

Approaches to Daniel and Revelation

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Introduction

It was only natural that early Christianity anticipated the Second Coming of Jesus much sooner than our day. But there was no universal agreement on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. However, there were some interpretations that were very widespread and nearly universal. Among them were: (1) the four kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7 being Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; (2) the ten horns of Daniel 7 representing the division of the Roman Empire; (3) the little horn of Daniel 7 being Antichrist; (4) the Stone Kingdom of Daniel 2 representing the Second Coming of Jesus; (5) the pure woman in Revelation 12 representing the Church; and (6) Babylon in Revelation was Rome.

After Emperor Constantine (d. 337), and the acceptance of Christianity in the Roman Empire, emphasis on the literal Second Coming of Jesus faded, and the Church became the embodiment of His kingdom on the earth; thus the Stone Kingdom became the first coming of Jesus and the Church as His kingdom. Augustine (d. 430), bishop of Hippo (in North Africa), completed the acceptance of allegorical interpretations begun by Origen (d. 254) of Alexandria (in Egypt), in the third century. Augustine saw very little in the book of Revelation that was prophecy of actual, literal events. This view prevailed, although was by no means the only one, until the twelfth century rise of the Italian scholar Joachim of Floris (or Flora or Fiero), when renewed interest in prophetic interpretation flourished.

The different approaches to Daniel and Revelation illustrate the differences in interpretation concerning end-time events. These are examples of apocalyptic literature. The word *apocalyptic* is derived from the Greek word *apokalupsis*, which means an *unveiling* or a *revealing*. The religious literature that bears this name uses much symbolism, some of it rather bizarre in nature, and conveys the cosmic sweep of history involving the conflict of good and evil with an emphasis on the ultimate triumph of good over evil. In other words, the focus is on eschatology, the study of end-time events.

Major apocalyptic Scriptures include parts of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Zechariah in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New Testament. Daniel and Revelation particularly are understood to be companion books because of their similar imagery and symbolism. For this reason, we will examine the major approaches to these two books. There are four major paradigms

that describe the different major approaches to these books, although a fifth one can also be identified.

Idealism

The idealist interpretive approach to the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation understands them as providing spiritual comfort and encouragement that God will eventually conquer Satan and evil but without any *specific* historical references or to any present or future events. Instead, the symbols are interpreted as having spiritual meaning to all believers in all ages and circumstances.

This approach has the virtue of having relevance for every generation of believers. It also avoids the difficulties and inconsistencies in interpretations of the symbols that the other schools of thought often reflect. However, it ignores the plain statements in Daniel and Revelation that obviously refer to specific events.

Preterism

Earlier preterists believed in the possibility of predictive prophecy but limited Daniel's climax to events surrounding the Syrian/Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century B.C. and what he did to the Jews and their Temple in Jerusalem. He invaded Judea and Jerusalem in 171 B.C., and desecrated the Temple by placing idols on the temple premises and offering a pig on the Altar of Burnt Offering. In late 165 B.C. his forces were forcibly expelled by a family of priests called the Maccabees, who then dedicated the temple back to God. At the beginning of the restoration of the temple, there was just enough oil for the menorah (in the Holy Place) to stay lit for one day, but Jewish tradition says that the light remained for eight days. This has been celebrated since then as the Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication, otherwise known as Hanukkah.

To arrive at this conclusion, preterists separate the Medes and the Persians into separate empires so that the fourth empire in the sequences of both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 is Greece. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a descendant of one of the generals of Alexander the Great. The same preterists usually ended the extent of Revelation's prophecies to no later than the time of Emperor Constantine in the fourth century A.D. However, Daniel itself states that the prophecy of chapter 2 extends into *the latter days* (2:28) when God's literal kingdom is established on the earth (2:44), that chapter 7's prophecy extends to the establishment of Christ's literal kingdom (7:13-14, 26-27), that chapter 8's prophecy extends to *the time of the end* (8:17; cf. 11:40-12:2), and that Revelation concerns *things which must shortly take place* (1:1; 22:6).

Essentially, preterism arose as part of the Catholic Counter-Reformation through the writings of Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613), a Spanish Jesuit priest who identified Roman Emperor Nero as the Antichrist. He interpreted Revelation chapters 1-11 as representing the Church's struggle against

the Jewish people and chapters 12-19 as representing the Church's struggle and eventual victory against the paganism of the Roman Empire. Then chapter 20 was interpreted as depicting the final judgment and defeat of paganism and of Nero, with chapters 21-22 picturing the glorious Church as the New Jerusalem that inhabits the world endlessly.

After the rise of the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the historical-critical scholars denied the possibility of predictive prophecy so that they believe some anonymous writer or writers wrote, or at least finished, the book of Daniel in the second century B.C., and that Revelation does not extend beyond the first century A.D., that is, in the apostle John's own time. This historical-critical framework reflects the Enlightenment's emphasis that there must be natural explanations for everything in contradistinction to supernatural explanations. Therefore, most modern preterists are skeptical of predictive prophecy, any other supernatural claims in Scripture, and thus the historicity of the Bible. By the nineteenth century, most mainline Protestant churches had adopted this liberal bias against the miraculous and historicity of the Bible along with the preterist paradigm.

This interpretive approach offers little, if any, value to Biblical scholarship except to make the apocalyptic prophecies meaningful and relevant to the believers at the time these books were written. As for the modern preterists' denial of predicative prophecy, how could that be a problem for an eternal, timeless God who sees the future as clearly as He does the past and present? For that matter, how could anyone calling himself a Christian deny that God can perform miracles? It seems intellectually dishonest to deny these things and yet claim to be a Christian.

Preterism and the Apotelesmatic Principle

One scholar who was essentially a preterist was the Australian theologian Desmond Ford (d. 2019), although he did not deny the possibility of predictive prophecy. While he did not identify himself as a preterist, he actually was one because he interpreted the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in a similar manner. His major reason was two-fold: (1) He asserted that the Old Testament knew no distinction between the First and Second Comings of the Messiah; and (2) He asserted that the New Testament writers believed that the Second Coming of Jesus was so imminent that they expected Him to return in glory before or by the end of the first century. From these two facts, he insisted that all Biblical prophecies, including those in Daniel and Revelation, must be fulfilled no later than the first century A.D.

Ford is essentially correct when he said that the Old Testament makes no distinction between the First and Second Comings of Jesus. If literal Israel had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, there would have been no need for a Second Coming. He could have set up His kingdom at His First Coming, resurrected the righteous, and fulfilled the events in that way without the need for a millennium in heaven. However, the book of Daniel was a sealed book (Daniel 12:4, 9) and reveals that literal

Israel would reject the Messiah and lose its most-favored nation status with God at the end of the 70 Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27). Ford seems to ignore the implications of this once-sealed book.

Regarding his assertion that the New Testament anticipates Christ's Second Coming as imminent, meaning that it anticipated that event before or by the end of the first century A.D., this is an unwarranted conclusion. He supported it by Jesus' statement that *this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place* (Matthew 24:34; cf. Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32) and by statements in Romans 13:11, I Corinthians 10:11, I Thessalonians 4:15-17, and others referring to the imminent return of Jesus.

It is true that the New Testament writers thought of the Second Coming as imminent. However, the idea that it was thought to occur before or by the end of the first century A.D. is completely an arbitrary assumption on Ford's part. For example, when Jesus said that *this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place*, He may have been referring to the current generation, some of whom would see the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem (cf. vv. 1-3). The expression *these things* seems to be particularly associated with the destruction of the Temple in verse 3 compared with verses 1-2. Another possibility is that since the word for *generation* can mean a *country* or *nation*, it might mean that the organized people of God (the spiritual nation) who sees the last of the heavenly signs and understands them as such (Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25) will also see the Second Coming, whether or not the specific individuals are still living at the Second Coming or not.

Furthermore, the Second Coming may have been referred to as imminent in the New Testament simply because Jesus' successful mission at His First Coming guaranteed that His Second Coming would occur. Thus, the Second Coming is pictured as imminent *theologically* rather than chronologically.

