppose nations;
- He foretells periods of famine, pestilence, and earth calamities and says that is just the beginning;
- He tells His disciples that they (and by extension their followers) will be persecuted and hated by all nations;
- Jesus says the Church (body of believers) will suffer heresies and intrusions by those who do not believe;
- Christ clearly says that sin will constantly advance on the earth and will dilute the love of many who believe;

- He says that the gospel will be preached in the whole earth for a witness unto all nations—*then will come the end*;
- He gives a fearsome description of a time of suffering and trouble/persecution of believers that will follow the worldwide spread of the gospel; and
- Finally, he describes the cataclysmic events that will occur immediately before and during His return to earth.

Anyone who has even a rudimentary understanding of history knows that Christ's predictions exactly parallel what has transpired on Planet Earth over the past 2000 years. These are the events that fill the gap between the time of Christ's predictions to His disciples and the emergence of the final kingdom on earth.

We should take special note of two of the events: the explosion of sin and the spread of the gospel worldwide. As residents of the twenty first-century AD world, we have first-hand experience in our lifetime of these two events. We were witness to the rapid and seemingly unstoppable spread of evil that occurred during the late twentieth century and the present *explosion* of evil in the twenty-first century. We are also knowledgeable of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century missionary efforts and the current use of technology and the Information Age to spread the gospel worldwide. There remains no corner of the world where the truth of Christ has not been proclaimed or any nation where information technology does not enable access to the gospel on any given day. So, while Jesus does not tell the disciples the "when," he does tell them the signs and events of the coming age.

Revelation. What is truly amazing is that we find the same message and pictures in the book of Revelation as those Christ revealed in the gospels. In the first fourteen chapters of Revelation, we see a very similar description of prophetic

events on earth in the Seals (worldly kingdom situation throughout the Church age) and Trumpets (apparently man caused destruction of the earth in the latter part of the Church age). Here is what we are told by the Prophet John:

- Rulers will go forth conquering and seizing power, nation against nation (first Seal);
- There will be wars, killing, and the taking of peace from the earth (second Seal);
- One day's wages will be insufficient to just provide food for a family (let alone other expenses), causing famines and starvation (third Seal);
- There will be death and destruction of human life causing a fourth of the earth to experience an untimely/unnatural death (fourth Seal);
- The Church will experience persecutions and martyrdom (fifth Seal);
- Cataclysmic events will occur in the material universe prior to Christ's return (sixth Seal);
- An Angel representing the Holy Spirit, reveals that one third of the earth's trees will be destroyed causing deforestation of major parts of the earth (first Trumpet);
- We are told that one third of sea life will die/be depleted, and at the same time there will be a loss of one third of the ships (depletion of edible fish in the ocean, death of the oceans reefs, loss of a major portion of the worlds fishing fleets) (second Trumpet);
- It is revealed that one third of the water supplies and rivers will be polluted (third Trumpet);
- It is revealed that one third of the atmosphere will be polluted causing smog/obscuring of the skies (fourth Trumpet);
- It is revealed that Satan and his angels will be released from their chains (restraint that prohibited them from deceiving the nations for a period lasting 1000 years)

and will go forth to persecute and deceive the nations/ those who do not know God (fifth Trumpet); and

- We see a loosing of four angels in the Middle East (Euphrates) who have power to gather together an immense army that will kill a third of mankind (sixth Trumpet: Is this spiritual death of one-third of the world by false religion and spiritual darkness and lies or real physical death? I am inclined to believe the former).

In these first fourteen chapters of Revelation, John also shows us:

- The condition, challenges, and struggles of the Church during the 2000 years we call the Church age (letters to the seven churches, chapters 2 and 3). We will discuss each of the seven churches as we march through history in the coming pages of this chapter.
- A period of protection for the Church/Word of God in its role as a witness (chapters 4, 5, and 7).
- The promulgation of the gospel worldwide and ultimate silencing of the messengers of God (chapters 10 and 11).
- The opposition of the worldly kingdom against the Church and the final success of the worldly kingdom in its struggles against the Church—war on the Church (chapters 11, 12, and 13).

Most of what John reveals in the first fourteen chapters of The Revelation has already been fulfilled, with the exception of these four: (1) the final and complete crushing of the Church, known as the great tribulation (something that appears to be *well underway*); (2) the revealing of the anti-christ; (3) the concurrent rise of the final satanic kingdom (something I believe is underway); and (4) the cataclysmic events of the heavens just prior to Christ's return.

So, what do the final seven chapters of Revelation represent (chapters 15–21)? They tell us the story of the victory of God and His Church in the end of the age when Christ comes to make an end of all things (defeat of sin, the satanic kingdom, and Satan and his antichrist).

Daniel. It is now time to return to Daniel and pick up the prophetic pictures/descriptions of the empires that will rule upon the earth. We have finished most of Daniel chapter 2 and the kingdoms leading up to Rome. We have also finished most of chapter 8, the Greek/Persian struggle and the four kingdoms that emerge from Alexander's Empire (all that is left is the "little horn," which we will discuss later in the next chapter). To continue the story of empires/kingdoms, we must return to chapters 10 and 11 of Daniel.

In chapter 10, Daniel is given a vision that he is told is a conflict that is "long." The word in the Hebrew means "great or exceedingly far/long." (While it could mean a "great" conflict, in the Hebrew it also can mean a long and protracted time of conflict. It is my opinion that it more correctly refers to a long and protracted time, given how the vision is described in 10:14). Daniel was stunned by the vision and mourned three whole weeks. Once he revived, an angel visits him and two important things are revealed to him in chapter 10;

- He is told twice that God (via his angels) is actively controlling and shaping the destiny of empires and kingdoms (specifically see verse 21 in the Hebrew).
- Second, he is told the vision relates to those who worship God as Daniel does and that the events of the coming chapter will befall his like-minded believers in the "latter days" (see v. 14).

In chapter 11, we pick up the story of the vision. We have already discussed the Persians, the Greeks, and some of the Roman Empire mentioned in verses 1 to 5. We now observe a gap in verse 6 that says the next kingdom would be in "the

end of years”; that implies that there is a *large gap* between the kingdom in verse 5 (Rome) and the kingdoms that will be described in the remainder of the chapter. Before we proceed to a description of these kingdoms, it is worth discussing the fall of the sixth kingdom, Rome.

The History of the Fall of Rome. It is not easy to show an exact date or time for the fall of Rome (the sixth empire of the beast). Unlike Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece, Rome did not end with the destruction of a dynasty, a decisive battle, or with the death of a single ruler. Instead, the end of Rome is a story of the division of the empire into east and west kingdoms, the slow decline of culture and power, and the overwhelming inundation of the empire by foreign people groups. Many historians place the end of Rome with the rule of the last emperor of truly Roman descent in the west, Romulus Augustus, in 476 AD. However, the eastern empire continued for many centuries as a very robust and powerful kingdom, even conquering the western empire lands in later centuries and establishing control and co-regency over the Germanic invaders who had assumed the title of emperor.

From the time of Caesar Augustus (first century BC) until the rule of Diocletian (284–305 AD), Rome ruled the world with a fist of iron. She spread her influence to the far reaches of Central Asia, North Africa, Southern Europe, and as far north as Britain. She successfully defended her northern borders from the constant pressure of the Germanic tribes that lived beyond the Rhine and Danube Rivers and reached a pinnacle of economic prosperity and power by the rule of Marcus Aurelius (made well known by the movie *The Gladiator*) and his son Commodus (end of second century). Under Commodus, the bloody exhibitions of the Coliseum reached great proportions of excess. After Commodus, and throughout the third century, the empire began to decline both economically and politically, and the real power behind the

throne became the Roman legions and the generals who commanded the legions. Political power rested with the military. Intellectual life, architecture, literature, and art all began to decline throughout this century. By the time of the rule of Diocletian and the beginning of the fourth century (300 AD), the empire was a shell of the once-great cultural and economic union that had ruled most of the civilized world.

Early Church. From a Christian perspective, the period from the ascension of Christ until 300 AD was a period during which the church went from a small band of believers to being a primary force for good in the Roman Empire. They were so successful that a general persecution was started by Diocletian in the beginning of the fourth century to mute the influence of the Church. However, as Augustine so aptly argues in his masterpiece *The City of God*, contrary to those who argued the empire had declined because of the success of the Church, Augustine argues it was the Church that kept the empire from going into total collapse by the end of the third century. As we examine the seven churches mentioned by John in the book of Revelation, the first church mentioned in the Revelation is the church at Ephesus. If the churches represent the Church throughout history (as I believe), then there should be a parallelism between the first church and this period of Roman history.

- Ephesus (Rev. 3:1–7)—commended for its works, perseverance, and labor. It is also noted that they resisted those “false apostles” who spread false teachings and authority (as Christ mentioned in Matthew 24 as the first thing they needed to beware of). Their fault is that while they started with a true love for Christ, it has cooled over time. They are also commended for resisting the Nicolaitanes (who practiced compromise with paganism).

The early Church, from 29 AD to 300 AD was representative of this church. It was vibrant and active in spreading the gospel. They also were faithful in resisting false teachings (*before* there was a complete Bible!). They opposed Gnosticism (a teaching that claimed special wisdom, taught that Christ was a Spirit and not incarnate human flesh—leading to a philosophical dualism that negated the importance of holiness in our fleshly lives). They also opposed Montanism, a system of thought that is very similar to modern fundamentalism. Montanists believed Christ would return momentarily and also believed in the fuller baptism of the Holy Spirit—that perfection could be achieved in this life. Their teachings led to an emotional worship that de-emphasized doctrine and led to asceticism, a legalistic form of holiness. Despite remaining true to the faith, however, ultimately like Ephesus of Revelation, the early church’s love and vitality waned. Some of this can be blamed on the distinction drawn by Tertullian and Origen that there was a difference between the gospel requirements and the “advice” of the more stringent aspects of Pauline doctrine. Voluntary celibacy for the sake of Christ and the gospel, voluntary poverty for the sake of the gospel, and giving up all to follow Christ were considered *advice* for those “special Christians” who received merit for this special type of lifestyle. The consequence was that the general population of Christians felt less inclined to be bound by the New Testament demands that “if any man come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” This type of thought also helped advance Manichaeism in the late third century, a form of Persian thought that was similar to Gnosticism, and taught a form of dualism that differentiated between the sins of the material body and the life of the spirit. It was Manichaeism that would capture Augustine early in his life prior to his true conversion. Augustine felt that Manichaeism gave him an excuse to sin and did not make him accountable for the actions of the flesh. He would fight

against this heresy most of his adult life. Clearly, the moral decline of Rome throughout the third century also impacted the church and led to a diluting of the Christian faith with the false philosophies of the world. I believe that the church of Ephesus, mentioned in Revelation, represents this period of history.

Rome of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries. Beginning with the fourth century, Diocletian (284–305 AD) began a reorganization of the empire that resulted in division of the empire into two spheres, the eastern and western portions. The West was to continue to be ruled from Rome and later on from Ravenna while the eastern empire (also know later as the Byzantine Empire) was ruled from Constantinople. It was also under the rule of Diocletian that the Church experienced the beginning of its most severe persecutions. Ruling from the eastern empire, Diocletian was persuaded by Galerius (western ruler) to begin a general persecution of the Christians in 303 AD. At this same time, Constantine became a co-ruler in the far provinces of Gaul (modern-day France) and Britain. From 303 AD to 313 AD Galerius and Diocletian conducted a fierce and violent persecution that resulted in the death and persecution of huge numbers of Christians. Most historians consider this the most severe persecution that the Christian Church suffered during its early years (worse than the persecutions under Nero). It is historically unclear what role Constantine played in this process. However, after the abdication of Diocletian (early 305 AD) and the death of Galerius in 311 AD, Constantine invaded Italy in 312 and defeated Galerius's general Verona at the Milvian Bridge near Rome. He is said to have seen a cross in the sky before this battle and shortly after converted to Christianity. By the Edict of Milan in 313 he declared equal rights for all religions, and properties confiscated from Christians were restored; the persecutions ended. Constantine would go on to rule until 337 and would reunite the entire empire under his sole control

for a short period from 324 until 337. Constantine is known for his Christianization of Rome and the reported baptism of entire sections of his legions into the Christian faith. Despite the acceptance of the Christian faith, the Roman Empire still remained a political system dominated by the power of the legion and the emperor. By the early fifth century (400 AD), just sixty-three years after the death of Constantine and after years of constant pressure from Mongolian Huns and Germanic tribes, Rome was no longer able to resist the invading hordes.

First came the Visigoths under the leadership of Alaric in 401 AD. He sacked Rome in 406 and moved towards Africa, only to die after the loss of his fleet. His successor, Ataulf, led the Visigoths to Gaul where they conquered both Gaul and Spain and established a kingdom that fused Roman and Gothic cultures and replaced orthodox Roman Christianity (who by the Nicene Council established the unity/deity of the Triune God) with Arian Christian traditions (believed Christ was a created being who was not equal with God the Father). They would remain in Gaul (France) until defeated a century later by the Franks (who were by Providence, orthodox Christians).

Nearly concurrently came the Vandals (also Arian in Christian belief). In 406 the Vandals crossed the Rhine and proceeded towards Spain and then over into North Africa. In 431, after a lengthy siege of Hippo, they took the city as Augustine lay on his deathbed during the siege. They later took Carthage, pillaged Rome for a short period, and ruthlessly ruled in North Africa for over one hundred fifty years.

In 411, the Burgundians arrived from the Oder region and settled in Gaul and what is today eastern France/Austria. They became a federate of the Roman Empire and continued until conquered by the Franks.

By the mid-century, the Huns came. They had invaded and destroyed the Ostrogothic kingdom that was north of the Danube in the late fourth century (the Ostrogoths had been an accepted part of the Roman Empire for over fifty

years). In 445, under the leadership of Attila the Hun, they attacked the Visigoths in Gaul and after an extended period of warfare, turned into Italy and razed the Ravenna area and marched on Rome. The Bishop of Rome (the Pope) met Attila the Hun on the road to Rome, delaying his attack on Rome, and after plague broke out in the Hun army, Attila retreated. After Attila's death, the Huns settled back along the Danube, and the Ostrogoths (now allied with the Huns) settled in Pannonia. About fifty years later, the Ostrogoths, under the leadership of Theodoric the Great, left Pannonia and completely overwhelmed Italy. Theodoric replaced a third of all Roman estates and Roman civil rulers with Ostrogoths and even received the recognition as the Western Emperor by the Eastern Emperor in Constantinople. Theodoric practiced a separate but equal policy between the Latin Romans and the Germanic Ostrogoths. He also conquered or controlled all of the other Germanic tribes in Southern and Western Europe. The Ostrogoths would stay in power in the southern portion of the Western Empire until the Eastern Emperor Justinian re-conquered Rome and Italy in the mid-sixth Century (over the period 535–552 AD).

Finally we see the arrival of the Franks. In the late fifth century, a portion of the Franks crossed the Rhine and defeated the Visigoths in Gaul (France). By the end of the fifth century (481–511 AD), Clovis had emerged as the king of the Franks and had united the Franks on both sides of the Rhine under one kingdom and had also converted to the Roman Orthodox Christian faith. As we will see later on, his conversion to orthodox faith from the heretical Arian faith would have a huge impact on the Church in Europe.

This period from the rule of Diocletian (300 AD) to the completion of the invasion by the Germanic tribes (middle of the sixth century—550 AD) represents a time where the Western Empire morphed from a declining Roman culture to a multicultural empire ruled by a series of semi-Romanized

Germanic Emperors. Many historians have pronounced Rome dead by 500 AD. However, I believe it was not dead; it was still comprised of the same territories Rome had always ruled. I believe it is more appropriate to say the Western Roman Empire had simply incurred a complete social order change and decline of higher culture due to the wave of non-Roman people groups that infested the empire.

Church of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries. The persecution from 303 to 313 AD had a profound impact on purification of the Church. The conversion of Constantine and the rise of great theologians like Jerome and Augustine also shaped this two-century period. Constantine freed the Church to spread throughout the empire and also freed them to openly proclaim the truth of the gospel. It was under Constantine's influence that the Donatist schism was put down (Donatists believed that those who had lapsed during the Diocletian persecution or failed to stand firm had lost their faith and needed to be re-baptized before reentry into the church, essentially saying you could be saved, lost, and resaved) and the Council of Nicaea was assembled to deal with the issue of the theological divide over the nature of Christ. This council voted in favor of the concept of Bishop Alexander (and his successor Athanasius) that Christ was of one substance with God the Father. This led to the present doctrine of the Trinity and eventually to the Nicene Creed that the Church still proclaims to this day (a forerunner of the Apostles Creed). It is also during the fourth century (300–400 AD) that the canon of scriptures (Bible) that we accept today as God's Word to mankind, was first codified. It was also at the end of this century (387 AD) that the Church experienced the conversion to faith of one of its great theologians, St Augustine. If the third century had seen a cooling of the Church, the fourth century experienced a purification by persecution and a strong spiritual and intellectual revival of the life of the Church. Throughout the fifth

century (400–500 AD), the Church sent out missions, established churches (such as St. Genevieve in Paris) that enabled them to bring true Christianity to the invading Germanic tribes, and established a series of monasteries in both the Carthaginian kingdom and in Ireland that would protect and faithfully translate the biblical scriptures and other important intellectual texts for centuries to come. The story of the monasteries is a significant history often lost to modern historians. It was the missionary St. Patrick who brought the gospel to Ireland. It was also in Ireland that some of the most important monasteries were established. It would be from these monasteries (and those in Egypt) that the faithful translators would maintain the libraries that would provide a reestablishment of intellectual life during the early Middle Ages. It was during this time that the Codex Sinaiticus (for years one of the earliest known texts of scripture) was produced at St. Catherine's Monastery in Egypt (a library I had the privilege of visiting while working as a UN Peacekeeper in Palestine and Egypt in the 1980s). I believe this period of Church history is compatible with the next church mentioned in John's Revelation.

- Smyrna—Like Philadelphia, receives *no warnings*. They are commended for being spiritually rich despite their poverty, tribulations, and suffering. They, like all churches, have among them those who claim to be Christians (say they are Jews) and are not. God says he will deal with them. Despite suffering tribulation ten days, Christ encourages them not to fear; He will grant them a crown of life.

Smyrna is one of only two churches that are not chastised. I believe the words used in Revelation concerning Smyrna are a perfect picture of one of the most vibrant periods of church history from 300 AD until 500 AD. They suffered horrific persecution for ten years (from 303 to 313) under Diocletian. They faithfully dealt with the massive *diluting*

caused by Constantine's edicts and wholesale acceptance of many Romans into the churches (evangelizing many Romans while maintaining the truth of the scriptures and not being destroyed by the newfound liberty under Constantine). They resisted the paganism of the waves of Teutonic hordes that swept over Rome, and they planted the seeds of orthodoxy in the Frankish kingdom (destined to rule most of Europe). Finally, they faithfully maintained the intellectual life of the empire and established libraries that would protect the truth of the biblical scriptures and other historical texts. Perhaps the greatest theologian in Church history, Augustine, established the written foundation for the believing church for the next 1500 years (he influenced both Luther and Calvin and all of modern orthodox theology). The Council at Nicaea (325 AD) formed Nicene/Trinitarian church creed (followed closely by the Apostles' Creed around 390 AD) and the scripture canon is solidified.

Rome of the Sixth through Eighth Centuries. The sixth century saw the rise of the Eastern Emperor Justinian the Great. In 535 AD, under the leadership of General Belisarius, the Eastern Empire reconquered the West and drove the Ostergoths out of the Italian lands to an unknown end (He was aided in his attack by the Lombards of Pannonia). The seat of government for the Western Empire was again established in Ravenna. Within a short period after Belisarius' conquest, the Lombards (a people of Hunic origin of which little is known prior to this time except the fact they were Arian in faith), began to move south into the Italian Peninsula. The Roman Italians, worn out from almost two hundred years of warfare, offered little resistance. The Lombards soon established the Western Empire under their authority. The Lombards took Roman names and titles and adopted Roman ways. They began to accept Roman Orthodoxy, but until the end of the Lombard kingdom, pockets of Arian Christianity

remained. The Lombards would rule in the Western Empire for two hundred years. However, the real power in the West became a tug of war between the Pope, the Lombards, and the Emperor in Constantinople. Under Pope Gregory the Great from 590 to 604, the real power rested with the Pontiff (even payments for the legions and the direction of the generals fell under the Pope's authority). As the Pope attempted to maintain the sole authority of the Roman seat as the head of all the Church, his actions alienated the Bishop in Constantinople and caused friction with the Eastern Empire. By the beginning of the eighth century (717), the Emperor Leo attempted to bring Italy back into obedience to the Eastern Emperor. He placed heavy taxation on the major landowners (of which the Papal State was one) and issued the Iconoclastic decree in 726 which aroused all of Italy (the decree banned pictures and icons). Pope Gregory III in Rome excommunicated all of the Iconoclasts (those who banned pictures and images) bringing the controversy to a head. At the same time the Lombards asserted their authority on the weakened Pope Gregory III and eventually seized all of the Papal lands in Ravenna. By the middle of the eighth century (750 AD), the Pope found himself on the losing end of relations with the Lombards. The Pontiff appealed to the Frankish King Charles Martel, but Martel was busy opposing the Muslims (defeating them at Tours, driving them over the Pyrenees, and leading to their later defeat in Spain), and he remained faithful to his alliance with the Lombards. In 753, Pope Stephen II renewed the appeal to Pepin the Short (III), now king of the Franks, and received a more favorable response.

What followed over the next forty years was a series of momentous events that would seal the long and agonizing death of the old Roman Empire and usher in the Middle Ages and a period of 1000 years known as the Holy Roman Empire. In support of the Pope and to deal with the problem of the Lombards, Pepin invaded the Lombard kingdom. He

seized the former Papal lands of Pentapolis and Ravenna and returned to Rome where in 756 AD he donated them to the Pope. This event is known in history as the *Donation of Pepin*. In return, the Pope named Pepin as a Patricus (regent and protector of Italy). This was a title that only Constantinople could legally confer, and the result was a permanent break with the Emperor of the Eastern Empire. In 774, the new Frankish King Charlemagne (son of Pepin) completely defeated the Lombards and absorbed their kingdom into the greater Frankish Empire. He also visited Rome and reconfirmed the donation of his father. On Christmas day of 800 AD, the Pope crowned Charlemagne as the first Holy Roman Emperor. Yale Professor Williston Walker put it this way in his *History of the Christian Church*,

This transaction, which seems to have been simple at the time, was fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. From it might be drawn the conclusion that it was within the Pope's power to give and withhold kingdoms. All unseen in it, were wrapped up the re-establishment of the empire ... the Holy Roman Empire, and *that interplay of papacy and empire which forms so large a part of the history of the Middle Ages* (italics added). From this point of view it was the most important event of mediaeval history.

From 800 AD until the last Holy Roman Emperor, Francis II of Austria in 1806, who was deposed by the Emperor Napoleon (who is said to have crowned himself Holy Roman Emperor in defiance to the Pope), there would exist a designated emperor who maintained a bond between the Church (represented by the Pope) and the State. It also conveyed to the monarchs of Europe the idea of the "Divine Right of Kings" and their responsibility to protect the Church and further its

mission on earth. While not “holy” in the sense of spiritual, it was an alliance, nonetheless, that kept the Christian kingdoms of Europe from destroying each other, helped maintain them in unity against the Islamic Caliphate threat of the Middle Ages, helped spread the gospel throughout Europe and to all of the colonies of the European powers worldwide, and retarded the establishment or rise of a single emperor or empire in the Christian world (until Napoleon). It truly was a 1000-year period during which no empire of the worldwide magnitude of the previous six we have discussed, would arise in Western Civilization until the beginning of the modern age. With this, we end our discussion of the old Roman Empire.

The Church in the Sixth to Eighth Centuries. The Roman church experienced a significant shift beginning in the sixth century. Among the changes were four events that will shape the history of the church and the Papacy for many centuries to come.

- First is the shift in attitude towards the Bishop of Rome (whom we now call the Pope). The surviving writings of prominent men of this period show that the Pope was beginning to be venerated as above the authority of men, not to be judged by men. Bishop Ennodius wrote early in the sixth century, “God was willing that the causes of other men would be determined by men, but as for the Bishop of the Roman See, he has without question reserved him to his own judgment.” In other words, the Pope is above the judgment of humans, an idea that would lead to the dangerous doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope, and would have a long-term detrimental impact on the spiritual health of the Roman church.
- The second change was the shift in power of the civil authority to the Pope. In the middle of the century (552 AD), the armies of the Eastern Emperor Justinian

re-conquered the Western Empire and specifically freed Rome from the grip of the Ostrogoths. The Pope, the most significant ruler in the peninsula, quickly filled the power gap created within Italy at that time. By 590 AD, Pope Gregory the Great (Pope from 590 to 604), with great skill and administrative acumen, consolidated much of the power over the old Roman Western Empire under his leadership. He was even the recipient of the funding for the Roman legions from the Eastern Emperor and assumed responsibility for the direction of the military. We say that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. That is true also for the Church. The further we proceed into the Middle Ages, the more corrupt and power-hungry the leadership of the Roman Catholic church would become, leading to severe compromises with sin. In fairness to Pope Gregory the Great, he was a humble man from monastic origins who was a solid spiritual leader, had great compassion for the lost, and had a significant impact on the missionary efforts to reach the remote pagan regions of Europe. However, he, just like Calvin of Geneva and Cromwell of England centuries later, merged the church authority with the power of civil authority.

- Third, was the influence for celibacy that Justinian brought to the church in the West. It had always been a significant part of the Church, particularly in the monastic movements. However, Justinian now made it mandatory by decree. Celibacy by choice for the sake of the gospel is a worthy goal. Celibacy by order of the Church was, and still is today, a disaster (in my opinion).
- Finally, the growth of the monastic movement and the missionary efforts of the sixth to the eighth centuries spread the gospel to the most remote regions of Europe.

Missionaries from the monasteries of Ireland and England and missionaries from the monasteries of Italy and the Frankish kingdom fanned out over England and northern, central, and eastern Europe. This helped ensure that Roman Orthodoxy would supplant the Arianism that had taken hold in some of the Germanic tribes. It also paved the way for the Christianization of Europe and the ultimate spread of the gospel worldwide as these states in Europe began colonization in the coming millennium. One of the most significant of these missionaries was St. Boniface, the patron saint of the Germans. Given the name by Pope Gregory II, he left his monastery in England in 716 AD and proceeded to Frisia, today called the Netherlands. He was later appointed the bishop for Germania by the Pope and spent much of the rest of his life in Bavaria, establishing churches. He was also said to be responsible for building friendly relations between the Pope and the Frankish kings and establishment of several dioceses and many trained priests in the areas he evangelized. At the age of eighty, he left his work in Germania and returned to the still-pagan Frisia to do the work he had first started. After some initial success, pagan common thieves martyred him in 754 AD, just two years before the Donation of Pepin.

I believe this period of Church history is compatible with the next church mentioned in the Revelation, Pergamos.

- Pergamos—Commended for not denying its faith during persecution and the martyrdom of Antipas. Despite *dwelling* where Satan's seat is, they have worked the works of God. They are chastised however, for significant compromise, like that caused by Balaam and the Nicolaitanes of previous times.

This church is representative of the Church from 500 AD until 756 AD. This is a Church, at the grass roots level, that is doing the work asked by God. Spiritually, the Church as a whole is still fundamentally sound in doctrine and still has a great fervor for evangelization. However, during this period, we see the rise of the Papacy and the centralization of Catholic church power in the Roman capital (the Roman Empire capital perhaps representative of the idea of Satan's seat). Satan's seat has always been and always will be with those world powers that he can use as a tool for his evil purposes. The seven heads of the beast in Revelation represent empires that Satan has had or will have authority over. The Roman Empire was one of these (the sixth). This is not to imply or say that the Pope and the Papal State is the seat of Satan. God forbid. However, it does show that the Roman church allowed itself to be centralized in Rome and diluted by the mixing of ecclesiastical power with the civil power of the Roman Empire (Satan's seat). This consolidation of power in the Pope, combined with the idea of Bishop Ennodius that "God alone can judge the Pope," paves the way for corruption and abuses we will observe in the Catholic church during the Middle Ages. Though few historians discuss it, I also believe that because Rome had suffered invasion by the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Huns, Burgundians, Lombards, and finally the Franks, some pagan compromise and practices entered the Church during this period. These problems will plague the church for 750 years (until the time of Luther).

The kingdoms of the Middle Ages from the Ninth Century until the Eighteenth Century. As we attempt to study this period, it is important to understand that historians tend to present their observations from a microview rather than a macroview. That is to say, they examine each state/kingdom of Europe from a political rulers/tribal/sectional/state view and also tend to divide the Middle Ages era by referring to

the last two centuries as the Pre-Modern Era. What that tends to do is obscure the “macro” deeper issues that are shaping the historical events at the local level. This is particularly true of their view of the impact of Christianity. They tend to look at it from only the point of view of the organized church (Roman, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant Reformation churches) and miss the greater impact of the true Church (those who walk in faith with Christ), particularly the impact the Judeo-Christian ethics had on cultural development. In this study, I will attempt to examine the Middle Ages from the following viewpoints: (1) Political leadership and people movements that led to the modern nation states and the struggle between the Papal leadership and the ruling monarchies; (2) The emergence of the Crusades, political freedom movements, religious freedom movements, and the impact of the Church on these processes; (3) The steady cultural, educational, scientific, and artistic advancements and the impact of the Church on these processes; and (4) Constant warfare without the emergence of a western-wide empire.

- *Political leadership and people movements that led to the modern nation states and the struggle between the Papal leadership and the ruling monarchies.* From the time of Charlemagne’s rule until the beginning of the modern age in the eighteenth century, the kingdoms over which Middle Age monarchs ruled were generally smaller in size than the empires of the past. They also tended to struggle to hold together kingdoms that had multiple people groups or tribal groups. One of the reasons kingdoms remained small was the lack of road networks in a still very “wilderness-like” Europe (until the midpoint of the Middle Ages) and the smaller size of the armies in these kingdoms. Without the means to police large states and the network to communicate with a diverse kingdom, the existing kingdoms tended to divide up into smaller entities. Second, by the eleventh or twelfth century, most

areas of Europe had been reached by the missionary efforts of the Roman church. This also led to the existence of Christian monarchs or rulers. The “partnership” established by the Holy Roman Empire extended to many of the ruling families of Europe. The monarchs claimed the primacy of authority within their kingdom and claimed the Divine Right of Kings (asserting that a monarch is subject to no earthly authority, deriving the right to rule directly from the will of God). This even extended to the right of investiture (right to appoint the bishops and leadership of the churches in their countries). The Church, on the other hand, expected the right to proselytize, to educate, and to the protection of their property in return for support of the political leadership. While on the surface, this would seem to lead to stable kingdoms and the growth of political unity, in fact just the opposite sometimes occurred. The whole period of the Holy Roman Empire is replete with examples of the hostility and tug-of-war between the Roman church and the political leadership. Several examples will suffice to demonstrate this fact. From 1073 to 1093, the designated Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, who ruled over the various German Duchies, became involved in open revolt against Pope Gregory VII. One of the issues was the right of investiture. The Pope excommunicated the king, and the king persuaded the bishops of his churches to align themselves against the Pope. Eventually Henry invaded Italy and deposed the Pope. The Pope’s loyal Norman allies counter invaded, sacked Rome, and reinstated Gregory. Gregory was eventually again forced to leave Italy and soon died. The Pope’s successors supported the rebellion of Henry’s sons against his rule, leading to a civil war in the German Duchies. A second and better-known example is Henry VIII of England in the early 1500s. His notorious split with Rome over its refusal to sanction his

marriage annulment led to the formation of the Anglican church of England and the English break with the Roman Catholic church. While the Holy Roman Empire led to the Christianization of Europe, it also was the source of constant conflict between powerful political Popes and even more powerful political kings. The turmoil caused by the church-state relationship was only compounded by the movement of people groups throughout Europe (the Vikings along the European coasts, the Normans into England, the Franks over the Pyrenees into Spain, the Danes into England and northern Europe, the Mongols and Slavic peoples into Eastern Europe, etc.). Over the thousand-year period of the Holy Roman Empire, the European continent eventually homogenized and solidified into the modern-day cultural kingdoms (French, Spanish, German, English, Russian, Scandinavian, etc.). Additionally, the constant bickering between the various ruling families in Europe (example: the War of the Roses in England, 1455–1485, between the Lancasters and the Yorks, vying for the English crown) tended also to restrict the development of large kingdoms. The bottom line is that between 800 AD and 1800 AD, western civilization did not see the rise of a unifying emperor until the appearance of Napoleon.

- *The emergence of the Crusades, political freedom movements, religious freedom movements, and the impact of the Church on these processes.* A second major factor in why western civilization did not coalesce into a single major empire prior to Napoleon was the ideological movements that were surging across the continent.
 - o The most significant ideological shift after the Roman Empire was the division of Europe and Asia into Christendom and the Islamic Caliphate. Eventually there was a fault line between these two religious ideologies that ran through Spain, the Mediterranean

islands, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Between 1095 and 1270, there were no less than eight crusades by Christendom against the Islamic world and specifically against the Holy Land and Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the pawn in this warfare, passed back and forth between the Islamic rulers and the Christian Crusaders. It was actually captured and ruled by Christian kings for several periods (nearly 100 years total). It is amazing to understand that over this period, the Pope and the Roman church had such sway over the monarchs of Europe, that French, Norman, English, German, and Sicilian kingdoms and perhaps as many as 100 thousand Christian European soldiers could all be persuaded to unify and “take up the cross” and fight for the liberation of Jerusalem (at their own expense). While many today question the wisdom of the Crusades, it is still significant that the Christian ideology (and powerful Popes) could have such a significant impact on western civilization. The emphasis on Christian Crusading not only gave Europe a common enemy, it also retarded the inclination of the nation states of Europe to war with one another for nearly two hundred years (This inclination did not last long as the outbreak of the One Hundred Years War, fought between France and England, erupted shortly after the Crusade period).

- o The second ideological issue that confronted western civilization was the religious freedom movements that arose in Europe during the period of the Holy Roman Empire. As early as 1200, the Albigensian and Waldensian sects arose in opposition to the corruption of the church clerics and leadership. The Roman church persuaded the loyal monarchies to brutally attack and destroy these Christian sects that threatened the ecclesiastical rule of the Pope (amazingly,

a small contingent of Waldensian Christians survive to this day). The faithful grassroots missionary work of the Franciscans was also initially labeled a break-away sect. However, in order to prevent another schism, the Pope transformed this group into an “authorized” church order. In the middle 1300’s, John Wycliffe, an Oxford scholar, had translated the Bible into the English language. Wycliffe and his followers (Lollards) opposed church practices that they saw as nonbiblical. Wycliffe was an early Protestant in the sense that he opposed the secular power and religious infallibility of the Pope. The Lollards demanded that Christian practitioners have the liberty to conform to scriptural authority rather than human dictum. Although Wycliffe was exiled from Oxford and died a natural death, the Roman church later had his body dug up and burned in protest to his teachings. By the sixteenth century, full-blown opposition arose in Europe (Martin Luther, John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli, Menno Simmons, etc.) against all ecclesiastical authority that the protesters believed was not biblical (*Sola Scriptura*). This schism movement (Reformation) led to a full break from the Roman church and the formation of the forerunners of the present-day Protestant churches. To Luther’s horror, his ideas also emboldened the peasant classes to rise in an unsuccessful revolt against the civil authority.