Again, we note that Daniel was a sealed book until *the time of the end* (Daniel 11:40-12:2), described as a period of time that culminates in a time of trouble such as never was and in resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2). The fact that it was sealed allows for the fact that the book's prophecies extended far beyond the first century A.D. while the rest of the Old Testament did not indicate that amount of time. As for Revelation, it borrows much from Daniel and is thus a companion book of Daniel, as all scholars acknowledge. Therefore, much of Revelation could not have been understood until Daniel was unsealed—again, allowing for Revelation's prophecies to extend far beyond the first century A.D. This is an argument against all preterists. The fact that Revelation 1:1; 22:6-7, 12, 20 anticipates the events in that prophecy, including the Second Coming of Jesus, to be imminent can be understood as *theologically* soon in order to keep His people watching and in readiness for His return.

Ford adopted a modified form of preterism by emphasizing the apotelesmatic principle in the interpretation of prophecies. The apotelesmatic principle states that a prophecy can be fulfilled in installments. Ford insisted that all prophecies are fulfilled in installments. For example, he taught that the Papacy was a second installment of the prophecy of the little horn in both Daniel 7 and 8. He also acknowledged that the renewed emphasis on Christ's high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary that began in 1844 was a second installment of that prophecy. However, he insisted that since no prophecy's fulfillment extends beyond the first century A.D., Antiochus IV must be *the* fulfillment of those prophecies and that the Papacy and the 1844 sanctuary movement were only echoes of that prophecy.

While we agree that there may be echoes or pre-cursors in some prophecies of the events that will be fulfilled at a much later time, a prophecy must require or allow for more than one fulfillment or for more than one installment of its fulfillment in order to so interpret them. We will give three examples.

First, the prophecy given by the Lord to Abram (later, Abraham) that He would bless *all the families of the earth* in Abraham (Genesis 12:3). Three times the Lord told Abraham that this would be through his *seed* (literal Hebrew in Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7). The name *Israel* was first applied to Abraham's grandson Jacob after he had wrestled all night with the Lord (Genesis 32). The passage says that Jacob wrestled with an unknown person *until the breaking of day* (Genesis 32:24). As dawn approached, Jacob refused to end his struggle until the man blessed him. At that point, he was told that he had been struggling with God Himself. It was then that the Lord changed Jacob's name to *Israel for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed* (v. 28). The name *Israel* is derived from two Hebrew words: *el* [God] and *sarah* [to prevail or to have power (as a prince)]. Thus, *Israel* means *he contends [prevails, has power] with God*. In this way, it is clearly seen that *Israel* is primarily a *spiritual* name given to someone who is a spiritual overcomer.

It is both interesting and significant that the Old Testament uses references to God's *servant* and to God's *son* interchangeably with both the nation of *Israel* (the descendants of Jacob/Israel) and the *Messiah*.

Representative examples of the term *servant* are shown below; the verses in parenthesis are those that specifically contain the reference to *Messiah* as *Israel*:

Nation of Israel

Isaiah 41:8-9

Isaiah 42:18-25 (19)

Isaiah 43:10

Messiah

Isaiah 42:1-9 (1)

Isaiah 49:1-13 (3, 5, 6, 7)

Isaiah 50:4-11 (10)

Isaiah 44:1-2, 21, 26

Isaiah 45:4

Isaiah 48:20

Jeremiah 30:10

Jeremiah 46:27-28

Ezekiel 28:25

Ezekiel 37:25

Isaiah 52:13 (13)-53:12 (11)

Ezekiel 34:23-24

Zechariah 3:8

Now please note the following references to the nation of Israel and the Messiah as God's son:

Nation of Israel

Messiah

Exodus 4:22

Matthew 3:17

Matthew 3:17 is God's voice directed toward Jesus the Messiah at the latter's baptism by John the Baptist. This text echoes both Psalm 2:7 (*You are My Son*) and Isaiah 42:1 (*My Elect One in whom My soul delights!*).

This Biblical usage of interchangeably referring to the nation of Israel and the Messiah as God's *servant* and His *Son* strongly suggests that the Messiah is *ultimate* Israel Himself, a fact that naturally follows from the realization that the name *Israel* is primarily a spiritual name. This is the reason that the apostle Paul declares that the promises made to Abraham and his seed were ultimately applied to Jesus the Messiah, as he stated in Galatians 3:16: He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. In other words, the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) find their complete fulfillment in Christ. In this way, he could truthfully say that *if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*.

This example of the apotelesmatic principle reveals two things. First, the prophecy or promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) contained an element (the spiritual name of Israel) allowing for a later fulfillment beyond the nation of Israel. Second, the complete fulfillment was not therefore the nation of Israel but Jesus the Messiah.

Second, the prophecy concerning the rain of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:23, 28-32) allows for two installments of that prophecy, one for the former rain and one for the latter rain. That is the reason that the apostle Peter said that this prophecy was being fulfilled at the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (vv. 16-21). However, that was not the complete fulfillment, for it did not meet all of the specifications of the prophecy in Joel, which includes *wonders in the heavens and in the earth* (Joel 2:30), specifically as the darkening of the sun, the moon turning to blood, and *the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord* (v. 31). Yet Ford would have us believe that the first

installment in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 was *the* fulfillment. That is not even consistent with his own explanation of the apotelesmatic principle.

A third illustration of the apotelesmatic principle in Bible prophecy is Malach 4:5, which predicted that Elijah would return before *the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord*, identified earlier in 3:1 as the *messenger* who would prepare the way before the Lord. Jesus applied that prophecy to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:10-14 and Luke 7:27-28. However, *the great and dreadful day of the Lord* did not come shortly after John the Baptist, meaning that a second installment must come later than John the Baptist.

We learn three things from the aforementioned illustrations of the apotelesmatic principle in Bible prophecies. First, the prophecy itself must contain some element that either requires or allows for a second fulfillment or installment of a fulfillment. Second, the second installment is not limited to a time no later than the first century A.D., for two of our examples have not yet had their second installment come. Finally, the very metaphor of the word *installment* (implicit in the word *apotelesmatic*) means that the *last* installment must be the *complete fulfillment*.

Ford's application to the prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8 violates all three of the Biblical criteria for an apotelesmatic prophecy. First, there is no language in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation requiring or even allowing for them to be fulfilled in installments. In fact, their prophecies contain so many specifications that it is impossible to find more than one fulfillment, whether that is viewed as a literal fulfillment or as an installment. Second, those prophecies are not limited to the first century A.D. Finally, his position that the first installment was *the* fulfillment violates the apotelesmatic principle's implicit meaning.

Once one (*any* preterist) limits the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation to our past, two other sets of errors are guaranteed. First, the contextual evidence must be interpreted to fit the preterist assumption. Second, the year-day principle must be denied and the time elements interpreted as literal time.

Futurism

The common element among all futurists is that the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are understood to put its emphasis on end-time events. Straight-line futurists view these prophecies as pointing from the time of the writer in a continuous line to the climax of the ages, with most of the prophecies focused on the end-time. Futurism as a separate school of thought arose as part of the Catholic Counter-Reformation through the teachings of Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), a Spanish Jesuit priest, who attempted thereby to take the heat off the Papacy, which all Protestants identified as the Antichrist. He taught that the Antichrist would only arise in the end-time as a charismatic atheist individual, not a system, who would befriend the Jews and

rebuild their temple, and conquer the world all in the space of 3 ½ years immediately preceding the Second Coming of Jesus.

While most Christian scholars maintained the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers' historicist approach to the end-time prophecies for about 300 years, one form of futurism became popular in the nineteenth century. This dispensational futurism is the most common form of futurism today. It arose in the late nineteenth century through the efforts of the British theologian John Nelson Darby and the American Cyrus I. Scofield, whose study Bible was first published in 1909. It was strengthened by the creation of the modern nation of Israel in 1948 and by Israel's occupation of Old Jerusalem as a result of the Israeli-Arab War in 1967. More recently it has been bolstered by Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* in 1970 and the *Left Behind* series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, with the publication of their first book in 1995. Now it is the most popular approach among Protestants in general and conservative evangelical Protestants in particular. Essentially, dispensational futurism has added the secret rapture of the Church to Ribera's futurist paradigm.