- o The third ideological issue was the push for political freedom in many of the European states. In addition to the peasant uprising in Germany during the Reformation, England also experienced significant moves toward political freedom. In 1215, the English king was forced by barons and the Archbishop to sign the Magna Carta, a document that granted significant legal protection for all English freemen. In the

mid-seventeenth century in England, the middle-class citizens and 288 members of the Commons, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, led a successful civil war that temporarily abolished the monarchy in England and placed the English church and government under a rule of law that “conformed to the Word of God, and the examples of the best reformed churches” (An Encyclopedia of World History, 1948). All of these freedom movements had at their root a biblical imperative for the individual right of each “God-created” human being. As many church leaders and adherents, schooled in the Reformation and political freedom movements, left Europe and settled in the New World, they brought with them their desire for religious freedom and political autonomy. The seeds of the American War for Independence and American Constitution can be found in the Reformation and political freedom movements of England. These freedom movements, particularly those associated with the Reformation ideology, tended to counteract the development of authoritarian government and retard the rise to power of empire builders. As we will see later on, the Renaissance in France (and the rationalism of men like Rene Descartes who rejected religious authority in the quest for truth and philosophical knowledge) muted the influence of both Roman and Protestant Christianity and led to the rise of a brutal secular political autonomy that eventually handed political authority to Napoleon. So despised was the humanistic freedom movement of France by the founders of the American republic, that George Washington refused to have anything to do with the French Revolution and even banned contact with Thomas Paine because of his active involvement in the French Revolution.

- *The steady cultural, educational, scientific, and artistic advancements, and the impact of the Church on these processes.* One of the most significant contributions of the church to the advancement of society during the Middle Ages was the work done in the monasteries during the early period of the Holy Roman Empire to protect and faithfully reproduce the literature, historical writings, and scriptural texts endangered by the destruction of the libraries of the Roman Empire. From 800 until 1200 AD, it was the work of these institutions and groups (like the Benedictines) that preserved and began the recovery of much of the knowledge that had been lost with the destruction of the Roman world. By the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries (1150–1250), the scholars produced by the Church, Church orders, and monasteries began to multiply (men such as Anselm of Canterbury, often called the father of scholasticism). As they did, they began to collect students who were eager to learn from these scholarly men. These groupings of scholars and students slowly developed into universities (Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge are just a few great universities that had their beginnings during this period). While not all of the universities were founded under the direct authority of the Church, none of these universities would have formed without the profound influence of Christian educators/scholars who were part of the church/members of Church orders. Concurrent with the establishment of universities was the explosion of philosophical and scientific learning and knowledge in Europe. Fortunately for Europe, during the disruptive years at the end of the Western Roman era, scientific and philosophical knowledge survived and flourished in the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic world. The Islamic world's leadership in philosophy, science, mathematics, and medicine during the early Middle Ages was significant. However, as the Islamic world turned away from the philosophy and

science of earlier years and focused on literature and religious studies, it gradually lost its edge in scholarship. The intellectual advances they had made slowly made its way back to Europe as the institutions of learning were reestablished throughout the European continent. The thirteenth to sixteenth centuries saw the likes of St Thomas Aquinas (theology), Robert Grosseteste and Francis Bacon (scientific method), William Ockham (Ockham's razor, a problem-solving principle), Copernicus (universe model), Michael Servetus (anatomy), and William Gilbert (magnetic field). The real explosion in science began in the seventeenth century (1600s) when Kepler, Galileo, Napier, Boyle, Hook, Newton, and many, many more of the greatest scientists of all time began to expand the horizons of scientific knowledge. It was during this century that we see the beginnings of the Royal Society and publication of reviews on scientific issues. The work of these men laid the foundation for the amazing work of modern science. It is fair to say that most of the scientists of this era were Christian. It is also fair, but sad to say, that the Roman church (and later the Protestant churches) were an impediment to the work of many of these men (such as Galileo). Clearly, Christian enlightenment and Christian universities and educational institutions had driven men to discover and investigate their universe. However, the Church resisted any understanding of science that conflicted with a narrow world-view founded on a literal understanding of the biblical concepts. Sadly, this narrow worldview remains alive today in some of the modern evangelical movements of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Regardless of the opposition by the organized church, it was clearly the influence of Christianity that led to the formation of the university system and to the explosion of scientific knowledge in the mid-to-late period of the Holy Roman Empire. Christianity also had a

profound impact on the development of art in the Middle Ages and early Modern Era. Beginning in the sixteenth century with men like Raffaello, Bosch, Michelangelo, and Leonardo De Vinci and men like Rembrandt and Vermeer in the seventeenth century, art experienced a renaissance. Anyone who has visited the museums and the antiquities of Europe can attest to the overwhelming Christian content of the art produced during this period. Some historians cry foul and claim that the Church protected its art while secular art was more prone to be lost. Even if this were true, it would not significantly change the overwhelming impact Christianity had on art and artists. Finally, music also experienced a renaissance during this later part of the Middle Ages. Starting with great composers like Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach in the seventeenth century and continuing into the next century with Mozart and Beethoven, the chorals, requiems, and pieces like the Messiah all revolved around Christian themes. All of these cultural advances are considered part of the Renaissance Period that is historically defined as between the late fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. While most of these advances reflected the deeply held Christian worldview, the Renaissance advances in philosophy and politics were not as favorable to Christianity. The Renaissance ushered in the ideas of Rationalism and Humanism/Empiricism. Rationalism attempted to establish knowledge by the primary/sole use of reason (rather than revealed truth). Humanism and Empiricism all relied on experience to find knowledge. Both attacked the idea that truth was absolute and could be found in revelation. This renaissance in philosophy (and the development of modern secularism) played a significant role in political movements in the modern age like the French Revolution, Nazi National Socialism, Communism, Marxism, and the current form

of Progressivism driving present-day American secular politics.

In conclusion, it is fair to state that contrary to what is often taught about the Middle Ages and the common reference to a portion of this period as the Dark Ages, examination of the steady advancement of culture, art, science, and education reveals a far more positive picture of this period. The advances that were made during the Modern Age, which is traditionally listed as the beginning in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth Century (1750s to 1800), would not have been possible without the *solid foundation* laid by the Middle Ages. Finally, as we examine this period from the perspective of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, it is important to understand that the 1000-year period of the Holy Roman Empire is a period during which Christianity flourished. The satanic influences/attempt to destroy God's people and message (what we observed in previous empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) were *restrained*. No major emperor or empire would dominate western civilization until the arrival of Napoleon at the beginning of the nineteenth century (1800).

The Prophetic Churches of the Middle Ages. Returning to the seven churches of John's Revelation, we left off earlier with Pergamos and demonstrated that it was representative of the period from 500 to 756 AD. The next three churches mentioned in Revelation are Thyatira, Sardis, and Philadelphia. Two of these represent church periods in the early and middle period of the Holy Roman Empire while the Philadelphia Church spans from the later part of this era until the early part of the Modern Era. I believe that Thyatira is representative of the Church from 756 AD (beginning of the Holy Roman Empire) to 1225 AD.

- Thyatira—This church is commended for their works, love, service, faith and endurance...more in later times than at first. But, they have let “Jezebel” seduce/mislead them to idolatry and ultimately adultery against God. God says those who promote pagan religious ideas with “Jezebel” will suffer great trouble resulting in the death of many, including their children. The result will be that they will realize that God is sovereign.

From the period 756 AD until 1275 AD, the Church (and specifically the Roman church) took two decisively different directions. By 1100 AD Christianity was successfully spread from the old areas of the Roman Empire to all of modern Europe (including Norway, Sweden, all of the British Isles, and all the way to the Volga River in Russia). This work was accomplished by the shoe-leather work of monks, priests, and missionaries. Considering the remoteness of much of northern Europe, this was a significant effort. It was also during this period that we observe the development of the Waldensians. Their insistence on the use of scripture as the primary source for worship and church life was a cause of great friction with the Papacy. In the later part of this Church period, St. Francis of Assisi began his preaching and ministry of love and service to the poor and downtrodden. At the end of this period we see the preaching and ministry of St. Dominic in Spain and France to correct false teachings (particularly against the heresy of the Cathari). Unfortunately, all of these movements were negated by the hierarchy of the Roman church. The Waldensians were dealt with by force of physical attack when the Pope instigated a crusade against this sect. The Franciscans were made an order of the Roman church, but were taken away from the intended goals of Francis (Francis left the new order and went to Egypt for the remainder of his life) and were denied the right to preach,

only being permitted to beg and exist as an order of poverty. The Dominicans were also eventually made an order of the church but were redirected from preaching and missionary work to the establishment of monasteries and the intellectual work of teaching and study at the emerging universities of Europe. The Dominicans were even used for the inquisitions in Spain, something most historians believe Dominic would never have authorized. It is fair to say that the truth of the Christian gospel and the ministry at the *grassroots* level spread Christianity throughout Europe *despite* the actions of the church leadership. At the ecclesiastical level, the church took a completely different direction. From the time of the agreement between the church and state (the Holy Roman Empire), the position of Pope became more and more a secular seat of power. The Popes were involved in open warfare with the Holy Roman Emperors (Henry IV), directed the Crusades both militarily and philosophically, and by the time of Innocent the III (1198–1216), the Papacy reached the summit of worldly power (becoming the most powerful sovereign in Europe). On one hand, the Holy Roman Empire helped spread the gospel throughout Europe. On the other hand, it put the church in an incestuous relationship with the state (monarchies) that led to the corruption of the Papacy. Just as the heathen Jezebel's marriage had corrupted the nation of Israel and led wicked Ahab to grievous sins against God, the marriage of church and state led to the corruption of the Papacy and destruction of the spiritual nature of the ecclesiastical leadership of the church.

One of the *inadvertent* results of the corruption of the ecclesiastical leadership of the church was great death across Europe. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the church was responsible for a number of crusades against Jerusalem and the Muslim populations in the Middle East (eight in all). These resulted in a significant number of deaths of those who participated in the Crusades. But even more

significant, was the fact that the Crusades opened up the opportunity for new trade with an area that was isolated since the fall of Rome. Merchants from Italy settled in these areas and reestablished the old trade route known as the Silk Road. Unfortunately, one of the first things that traveled this newly open trade route was the Black Plague. In the early fourteenth century (early 1300s after the end of this church period), it was this route that brought the plague to Europe, resulting in the death of between 30 percent to 60 percent of all men, women, and children living in Europe. I am not implying that the Roman church is responsible for the Black Plague—nor did God cause the Black Plague. However, it should remind the Church that a spiritual relationship with God is of greater importance than the transience of our physical existence or the importance of ecclesiastical power. Truly this period is representative of the description of the church at Thyatira. The next church we will examine is Sardis.

- Sardis—Christ calls this church *dead*. He acknowledges that there are some who are faithful, “You have a few who have not defiled their garments,” but otherwise it is a church in total decline.

I believe that Sardis represents the Church from 1225 AD until 1517 AD. Already suffering from severe authoritarian ecclesiastical leadership problems, things declined rapidly starting in 1227 with the ascent of Pope Gregory IX. Pope Gregory, as had his predecessor Pope Innocent III, considered the Cathari sect heretics (and by orthodox standards they were). He authorized the inquisitions to begin in Spain and southern France. Nothing good can be said about the Inquisition, it was brutal and ruthless in destroying those it saw as enemies of the Roman church. The 1300s opened with the issue of the *Unum Sanctum* (infallibility of the Pope, civil power is subject to Papal supremacy, and declaration that it was necessary to salvation for every human being to

be subject to the Roman Pontiff). Issued in 1302, this Papal decree clearly declared that anyone who was in disagreement with the Holy See in Rome was outside of the grace of God (not part of God's plan of salvation for mankind). However, the mid-portion of the 1300s, and the arrival of the Black Plague seemed to have caused a significant change in church oversight. While historians say little about the impact of the plague on the church, I would like to suggest that it might have been the cause of the increase in lay leadership control and greater reliance on scripture rather than ecclesiastical pronouncement. The plague resulted in a significant loss of priests and ecclesiastical leadership of the church and to fill this gap, lay leaders of the Christian community increased. John Wycliffe, a philosopher and lay leader in the church in England, had his primary impact on Christianity during this period. John Huss (also called Jan Hus) of Poland became a disciple of Wycliffe. Although Hus was a priest, he was primarily an educator and after his death it was the lay leaders that continued his reforms. From 1378 to 1417 AD, the Papacy literally split between two political factions with a Pope in Avignon, France and a Pope in Rome. The fights between Popes and civil princes and kingdoms across Europe continued. The persecution of Wycliffe (mentioned earlier) and the execution of John Huss (a disciple of Wycliffe from Prague who preached the primacy of scripture and declared that Christ was the head of the true Church and not the Pope) alienated Christians who were blessed by these men's emphasis on the truth of scripture. Most egregious during this period was the selling of indulgences for forgiveness. Begun earlier in church history, it was sanctioned by the writings of Aquinas, opposed by John Huss, and came to a head with the posting of Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses against such excesses in 1517. The impact of Thomas Aquinas during this period cannot be dismissed. Rather than saying that man must reject attachment to this world (as Augustine

had taught in the *City of God* and other writings), in order to reach God, Aquinas argued that by fully understanding the workings of this world, one can attain knowledge of God. While Augustine believed that the physical world system (not physical matter) is a gateway to corruption and a roadblock in the spiritual path to salvation, Aquinas taught that God manifests himself through all worldly things and can be most easily found within the world of man. Aquinas rejected the spiritual dualism of Augustine and fully supported the right of the Pope to make the reason of man and pronouncements of the church equal with the scriptures. Clearly scripture teaches that nature can teach us about God since it is His good creation. However, when it came to issues of *faith*, the reformers would declare *Sola Scriptura* (scripture alone). In conclusion, the period from 1225 AD until 1517 AD, was the most corrupt time for the Roman church and a period in which those true believers connected to Christ in faith suffered the most opposition. The next church during this period was the church at Philadelphia.

- Philadelphia—Probably the most faithful of the churches, like Smyrna, received no warning. Christ has set an open door before them and they have obeyed his Word and not denied His name. Christ acknowledges that even in this church, there are those who are believers in name only (synagogue of Satan) and they will be purged/punished.

I believe this represents the Church from 1517 AD until 1920 AD. This church had its beginnings in the late Middle Ages and continued through much of the Modern Age. During the first 200 year period of this Church, we observe the Protestant Reformation, the Counter Reformation of the Catholic church, the publication of scriptures in common languages, the spread of the Church to the new world and to every colony of the European powers, and the beginning of

the great missionary efforts that will characterize the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Beginning with the nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg, men like Martin Luther and those reformers who would follow his lead, declared that scripture alone was the authority in matters of faith. It is important to note that Luther did not intend to sever his relationship with the Roman church. However, he did so in order to remain true to what he believed is the truth of the Christian scriptures. We would be remiss to not mention that the providential timing of the inventing of the printing press (Gutenberg Press in 1453), allowed for the printing of tens of thousands of books by the time of the Reformation. Luther translated the scriptures into common German and published it during his lifetime. King James of England authorized the translation and publication of the King James Bible in 1604 (after the publication of two previous English versions in the 1500s). Putting scripture into the common people's language was a two-edged sword. For the most part it was good in that it provided Christians the ability to search the scriptures and confirm that the teachings of the organized church were truly God's revealed intentions for mankind. On the other hand, it also put the scriptures in the hands of those who would use it for personal gain and in the hands of those who would twist spiritual truth by a Pharisaical literal interpretation of biblical truths. However, I believe it is fair to conclude that making the scriptures available to all mankind led to the spiritual rebirth of the Christian Church. The other significant event of this period often overlooked by Protestants, was the Counter Reformation of the Catholic church. This event, initiated by the Council of Trent, led to scholastic reforms to ensure education of priests in scriptural truths, the returning of Orders to their spiritual roots, spiritual movements to emphasize the relationship of the Christian with Christ, and some ecclesiastical reforms in Rome. Finally, this Philadelphia period is characterized not

only by spiritual renewal, but also by the open door that Christ sets before them. Starting in the 1500s and picking up steam in the 1600s, the nations of Europe established new settlements in the New World and Australia and colonized many existing territories in the less-developed world (Africa, India, Asia, and the Pacific Rim). Everywhere the flags of Europe went, the Christian faith spread. Catholicism captured much of Central and South America, while Protestants primarily impacted North America, Australia, and India. Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Rim were equally impacted by both Catholics and Protestants. These missionary efforts by both the Catholic and Protestant churches, resulted in the establishment of missionary outposts in nearly every corner of the globe. God had not only provided his Word for Christians to read and understand, but he had also provided an open door to take the gospel to the world. The second phase of the church at Philadelphia has occurred during the Modern Age. In the Americas, it was characterized by several spiritual “Great Awakenings.” The first occurred in the early to mid-1700s and was led by such men as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield. In Europe and England the movement was called the Evangelical (Holy Club) movement, and it involved men such as Charles and John Wesley. Subsequent awakenings (a religious revival or call back to true faith) occurred in the early 1800s and spawned such organizations as the Abolition Movement in the United States, the work of William Wilberforce in England to abolish the slave trade, and in the mid-1800s, the founding of the Salvation Army by William Booth. The last awakening in the late 1800s resulted from the evangelistic preaching of men like Dwight L. Moody. All of these movements had their roots, not just in the churches, but also in the educational institutions. Jonathan Edwards served as the president of Princeton for a short period prior to his death. The Oxford movement in England occurred among the students and faculty of Oxford University. The awakenings also spawned the beginning of a

significant number of Christian institutions of higher learning in the United States. The final portion of this period is characterized by the sending of missionaries worldwide. David Brainerd became a missionary to the Native Americans in the mid-1700s. Hudson Taylor was an Englishman who had a profound impact on China in the 1800s and helped found the China Inland Mission. William Carey ministered in India. Adoniram Judson was the first missionary to reach the jungles of Burma. In the early 1900s, the Englishman Oswald Chambers worked with the YMCA and with the British Expeditionary Force in Egypt to reach men with the gospel. The period of the Church of Philadelphia ends with the penetration of modernism into the Christian Church in the early twentieth century. Modernism questioned the truth of scripture and led to the injection of man's rational philosophical ideas as a better source of truth. By the 1920s, economic expansion in the West, the prevalence of modernism in the Church, the growth of skepticism in the educational community, and the explosion of Communistic thought worldwide, contributed to the decay of Christianity and the end of this Church period.