This paradigm operates on the principle that virtually all of the predictive prophecies that revolve around the Antichrist will be fulfilled in a seven-year period before the literal, glorious Second Coming of Jesus. That seven-year period begins with the secret Rapture of the Church to heaven, who then does not experience the final tribulation on the earth. Meanwhile, the Antichrist appears and enters into a treaty or agreement among the Jews, then breaks it in the middle of the seven years, which will also be the start of the final tribulation. During these seven years, people have a second chance to be saved before the literal, visible, glorious return of Jesus. Therefore, dispensational futurists view the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation as beginning in the writer's day but then skipping the entire Church Age and moving to the end-time events.

We will withhold comment on futurism until we have examined some of the evidence from the books of Daniel and Revelation in this paper. We would point out, however, that like preterism, the acceptance of the futurist paradigm requires an interpretation of the contextual evidence to fit the futurist paradigm and the denial of the year-day principle, accepting the time elements as literal in nature.

Historicism

Historicism views those books as beginning in the days of the authors and then proceeding from there to cover the future from that point through the end-time events. The major difference between all historicists and straight-line futurists is that the former understand that much more of the prophecies pertain to the historical era than futurists do. Historicism was the universal paradigm of the Protestant Reformers in the sixteenth century and was, in fact, so popular among Protestants that it was called *the* Protestant approach until the late nineteenth century.

Earlier historicists tended to be straight-line historicists, viewing the prophecies as continuing in a straight, uninterrupted line from the writer's day to the climax at the end of the age. Many later historicists can be called recapitulation historicists. They view the several explicit series of sevens in the book of Revelation—Seven Churches, Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets—to cover the same future ground from John's day to the eschatological climax. The last chapters of Revelation are interpreted as focusing on the eschatological climax, although there is disagreement as to where they draw the line between the historical series and the purely eschatological section.

Historicism has been criticized for not being relevant to every generation of believers, but rather focused on a fixed series of events. It has also been criticized for leading to numerous different, conflicting interpretations of the symbols. Particularly for this latter criticism, historicism has not been taken seriously by most recent expositors of Daniel and Revelation.

However, if Revelation speaks of specific future events, we might not expect all of those to be understood in detail until they are occurring or have occurred. Jesus suggests in John 14:29 that the primary purpose of prophecy is not so that people can know the future before it happens, but that when they do see it happen, they will believe. Also, Daniel was told to seal up his book until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4, 9). Although many things could be understood by Daniel and his believing peers, some parts of his apocalyptic book were not intended to be completely understood until many generations later. Nevertheless, there are sufficient symbols and other words to give an earlier believer a pretty good idea of what was coming in the future. Therefore, this criticism against historicism is not a disqualifying point.

The fact that historicist interpreters often disagree about the meanings of the many symbols is a more valid criticism. However, that speaks more about the interpreter than it does the historicist approach. Many historicists have been too tempted by the current events in their day to understand them in their actual context. The symbols must be carefully studied for what they meant to the believers in the days when the prophecies were written, how they are understood in other parts of the Bible, and be interpreted according to the immediate context as well. Let the Bible be its own best interpreter, and there will be much more agreement among historicist scholars.

Eclectic Paradigm

Some scholars have identified the problems with all four of the recognized paradigms for interpreting the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. They state that these four hermeneutical approaches are correct in what they affirm but incorrect in what they deny. Therefore, instead of adopting any of them, these scholars use what we call the eclectic paradigm, which is an attempt to reconcile the differences among the four basic approaches. However, the chief problem with this eclectic paradigm is that it ignores the numerous specifications of these prophecies, which implicitly means that there is only one actual fulfillment for each prophecy.

While it admirably seeks to make the prophecies relevant to each generation of believers, it simply fails to take into account the evidence that there is only one actual fulfillment for each of these prophecies. Furthermore, there is no way to reconcile a preterist paradigm that views the prophecies as limited to the writer's era and the futurist paradigm that views many of these same prophecies as applying only to the end-time. Neither can the difference between viewing the time elements as literal or symbolic be reconciled. Either one or the other (or neither) is correct.

We now turn our attention first to the book of Daniel and then to the book of Revelation. Our only purpose will be to examine just enough in order to identify the correct paradigm in which to interpret the entire books. In Daniel we will confine ourselves to the related prophecies in chapters 2 and 7, to the issue of Antiochus IV in chapters 7 and 8, and to futurism's skipping of the Church Age by separating the 70th week from the 69 weeks in the 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9. In Revelation we will confine ourselves to the futurist formula in 1:19 and the broad outlines of the prophecies in relationship to the Seven Churches, Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and the Great Controversy sections. After that, we will discuss whether the time elements are literal or symbolic.

The Prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7

Beasts in Daniel

Before beginning an interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7, we first will determine what symbolic beasts in chapter 7 mean. (Daniel 2 uses different imagery to symbolize what chapter 7 covers.) In Daniel 7, the four beasts introduced in verses 3-7 are identified as four *kings* (v. 17). In verse 23 the fourth beast is also identified as a *fourth kingdom* (cf. v. 24). Therefore, the term *kings* must refer to the kings as representing their kingdoms. Thus, the emphasis is on kingdoms rather than on individual kings.

In Daniel 8, two beasts are introduced in verses 3-8, a ram and a male goat. The ram is identified as *the kings of Media and Persia* (v. 20), a reference to the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia. The male goat is explained as *the king of Greece* (v. 21). However, it is better to say that the kingdom of Medo-Persia was by defeated by another kingdom. Thus, the term *king of Greece* is used to represent his kingdom.

The idea that beasts in Daniel are sometimes called kings only as representing their kingdoms is confirmed by the parallel chapter of Daniel 2 with Daniel 7. There a vision was given to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (technically Neo-Babylonia); see verses 1-7. The first four parts of this vision were parts of a man (vv. 31-33). The first part, or head (vv. 32, 38), represents Nebuchadnezzar or his kingdom (v. 38). Then the next three parts of the man are identified as *another kingdom*, *another*, and *the fourth kingdom* in verses 39 and 40. Thus, we see that all four parts are symbolic of kingdoms. Because all scholars see that the parts of this human image are

parallel to the four beasts in chapter 7, we conclude that symbolic beasts in Daniel actually represent kingdoms.

Horns in Daniel

Horns often appear on symbolic animals in the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8. What do they represent?

The ten horns on the fourth beast of Daniel 7 (vv. 7, 24) are said to be ten *kings* (v. 24). The little horn, also on the fourth beast (v. 8), is called *another horn* (v. 8) and *another horn* (v. 24), which implies that it is of a similar nature as the ten horns.

In Daniel 8, two horns on the ram (vv. 3, 20) are called *the kings of Media and Persia* (v. 20). This refers to the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia even though the word *kings* is used here, an interpretation adopted by all scholars. The male goat (vv. 5, 21) is identified as *the king of Greece* (v. 21). Although it is called a *king*, the fact that it is a symbolic beast means that the emphasis is on it as a kingdom (see the previous section). Therefore, it is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn between its eyes (vv. 5, 21) is called *the first king* (v. 21), which scholars agree is a reference to Alexander the Great. This confirms the interpretation of *the king of Greece* as the kingdom of Greece, for an individual king would not arise from an individual king. The four horns that arose after the large horn (Alexander) was broken (vv. 8, 22) are identified as *four kingdoms [that] shall arise out of that nation* (v. 22, cf. v. 23), meaning out of Greece. Finally, the little horn (v. 9) is clearly referenced in verse 23 as a *king*.

After examining the above data, we conclude that horns on symbolic animals represent kingdoms, with the word *kings* representing their kingdoms, unless the context requires the interpretation of a horn as an individual king (as in the first king of Greece).

Identification of the Four Kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7

The four kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7 represent four *successive* world kingdoms, as deduced by the references in Daniel 2 to *another kingdom* and *another* in verse 39. These kingdoms are said to *rule over all the earth* (v. 39). This is not literally true in a geographical sense because kingdoms like China, India, and others are not mentioned in Scripture. That is not because God does not care about the people in those kingdoms. Instead, the Bible is concerned with the history of His chosen people. Therefore, virtually only nations that interacted with the nations of Israel and Judah are mentioned in the Bible.