The Modern Age and the Prophecies of Daniel. Pinning down the beginning of the Modern Era from a historical perspective is a little like pinning the tail on the donkey. Historians are all over the page, setting it from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. So, I feel little fear in picking my own date and events for this era. I believe that the Modern Era begins with the end of the Holy Roman Empire and the beginning of the first real worldwide war in 1756 AD. As we noted earlier, the Holy Roman Empire can be dated as starting with the Donation of Pepin in 756 AD or with the church reciprocal coronation of Charlemagne in 800 AD. This marriage of church and state ended either with the beginning of the Seven Years War in 1756 AD or with the last crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1800 AD (In Feb

1801, Francis II of Austria, the last Holy Roman Emperor, capitulated most of his power and authority to Napoleon of France in the Treaty of Luneville). It is my opinion that this 1000-year period of the Holy Roman Empire is the “gap” between the fall/decline of the old Roman Empire in early eighth century and the next kingdom mentioned by Daniel as beginning in “the end of years” in Daniel 11:6. I also believe that this 1000-year period is representative of the 1000 years mentioned in Revelation and the New Testament during which Satan is restrained from deceiving the nations (prevented from developing a worldwide empire that would oppose God). Let’s pick up the story again in the book of Daniel. From Daniel 11:6 to Daniel 11:45 we observe a series of kings/kingdoms referred to by Daniel, using the terms “southern kingdoms” and “northern kingdoms.” As we proceed further into the chapter and examine the meaning of these kingdoms we will find (as mentioned earlier) that this is not only a geographic reference, but it also signals a difference in the nature and worldview of these kingdoms (as described earlier in Daniel 2 as partly clay and partly iron feet).

Daniel now sees the following kingdoms (Note: words used to describe the verses of Daniel 11 in this chapter are a *paraphrase* of the King James and the Hebrew Interlinear Bibles):

- Daniel 11:6—In the end of years as kingdoms and peoples make alliances, a daughter of a kingdom of the south makes an agreement with a kingdom of the north, which will result in a conflict in which she, and all (implying many) of those aligned with her, as well as the king of the north with whom she makes the agreement, will *not* profit from the situation.

Historical Interpretation. In 1740, with the death of Charles VI (the Holy Roman Emperor), the male line of the Hapsburgs ended. Charles, in a bid to keep the line in his

family, issued the “Pragmatic Sanction.” He declared his daughter, Maria Theresa, to be his rightful successor to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This arrangement was unacceptable to several male claimants to the throne and to the other male rulers of Europe. The result was the Austrian War of Succession (1740) and two Silesian Wars (1740 and 1744), which were opportunistic grabs by Frederick the Great of Prussia (a ruler from the Hohenzollern line) to gain permanent control of Silesia. In the middle of these three wars, in a bid to secure her throne, Maria did two things: she advanced Francis I (her husband from Lorraine and also the Grand Duke of Tuscany) as the legitimate Holy Roman Emperor, and she also went to Frederick the Great of Prussia to make a treaty. This agreement was the Treaty of Breslau, a document that confirmed Frederick’s acknowledgment of the Pragmatic Sanction while also confirming Austria’s recognition of Prussia’s claim on Silesia (southern Germany/western Poland). Because of the numerous alliances and separate treaties that existed in Europe at this time, the events surrounding the Pragmatic Sanction morphed from a war over Maria’s ascension into a worldwide war (many historians believe this is the first real world war), beginning with the outbreak of the French and Indian War in America in 1756. This Seven Years’ War (1756–1763), was fought between the French and British in America, globally between France and England at sea, between the European powers in the Third Silesian War on the continent, and in Asia and the Indian Subcontinent as the Carnatic War. This war involved nearly every kingdom in Europe and resulted in over a million deaths worldwide. It accomplished little because most of the prewar boundaries remained the same and the agreements of the original Treaty of Breslau (reconfirmed in the Treaty of Ais-la-Chapelle in 1748), were maintained in the Treaty of Hubertusburg/Paris Treaty ending the Seven Years’ War. In the end, Francis I remained the Holy Roman Emperor (soon to be succeeded by

his son), and Frederick retained control of Silesia. The entangling treaties that led to this war is one of the reasons that George Washington cautioned, at his departure from office, not to become entangled in the alliances and foreign wars of Europe. What this war does represent is the beginning of the Modern Era, modern warfare, and the beginning of a series of clashes between the states of Europe desiring territorial expansion (empires). Jealous of the success and economic power of the British Colonial Empire (and its mercantile economic system), all the world's most powerful states sought territorial expansion and colonial conquests as a way of developing economic growth. Examples:

- Napoleon's creation of a continental system of trade over the conquered territories of Europe (to which he excluded England).
- Germany's grab for a colonial empire and expansion of its territorial borders in World War I after the creation of the modern German state in the late nineteenth century.
- Germany's recapture of the industrial and resource-rich Saar and Ruhr, their grab for the oil fields of Russia, and desire for naval control of the Atlantic and Mediterranean Ocean trading waterways during World War II.
- Japan's grab for the oil fields of Indonesia and desire for naval hegemony of the Pacific in World War II.
- The United States push for free markets worldwide to support its capitalistic system versus the expanding Soviet Union Block that was trying to develop a global communist system capable of feeding mother Russia during the Cold War years.
- Saddam Hussein's grab for the oil-rich Kuwait.
- The radical Islamic world's push for a caliphate that would not only give them cultural and religious

hegemony but would also give the Islamic nations an economic hegemony.

Every war fought from this date forward will have at its roots the building of a territorial or global empire capable of improving the economic success of the warring countries. This is true regardless of the social order of the country. Later we will examine the Harlot of Revelation, *a figure representative of lust, greed, and power*. We read in Revelation that she rules over the kings of the world. While she represents an evil philosophical tool of Satan, which he will use to rule over the New Babylon of Revelation, she can already be observed in action with the beginning of the Modern Age and the grab for territory and power beginning with the Seven Years' War.

- Daniel 11:7–9—from the roots of this daughter will come a king who will enter the army and come into the kingdom of the north and crush them, will enter into Egypt and carry captive the treasures of Egypt (which seems to be the correct Hebrew translation), and will continue successfully more years than his adversaries. He will eventually return to his own land (a reference, repeated throughout this chapter, referring to retreat or loss of power and confinement in his own kingdom).

Historic Interpretation. In 1769, a baby boy (Napoleon Bonaparte) was born to a couple who were minor Tuscan royalty, living and working on the island of Corsica. Corsica, which had been a territory of Genoa, was ceded to France after the Seven Years War just prior to Napoleon's birth. This future French Emperor, born to minor Tuscan royalty, was truly from the roots of Maria Theresa in the sense that he came from the royal lineage of a country ruled by Maria Theresa and her husband Francis I (co-ruler with his wife of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, serving as the Holy Roman Emperor, and recognized

as the *Grand Duke of Tuscany* prior to his marriage to Maria Theresa). Napoleon grew to adulthood in Corsica while it was under French rule. He was sent to the governing nation of France by his parents at age fourteen to study French, eventually entering the military academy at the age of fifteen, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant at the young age of sixteen. Eight years after his commissioning in the French Artillery and at the still young age of twenty-four, he had risen to the rank of Brigadier General in recognition of his service in defense of Toulon during the French Revolution. His real ascent to power, however, occurred after his use of artillery to repel the royalist insurrection against the Convention and the Republic in 1795. In support of the French Republic in 1798, Napoleon led an army that invaded Egypt. Egypt was under the domination of the autocratic Ottoman Empire and his campaign in Syria and Egypt was directed against the Ottomans and in support of French trade in these areas. At his side were French doctors, historians, artisans, and nearly 167 scientists who accompanied the expedition for the sole purpose of capturing the great treasures and lessons from Egyptian antiquity. As the Hebrew translation of Daniel 11:8 says, “their cast images with vessels of their possessions ... silver and gold into exile he will bring Egypt” (The King James version indicates things were carried *into* Egypt, but as the Hebrew implies, he was bringing Egypt into exile. See the Westminster Leningrad Codex and Green’s Interlinear). This is a perfect picture of the looting of Egyptian antiquities carried out of Egypt and back to France by the 1798 French Expedition. Many of the modern museum pieces from ancient Egypt we view today in France, Europe, and America were carried back to France by Napoleon’s expedition (and then eventually sold to the world). In 1799, Napoleon seized power along with two other rulers from the Convention. By 1804, he was declared Emperor and assumed full authority for the French nation. As a respected military leader, Napoleon was able to dominate all of the powers of

Europe, defeating the British (land forces but not naval forces), Prussians, Italians, Austro-Hungarians, Russians, and Spanish, as well as many smaller states. He created a continental system within Europe that put him virtually in control of all trade in and out the European continent, which was an attempt to strangle the British Naval control of the high seas. By 1811, this “king of the south” had *repeatedly* defeated the northern kingdoms of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and virtually ruled all of Europe except England. In 1812, after Russian Tzar Alexander broke relations with France and was preparing again for war, Napoleon invaded Russia with the intent of crushing the entire nation. After seizing Moscow at great human cost, his army was left with no choice but to retreat as the Russian winter approached. The French Army would die in a brutal retreat across the Russian plains during the cold winter of 1812, and only 40,000 of the original 400,000 returned from the campaign. In 1814 after being defeated by the Allied coalition, Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to Elba, a small Tuscan island near the Tuscan coast (his own land as he was from Tuscan nobility). In 1815 during the infamous 100 days, he escaped and returned to France and led a new French Army that was crushed at the Battle of Waterloo. He was banished by the Allies to the remote island of St. Helena where he died in 1821. Clearly, the rule of Napoleon conforms to the prophecy of Daniel about this “king of the south.” It is interesting to note that Napoleon ruled his empire with both civil law and by the use of subordinate rulers he put in place over the conquered nations. In all, Italy, France, Spain, Holland, Naples, Westphalia (a created nation from parts of Germany), and Tuscany were ruled by members of the Bonaparte family (France being ruled until 1870 by a Bonaparte). As we will see in the next few verses of Daniel, when the nations of Europe again rise to worldwide warfare, they will, in a sense, be the descendants of the king of the south.

- Daniel 11:10–12—the sons, or descendants, of the king of the south will be stirred to action and assemble great forces. And one will start a war (overflow and pass through). Then will he (king of north) be stirred up to fight. And the king of the south shall become furious and will go to fight against the king of the north. The king of the north will raise a great host but it shall be given into the king of the south's hand. And the king of the south will defeat the host, but myriads will die (fall). The heart of the king of the south shall be exalted, but he will not prevail or benefit from the situation.

Historical Interpretation. This story starts after the demise of Napoleon and as early as 1873. The mid-nineteenth century had seen the decline of the Ottoman Empire and as a result, the Balkan states of Europe had become the pawns between the Austrians, Russians, and Turks (the former Ottoman Empire). An 1873 insurrection in Bosnia-Herzegovina, followed by an insurrection in Bulgaria in 1876, led to aggressive warfare against these states by the Turks. When Serbia entered the war, they were completely defeated and invaded by the Turks. Serbia was a strong ally of Russia (both were Eastern Orthodox), and Russia entered the war against Turkey in 1877. By 1878, Turkey had been defeated by the Russians and appealed to the British and Austrians for help in negotiating an end to the short war. One outcome of the war was that the Austro-Hungarian Empire received a mandate to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina. This did not sit well with the Serbians who had aspirations for the dominance of their region. By 1914, and after several more conflicts, Austria retained possession of Bosnia-Herzegovina. During this thirty-six-year period, a triple alliance developed between Austria, the newly organized and expanded German State (the Hohenzollern; Wilhelm II

ruled this new Germany), and Italy, the same alliance that would exist until Italy abandoned it in 1915 and joined the Allies during World War I. On June 28, 1914, the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand visited Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina and was assassinated by a Bosnian national sympathetic to, and operating under, Serbian authority. One month later, Austria declared war on Serbia. All of the European states began to mobilize for war and Russia (a Serbian ally) moved troops to its border. Germany—an Austrian ally, leader of the Central Powers and clearly the “king of the north” during this war—gave an ultimatum to Russia, and on August 1, 1914 declared war on Russia.

King of *North*. Remember, we said that the location of the kings is not the only measure of identifying them. Russia was part of the Allies and King of the South, yet Russia is northeast of Germany. However, Germany (and Central Powers) is definitely the more autocratic and aggressive of the combatants. The king of the north always appears more *autocratic* throughout the eleventh chapter of Daniel. Additionally, while Russia is geographically north, she allies herself with the southern and western democracies in both World War I and World War II.

Two days later, Germany declared war on France and Belgium; the British declared war on Germany the next day in support of their alliance with France. Within one month, most of the states of Europe (plus Japan) had been drawn into World War I by their various alliances. German war intentions were revealed in the “September Program” that included the annexation of territory in France, German economic and political domination of central Europe, and the creation of a

German colonial empire. A huge coalition of Allied Forces (king of the south), led by England, France, and Russia were patched together to fight against the Central Powers led by Germany. However, after three years of brutal warfare, the Germans and its fellow Central Powers had knocked Russia out of the war, fought the Allies to a stalemate at Gallipoli, bottled up Italy (who joined the war against Germany and Austria), and were occupying large portions of France. It was a different story at sea and in the colonies, where the Allies checked the Central Powers. By early 1918, the Central Powers were cut off from resupply, had become war weary, endured the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and had no more manpower available for use in changing the stalemate of the war. The entry of the United States into the war in 1917, and the infusion of new blood into the western front, was more than Germany could bear. On November 11, 1918, the Germans and the Central Powers surrendered. World War I left a staggering 16 million dead and over 20 million wounded, the worst war in the history of the world to that point (thus called the Great War). What followed was a brutal peace settlement that stripped Germany of much of its industrial assets (Alsace-Lorraine and resources of the Saar to France and the Rhineland was occupied), decimated its military, forced them to give up much of their merchant shipping, required them to pay enormous financial reparations and virtually guaranteed the eventual collapse of the German economy. While many of the Allies gloated and rejoiced over the destruction of the northern aggressor, the humiliating and destructive terms of the Versailles Treaty would directly lead to the eventual rise to power in Germany of Adolph Hitler and would not benefit the Allied powers during the worldwide economic collapse of the Great Depression. The events of World War I are a perfect parallel to the vision provided by Daniel 11:10–12.

- Daniel 11:13–19—(the reason the king of the south will not benefit) the king of the north will return and raise a host greater than the former and at the times of the end of years, he will come with an army of great equipment. Many will join the king of the north in standing against the south. And the violent members of the king of the north (English version says robbers) will attempt to establish the vision/plan, but they shall fail. The king of the north will heap up a siege and seize fortified cities. Neither the king of the south nor the chosen people will have the strength to stand. No one will be able to defeat the king of the north, and he will do as he wills and will stand in the glorious land and will wield great destruction. He will attempt to gain the whole kingdom and will be supported by upright citizens. The daughter of women will be given into his hand to destroy but she will not stand up for him. The king of the north will turn his face towards the seacoasts and shall capture many. But one of his own princes will turn against him and make his reproach cease, and he will turn inward. He will turn his face towards the fortress of his own land (to destroy it?), but he will fall and not be found.

Historical Interpretation. Within fifteen years after the end of World War I, all of Europe was in the throws of a severe depression. Germany was particularly hard hit as a result of the Versailles Treaty. In 1933, the Nazi Party and its leader, Adolph Hitler, came to power in Germany when Hitler was appointed chancellor. Hitler hated the humiliation caused to Germany by the terms of the peace settlement of 1918. He was determined to bring prosperity to German and in the process a new social order under the pagan socialistic philosophy of the Nazi Party. Because many of Germany's churches and church leaders had accepted "modernism" (a

questioning of the truth of the scriptures and all of the tenants of the Christian faith), Germany was devoid of the Christian moral and ethical fiber necessary to resist the pagan Nazi movement. By the late 1930s, Hitler had violated many of the terms of the Versailles Treaty and had built Germany (king of the north) into a formidable and rapidly modernizing military power. They were joined by Italy, Austria, Japan, and many other smaller Balkan states as the Axis Powers. Using what is known in history as Blitzkrieg, by 1942 the Germans had rapidly overrun Czechoslovakia, Poland, France, most of eastern and northern Europe, and had totally isolated England. After the defeat of France in the summer of 1940, Hitler and his chief architect Albert Speer toured the captured beautiful architectural treasures of Paris. It was also during this time that the Nazis began to implement the plan they called the “Final Solution” (a plan carried out by the violent SS community to confine and murder all of the Jewish people living in Europe—a plan that would ultimately destroy six million Jews, but in the end, would fail to achieve its objective). The Allies (king of the south) led by the British, the Russians (after being attacked by Hitler in 1942), and the United States (after being attacked by Japan in December 1941) faced the formidable task of fighting a world war on two fronts. By 1942, much of the civilized world was under the domination of the Axis Powers, and the remainder was desperately trying to resist the massive onslaught of the Germans and Japanese. Even the true Christians within Germany (both Protestant and Catholic) were unable to resist the power of the Nazis, and attempts to organize resistance (the secret opposition movement under Admiral Canaris and other prominent Germans), protect the Jews, or eliminate Hitler by force repeatedly failed. It was also during this period that the Nazis corrupted the traditional marriage relationship for women under the Lebensborn Movement (an attempt to encourage extramarital relations, even among girls as young as sixteen, to produce a

master race of Germans). In 1942, Hitler attempted to eliminate all resistance in Europe to his rule by invading Russia. By late 1943, the tide of the war had begun to turn as the Allies made significant gains worldwide. In 1944, after repeated failures by the opposition movement to eliminate Hitler, Colonel Claus Philipp Maria Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, (Graf meaning Count or Prince), attempted to kill Hitler and take control of the government with the Valkyrie Operation. It failed, resulting in the capture and deaths of the conspirators Admiral Canaris, General Beck, General Tresckow, Stauffenberg, Bonhoeffer, and many others. Hitler was never the same after this assassination attempt and began to turn his aggressive fury toward Germany, ordering the destruction of Germany's infrastructure in advance of the occupation of the country by the Allies. On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide, and his body was burned. His remains were never found. Once again, the prophecy of Daniel is an exact parallel to the events of the German nation and the history of World War II.

- Daniel 11:20—(after the above events) The king of the north will be replaced by one (implying king of south) that is an exactor of taxes in the most *glorious time of the kingdom*. He shall eventually be destroyed, but it will not occur in battle or by anger.

Historical Interpretation. At the end of World War II, there was only one truly superpower left in the world, the United States of America. Although the Russians and the Soviet Union would develop into a second superpower, that would not fully occur until the mid-1950s. Militarily, the United States was nearly unchallenged and was initially the sole possessor of atomic weapons. The explosion of wealth and prosperity in the United States after World War II was phenomenal. The United States dominated world trade, and the US dollar became the standard for international trade.

The United States military was the undisputed controller of the oceans of the world, with a Navy that was unparalleled by any nation, including the Soviets. The gold standard for the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness was the United States of America. No nation in all of human history accumulated the wealth and economic power that the United States of America possessed in the second half of the twentieth century. All of this was accomplished and financed by the collection of taxes from both businesses and from the individual citizens. April 15 of every year became the time that the dollars, which would enable the United States to achieve world hegemony, would flow into the coffers of the federal government. However, the United States did not remain unchallenged in its role as world leader for very long. By the early 1950s, the communist coalition of the Soviet Union and Communist China were well on the way to providing a serious challenge to US world leadership. That challenge would remain formidable for nearly forty years before it was ultimately replaced by the Islamic world as the chief opposition to the United States and Western democracy. The questions we must ask are: does Daniel mention the battle for supremacy among these formidable world systems of Western democracy, communism, and the Islamic world, and does it give us any information on how this “raiser of taxes” will be destroyed? I believe the answer to both of these questions is yes.

Daniel Chapter Seven. The one part of future prophecy in Daniel, mentioned earlier, that we have not yet discussed is chapter seven. The entire chapter deals with the events that will occur just prior to the second coming of Christ (that being demonstrated by verses 9–14, 22, 26–27). The chapter details three great beasts that will come up out of the sea and a fourth terrible beast that will be ruled by a “little horn” and which will replace the three horns (or kingdoms) and will have dominion over the entire earth (vs. 7–9, 23–25).

Verses 17 and 18 seem to indicate that the existence of these four beasts, and the saints of the Most High taking and possessing the kingdom for eternity, are closely related events. Even more astounding is the amazing parallel between the first three beasts and the three world philosophies that have dominated society in the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The first beast described in verse four of chapter seven was like a lion and had eagle's wings. The wings were plucked, and it was made to stand as a man, having the mind of a man. Anyone familiar with history knows that the symbol of the British Empire is the lion. It was the leadership of the English that laid the foundation for all of Western democracy (the Magna Carta, Parliamentary government, and Blackstone's laws). Everyone also knows that the symbol of the United States is the eagle. The United States is considered the cradle of modern democracy. It is also easy to compare the "change into a man standing with a man's mind" to the change of the United States from a country under constitutional law to the current state of affairs where rationalistic humanism has taken control of the US government (the *vote/poll* of the people decides right and wrong rather than the rule of law). This first beast is a perfect picture of the United States and the Western democracy that has been one of the three primary world powers for the last seventy years.

The second beast is a bear. This bear has three ribs in its mouth, and it devours much flesh. Anyone who has studied modern history also knows that the communist Soviet Union and the nation of Russia are referred to by the symbol of the bear. In fact, the Soviets even named their long-range bomber the "Bear". It is also significant to note that when communism dominated nearly a third of the world, there were three primary forms of communism: Soviet Union and its satellites, Communist China and its subordinates, and third-world communism, such as that we saw in Cuba, Central and South

America, and Africa. From the end of World War II until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990–1991, communism was the most formidable enemy of Western democracy. The Cold War (which was also sometimes hot) was waged between these two superpowers.

The third beast is the leopard. It is seen to have four wings and four heads. Again, those who study the history of the Middle East and leopards will discover that their original primary habitat was in Central Asia and northern Africa (today their numbers are strongest in the bush of Africa). The areas they originally inhabited make up most of the Muslim world today. The ancient Egyptians domesticated leopards. They appear in ancient Mesopotamian, Greek, and Persian art and a few of the depictions of Alexander the Great during his time in Persia show him with a leopard saddle and helmet covering. I believe the leopard represents the world of Islam. Just as the vision saw a leopard with four heads and four wings, Islam also has four primary branches: Sunni, Shi'a, Sufism, and Ahmadiyya. While two of these are minor sects, they are still formidable variants of the Islamic faith. The Ahmadiyya sect of India has as many as 170 million adherents, while the number of Sufi is unknown but is said to include much of the Muslim population of Turkey. It is fair to say, that both the Ahmadiyya and Sufi are more moderate in their view of relations with other people groups of the world than the Sunni and Shi'a. Nearly all the radical elements of Islam come from either the Sunni or Shi'a communities. Since 1991 (First Gulf War), Western democracy has been at war, and remains at war, with the world of Islam and the radical elements such as the Taliban, Brotherhood, ISIS and Al Qaeda.

The fourth beast revealed in Daniel chapter seven is described as a terrible beast with iron teeth and ten horns; this beast destroys and crushes with its feet. It is said to have a little horn that replaces three horns, and this little horn speaks great things against the most High. This beast will be destroyed at

the coming of the Ancient of Days and the kingdom will be given to the saints. Clearly, this beast represents the satanic kingdom we observe in Revelation, and the little horn represents the antichrist mentioned in both Revelation and Daniel and in many books of the New Testament. I believe the text conveys the concept that this beast will replace the previous three beasts and that the previous three beasts will be destroyed at the coming of this satanic kingdom (that would imply that Western democracy and the United States, communism/Russian-Chinese Socialism, and radical Islam will all give way to this new beast). With this new knowledge, let's now return to the verses of Daniel chapter eleven that we have previously been discussing.

- Daniel 11:21–28—(These verses are not easy to understand, but if we approach them from the perspective that they are revealing the relationships between the various three beasts described above, they are much easier to comprehend). In his (the raiser of taxes) place, will come a vile person who will not receive the honor of the kingdom. He will come peaceably and obtain the kingdom by the work of teachers/guides (flattery). He will overcome everyone, and even the prince of the covenant shall be broken. After the league made with him, he will work deceitfully and shall become stronger. He will take the riches of the provinces and scatter the spoils/riches among the people. He will aim his plans against the king of the south and will attack him with a great army. The king of the south will fight with a formidable army, but because of intrigue and because of the actions of those who feed on his own food, the king of south will suffer loss. Many shall fall down slain because of this cause. Both of these kings will speak lies at one table but neither shall profit from the situation. Then the king of north will return to his

own land, but his heart will remain fixed against the holy covenant.

Historical Interpretation. In 1905, a movement was started by a small group of Bolsheviks to introduce communism to Russia. By 1917, their ideas had taken sufficient hold that they were able to seize control of the government of Russia and take her out of her failing effort as part of World War I. Over the next twenty-five years, Russia went through a complete change of her social order, implementing the destruction of free enterprise, the distribution of wealth to the people, and the secularization of all elements of society. One outcome of communism was that Christianity was driven completely underground in Russia. These changes did not come by invasion or by foreign intervention; they came by homegrown ideals. By 1942, with the brutal dictator Joseph Stalin in control, Communist Russia endured attack from the Germans. As is known by most, Russia was not only able to stop the German Army but was also instrumental in their eventual defeat by the Allies. In early 1945, a conference was held in Yalta between Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill. The decisions of this conference ultimately enabled Russia to manipulate the terms of the agreement and to gain a total stranglehold on all of Eastern Europe, creating the Soviet Union (USSR). Although the Soviet Union became a member of the UN and a permanent member of the Security Council, they were never well respected by the free world, garnering fear from all non-communist states and causing a rift that led to the Cold War (never given the honor of the kingdom). While the massive Soviet Army (now king of the north) was a threat to the world, they rarely used their military power to expand communism. Instead they spread communist ideology by propaganda and education (in Asia, Africa, and the Americas). The Cold War, waged with Western democracy and the United States (king of the south), led to two major

shooting wars, the Korean War of 1950–1953 and the Viet Nam War of 1965–1973. While the Korean War was a draw that protected the free portion of South Korea but did not reunite the two Koreas, the Viet Nam War was a seven-year failure that ultimately led to the complete occupation of Viet Nam by Communist North Viet Nam. Despite numerous battlefield victories, the will of the American people to wage war in Viet Nam was systematically destroyed by the internal anti-war movement (destroyed by those who feed on his own food). On the verge of internal political chaos, the United States sought and received a peace settlement via the Paris Peace Accords. In a sense, all parties involved lied. The United States promised South Viet Nam that if the North invaded, they would return to defend the country. The communists, on the other hand, agreed not to invade the south. Two years later in 1975, South Viet Nam collapsed under the weight of a massive invasion from the North, and the United States refused to intervene, instead conducting Operations Frequent Wind and Eagle Pull that extracted all US citizens from South Viet Nam and Cambodia. The period from 1975 to 1983 was the zenith of Soviet world power. However, by the early 1980s the United States and its Western democratic allies began a military buildup and modernization (and an economic expansion) that would stagger the sluggish communist economic system as it attempted to keep pace with the West. This buildup, combined with a new information technology openness that made communist people aware of the better economic conditions abroad, led to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Today, most of the states of the former Soviet Union are independent, and the Russian state is much more of an authoritarian socialist state rather than the old communist government (in a sense the king of the north has returned to his own land).

- Daniel 11:29–30—At the appointed time, he (king of the north) shall return and come again towards the

south. However, it will not be like the former (where the king of the north had success) or like the latter (the last battle yet to come in Daniel). He will be opposed by those coming in ships from Kittim (present-day Cyprus, implying that his opposition will be coming from the sea). And he (king of the north) will return (retreat or be turned back), and he will be furious against the covenant (implying the Christian covenant and the Christian influence on Western democracy), and he will do (act again) and return (be turned back again or retreat again) and he will have intelligence (meaning to separate mentally or deceive) with those who have forsaken (or given up) the holy covenant (Christian ideals or faith).

Historical Interpretation. Immediately on the heels of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Islamic world took up the torch against Western democracy. In June of 1990, the massive Iraqi armies of Saddam Hussein (king of the north) moved south and occupied the country of Kuwait. He is reported to have been motivated by the desire to control the Kuwait oil. However, he is best known for a supreme ego that coveted power and for his desire to complete the Ba'athist Party vision of creating an Arab State that would oppose all of Western democracy. In a sense, the vacuum created by the fall of the Soviet Union provided the opportunity for the rise of the Arab world. However, Iraq's occupation of Kuwait would not succeed. In the fall of 1990, and the spring of 1991, a coalition of forces from Western democracies and even units from Eastern European countries of the old Soviet Union, launched a massive infusion of forces by ships (from the sea) into Saudi Arabia. Most people do not realize that 90 percent of all the equipment, supplies and personnel used in this war arrived in the theater from naval, commercial, and maritime prepositioned shipping. The subsequent attack

on the Iraqi Army in Kuwait resulted in a decisive defeat of Saddam Hussein, driving his forces back into Iraq. While Saddam remained in control of his country for another ten years, he was completely isolated from the rest of the Islamic world and militarily hobbled by the defeat. This crushing blow was taken by the more radical elements of Islam as a severe insult, and in the early 1990s, there was an arousal of the jihadist spirit within many radical Muslims: Al Qaeda fought against Western democracy in Somalia in 1993 (i.e., *Black Hawk Down*), the Al Qaeda-sponsored Taliban seized the government of Afghanistan, Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups struck the United States and other western European nations with horrific terrorist attacks (i.e., the attack on the World Trade Center and the Spanish train bombing), and ultimately Islamic terrorism declared all-out war on Christianity and Western democracy. However, Western democracy was able to turn back the forces of terror, using both air and sea attacks to defeat them on the battlefields of Asia and Afghanistan and concurrently use information technology to thwart other attempted acts of terrorism. In defeat, the terrorist jihadists have changed tactics and are now attempting to deceive/convince those who have mentally given up the Christian worldview among the Western democracies *that their real intentions are for freedom and peace*. They eventually turned their jihadism towards their own Islamic leadership (the Arab Spring in Libya, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, etc.) and used this Islamic Freedom Movement (Arab Spring) to try to destroy traditional Islamic leadership. The result, instead of being a birth of freedom in the Islamic world, has been the destabilization of Libya, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, and the development of the radical Arab Caliphate (ISIS). How this war between Western democracy and radical Islam will end, is a story yet to be told.

The Present Age. This brings us to the year 2014 and to our present day. We have looked at all of the prophecies of Daniel with the exception of the second half of the seventy weeks of Daniel (7 weeks after the 62 weeks) and the last few verses of Chapter 11 and all of chapter 12. In my opinion (and the opinion of many Bible scholars), these remaining prophetic events will occur during the end of the age, the time of trouble—the time just prior to the return of Christ. It also brings us to the last church of the book of Revelation.

- Laodicea—Christ, in addressing this church, calls Himself the Amen (meaning so be it—or the end of a matter), and He says that when examining their works, they are neither cold nor hot. Because they are lukewarm, He will vomit them out of His mouth. He tells them they think they are rich and in need of nothing, and as a result do not realize how spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked they are. He cautions them to buy the “true” gold and to repent. Finally he tells them He stands at the door knocking (ready to enter).

I believe that the church at Laodicea represents the modern-day Church of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The quantity of wealth and the widespread distribution of wealth in our age is beyond comparison to any previous period of history (I acknowledge that there still remains widespread poverty; however, the total worldwide wealth exceeds anything in the history of mankind). This obsession with wealth is not just confined to the world, it has thoroughly infected the Church. It is not just wealth that is the problem; it is the love or lust for wealth. First Timothy 6:10 says that the love or coveting of money is the root of all evil. James 4 tells us that all the wars and differences that cause division among people come from the lustful desire to covet. We covet because of our lustful desire to have whatever

is our hearts' desire. God calls this adultery or harlotry. I believe this is what Christ is referring to when He tells the church at Laodicea that they believe they are rich and in need of nothing (I also believe this is the same Harlot that rules over the Babylon of Revelation). This harlotry or lust has turned the heart of the true Church from a trust relationship with Christ to a more intellectual Christianity. We "believe" without really trusting or having faith in the sovereignty of God. This intellectual Christianity has also led many in the Church to question all ideals or biblical concepts that do not conform to their personal desires or freedom. This started with Modernism in the early part of the twentieth century (textual criticism of the truthful reality of the Christian scriptures) and continues today into Post Modernism (dividing daily life from the Christian life and making morality and daily behavior an issue of personal decision rather than scriptural truth). As a result, many in the Church condone the idea of getting rich by nonbiblical methods as acceptable, accept the idea that marriage and sexual behavior is a personal decision and not subject to biblical standards, believe it is okay to allow the world to educate their children using secular philosophical naturalism as a basis of education, and tolerate biblically sinful ideas and practices that are harmful to our spiritual relationship with Christ. In short, the modern Church is spiritually sick and woefully ignorant of biblical and spiritual truth. Clearly, the church at Laodicea is an apt description of the modern Church.

Chapter V

Present Worldwide Conditions and the Prophecies of Revelation and Daniel



Those of us who have lived long enough are not surprised by the current condition of our world, given the changes we have lived through during our lifetime. As a Baby Boomer born right after the end of World War II, I was born into a world in which the Christian worldview was the normative view in Western civilization. It was an exhausted world, gasping for peace after six long years of world war. It was also a Western world on the verge of an astounding explosion in technology and economic prosperity. The first twenty years of my life would see constant growth in the standard of living for families throughout the westernized world. Transportation modes would soon permit same-day worldwide travel, and by the early 1960s, plans were underway for the first trip to the moon. The Green Revolution was well underway in third world countries (an increase in agriculture output enabled by new found sources of water and fertilizer). Communications were on the verge of near-instant worldwide messaging. There was a huge explosion of knowledge about the current events and conditions in other countries of

the globe. Leisure time and recreational activities abounded. All of this paled in comparison to the surge in information technology the world would experience in the latter half of the twentieth century and the early portions of the twenty-first century. Life was truly good: we were prospering, and we were assured by our Church teachers that we would be “raptured” from Planet Earth before the evil times forecast in Biblical prophecy. As one of my college professors said, “I cannot think of a better time in history to live.”