Because the first kingdom is that of Babylon (2:32, 38), then all one has to do is to look at secular history in order to determine the other three kingdoms. History tells us, then, that the four successive world kingdoms referred to in Daniel are as follows:

- Babylon (Neo-Babylonia)
- Medo-Persia
- Greece
- Rome

The above list is identified by both historicist and futurist scholars. However, preterist scholars divide the Medo-Persian kingdom into two separate kingdoms because they believe that the little horn in Daniel 7 is Antiochus IV, who originated from the divided Greek Empire rather than from the divided Roman Empire. Thus, the preterist list is as follows:

- Babylon (Neo-Babylon)
- Media
- Persia
- Greece

We reject the preterist list for at least three reasons. First, the book of Daniel itself speaks of the two horns on the ram in chapter 8 as representing *the kings of Media and Persia* (Daniel 8:20). Because those horns are on one beast, this is a reference to the one, dual kingdom of Medo-Persia. Second, history records that it was the dual kingdom of Medo-Persia that defeated and thereby replaced Babylon, not the Median or Persian kingdom alone. Finally, the failure of the preterist list to include any reference to Rome is a major flaw in their interpretation. Historically, Rome was the fiercest of all the kingdoms, which makes it inconceivable that the prophecy would omit it.

For all of the above reasons, we conclude that the four kingdoms represented in Daniel 2 and 7 are Babylon (Neo-Babylonia), Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The Ten Horns and the Feet of Iron and Clay (with its ten toes) in Daniel 2 and 7

Daniel 7 describes ten horns on the fourth kingdom. We have already identified the fourth kingdom to be Rome and that horns on symbolic animals represent kingdoms unless the context requires the conclusion that they are individual kings. The context in Daniel 7 does not make it immediately clear whether the ten horns are kingdoms or kings. Therefore, it will require a more careful analysis to make this determination.

Preterist scholars interpret the ten horns as individual kings who succeeded Alexander the Great after his death. But there are numerous problems with this interpretation. First, which of the four divisions of the Greek kingdom did these kings come from? Or somehow are kings from more than one division represented here? The difficulties with identifying the specific ten kings on this basis have led many modern preterist scholars to take the number ten as signifying the totality of all successors of Alexander.

As applied to Rome, the ten horns could not represent ten kingdoms *or* kings that existed during the time of the Roman Empire, for that kingdom did not consist of ten other kingdoms, nor did ten kings reign in association with Rome during its time of rule. Neither could the ten horns represent ten successive kingdoms *or* kings following the fall of the Roman Empire, for how would they be identified in history? It simply does not fit the historical record.

So first we should seek to determine if the ten horns are successive or simultaneous in nature. We understand that they are simultaneous in nature for at least two reasons. First, there is no language in the prophecy to indicate that they are successive in nature. Second, Daniel 7:8 describes the little horn as *coming up among them*, that is, among the ten horns. If the ten horns arose successively, then the text could not say that the little horn arose *among* them. If the little horn arose from among the ten horns, those horns must exist simultaneously.

If the ten horns existed simultaneously with each other, and we cannot identify either ten kingdoms *or* kings in association with the Roman Empire, then these horns must arise simultaneously *after* the fall of Rome. This matches the testimony of history and the parallel segment on Daniel 2's image of the man, where the feet and ten toes followed Rome, during a time characterized by tension and disunity (*the kingdom shall be divided, the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile, and they will not adhere to one another* [Daniel 2:41-43]). The ten horns, then, must represent ten kingdoms that arose after the fall of Rome, for it is much more natural to view these as kings representing their kingdoms than to understand them strictly as ten kings.

Futurist scholars agree with historicists that the ten horns represent kings or kingdoms that exist simultaneously. However, they interpret this period of time as existing near the end of time in connection with the end-time Antichrist. In other words, they see the prophecy as moving from the fall of Rome immediately to the end-time. Specifically, futurists identify the feet and toes in Daniel 2, the ten horns in Daniel 7, and the ten kings in Revelation 17 (vv. 12-17) as all parallel prophecies.

However, we disagree for at least two reasons. First, the emphasis in Daniel 2:43 is on tension and disunity, as we just noted. By contrast in Revelation 17, the emphasis is on unity and cooperation in that verse 13 declares that *These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast*. There is no hint of discord or disunity among the end-time ten kings

or kingdoms. Second, Daniel 7:8, 24 tells us that three of the ten horns would be plucked up or defeated. This would leave only seven horns. By contrast, Revelation 17 speaks of all ten kings or kingdoms remaining in existence cooperating with each other. Even when they turn against the woman riding that symbolic beast, it is all ten who do so. Even if the number ten in both Daniel 7 and Revelation 17 is symbolic of a totality, the number seven is not equal to the number ten.

Therefore, we confirm our conclusion that the ten horns in Daniel 7 belong to the period in history following the fall of Rome, in which that empire was replaced in the West with the so-called barbarian tribes. In turn, this means that the little horn, which historicists and futurists agree is the Antichrist, arose in the days after the fall of the Roman Empire, a position held by the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers.

The Kingdom at the End of Daniel 2 and 7

In Daniel 7:14, 27, the kingdom of the Most High arrives after the demise of the little horn. This is a parallel to Daniel 2:34-35, 45, where God's kingdom is set up at some point during the divided kingdom of Rome represented by the feet and toes on the image. Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and some Protestant scholars interpret God's kingdom in Daniel 2 and 7 as the spiritual kingdom of His Church, which is understood to gradually fill the entire earth with its influence (Daniel 2:35)

However, that cannot be true for three reasons. First, Daniel 2:34 says that this kingdom that will arrive is one that was made *without hands*. In Scripture references to something made *without hands* or *not made with hands* refers to something which God does independently and separately from human beings (Daniel 8:25; Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48; II Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 9:11, 24). But Christ's spiritual kingdom represented by His Church is something that His special apostles helped create in that they were the instruments Christ used to establish His Church. Second, the stone that became God's kingdom in Daniel 2 is said to strike the image on its feet and toes (v. 34). This means that it would be established during the time of the divided Roman Empire. But the Church was established during the heart of the Roman Empire, several hundred years before that empire was dissolved. Finally, God's kingdom in Daniel 2 will replace all human kingdoms (2:35, 44). But the Church coexists with human kingdoms in the world. Therefore, for these three reasons, we understand God's kingdom in both Daniel 2 and 7 as His literal kingdom that He will establish at the Second Coming of Jesus.

We do not need to actually identify the little horn of Daniel 7 here because it is beyond our purpose in demonstrating how the prophecies should be broadly viewed.

Daniel 2 and 7 Outlined

We can now outline the parallel prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. Note that there is no equivalent reference in Daniel 2 for Daniel 7's Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment and little horn. This fact illustrates the principle of "repeat and enlarge" in which a later parallel prophecy adds more detail that was omitted in the earlier prophecy.

<i>Daniel 2</i>	<i>Kingdoms or Events</i>	<i>Daniel 7</i>
Head of Gold (v. 32)	Babylon (or Neo-Babylonia)	Lion (v. 4)
Chest & Arms of Silver (v. 32)	Medo-Persia	Bear (v. 5)
Belly & Thighs of Bronze (v. 32)	Greece	Leopard (v. 6)
Legs of Iron (v. 33)	Rome	Non-Descript Beast (v. 7)
Feet/Toes of Iron & Clay (v. 33)	Division of Rome	Ten Horns (v. 7)
_____	Antichrist	Little Horn (vv. 8, 25)
_____	Pre-Advent Judgment	Judgment (vv. 9-10, 26)
Christ's Kingdom (vv. 35, 44)	Christ's Kingdom	Christ's Kingdom (vv. 14, 27)

The 70th Week in Daniel 9

Dispensational futurism also skips the entire Church Age in the 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. Both futurists and historicists agree that this prophecy at least partly concerns the First Coming of Jesus as the Messiah. But futurist scholars separate the 70th week of this prophecy from the previous 69 weeks and place it at the very end-time. They do this for three primary reasons: (1) the pronoun *he* in verse 27 is applied to the end-time Antichrist because that verse says that he *shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering*; (2) verse 26 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70; and (3) reference to the word *abominations* points to the end-time Antichrist as it does in Daniel 12:11 (cf. Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). Since the latter two events did not occur within the continuous time of the 70 weeks prophecy, the 70th week must be understood to skip the Church Age and go to the end-time. Without examining that entire prophecy, we can show why this view misunderstands the prophecy with regard to the 70th week.

First, the pronoun *he* at the beginning of verse 27 refers to the Messiah, not the Antichrist, as illustrated by the fact that the prophecy alternates between references to Jerusalem and to the Messiah. Note this alternating pattern below:

- A Jerusalem—To restore and build Jerusalem (v. 25)
- B Messiah—Until Messiah the Prince (v. 25)
- A Jerusalem—There shall be seven weeks (v. 25)
- B Messiah—And sixty-two weeks (v. 25)

- A Jerusalem—The street shall be built again, and the wall (v. 25)
- B Messiah—After sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off (v. 26)
- A Jerusalem—The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (v. 26)
- B Messiah—Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week (v. 27)
- A Jerusalem—On the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate (v. 27)

We acknowledge that there is no historical evidence that proves the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt in the Persian period (three Persian kings issued similar commands referred to in verse 25 concerning the Temple or city) after just 49 years (7 weeks of years is 49 years). But there is more than sufficient evidence from the above parallel statements that we can know the parallelisms are intended throughout the entire prophecy from verses 25-27. Two important points are worth mentioning for our purpose here. First, the pronoun *he* in verse 27 refers to the Messiah, not the Antichrist. Second, the abominations of verse 27 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem.

These last two points are illustrated by the testimony of Scripture. First, while the sacrificial system continued to operate in the Jerusalem Temple until its destruction in A.D. 70, Christ's death ended the system as meaningful to God and His people because Jesus as the Lamb of God had died (John 1:29, 36); thus at His crucifixion the veil between the Holy and Most Holy Place in the Jerusalem Temple was torn by unseen hands (Matthew 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-38). Thereafter, the only sanctuary that mattered to God was the heavenly sanctuary as testified to in the book of Hebrews (8:1-2; 9:11-12, 24). Second, although there is no question that *the abomination of desolation* in Daniel 12:11 refers to a time later than the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Jesus Himself applied that same expression to the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:15 (cf. vv. 16-20) and Mark 13:14 (cf. vv. 14-18).

[Note: The context in Matthew 24:1-3 concerns the dual question of Christ's apostles about (1) the destruction of Jerusalem Temple and (2) the end of the age, which they assumed would occur at the same time. Jesus did not correct them on this assumption, but His answer implies that some of what He said applies to the destruction of Jerusalem and some applies to a later time in history, including His Second Coming. Indeed, after clearly speaking about Jerusalem, by Matthew 24:21 and Mark 13:19 He telescopes to a later event because He refers to a time of trouble such as never was that would be cut short in order to prevent the complete destruction of His elect (24:21-22; 13:19-20). That is not the end-time tribulation despite the similar language with Daniel 12:1, because Daniel 12:1 refers to heaven's time of trouble against the wicked in order to save His people, rather than a time of trouble against the elect. Therefore, Jesus must be referring to another time of trouble that was the greatest in the sense of its length of time. Historically, this must be the long period of persecution during the Middle Ages. In that way, the abomination of desolation would refer to the Medieval Church, just as the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers taught.]

Note also that nothing in the prophecy requires the interpretation that Jerusalem would be destroyed within the confines of the 70-week period. Verse 26 only states that at some point *after the sixty-two weeks* ($7 + 62 = 69$ weeks, see v. 25) Messiah would be cut off and that Jerusalem would be destroyed. While the Messiah would be cut off in the 70th week (v. 27), the repeated mention of Jerusalem's destruction after each reference to the Messiah's death suggests that the only reason it is mentioned at all was to warn that the Jewish nation's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah would result in the destruction of their city and temple.

Finally, just as there is no justification for separating the seven weeks from the sixty-two weeks (in v. 25), there is no justification for separating the 70th week from the 69 weeks. Therefore, futurism's understanding that the 70 Weeks prophecy moves from the crucifixion of Jesus directly to the end-time, thus skipping the Church Age, is completely erroneous.

Antiochus IV in Daniel 7 and 8

The Little Horn in Daniel 7

Preterist scholars understand Antiochus IV to be the little horn in both Daniel 7 and 8, while futurists identify him as the little horn only in Daniel 8. Do either of these prophecies actually apply to Antiochus IV? We already noted that the contextual evidence in Daniel 7 shows that the little horn there arose from the divided Roman Empire, not the divided Greek Empire.

In addition, Antiochus does not fit two of the specifications of the prophecy in that chapter. First, the little horn there was predicted to defeat three of the ten horns on the fourth beast (7:8, 20, 24). Some preterists believe these three kings to be his brother Seleucus Philopator, his nephew Demetrius, and his rival Heliodorus. However, these were all *potential* kings, not *actual* kings as specified by the prophecy. Other preterists identify these three kings as Artaxias of Armenia and Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VII of Egypt, whom he defeated. However, we already established that horns on symbolic animals are actually kingdoms rather than individual kings except where the context requires it to be interpreted as an individual king, and that they therefore represent the separate kingdoms that arose after the fall of Rome. By the way, that means that the little horn there is also a kingdom rather than an individual king.

Second, while Antiochus IV certainly spoke *pompous words against the Most High* (Daniel 7:25), he did not do so in the sense that he believed he had the authority to change God's *times and law* (7:25). Note the following diagram that illustrates the meaning of this part of the prophecy:

A He shall speak pompous words against the Most High,
 B Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
 A¹ And shall intend to change times and law.
 B¹ Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

This diagram represents the poetic style in which this portion of the chapter was written. Just as lines B and B¹ are obviously parallel to each other, so must lines A and A¹ be parallel to each other. In the context, the *times and law* must refer to God's times and law. Note that the little horn would *intend* or think to change them; thus he speaks pompous words against the Most High in the sense that he believes he has the authority to change God's times and law when he actually does not. This claim is the sin of blasphemy, the claim of possessing divine prerogatives (Matthew 26:63-65; Mark 14:61-64; John 10:29-33). First, Antiochus IV claimed a title referring to God but did not claim that he had the authority to change one of the laws of Israel's God. Antiochus IV was openly hostile to the God of Israel, so he certainly did not assert that he could officially speak for Him so that he had the authority to change His times and law.

Third, the period of persecution here is referred to as 3 ½ times or years. But such a period of time does not match what Antiochus IV did. Even if you limit the time period to the time of the actual control of the Jerusalem Temple per se, I Maccabees 1:54, 59 and 4:52, 54, describes this period as lasting for three years—or three years and ten days if you count the first ten days of setting up the pagan idol in the Temple before the actual pagan sacrifices began.

For all of these reasons, Antiochus IV cannot be the little horn of Daniel 7.

The Little Horn of Daniel 8

Both preterists and futurists identify the little horn of Daniel 8 as Antiochus IV. But there are at least six good reasons that this is not the case.

- First, the comparative greatness of the little horn with respect to the Persian ram and the Greek goat does not describe Antiochus IV, who was infinitely less great or powerful than either of those empires. [Compare vv. 4, 8, 9 to see that the little horn was at least as great as the ram and the male goat of that prophecy.]
- Second, he did not match the military activities of the little horn in Daniel 8, which states that he *grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land* (v. 9). It was Antiochus III who moved south and successfully took Palestine from the Ptolemies (based in Egypt) in 198 B.C. Antiochus IV had some success in going after Egypt in the south during his campaign from 170-168 B.C., but Roman diplomacy turned him back in 168. Again, it was Antiochus III who extended Seleucid rule further east, all

the way to the border of India during his military campaigns from 210-206 B.C. Most of these areas later rebelled, and when Antiochus IV attempted to reestablish Seleucid domination, he died having been unable to defeat the Parthians. Antiochus IV did not grow *exceedingly great...toward the Glorious Land* (v. 9) in the sense of conquering it because his predecessor had already accomplished that. In fact, under Antiochus IV, the Jews successfully harassed his forces (I Maccabees 3:57; 4:29) and eventually took back the Jerusalem Temple in late 165 B.C. (I Maccabees 5:52). Thus, Antiochus IV ruled only one portion of the post-Alexander Greek empire for about eleven years and with only minor success.