But all was not as it seemed on the surface. With technology came problems. The world population was exploding, and we now believe that by the year 2030, we will have 9 billion people on a planet incapable of feeding and caring for that number of humans. Many scientists believe a long-term, sustainable population for earth is about 2 to 2 ½ billion, and when the planet reaches 9 billion, as much as a *third* of the population of the world will be starving or malnourished. At the same time, we are experiencing a not-insignificant climate increase in temperature and greater damage and loss of life from natural disasters due to concentration of large population centers in the coastal areas. There are also increased levels of pollution in numerous major metropolitan areas that exceed the level considered healthy for humans, and a decreasing supply of fresh water for much of the world as the old earth aquifers are depleted. Water shortage driven reductions in farming of arid sections of the world have created a corresponding mass starvation in portions of Asia and Africa. We are experiencing pollution of a significant number of the world’s watersheds and oceans, the destruction of the coral reefs, a reduction in fish populations and harvestable fish species, with a corresponding reduction in the world’s fishing fleets. With the devastation of the bee and butterfly populations that pollinate our crops, a looming worldwide restriction on carbon-based fuels and fossil fuel produced electricity, a significant deforestation worldwide (leading to

climate fluctuations due to a lack of planet cooling by the rain forests) and the end of the agricultural green revolution, we are rapidly creating a situation that is making life, as we have known it in our western civilization, unsustainable on the earth of the future. If we take the time to understand the earth-changing events described by Christ in the first four Trumpets of Revelation, we should not be surprised by these conditions. As we discussed earlier, Christ told us that these events would transpire in the worldly kingdom.

- An Angel, representing the Holy Spirit, reveals that one-third of the earth's trees will be destroyed causing deforestation of major parts of the earth (first Trumpet);
- We are told that one-third of the sea life will die/be depleted and at the same time there will be a loss of one third of the ships (fishing fleets?) (second Trumpet);
- It is revealed that one-third of the water supplies and rivers will be polluted (third Trumpet); and
- It is revealed that one-third of the atmosphere will be polluted, causing obscuring of the skies (fourth Trumpet),

At the same time these environmental changes are occurring, we are also experiencing unimaginable changes in the world social order. When I entered the sixth grade in 1958, I attended a public school that began each day with a “word of the day” and “prayer” over the loudspeaker system, and I sat under teachers who not only used the Christian scriptures in the classroom but also discussed Christian ethics. Little did I know that cases were moving through the court systems (filed in 1957–1958) that would result, by decree of the US Supreme Court in 1962–1963, in the banning of both public prayer and public Bible reading (*Engle vs. Vitale* and *Abington School District vs. Schempp*). In essence, the

US Supreme Court created a wall of separation between the church and state that secularized public schools. They did not just ban mandated religion; they began a process that has driven Christian thought and ethics out of our educational process and the public square. By 1965, in the case *Griswold vs. The State of Connecticut*, the court ruled that personal freedom trumped the right of a state to establish a moral code (countering the right of the state to control the sale of contraceptives to singles). This ruling emphasized that privacy and freedom of control over one's personal life was more important than a state-mandated moral code. It was this ruling concerning "personal freedom" that was the foundational *supporting case* for the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision, that banned government restrictions on abortion. (Since that ruling, over 55 million US children have been destroyed prior to birth). At the same time, Western civilization experienced a wave of freedom movements that resulted in the sexual revolution, the deemphasis of marriage, the breakdown of the traditional family, open drug use (even legalization by 2014), and open rebellion against any restriction on personal freedoms. In the United States these pushes for secular freedom have driven a Progressive agenda in our political and legal system that is mandating moral, ethical and religious policies that most Christians believe infringe upon religious rights. As biblically defensible Christian teachings collide with secular calls for *no* restraints on personal freedom, it increasingly appears that the Church is losing the battle.

Many believe we have created a world that complies with the fifth Trumpet of Revelation where Satan (Apollyon) and his angels, are permitted to mentally torment those who do not have faith in Christ, for a period of time after their release from their binding in the bottomless pit (see Rev 9:1–12). This highly figurative picture in Revelation tells us that Satan's army has power to torment mankind with a scorpion like fever, creating a total inability to think rationally—total

madness. I believe this madness is the secular lie that Satan has foisted on western civilization that *all creation exists from natural causes and that there is no Creator nor is there any purpose or reason for our existence (philosophical naturalism)*. Scripture says that Satan will torment for 150 days (5 months). If prophetic days are prophetic years, then it would imply 150 years. That *parallels* the period of time since the beginning of the active teaching of philosophical naturalism in our institutions of higher education, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. As a result, mankind has become unconstrained by the Creator's guidelines for living. Since he was not created by God, he owes no allegiance to God and can now focus on *self* as the primary reason for existence. The consequences are predictable: an explosion of depression, despair, mental illness and insanity, an epidemic of drug use and abuse, an increase of sexual disease and sexual abuse, a destruction of marriage and the two-parent home, uncontrollable gun and gang violence among the youth, mass random shootings, wholesale destruction of the unborn, unconstrained immorality, evil practices by public officials and political authorities, mass murder by terrorist organizations, and a society that is severely lacking of any Christian influence or Christian ethical thought (or for that matter, a true noble purpose for living). Revelation even says those who are tormented will seek death, something we see happening with the alarming increase in suicides.

If all I have said above is accurate, then we are at a point in history where civilization has lived through the first five Seals and the first five Trumpets (the coming sixth Seal and the sixth Trumpet being part of the great time of trouble), and is on the verge of a war on the Church (the war between the Church and Satan's kingdom discussed in chapters 11, 12, and 13 of Revelation). In other words, we are on the brink of the revealing of the most evil time in the history of mankind. That would also imply that we are near to the time of

the unveiling of the one who will oppose himself to God—the person referred to as the antichrist. It would also appear from all we have just discussed, that Satan, contrary to being in “Check” (as we saw with previous kingdoms), is on the verge of turning defeat into victory.

The Antichrist and the Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Both Daniel and Revelation provide a detailed picture of a *literal person* identified as the antichrist. While many have attempted to spiritualize this person as figurative, I believe the totality of scripture and the fact the New Testament refers to him as “that man of sin” (II Thess. 2), clearly indicates it is a literal being. In scripture, he is referred to as the little horn, a beast with two horns that speaks like a dragon, the False Prophet, the prince of the people who will usher in the final period of history, and in the New Testament the son of perdition, the one who opposes and exalts himself above God, the one who claims to be God. Clearly the antichrist will be a man totally controlled by Satan. Some theologians have attempted to make a distinction between the above individuals, claiming that the false prophet and the antichrist are different people. I am not in agreement with this concept and believe scripture substantiates that the False Prophet and the Antichrist are one and the same person. According to Revelation 19 and 20, Christ will only destroy and cast into hell three things: (1) the Beast out of the sea (Satan’s kingdom and world system), (2) the False Prophet (which I believe is also the beast out of the earth...the antichrist), and finally (3) Satan himself. If there were a separation between the False Prophet and the antichrist then God would have mentioned the destruction of an additional person in these chapters.

As we discussed earlier in chapter III of this book, there is a distinct difference in the two parts of the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel chapter 9. As we saw, the sixty-two weeks (434 years), was a perfect fit for the coming of the Messiah

(Jesus Christ). That being true, then what does the seven weeks (or 49 years) refer to? As you recall from the discussion in chapter III of this book, the second portion of the prophecy refers to when Christ makes an end of all things and brings in everlasting righteousness. We also see in Daniel 9:25 that the second person in the seventy-week prophecy is referred to as “the prince.” Many Bible scholars and scriptural translators have attempted to make the Messiah and the prince the same person. However, when we examine the word used here for prince, and look at the word for prince used in verse 26 to refer to the antichrist, we gain a different view. The Hebrew concordance word for prince in chapter 9 is number 5057 in Strong’s Concordance. This word means a commander. It is only used a few times in the Old Testament and is used in *every* context to refer to an *evil prince* or *one who exalts himself against God*. In I Kings, it is used to refer to Jeroboam, the commander who took the ten tribes of Israel away from Judah and into pagan worship, and he was chastised by God for idolatry and for casting God behind his (Jeroboam’s) back. It is also used to refer to Job when he exclaims to God “that as a prince would I come near unto him (God).” In the next seven chapters, God severely chastises Job for his arrogance, resulting in Job proclaiming that he would put his hand to his mouth and speak no more. It is used in Proverbs to refer to an evil prince who lacks understanding. It is used *specifically* in Ezekiel 28 to refer to the prince of Tyrus who is a type/picture of Satan and Satan’s antichrist. Finally, it is used in verse 26 of Daniel 9 to refer to the coming prince or antichrist. This begs the question as to why, then, would God use this term to refer to the Messiah (Jesus Christ) in verse 25? For all of the reasons discussed here, I believe the prince in verse 25 of Daniel 9 and the Messiah in verse 25 are two distinct persons. That being true, then the command to restore Jerusalem (or as I believe, to restore Jerusalem as

the capital/Israel as a nation), the seven weeks (49 years), and the coming prince must all be related events.

So, when was a command given to restore Israel as a nation and to designate Jerusalem as a city representative of Judaism? The only command I am aware of, recreating the nation of Israel, is the one given in November of 1947 by the United Nations when they created a Jewish state in Palestine for Israel and declared Jerusalem as a neutral city under international mandate (representative of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism). If we apply this prophecy to that command, it brings us to *November of 1996*. A second possible date for the command is June of 1967. Israel had declared the western part of Jerusalem its capital in 1950, but the eastern part (old city) remained under Palestinian rule. During the Six Day War in 1967, Israel seized Jerusalem, unified east and west Jerusalem, and declared it under Israeli authority and under Israeli law. Forty-nine years after June of 1967 would be *June of 2016*. Does that mean that the antichrist came in 1996 or is coming in 2016? Certainly there was no fanfare in 1996, declaring his arrival. However, if we compare it to the coming of Christ, except for a small handful of people, no one knew the Messiah had arrived at his birth in 9 BC. He was not revealed until nearly *thirty-five years* later when his ministry began in 27 AD. I believe we can conclude, if this prophetic interpretation is correct, that either 1996 or 2016 refers to either a time the antichrist was or will be born, or perhaps a time he began or will begin to come of age as an adult, or perhaps a time he began or will begin to come to a position of power. Scripture tells us that eventually this individual will give himself over to Satanic control, and at that time his actions will reveal who he truly is (II Thess. 2).

Only time will tell if this interpretation of Daniel is accurate. We have no right nor should we speculate that an individual is the antichrist (that got the Christian Church in real trouble during World War II). Second Thessalonians chapter

2 clearly talks about the coming of the antichrist, the character he will exhibit, and the fact that Christ will destroy him at his second coming. Christ will not return until the antichrist is revealed, and the antichrist will not be revealed until God ceases to restrain him and permits his rise to power (II Thess. 2:6–7). When he does arrive, we will clearly know him by his evil actions and declarations. So, let's not speculate. *However, if this prophecy and this interpretation is true, the time of great evil on Planet Earth is very, very near.* This prophecy, if interpreted correctly, stands as a “harbinger” and severe warning to the church at Laodicea that the judgment time is very near.

So how will we recognize the antichrist and the end of the age? In addition to the excellent description provided in II Thessalonians 2, Daniel and Revelation provide valuable information in his identification. He is described in Daniel 7 as speaking great words against the Most High, changing laws and times, and making war with the saints and being victorious over them. In Daniel 8 he is described as magnifying himself to God and to heaven and defeating some of the host (saints/Church). It further states a host will be for him against what is the “daily or constant practice of worship” for a sinful purpose (the word *sacrifice* in the King James in Daniel 8:12 does not appear in the Hebrew text), and he will cast the truth to the ground. Daniel 9 says the people of the prince that will come (implying people of any age or period who support this godless prince) will do two things: they will destroy the city (Jerusalem) and they will destroy the sanctuary (can be *translated saints or a holy place where saints reside*—not necessarily the temple). Further, Daniel 9 says the evil prince will cause sacrifice (implying worship) and giving of holy gifts to cease, and because of abominations, he will cause desolation. I believe the first part of this passage clearly refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. I also believe the second part does *not* refer to 70 AD or the

temple but to a sanctuary or place where saints reside, that is specifically called the “sanctuary of strength” in Daniel 11:31. Where in the world is a sanctuary of strength where saints (or those made holy by the blood of the Lamb) are protected or reside? In my opinion this may be a reference to the United States of America and all of Western democracy, the traditional protector of Christians, Christian rights, and the dwelling place of a significant portion of the Church. That would also conform to the idea of the antichrist having victory or crushing control over the Church after the war he makes on them. Let’s pick up the story in Daniel 11 that we have been examining throughout this study. We left off in verses 29 and 30 with what we described as a war between Western democracy (king of the south) and Islamic terrorism (king of the north). Now we pick up verses 31 to 35.

- Daniel 11:31–35—Arms shall stand on his part and shall pollute the sanctuary of strength. They shall take away the daily (meaning daily practice of worship) and shall place the abomination that destroys. Those that oppose the covenant he will deceive by treachery, but those that know God will be strong and act (for God). Those who have understanding among the people (saints) will instruct many, but they will be martyred or driven into captivity. When they fall, they (saints) will receive some help, but much of it will be from those who have treacherous intentions. Those who fall or are martyred will be for the purpose of purging or making white the saints until the time of the end.

Historical Interpretation—The War on the Church. Since, in my opinion, most of this prophecy is a future event, it is hard to call this a historical interpretation. However, if all we have said before is correct, then this must apply to the present age in which we live. Most Bible scholars believe this

passage represents the rising of the antichrist. So do I. But, I also believe that all of what is prophesied will happen under the direct guidance of Satan himself (his kingdom being the fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7); some events in this passage will occur perhaps *even before the antichrist is revealed*. Scripture teaches that the antichrist will come to power with the support of many who stand for him. We also know from the whole body of prophecy that he will declare war on the Church. I believe that verses 31 and 32 represent this war on the Church, the same war discussed in greater detail in the middle chapters of Revelation (chapters 8–14). The passage in Daniel says he will pollute the sanctuary of strength. As I indicated before, I believe this may refer to the United States of America (remember earlier we saw that the “raiser of taxes” would be destroyed, neither in anger nor in battle). No country in the history of the world has been a harbinger of Christian faith, a protector of Christian freedoms, and a force for good like the United States has been for over 350 years. One would think that statement would be a given to those who study history. However, just the opposite is the prevailing opinion among much of the world’s populations and, amazingly, a majority of Americans. How can that be?

America is not a perfect nation. We fought a bloody Civil War to rid ourselves of the horrible scourge of slavery and have struggled for 150 years to establish equal rights and fair treatment for all races in America. We treated many of the Native American people poorly and have worked in the recent generations to make restitution for those wrongs. We were often referred to as the “ugly Americans” abroad because of our arrogance and willingness to exploit others for our economic well-being. At the same time, America willingly became the home of many immigrants who were poor and unwanted by their own countries. America gave great sums of foreign assistance that has enabled other countries to rise from third-world status to modern prosperous states. We have

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sent missionaries, doctors, aid workers, and humanitarian assistance worldwide throughout our history. America nearly single-handedly rebuilt Europe and Japan after World War II under the Marshall Plan. While it is debatable, I believe America has never sought to conquer foreign countries for the sole purpose of exploitation of those countries. America has, however, shed the blood of her sons and daughters for the purpose of freeing our own slaves, freeing enslaved people abroad, and defending the world from tyranny. Finally, America has been the world's strongest advocate for both human rights and religious rights throughout recent history. It is for this reason that I believe that the United States is the "sanctuary of strength" spoken of in Daniel.

Yet America's intelligentsia and secular humanists have spent the last 100 years rewriting history and teaching our children that America is the problem—the source of the world's problems and not the source of good. In this process, the Church and all Christians have been labeled as seamlessly *connected* with all that is bad about America and the world. In short, the Christian people who laid the ethical foundation for this nation, played such a vital role in establishing the liberties protected by our Constitution, and willingly shed their blood so that people worldwide could also enjoy these liberties are now declared the enemies of liberty—the enemies of what is good.

It is not surprising then, to see the rising hatred against Christianity and the attacks being perpetrated by our government and by the American public on Christian freedoms and rights. Every year that passes sees further restriction of Christian rights and religious liberties. I see nothing that will stem this trend as the United States abandons a theistic worldview and slips further and further into progressive secular naturalism. Here is a statement of reality: if Christians lose their rights in America, Christians throughout the remainder of the world will most certainly lose those same rights.

This passage in Daniel says the antichrist will put in place an “abomination that destroys.” It may be that this is representative of a Godless form of freedom that places self and personal freedoms above the Judeo-Christian ethic that has traditionally shaped US culture and law. In other words, the process we started in the 1960s, placing the good of the self above the revealed good of God, will come to full flowering

What could possibly be more of an abomination to God than a “Godless Secular Freedom” that results in the destruction of over 50 million unborn, corruption of the morals of our society, restriction of the rights of true Christians to live their worldview, and every individual determining for themselves what is right and wrong?

with the total destruction of any ethic or world-view based upon the existence and revelation of a Creator God.