- Third, Antiochus IV's activities in Jerusalem do not line up well with the description of the little horn when you examine them more closely. It is true that he did take over the city and desecrated the Temple there. However, he did not actually attack the literal foundation even if one interpreted this prophecy as pertaining to the Jerusalem Temple (Daniel 8:11). Nor did he specifically *cast truth down* (v. 12).
- Fourth, the rise of Antiochus IV to power does not match the description of the time period that the little horn is said to have arisen, *in the latter time* of the divided Greek kingdom (v. 23). Instead, Antiochus IV rose to power closer to the middle of that era, for the Seleucid dynasty officially began in 311 B.C. and lasted until 65 B.C., consisting of more than twenty different rulers. Antiochus IV was the eighth in the line, placing him in the first half of the dynasty. Measured by the dates of his rule (175-164/3 B.C.), he would be more accurately in the middle of the dynasty, within less than twenty years from the exact middle.
- Fifth, the activities of Antiochus IV in and around Jerusalem does not match the period of either 2,300 or 1,150 days (v. 14). If one takes the number of days as applying to his general persecution of the Jews from 171-165 B.C., there is no evidence that places this persecution for a period of exactly 2,300 days. As for 1,150 days as applied to the time of the Seleucid actual control of the Jerusalem Temple per se, I Maccabees 1:54, 59 and 4:52, 54, describes this period as lasting for three years—or three years and ten days if you count the first ten days of setting up the pagan idol in the Temple before the actual pagan sacrifices began.
- Finally, a sixth objection to Antiochus IV being the little horn was there was nothing unusual about his death. Daniel 8:25 states that the end of the little horn would come *without human means* (literally, *hand*). Lamentations 4:6 and II Corinthians 5:1 indicate that events or objects made without human hand are those things which God Himself does without human assistance. Also, with the establishment of God's Kingdom in Daniel 2:34,

44-45, such events tend to be rather spectacular in nature. Historically, I Maccabees 6:8-17 seems to assign the death of Antiochus IV to natural causes in early 163 B.C.

For all of these reasons, we reject Antiochus IV as the little horn in Daniel 8.

The Book of Revelation

Meaning of the Seven Churches

The dispensational futurist view is that the basic structure, leaving out a more detailed one, is based on an interpretation of Revelation 1:19. That text reads, *Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this*. The verb tenses reflected in this text—past, present, and future—form the specific three-fold structure of the book. This futurist view is also based on the interpretation of the Seven Churches in chapter 2-3 as representing seven sequential parts of Church history from the very beginning to the end of the Church Age. Therefore, they view the structure in the following way:

- *the things which you have seen* as John's vision of Jesus walking among the lampstands in 1:12-18.
- *the things which are as the Church Age* as seen in chapters 2-3.
- *the things which will take place after this* as those events after the Church Age has ended, when the saints are in Jesus' literal kingdom in heaven, in 4:1-22:21. They note that 4:1 repeats this third phrase in the clause, *I will show you what must take place after these things*, signifying that Revelation 4:1 marks the beginning of the third part in the literary structure.

Historicists agree that the section of the Seven Churches applies to the sequential history of the Christian Era. However, historicist scholars view this as only an implied, *secondary* application of that section. Historicists and futurists agree that there is a significance to the fact that there were more than seven local churches in John's day and that the end of the message to each church says the message is given to the *churches* (plural)—see Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22. Futurist scholars derive from these facts that they mean that the Seven Churches represent the types of churches that would exist throughout the Christian Era. However, it might be that it only demonstrates that the Seven Churches represent the various spiritual problems present among *all* of the churches existing in *John's* day, without reference to the future churches in the Christian Era.

We understand the Seven Churches to represent the entire Christian Era on two grounds. The first one is that the other three sections in the book of Revelation that have seven numbered lists each

give its seven items in obvious sequential order: (1) the Seven Seals (Revelation 6:1-21; 8:1); (2) the Seven Trumpets (8:7-9:21; 11:15-18); and (3) the Seven Last Plagues (16:1-21). The sequential nature of these lists is denoted by a phrase including the word *then* or *when*: (1) *when* appears in 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1; and (2) *then* appears in 8:8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 11:15; 16:3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17. This strongly suggests that the list in the Seven Churches may also include a sequential aspect, although it does not prove it.

Second, when the history of Christianity is carefully studied, the spiritual problems in each of the Seven Churches matches the conditions in a sequential order of the churches throughout the Christian Era. In other words, such a view fits the historical reality. Jesus said *Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He* (John 13:19). In other words, the primary purpose of prophecy is not so we can predict the future, but that when it is fulfilled we can know that the prophecy was valid. Therefore, as we see the sequential unfolding of the spiritual conditions of the Seven Churches throughout the Christian Era, we can deduce that those seven messages may well have been intended to be prophetic in nature. At the same time, of course, each message would also have to apply to the appropriate church in John's day. If they only applied prophetically, the believers in those Seven Churches could safely infer that the only major spiritual problem in all of the churches was the one described in the first church of Ephesus.

Our rationale for viewing the Seven Churches as representing the entire Christian Era means that such an application is only implied and secondary. This leaves the primary application to the literal churches in John's day.

Thus, we view the present tense phrase in Revelation 1:19, *the things which are*, as applying to the spiritual conditions of the Seven Churches in John's day. In turn, this means that the third phrase in 1:19, *the things which will take place after this*, applies to things after John's day and *not* to things after the Church Age.

Significance of the Sanctuary Scenes in Revelation

We also note that each major section of the book of Revelation begins with a scene from the heavenly sanctuary. From that fact we can see that the major sections dealing with the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and the Great Controversy *each* move from approximately John's day to the climax of the ages. The evidence for this follows.

The Seven Churches (1:9-3:22)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (1:9-20):

After describing where and when John was and to whom he was to write about the contents of his vision (vv. 9-11), we are shown what John saw in this first section of the vision (vv. 12-18).

Significantly, this part of the introduction is a Sanctuary Scene. First, he sees Jesus dressed like a priest (v. 13). Second, he sees Jesus among *seven golden lampstands* (vv. 12-13). In the sanctuary system, the Holy Place contained, among other furniture items, a gold candlestick with seven lights on it (Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20-21). So these seven separate lampstands are an allusion to the candlestick in the sanctuary.

Jesus is dressed with a garment that reaches to his feet and is girded around the chest with a gold band (Revelation 1:13). Although the Bible does not give the precise details of a priest's dress, the first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus does. In his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book III, Ch. 7, v. 2, he describes the priest as wearing a long robe or vestment reaching to his feet and girdled about this robe around the level of the chest. The high priest's girdle is described as being woven with gold (v. 4). Although there are other parts of the high priest's clothing mentioned by both Josephus and Exodus 28, the abbreviated description in Revelation 1:13 is sufficient to be an allusion to a priest's clothing. Some dispute this interpretation on the grounds that such a robe was worn by kings (I Samuel 24:5, 11) and other important people (Ezekiel 26:16; I Samuel 18:4) as well as by priests; in all of these passages the Septuagint uses the Greek word for *robe* which means *reaching down to the feet*. Furthermore, the fact that the seven lampstands represent the seven churches (Revelation 1:20), and those churches are on earth rather than heaven, means that Jesus is here pictured on earth and not in the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, this cannot be a heavenly sanctuary scene.

In response to these objections we note that because Jesus is dressed like a priest *and* king reflects the roles that He plays as *both* priest and king. While He is pictured as with His churches, at the time that John sees this vision, Jesus is literally in heaven. This means that He is with His churches in a figurative *sense* that a high priest functions to represent believers. Therefore, the allusions to His priestly nature and His being with His churches demonstrate an allusion to a scene in the heavenly sanctuary.

This sanctuary scene is linked to the actual messages addressed to the Seven Churches because Jesus Himself, having been introduced in that sanctuary scene, addresses each message to the Seven Churches (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

The Seven Seals (4:1-8:1)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (chapters 4-5):

This is a heavenly sanctuary scene because 4:1 pictures a *door standing open in heaven*. The Greek means that the door is not a door into heaven but the door of some structure located in heaven. After entering that door in vision, John sees God's *throne* (4:2). Since God's throne is in His heavenly sanctuary (Exodus 25:10-22, especially v. 22; Psalm 80:1, cf. Exodus 25:17-20, 22), this is a heavenly sanctuary scene.

This scene is linked to the actual descriptions of the Seven Seals by the fact that Jesus the Lamb (5:6) receives a seven-sealed scroll (5:7; cf. 5:1) and personally opens each seal in the next scene (6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1).

The Seven Trumpets (8:2-9:2; 11:15-18)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (8:2-6):

This is a heavenly sanctuary scene because John sees *seven angels who stand before God* (v. 2) and both the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense (vv. 3, 5).

This sanctuary scene is connected to the actual portrayal of the Seven Trumpets because the seven angels present in the sanctuary are the same ones who sound the trumpets (8:2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 11:15).

The Great Controversy (11:19-15:4)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (11:19):

This scene opens up the interior of the Most Holy Place and displays the Ark of the Covenant.

This sanctuary scene is linked to the rest of the section because the Ark of the Covenant contained the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32:15-16; cf. Exodus 34:28; also see Exodus 25:16, 21-22), which are referenced in the expression *the commandments of God* occurring twice in the section actually depicting the playing out of the Great Controversy (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

The Seven Last Plagues (15:5-18:24)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (15:5-8):

This is a scene of the heavenly sanctuary because verse 5 says that the apostle John saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.

This scene further depicts seven angels holding the seven bowls containing the Seven Last Plagues (vv. 6-8). Then each angel pours out one of the Seven Last Plagues (16:1; 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17). Thus, this heavenly sanctuary scene is connected with the actual pouring out of the Seven Last Plagues.

The Second Coming and Millennium (19:1-21:1)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (19:1-10):

A careful reading of this passage reveals that John does see into heaven here or else he could not have known that the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures bowed down and worshiped God (v. 4) or that the wife of the Lamb had been given *fine linen, clean and bright* (v. 8). Since the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures are in the heavenly sanctuary (Revelation 4:4, 6-11; 5:8, 11, 14), this is indeed a heavenly sanctuary scene.

This sanctuary scene is linked to the Second Coming and Millennium by virtue of the statement that *the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready* (v. 7; cf. v. 9). This marriage supper echoes Jesus' parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14, which portrays God the Father as a king who throws a wedding feast for His son (Jesus). This parable concerned *the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 22:2), and such a festive occasion is a fitting illustration of the joys that will be experienced in the literal kingdom of heaven that will begin at the Second Coming of Jesus. This understanding seems confirmed by the fact that a man who arrived at the feast without a suitable wedding garment was cast *into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (v. 13). The act of being cast into outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth is used elsewhere to describe what will happen to those who are eternally lost (Matthew 8:12; 25:30; Luke 13:28). Clearly, then, the wedding and wedding feast language refers to what will happen just after the Second Coming of Jesus. These references in Revelation 19:7-9 are then linked to Christ's literal kingdom that begins at His Second Coming (19:11-21).

The New Jerusalem (21:2-22:5)

Heavenly Sanctuary Scene (21:2-8):

This is a heavenly sanctuary scene at least partly because John must have seen God on His throne (21:5) in order to know that He was there, and that throne is in the heavenly sanctuary as we have seen before (Exodus 25:10-22, especially v. 22; Psalm 80:1, cf. Exodus 25:17-20, 22).

This sanctuary scene is linked to the description of the New Jerusalem in 21:9-22:5 because that heavenly city is introduced in 21:2.

The Series of Events in the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and the Great Controversy Section

The last or next to last event in each sequence of the Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and the Seven Scenes in the Great Controversy section each points to the Second Coming of Jesus and/or beyond, as we note below.

First, in the Seven Seals, we note that events associated with the Second Coming of Jesus are actually referenced in the sixth seal (cf. the language with Matthew 24:29-30; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:25-27). Then in the seventh seal, there is silence in heaven (8:1). In Habakkuk 2:20

people are told to be silent in anticipation of God's judgments about to come upon the wicked (2:5-19). The same thought is found in Zephaniah 1:7 in light of verses 8-9. Finally, Zechariah 2:13 also calls for silence in light of the fact that God is about to judge the wicked and reconcile with Judah (vv. 8-12). Since the Seven Seals are sequential, the seventh seal must occur at some point after the Second Coming of Jesus. This would mean that the silence in heaven is an expression of anticipation of the final judgments on the wicked after the millennium (Revelation 20; see our paper entitled "The Millennium").

Second, in the seventh trumpet of the Seven Trumpets are references to events that begin with the Second Coming of Jesus, such as Jesus beginning to reign (Revelation 11:15, 17), followed by the judgment of the dead (v. 18; cf. Revelation 20:11-15's Great White Throne judgment and final destruction of the wicked at the conclusion of the millennium), and the final reward of the saints, which after the final destruction of the wicked would be the reestablishment of the New Jerusalem and the creation of the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1 onward).

Finally, in the Great Controversy section, the sixth visual scene pictures the Second Coming of Jesus (Revelation 14:14-20) and is followed by the seventh scene that depicts those who got the victory over the beast standing in heaven immediately following the Second Coming.

This sequence of events that end with the Second Coming of Jesus or beyond means that each of the sections of the Seven Seals, the Seven Trumpets, and the Great Controversy cover history during the Christian Era and close at the end of that era. This, then, also refutes the futurist idea that understands everything after Revelation 4:1 to come after the Church Age and affirms the recapitulation historicist approach.

Apocalyptic Time Elements

Now we are ready to examine the time elements of the major apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. As noted already, both preterists and futurists interpret them as expressions of literal time while historicists view them as symbols representing longer periods of time in terms of the year-day principle. Which view is correct?

There are seven major different time expressions in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation: (1) 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24); (2) the 3 ½ times (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:14); (3) the 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6); (4) the 42 months (Revelation 13:5); (5) the 1,290 days (Daniel 12:11); (6) the 1,335 days (Daniel 12:12), and (7) the 2,300 days (Daniel 8:14).

The 3 ½ Times, 1,260 Days, and 42 Months

It is evident that the 3 ½ times, first appearing in Daniel 7:25, is equal to the 1,260 days and the 42 months in Revelation 12 and 13. First, Revelation 12:6 says that a symbolic woman fled into the wilderness for protection for a period of 1,260 days. Revelation 12:13-14 says that the same woman fled into the wilderness for protection from persecution for a period of 3 ½ times. Thus, those two time elements represent the same period of time. Then the 42 months of Revelation 13:5 is also identical to the 3 ½ times and the 1,260 days, as is seen below:

For the 3 ½ times to be equal to the 1,260 days, each time must represent a period of 360 days. Thus 360 times 3 ½ equals 1,260 days. The 42 months would then consist of 30 days each, so that 42 times 30 equals 1,260 days. Therefore, the 3 ½ times, 1,260 days, and 42 months all represent the same period of time.