I admit this is speculation. However, whatever the abomination is, it will totally drive God out of society. When that fully happens, we will be one step away from an all-out war on the Church. I think few would disagree with me that the law changes that have occurred in America over the past twenty years place us well on the way of making secular godlessness the law of the land. We are slowly being choked and polluted by the evil of secular philosophical

naturalism, and the process is nearly complete. Scripture also indicates this will happen with deceit or treachery. Policies that look fair on the surface will have the deceitful effect of destroying or wiping out the Christian world-view from the public square. Finally, whoever this individual is (the antichrist), he will declare a war on the saints and the Church. He will martyr many Christians, drive many into captivity or confinement, and he will accomplish this with the treacherous help of those who follow him. The net effect is that the Church will

be defeated, but not destroyed. Matthew 24 says that except this time were constrained, no one would survive, but for the elect's sake it will be shortened. Revelation chapters 11, 12, and 13 also talk about this war. It says that Satan (who was released from the bottomless pit) will be behind the war. Chapter 13 indicates the war will be perpetrated by the antichrist (Satan's mouthpiece) acting under the authority and for the satanic kingdom that will dominate the world. He will leave the Church as if it were dead. This will occur for a period of three and one half days (perhaps three and one half years?). The world will rejoice over the corpse of the Church just as Germany did over the destruction of the Jews and the confessing church of Germany. The story continues in Daniel 11:

- Daniel 11:36–38—(He, the antichrist, will now show his true colors). He will exalt himself above every god. He will speak against the God of gods. He will continue until the time of judgment. He will not regard the gods of his fathers, nor will he be swayed by desire for women, nor will he regard any god. He will magnify himself as God. He will also honor a god of a defensive or fortified place, who none of his fathers knew, with all types of precious and desirable things.

Historical Interpretation. Clearly this refers to a satanically indwelt being whom we refer to as the antichrist. He will show himself to be the incarnate God instead of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. He will be so deceptive that Matthew 24 tells us he could even deceive the elect if that were possible. His reign will be short. In Daniel chapter 9, the scripture implies it will be for a period of one week of seven days or seven prophetic years. What we do not know is how long the period between the beginning of his ascent to power and his declaration of himself as God will be. What we do know from Revelation is that his initial seat of power will be a place

called Babylon. This Babylon will be ruled over by a Harlot that represents the philosophy of lust, desire, and greed for wealth and self that we discussed earlier. So, scripture tells us what is coming, but we do not know how nor the exact date when all of this will be accomplished. However, Jesus said in Matthew 24 (see also Mark 13 and Luke 21) that when we see the tender leaves on a tree, we know summer is near—even at the door. In like manner He said, when we see all things occur (the things we have discussed in this chapter of this book), know that He (Christ) is even at the door. He tells us this generation (the generation that is experiencing all these events) will not pass until *all* prophetic events are fulfilled.

Chapter VI

The End of the Story



It would be tempting for me to go through the remaining portions of Daniel and the last sections of Revelation that discuss the rule of Satan, a time of great trouble for the Church commonly referred to as the Tribulation, the relationship between the antichrist and Satan, the final battle between Good and evil, and the final judgments of God revealed in those texts. However, that goes well beyond the purpose of this book. I will refer those interested to Appendices B and C (that discuss Revelation and Daniel) and to other writers who excel in looking into the looking-glass of the future.

Here is the end of the matter: God wins—*Checkmate!* The last chapter of Daniel and the last section of Revelation discuss the *victory of God* over the satanic kingdom, the antichrist, and Satan. It discusses the victory of the Church over its enemies. It discusses the marriage of the Lamb, the uniting of Christ with His beloved. It discusses eternity and the new heavens, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem. Many of the pictures in these chapters are symbolic and not easy to comprehend. Regardless, they reveal a loving God fulfilling His promise to His redeemed people.

- Daniel 12:1 tells us that after this time of great trouble, “at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered” (NIV).
- Revelation 21:1–4 says, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ... I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things are passed away” (NIV).

So, what remains to be discussed? The question that should be on all of our minds is how we should live if all that we have discussed in this book is true? If we are in the end of the age, if we are entering a period where the world and Satan’s agents will declare war on the Church, how should we live—regardless of our stage in life?

There may be no better place to look than in the book of Jeremiah. By 586 BC, the vicious king of Babylon had destroyed Jerusalem, killed untold numbers, taken many into captivity to an unknown destiny, and left those not killed or hauled off into captivity in a state of total defeat and poverty. In the midst of this chaos, Jeremiah pens his first letter of encouragement to God’s saints (believers).

While the circumstances between Israel in 586 BC and what the Church faces in the end of times are not perfectly parallel, there is a significant amount of similarity. I think the guidance God is giving to His people is to live their lives as normal as possible while seeking Him with all their hearts, in the midst of uncertain times and circumstances.

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This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile.... Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number ... do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you ... because if it prospers, you too will prosper When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and will bring you back from captivity.

—Jeremiah 29:4–14 (NIV)

A more recent example may be the condition of the Church in Germany during the years of World War II. I recently finished reading *Trapped in Hitler's Hell*, by Anita Dittman. Half Jewish by birth, but Christian by her rebirth, this brave teenage girl suffered as both a Christian minority and as a non-Aryan. While the story is troubling, watching her and her mother suffer through the horrific times of the end of the war, it is uplifting in the provident protection God provides to her by her Christian brethren and from common strangers. It was her faith, her Christian mother, her Christian pastor, her Christian schoolmates, and her church that provided comfort and shelter in the midst of the storm. Truly she experienced

the reality of Hebrews 10:24–25 (NIV) “Let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Finally, God exhorts us from both Daniel and Habakkuk how to respond during this coming time of trouble. In Daniel, after the rise of the antichrist and beginning of the persecution, He says in 11:32, “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” In Habakkuk 3:16–19, referring to the time of coming trouble, he says, “my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people.... Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.”

*So, are the Christians
of the twenty-first
Century aware of what
looms on the near
horizon?*

If we review what is happening globally with the Church, the answer to that question appears to be *no*. Consider the events of just the past few years; my discussion with American Christians reveal they lack awareness of most of them:

- As a result of the Arab Spring uprisings in Egypt, Christian bookstores were burned and looted, churches were burned, Christian homes were burned by rioters, as many as fifty Christians were killed in clashes with Muslim neighbors and hundreds were injured, and a significant number of

Christians were sentenced to prison under the incoming Brotherhood regime. Fortunately for the Christians, a military-supported government has taken control and placed the Brotherhood back on the list of terrorist organizations. How long this situation will hold for the 10 percent Christian minority of Egypt (about 8 million people) is unknown.

- The Syrian city of Homs was the residence of a Christian community reported to have been about 160,000. This community dated its origins back to the first century. As of the summer 2014, it is believed that only 1,000 Christians remain in the city, and all of the churches and Christian infrastructure has been destroyed. As many as 1,200 Syrian Christians were reported to have been killed during 2013.
- Worldwide estimates for 2013 of Christians martyred for their faith range from 7,000 to 8,000.
- The Boko Haram terrorist group in Africa is responsible for as many as 600 Christian deaths in Nigeria in 2013 and was held responsible for the highly publicized kidnapping of nearly 300 young Christian girls in 2014.
- In Iraq, as much as 50 percent of the Christian population has fled the war-torn country. In 2014, the terrorist group ISIS forced as many as 150,000 refugees to flee in front of their assault on Mosul and northern Iraq cities, many of these being Assyrian Christians who date their church history to the first century. ISIS burned and destroyed churches and homes including a 1,800-year-old church. They also destroyed the Shrine of Jonah and reportedly also destroyed the tomb which, some believe, contains Daniel's remains. ISIS gave the Christians the alternative of converting to Islam or fleeing their homes. Most left. A few had their eyes plucked out for defiance of the Islamic rebels.

- In India, the Christian Church remains under pressure from both Hindus and from Muslims. Reports of deaths or severe persecution to Christian workers are common daily occurrences. India was the location of the single worst martyrdom of Christians in the twenty-first century, when perhaps as many as 500 Christians were murdered by rioting Hindus in Odisha Province during 2008. In 2014, the fundamentalist Hindu Party (BJP)/political party RSS has taken over control of the government in India. Time will only tell the impact this will have on the Christians in India.
- The history of Sudan and Ethiopia is replete with conflict over the past century. While reports indicate there may be as many as 4 million Christians in this region, the constant war and famine has caused most to flee their traditional villages. Few of us who follow the news could have missed the story of the pregnant Sudanese woman Meriam Ibrahim. Raised a Christian and married to an American citizen, she was sentenced to death in 2014 by a Sudanese court for converting from Islam to Christianity (her mother was Christian but her father was a Muslim, who abandoned her as a baby and she was raised Christian). She was forced to give birth to a child while shackled in leg irons in prison. Only after huge pressure was brought to bear by the international community was she finally allowed to leave Sudan and be reunited with her husband and children.
- While physical persecution is rampant, the subtle persecution of Christians by secular forces is even more disturbing. Reports in August of 2014 indicate that the Chinese government is planning to develop its own form of “theology” to control the growth of Christianity in China. There are believed to be as

many as 40 million Christians in China. While only time will tell the form this state-imposed theology will take; it brings back memories of the “Positive Christianity” imposed on the German churches during the time of Hitler. In the case of Germany, state-directed religion promoted the positive attributes of Christ and Christianity but attempted to destroy or deemphasize the idea of original sin, the crucifixion of Christ, the concept of redemption, the need for salvation, and any portion of Christianity that did not conform to Nazi ideology. They denied the use of the Jewish-written Old Testament, denied the Deity of Jesus Christ and tried to establish the Aryanhood of Jesus. Will China go down this same road?

- As we have previously discussed, Christianity in the United States and in Western democracies is under constant pressure and attack. Our public education system has been totally secularized. It is not only against the law to read the Bible and pray at school, but it also appears that most school districts have taken it to the extreme, banning any discussion of Christianity or Christian ethics in the name of separation of church and state. How can we expect the Christian worldview to survive if it is banned by those who spend ten months a year, forty hours a week educating our children? Without Christianity, the American educational community is providing *no ethical foundation* to society. Is it any wonder we see an explosion of violence, drug use, sexual promiscuity, and hatred of the Christian worldview by the younger generation?
- As of 2014, it is socially unacceptable to speak of homosexuality as a sin or an act not in conformance with God’s plan for mankind. To do so can result in job-related firing and even possible civil litigation and criminal prosecution. Churches in the United States are

being split wide open over the issue of gay marriage. In Canada and some areas of Europe, it is already a crime to speak openly against homosexuality. In October 2014, the city of Houston, Texas, *subpoenaed* the sermons of local pastors who dared to exercise their First Amendment rights and advocate for a new policy to check the city-enacted Ordinance on Equal Rights. One of the consequences of the ordinance, as written, would prohibit discrimination based upon sexual characteristics, for use of public restrooms (subpoena later withdrawn).

- As a former member of the US military, it is heart-breaking to see the destruction of faith and Christian principles in the twenty-first century military services. Acceptance of homosexuality is the mandated law of the military, and leaders are forbidden to express their own religious views on the morality of this activity (including chaplains). Military fitness and stamina standards are being ignored or compromised in the name of gender neutrality (denying the God-created differences between men and women) while the current administration's desire to move women into all combat units and occupational specialties (including infantry platoons) is pressing forward. Chaplains are frequently restricted from praying in the name of Jesus Christ at any public gathering or event. The ethos of our military was built around the Judeo-Christian ethic for over 200 years. It was the foundation to military law, conduct, and customs and courtesies. That is no longer the case.
- In the summer of 2014, the Freedom From Religion Foundation settled a lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) concerning their demand that religious nonprofit churches and groups be restricted in their political activities. While it is unknown how this will impact future policies of the IRS, it is

reasonable to assume that greater scrutiny will be placed upon religious organizations, and the First Amendment rights of Christians will continue to come under attack.

- Even more disturbing is the reported rise of antisemitism worldwide. In France, Jewish businesses and synagogues have been burned and looted. In Germany, for the first time since World War II, open rallies have advocated the holocaust-style elimination of the Jews. In Belgium, an attack on a Jewish museum resulted in four deaths. Given that Europe has become a mainly secular community, it is not surprising to see the return to this continent of antisemitism.

Christians have been marginalized on every continent in the world. The Christian worldview no longer influences Western democracy. Christian rights of freedom of religion and freedom of speech are now exercised (for the most part) at churches on Sunday morning, in a few bravely produced films and documentaries, on Christian TV channels on cable networks, in Christian books, and in privately funded Christian schools. In the public square, Christianity has been nearly silenced. It is a very small step from persecution and restriction of rights to all out-war against Christians and the Christian worldview. The providential hand of God is in control, and we cannot stop the advance of evil in our generation. However, we can be *informed*, and we can be *prepared* for the ultimate result of this shift in the world's attitude. One of the most pressing needs is for churches and Christian homes to take control of the education of their children and begin to counteract the philosophical naturalism being forced upon our children and grandchildren in secular public schools. A second, and most important need, is for our Christian leaders, those entrusted by God with the earthly leadership of His Church, to stop giving false comfort to a complacent and

sick, Laodicean church! For too long the leadership of the Christian churches has failed to provide direction and understanding necessary to prepare us for the coming trouble. While it seems to be a dark time in the Church, there are, however, bright fires of hope.

- Reports are that private and Christian schooling and home schooling have risen from 11 percent of the school population a generation ago to nearly 15 percent. While private schools have declined during this period due to exorbitant costs, the number of home-schooled children has risen dramatically.
- Many churches have expanded their children's programs through efforts like Awana and Pioneer Boys and Girls. These programs are particularly effective in reaching elementary and middle school students.
- A number of Christian colleges and universities have lowered their tuition and education costs to make a Christian education more available to the bulk of the Church.
- Some churches have begun to make a current events time part of their Sunday worship in order to both pray for the suffering Church and also in order to keep the members of their church bodies informed.
- Organizations such as Chuck Colson's ministry began a worldview study program with their Wilberforce Institute, designed to train leaders to counter the influence of the secular culture.

While these efforts are commendable and noteworthy, they pale in comparison to the influence the world exercises over Christian children and adults. As a student of history and as a Baby Boomer, I not only studied about, but also remember hearing the stories of the previous generation as they recounted how America retooled in the late 1930s and early 1940s in preparation for the looming World War II. This


The End of the Story

Herculean effort turned “widget-making” factories into producers of war materials. It helped Europe defend itself in the early years of the war and prepared the United States for her entry into the War. Clearly something on this level (a spiritual retooling) is needed to turn a complacent Church into a Church prepared for the coming storm. That will not happen without the leadership of Christian educators, Christian pastors and youth leaders, Christian ministry leaders, and prominent Christian leaders in the community.

We, the Church, have the financial assets, we have the modern information technology tools, we can see the storm cloud warnings from history and our modern culture, we have the clear warnings from the Word of God, but we have precious little time left. For too long we have deceived ourselves into believing that we would not suffer or even experience the coming time of trouble—but now we find ourselves in the midst of the brewing storm! It is time for Christian leaders to lead. It is time for the corporate Church to help save the next generation from godless philosophical naturalism, and it is time for Christian leaders to properly prepare the Church for the coming trouble. My prayer is that this book will challenge the hearts of thousands of talented and capable Christian leaders to both see the need and to take up the mantle of leadership in this pending war. Remember the words of Mordecai to the newly selected Queen Esther in Esther 4:14: “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance ... will arise from another place ..., and who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

**Where there is no vision, [no redemptive
revelation of God] the people perish
—Proverbs 29:18 (AMP)**

**Son of man I have made you a watchman
for the people of Israel; so hear the word I
speak and give them warning from me
—Ezekiel 33:7 (NIV)**



And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: “Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied: “Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.

From *God Knows (The Gate of the Year)*
by Minnie Louise Haskins



Appendix A

Historical Amillennial Paradigm



- Uses Augustinian view/method of scriptural interpretation.
- Uses the New Testament (NT) as the basis for interpretation of the Old Testament (OT).
- Uses NT scripture to interpret OT *prophetic* concepts:
 - Luke 17:20–21 (Indicates the OT Kingdom of God/ Millennium = NT concept of the Kingdom of God).
 - Rom. 2:28–29; 9:6–8; 11:25–26; Gal 6:16 (Indicates that Israel = the Church).
- Recognizes the criticality of historical events, historical theology and the importance of other scriptures in interpreting prophetic passages.
- Emphasizes importance of *spiritual meaning* (i.e., Dan 9:27; 11:31 “sacrifice” = spiritual worship, and I Sam. 15:22; Hosea 6:6; Ps. 51:16-17 “sacrifice” = obedience).
 - Rejects the implausibility of Millennialism (i.e., the concept of future Temple sacrifice is contrary to the NT covenant)

Methods of Scriptural Interpretation

Literal Interpretation. “The Bible must be interpreted according to the manner in which it is written.... Luther comments: ‘Neither a conclusion nor a figure of speech should be

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admitted in any place of Scripture unless evident contextual circumstances or the absurdity of anything obviously militating against ... require it.' ... closely related to the grammatico-historical method ... which focuses on the historical setting in which Scripture was written and pays close attention to the grammatical structure of the biblical text."

—R. C. Sproul, *Grace Unknown, The Heart of Reformed Theology*, pp. 56–57

Augustinian View. "How would it harm me, O my God thou Light of my eyes in secret, if while I am ardently confessing these things—since many different things may be understood from these words, all of which may be true ... if I should interpret the meaning of the sacred writer differently from the way some other man interprets? Indeed, all of us who read are trying to trace out and *understand* what our author wished to convey; and since we believe that he speaks *truly* we dare not suppose that he has spoken anything that we either know or suppose to be false. Therefore, since every person tries to understand in the Holy Scripture what the writer understood, what harm is done if a man understands what *thou*, the Light of all truth-speaking minds, *showest* him to be true..." (Albert Outler) says: "This is the basis of Augustine's defense of allegory (or deeper meaning) as both legitimate and profitable He did not mean that there is a plurality of literal truths in Scripture but a multiplicity of perspectives on truth which amount to different levels and interpretations of truth."