This period of time must be symbolic of a much longer period of time for several reasons. First, these time elements are given in the context of symbolic prophecies, suggesting while not proving that they might also be symbolic. Second, the 3 ½ times and 42 months are very unusual ways of describing literal time. Third, the 3 ½ times and 42 months are based on non-literal time, for the Jewish calendar alternated between months of 29 and 30 days and they added a 13th month at least every three years in order to keep their annual festivals within the same agricultural season each year. Finally, the location of the 3 ½ times and 1,260 days in Revelation 12 suggest they represent a much longer time period than literal time, as can be seen below:

- *Early Christian Era:* Revelation 12:5 concerns the First Coming of Jesus, the male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, which is pictured in Revelation 19:15 as something Christ does (19:11-13, 16). It also refers to His ascension (v. 5).
- *Middle Christian Era:* Revelation 12:6, 13-16 refers to a period of persecution of God's genuine Christian people between the Early Christian Era and the Late Christian Era. It is in this era that the 1,260 days or 3 ½ times is located.
- *Late Christian Era:* Revelation 12:17 refers to the *remnant* (literal Greek) of the woman's seed or offspring. The word for *remnant* refers to the last portion of something, as in the last part of a bolt of cloth. Although the dragon is still angry with the woman, verse 17 emphasizes that his anger is specifically directed against the remnant of her offspring, which represents a later generation. Therefore, verse 17 speaks of the Late Christian Era.

The fact that the time elements are located in the Middle Christian Era strongly suggests that the period of persecution lasts for a long time. The common denominator for all three time elements—the 3 ½ times, 1,260 days, and the 42 months—is a day. The only way that a day is used

symbolically of a longer specific period of time is for a literal year, according to Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. Therefore, all of this is strong evidence that the year-day principle exists but that these time periods represent 1,260 literal years.

The 1,290 and 1,335 Days

The period of 1,290 days is related to the 3 ½ times in Daniel 12. Notice the following pattern in that chapter:

- Daniel is told to seal up his prophetic book until the time of the end (v. 4).
- Reference is made to the 3 ½ times, which is equal to 1,260 days (v. 7).
- Daniel is told to seal up his book until the time of the end (v. 9).
- Reference is made to the 1,290 days (v. 11).

Obviously, the 1,260 and 1,290 days are not equal in length. Apparently they are parallel in the sense that they both end at the same time; thus the 1,290 days begin 30 days before the 1,260 days. Given this relationship, if the 3 ½ times (1,260 days) represent 1,260 years on the basis of the year-day principle, then the 1,290 days must represent 1,290 literal years on the same basis. Our purpose here is not to define when those time periods began and ended but simply to see their relationship to show that the latter is also based on the year-day principle.

According to Daniel 12:12, the 1,335 days are simply an extension of 45 days after the 1,290 days. Therefore, the 1,290 days must also represent 1,290 literal years on the basis of the year-day principle.

The 2,300 Days

Finally, there is the matter of the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14. In Daniel 8:13 two heavenly beings (presumably angels) discuss the matter of time concerning the prophecy in that chapter. One of them asks in literal Hebrew, *Until when the vision...* In other words, the emphasis was not on the length of the prophecy but on its termination. The other being answers in verse 14 that it will be for 2,300 days. In verse 17 the angel Gabriel (v. 16) tells Daniel that *the vision refers to the time of the end*. The Hebrew word for *vision* there is *mareh*, which means an *appearance*, not the usual word for vision. This word for vision, then, refers particularly to the appearance of the two heavenly beings and their discussion of the time element. Therefore, the 2,300 days extends to *the time of the end*.

According to Daniel 11:40-12:2, *the time of the end* in Daniel is a period of time that culminates in a great time of trouble against the wicked forces and in resurrection (12:1-2). Since the original vision in Daniel 8 began in the period of Medo-Persia (8:3-4, 20) and would not end until sometime

in *the time of the end*, the 2,300 days must be symbolic of a much longer period of time than a literal period of just more than six years. On the basis of the year-day principle, the 2,300 days would actually represent 2,300 literal years.

The 70 Weeks

Although the word *days* is nowhere directly used in the 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, this prophecy provides the conclusive evidence that the year-day principle is in fact Biblical. We will not attempt to exegete the entire prophecy but just look at the time element here.

Some elements of the 70 Weeks prophecy are sufficiently clear that both futurists and historicists agree that it concerns the First Coming of the Messiah and the restoration and rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, which we have already stated earlier (9:25). Daniel 9:25 says the 70 Weeks begins with *the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*. Historically, no matter which decree or command one chooses, this is speaking about a Persian king (Cyrus the Great, Darius, or Artaxerxes I).

From the Persian period to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and/or the coming of the Messiah is far too long for the 70 weeks to be understood as a period of 70 literal weeks. Since Daniel has been contemplating Jeremiah's prophecy that the Babylonian Captivity would only last 70 years, the assumption is correctly made that a play of words exists between the 70 years and the 70 weeks, so that the latter is understood to represent 70 weeks of years. In order to avoid the year-day principle, futurists (and the preterist Desmond Ford) say that the word *weeks* in Daniel 9 should be translated as *sevens* so that the 70 weeks is literally 70 sevens of years, or 490 years. The use in the literal Hebrew of Daniel 10:2-3 of *weeks days* is then taken as confirmation of this, meaning that the weeks are weeks of days, implying that the weeks in Daniel 9, that do *not* contain the word *days*, mean weeks of *years* instead. Actually, however, as most translators have done so, the addition of *days* with *weeks* is an idiom meaning full, whole, or entire weeks.

The word translated by most translators as *week* or *weeks* is the normal word for *weeks* and is never translated as *sevens* anywhere outside of Daniel 9. Moreover, the juxtaposition of the Hebrew words for *seventy years* in verse 2 and *seventy weeks* in verse 24 confirm that the correct translation is weeks, not sevens. The literal Hebrew expressions are as follows:

70 years...weeks 70

Just as the numbers 70 are parallel to each other, so are the words for *years* and *weeks*. In other words, both words represent a unit of time rather than a number. To translate the 70 weeks as 70 *sevens* would destroy the parallel. Therefore, for both of these reasons, the only correct translation is 70 weeks.

The only way that 70 weeks could mean a period of 490 years—in fact, the only way that 70 weeks could represent any literal longer period of time—is to interpret each day in a week as symbolic of one literal year. Thus, a week is seven literal years and 70 weeks is 490 years. By definition, this requires use of the year-day principle. Therefore, the 70 Weeks prophecy must be employing the year-day principle and is confirmation of its Biblical validity.

[Note: The year-day principle has a long history in Christianity. It was recognized and applied to the 70 Weeks prophecy in Daniel 9 from the very beginning of the Christian Era. In addition, several expositors over the centuries have also applied this principle to the ten days of tribulation in the message to the church at Smyrna (Revelation 2:10) and to the 3 ½ days that the Two Witnesses lie in the street (Revelation 11:9, 11). Then in the twelfth century Joachim of Floris (or Flora or Fiore, ca. 1130-ca. 1202) became the first known Christian scholar to apply the year-day principle to the 3 ½ times, 1,260 days, and 42 months of Daniel 7:25, Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5 so that he understood them as representing 1,260 literal years. After his death, many of his followers also applied the year-day principle to the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14. It was not until the rise of preterism and then of futurism that the year-day principle has been abandoned altogether by the large majority of Protestant scholars.]

Final Conclusion

Our analysis of Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 9, as well as the basic structure of the book of Revelation, confirms our suspicions about all of the major approaches or paradigms of interpreting the apocalyptic prophecies in these books. Idealism may have the advantage of not getting bogged down in detailed exposition of these prophecies and of seeing them as relevant for Christian believers in every age, but it ignores the obvious fact that the prophecies actually depict specific events.

Modern preterism is not only skeptical about any prophet's ability to foresee the future and thus suspect, but all preterists ignore the fact that the apocalyptic prophecies focus primarily on events that are future to that of the writer's day.

Even straight-line futurism fails to appreciate that much of the apocalyptic prophecies concerns the Church throughout its history. Dispensational futurists, who take these prophecies as beginning in the writer's day and then quickly skip over *most* of the Church Age to get to the end-time events, simply ignore the evidence to the contrary. The contextual evidence in both Daniel and Revelation contradicts the teachings of preterism and futurism. It also suggests and finally proves that the year-day principle utilized by the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers (and many others previous to them) is a valid Bible principle in highly symbolic prophecies. Furthermore, both books reveal that there is a repetition of some of the same general time period—the four great empires in Daniel 2 and 7 and the Seven Churches, Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets,

and the Great Controversy sections in Revelation. We, therefore, conclude that the correct paradigm for interpreting Daniel and Revelation is that of recapitulation historicism.