—*The Library of Christian Classics, Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridion*, Translated and Edited by Albert C. Outler, pp. 284–285

Amillennial Perspective. "Historically, Protestant interpreters have argued that the New Testament provides the controlling interpretation of the Old Testament. The goal of

the interpreter of eschatology is to determine how prophecies made in the Old Testament are treated and applied by writers of the New. ... (Secondly), eschatological themes are reinterpreted in the New Testament, where we are told these Old Testament images are types and shadows of the glorious realities that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ ... A third critical factor is “the analogy of faith.” This refers to the importance of interpreting an unclear biblical text in light of clear passages which speak to the same subject rather than taking the literal sense in isolation from the rest of Scripture.”

—Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, p. 37

Author’s Conclusion. Most literalists avoid the Augustinian use of allegory/metaphor, and choose only meanings that would be derived literally or grammatically from the text. They feel, in general, that there is not a need to reconcile the literal reading of scripture with empirical truth known from our human existence (history, traditional Christian understandings from the fathers of the church, science, life experience, etc.). On the other hand, the Augustinian method recognizes that there is truth in the general revelation, that “all” truth is God’s truth, and reason would lead us to conclude that all known truth should be compatible with scriptural truth. It is fair to say, that even within the literalist view, there is significant disagreements on when a literal meaning should be applied as universal and when a literal meaning creates an “absurdity” that begs a figurative, allegorical or metaphorical understanding. It is my view that scripture may *not* speak falsely concerning *any truth revealed by God*. It is also my view that there are known empirical truths in human and church history and truths revealed by study of the material world that are *true*. Consequently, when a literal interpretation of scripture leads to an “absurdity of truth” when compared to *other scriptural texts* or to empirical truth, human reason and the Holy Spirit leads us to the conclusion that we

must *reconcile* these truths. If the textual criticism allows for (1) a deeper or figurative or metaphorical meaning; (2) other scripture demands a different meaning; or (3) “an absurdity of truth” would exist by a literal interpretation, deeper interpretation of the text should be permitted.

Author's Amillennial Precepts

- Continuity of biblical history—Salvation is always based on faith in both OT and NT.
- Rejects automatic scriptural and prophetic divisions based on Israel versus the Church (unless scripture *specifically* indicates so). Thus the NT teaching that the Church is the Israel of God indicates the seamless nature of the sainthood of believers.
- Recognizes God's three different governances (pre-Abrahamic world, Israel, and Church) but does not see this changing the sainthood of believers.
- Sees no scriptural basis for belief in a physical millennium on earth after Christ's return.
- Believes we will see antichrist and go through Tribulation.
- Believes in *one* return of Christ (with the saints at which time those still alive will join Him in the air) after which Christ will make an end of all things. This will be followed by the second resurrection (unbelievers) and the second death.
- Believes Satan was cast out of heaven after the cross and was confined to earth, “bound” from *deceiving nations* for 1000 years. He will be (or has been) released to deceive the nations, persecute the church, set up the kingdom of the fourth Beast, oppose Christ's coming, and suffer defeat and eternal damnation at Christ's second coming.

Historical Amillennial Paradigm

- Believes Christ will make all things new (new heavens and new earth) and will reign over this new creation for eternity.
- New heaven and new earth, and new Jerusalem are in eternity—not the millennium (Rev. 21 :2).
- Resurrections: Amillennialism believes there are only *two* resurrections (rather than the four of Premillennialism).
 - o Believes first resurrection took place at resurrection/ascension of Christ and takes place at the death of believers/saints and that Christ is ruling with resurrected saints in heavenly kingdom (II Cor. 5:6–8, John 5:25, Matt. 27:52–53, I Pet. 3:18–20, Eph. 4:8). (The first resurrection is a continual ongoing process.)
 - o Christ catches up the Church (living saints) to meet returning saints (I Thess. 4:13–17; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21).
- The second resurrection occurs at the return of Christ (to make an end of all things) and is only for unbelievers (also called the second death) (Rev. 20:11–15).

Appendix B

Outline of the Book of Daniel

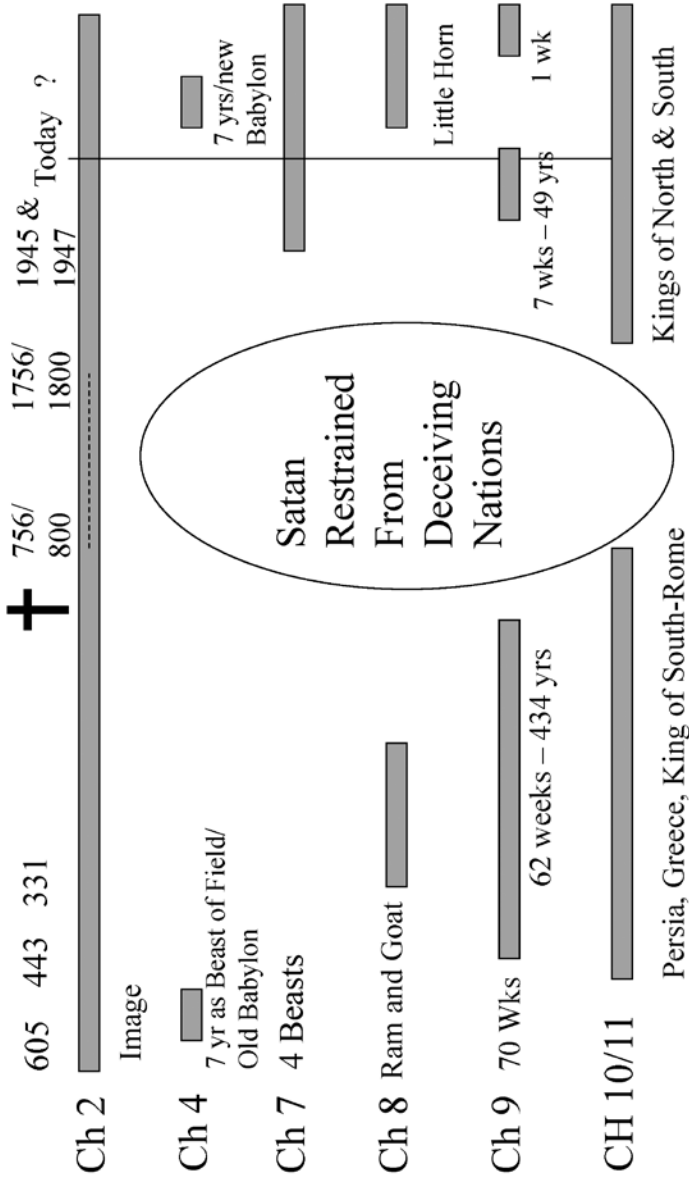
Focus of Daniel

- Three themes in Daniel: 1) Prophetic messages about the *history* of worldly kingdoms (chapters 2, 8, and 10-11). 2) Story of how to live as a believer in a world hostile to the truth of the scriptures (chapters 1,3,5, and 6). 3) Prophetic messages about recognizing new Babylon, four kingdoms at the end of the age, the Messiah & Antichrist, and the future satanic kingdom (chapters 4, 7, 9 and 12).
- While the second theme of how to live in a world hostile to truth is more than appropriate for the twenty-first century Church in America, it is not the focus of this study. We will narrow our study to the first and third themes and the six major prophetic visions and messages of the book:
 - o Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of the Image (Chapter 2)
 - o Nebuchadnezzar’s Vision of the Cut Tree (Chapter 4)
 - o Vision of the Four Beasts (Belshazzar) (Chapter 7)
 - o Vision of the Ram & Goat (Belshazzar) (Chapter 8)
 - o Vision of the 70 Weeks (Darius/Cyrus) (Chapter 9)
 - o Vision of the Kings of the North & South (Darius/Cyrus) (Chapters 10-11)

Outline of Daniel

	Prophetic History of worlds greatest Kingdoms	Status of Saints – Church	Recognizing end times kingdoms - people
Nebuchadnezzar	Ch 2 Statue of Neb & interpretation	Ch 1 Daniel and friends honored-promoted Ch 3 Three friends fiery trial - protected by Christ	Ch 4 Neb vision of Tree & Beast of Field – Anti-Christ
Belshazzar	Ch 8 Ram – Goat – Little Horn interpretation	Ch 5 Daniel honored – 2 nd authority in land	Ch 7 Four Beasts/Kingdoms of end times
Darius/Cyrus	Ch 10-11 Kingdom lineage – Persia to Anti-Christ	Ch 6 Daniel in Lions Den	Ch 9 Seventy Weeks of Daniel - Messiah & prince

Outline of Daniel



Appendix C

Outline of the Book of Revelation

Focus of Revelation

- Revelation is *not always chronological or sequential*
- Revelation is the story of the fight between good and evil, a fight between God and Satan, from the *time of Christ until eternity*
- Book divides into four sections:
- Christ's Revelation (Chapters 1 – 7)
 - Holy Spirit's Revelation (Chapters 8 – 14)
 - God the Father's Revelation (Chapters 15 – 21)
 - Eternity & Conclusions (Chapter 22)
- Nearly all of the images of the book are *figurative or metaphorical* of real events and real groups of people

Many people simply will not study Revelation because they get quickly lost in the seeming maze of types and metaphors. The book seems to be often repeating events and types that have been mentioned in previous chapters. Consequently, trying to comprehend the book sequentially and in chronological order leads to frustration. It is essential to understand that the book is not always chronological and that it is a trilogy of three revelations, all of which parallel each other in format. Secondly, it is important to realize that most of the types and images of the book are figurative, not literal.

- Chapter Breakdown of Book.
 - o Chapter one is a picture of the risen Christ ruling in heaven
 - o Chapters 2 & 3 chronologically cover the entire Church period
 - o Chapters 4 & 5 describe the beginning or commissioning of the two witnesses, the Church and the four gospels/Word of God.
 - o Chapters 6 & 7 cover the condition of the worldly kingdom from the time of Christ until His return (Seals)
 - o Chapters 8 & 9 cover the themes of mankind's destruction of the earthly kingdom, both physically and spiritually (Trumpets)
 - o Chapters 10 & 11 cover the opposition to God's two witnesses, the Church and Word of God (and eventual defeat of these two witnesses)
 - o Chapters 12 & 13 chronologically cover the status of Satan, his satanic kingdom (beast out of the sea), and the Antichrist (beast out of the earth) from the time of the cross until the war on the Church
 - o Chapter 14 introduces the preparation for Christ's return
 - o Chapters 15 & 16 are in the future at Christ's return and cover God's final judgment of the earthly kingdom (Vials)
 - o Chapters 17 & 18 are in the future at Christ's return and cover God's judgment of the earth's two messengers: new Babylon and the Harlot
 - o Chapter 19 covers the future marriage of lamb at the second coming and the judgment of the two beasts: 1) the satanic kingdom and 2) the Antichrist
 - o Chapter 20 separately covers history of Satan's binding, his loosing for a season, and his final judgment. It also covers the 2nd resurrection and judgment

Outline of the Book of Revelation

- of the unbelievers. Note: chapters 19 and 20 collectively cover the judgment of all three of those that oppose God; 1) satanic worldly kingdom, 2) the Antichrist, and 3) Satan, as well as all unbelievers.
- o Chapter 21 & 22 are the future eternity

Outline of Revelation

	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>MESSAGE</u>	<u>EARTH/KINGDOM</u>
Ch 1 Christ On His Throne (7 Candlesticks)	Ch 2 & 3 Christ's Message of the <u>Church's condition</u> (7 Churches)	Ch 4 & 5 Christ's Commissioning of The Two <u>Witnesses</u> (7 Lamps & Spirits)	Ch 6 & 7 Christ's Message of the evil of the <u>earthly kingdom</u> (6 Seals)
Ch 14 HS Msg Of Christ's harvest of Church/world	Ch 12 & 13 HS Msg of Satan's opposition to the <u>Church</u> (7 headed Dragon & Beast)	Ch 10 & 11 HS Msg of the opposition to the Two <u>Witnesses</u> (7 th Trumpet/7 Thunders)	Ch 8 & 9 HS Msg of Mankind/Satan's Pollution/Dest of the <u>earthly kingdom</u> (7 th Seal/6 Trumpets)
Ch 21 God's Msg of his Tabernacle with mankind (eternity)	Ch 19 & 20 God's Msg of the <u>Church's</u> victory over Satan & earthly kingdom	Ch 17 & 18 God's Judgment of the earths two <u>teachers</u> & their message. (7 Mountains & Kings)	Ch 15 & 16 God's Judgment of the <u>earthly kingdom</u> (7 Vials)

2300 days vision

BC 605 586 536 530 522 485 465\464 443 331 323
 Nebucadnezzar-Babylon |Cyrus-Persians/ Cambyses/ Darius I /Xerxes /XX /Artaxerxes /Alexander-Greeks
 Daniel in Babylon 1st Return to Jerusalem Thermopile (Artabanus) Cmd to rebuild March 443 Gaugamela

1 Daniel 2 The Great Image

GOLD HEAD | BREAST & ARMS SILVER

|BELLY BRASS

2 Daniel 7 Four Beasts

3 Daniel 8 The Ram/The Goat/The Little Horn

The Ram | Goat |Great-horn broken

4 Daniel 9 70 Weeks

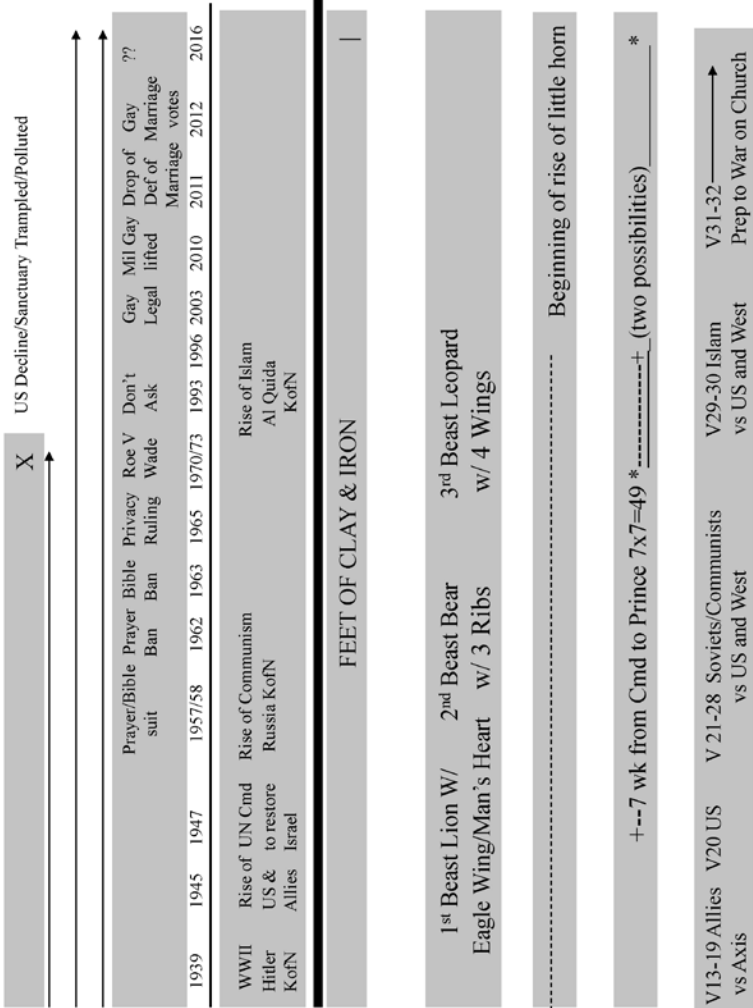
| 62 weeks to Messiah-----

5 Daniel 11 (Vs 1-2) Cyrus-----4th (Xerxes) fight Greece-----4th (Alexander) to 4

- War between ram/goat -- until -- daily taken away - cast truth to ground -				
150	49	9	29	285
Greek Wars of diadochi	Julius Caesar-Caesar Augustus ROME	Rev 12 Woman delivers child	Rev 12 Satan Cast out of Heaven	Satan persecutes the woman (church)
	Birth of Christ (conception) March 9BC	1BC/1AD	Death of Christ March 29AD	Destruction of Jerusalem
				Divided Rome
BRASS LEGS OF IRON 2 LEGS				
4 horns --(Rome)-----				
434 years (7x62)----- Christ cut off				
------(Vs 5) King of South strong (ROME) one above (CEASAR AGUSTUS)-----				

<p>The sin (transgression) that causes desolation - Place of the sanctuary cast down</p>					
<p>Rev. 11 Court within (earthly kingdom) and Holy city (saints/Church) under pagan rule 42 months= 1260 days Witnesses (Church/Word of God) preach 1260 days=1260 yrs (756 to 2016)</p>					
<p>Satan restrained - Woman flees to Europe- then in chains 2 wing eagle to America Satan released/ deceives nations</p>					
756	800	1607	1756	1800	1804
Slow collapse of Rome -	Donation of Pepin & church/state marriage	Charlemagne	1 st Holy Roman Emperor	7 yrs War	Napoleon V Prussia/Russia
			Frederick KoFN		KoFN
					WWI Germany KoFN
<p>LEGS 1000 years without significant empires FEET OF CLAY & IRON</p>					
<p>-----</p>					
<p>Vs 6 End of years & all Europe Marie Theresa Vs 7-9 & all Europe Napoleon Vs 10-12 France- Germany/Europe</p>					

God's Chessboard



Outline of the Book of Revelation

Note: Transition from 7th Kingdom
To the 8th may be seamless

