



Daniel

Part 1

The Making of a
Man of God

Daniel - Part 1

The Man of God

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Chapter 1

The Making of the Man

Daniel Chapter 1

Daniel opens with the words, *"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it."* With the usual economy of words scripture invites us to contemplate the trauma of a city under siege. In the British Museum in London there is a room the walls of which are clad with stone carvings. They are the newsreel from 2700 years ago. The carvings tell the story of another besieged city. The armies of Sannacherib king of Assyria surround Lachish in Judah. The armies, the siege engines, the defenders and finally the captives are all shown in great detail. Some of the scenes from this piece of Bible history can be viewed on the British Museum Web site. These stone reliefs provide a picture of what it was like to be under siege in the ancient world.

Viewing the record will give little insight into the feelings of those caught up in such a siege. Daniel was one of the people trapped inside Jerusalem as it was surrounded by the super power of Babylon. He was in his early teens and like any young lad probably stole out to the walls to catch a glimpse of the forces arrayed against the city. Tension would be high. Could the city hold out? Would the food and water supplies last? When would Babylon mount the main attack? Would Egypt come to their rescue? No one knew.

It is not quite true that no one knew. There was one lonely man in the city who had been warning of this catastrophe for years. Time and time again the king and leaders of the people had tried to silence him. But he continued to bring his message that God had forsaken them. Judgement must come for they had gone beyond the point of no return. The prophet Jeremiah had warned that God would not listen even if Moses and Samuel were to plead their case. He pronounced

the fate awaiting them: *"Indeed, who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, Or who will mourn for you, Or who will turn aside to ask about your welfare? "You who have forsaken Me," declares the LORD, "You keep going backward. So I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am tired of relenting!" Jeremiah 15:5-6.* Year after year Jeremiah brought the warnings of judgment to a sinful nation who refused to listen.

It seems that Jeremiah made a great impression on Daniel. How was it that he could stand alone, to bring a message of judgement when all the other prophets were saying that God was on their side? The other prophets confidently declared that Babylon would be defeated and the city set free. Years later, Daniel would recall the prophecies of Jeremiah. His seeking to understand them would lead to God revealing to him one of the most remarkable prophecies of the Bible.

In the short term, Daniel would learn from this godly prophet that the nation's desperate situation was the consequence of sin. They had turned from God, so God had turned away from them. Jeremiah was often in despair. He was ridiculed and the message he brought from God was mocked and scorned. The nation chose instead to listen to preachers more to their own taste. Prophets who spoke of peace and prosperity, who assured that God would never forsake them. Unknown to Jeremiah, there was one young life in which his teaching bore fruit. Daniel resolved that no matter what happened he would be faithful to his God, a resolve that would soon be put to the test.

And so time moves on. The second verse of Daniel opens with the words, *"The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hands."* No it wasn't the might of Babylon, which brought about the downfall of Jerusalem. It was the Lord. This is a lesson that applies to all time and will be applied later in this study to three great nations who once trusted in the Lord. Nations that turned against the Lord's purposes and in consequence He turned against them. If a nation turns against

God, He will in due time humble that nation. God may seem slow to act, but He is sovereign over all the affairs of men.

As a young man Daniel is forced to leave his home and family, never to return. His future is to be a slave in the king's service and to be trained as an administrator for the empire. Here he faces his first test. His response to this test will influence the rest of his life. Should he accept what has happened and try to make the best of it? Should he adapt to the ways of Babylon seeking to progress in the royal service, or should he seek to be faithful to his God? Making a stand could mean that instead of the royal service he is sent to the slave labour camps along the river Chebar. Instead of position and prosperity he would endure hard labour and ill treatment.

Daniel decides that no matter what the cost, he will serve his God. He is fortunate to have three friends who are prepared to stand with him. Together they refuse the royal food, preferring instead to keep to the law regarding those things that may be not eaten. God honours this stand and grants them the ability to excel in all matters of knowledge, literature, intelligence, wisdom and understanding.

It is said that the opening verses of any book in the Bible reveal the message of the whole. Daniel is no exception. The book opens with this story of great faith and trust in God, at a time when the whole world is falling apart. All the hopes and aspirations of the people of God are dashed. Yet despite this there are a handful of people who still believe that God is in control. They remain strong in their faith, not prepared to give in.

The study of Daniel will take us to other times when such faith has been and will be required. There will be times when the people of God are hard pressed by the forces of this world and outwardly all hope is lost. These are and will be the times when in the words of Daniel “.... *the people who know their God will stand firm and take action.*”

Chapter 2

The Dream

Daniel Chapter 2

Even before their training is complete, the four companions face a new challenge. They find out that their names are on a death list. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. His impossible demands are recorded in the second chapter of Daniel. He wants to know the meaning of the dream, but refuses to describe it to anyone. Angered by the procrastination of the wise men, he threatens to kill them all if they cannot answer his command to interpret the dream.

On hearing that he and his companions are in danger, Daniel calls them to pray. In the night the mystery of the dream and its interpretation is revealed to Daniel. Giving all the glory to God, Daniel explains the dream to the King.

The dream

"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2: 31-35

The dream was of a very great and splendid statue, which is described as awesome in appearance. The statue has five distinct parts:

- Head of Gold
- Chest and arms of silver
- Belly and thighs of bronze
- Legs of iron
- Feet a mixture of iron and clay

The whole edifice is destroyed when struck by a stone cut without human hands. The stone, as we are told in the interpretation, represents the kingdom that God will establish.

The Interpretation

From the interpretation we learn that the dream is about Kingdoms. It is about power and dominion, the sort of things that would have occupied an emperor's mind. For Nebuchadnezzar it was important to know who would come after him. Who would inherit this great empire which he had built?

The dream does not concern itself with Nebuchadnezzar's immediate successors but with the kingdoms or empires that will follow the one he created. A significant time span is in view as the dream culminates with the establishment of the kingdom of God. This will supersede all the empires of this world. We will look at the interpretation of each part of the statue in turn.

The Head of Gold

"This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation before the king. You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold." Daniel 2:36-38

All authority on this earth is from God. What is said of Nebuchadnezzar can be said of all rulers. The kingdoms of this world only exist by permission of God. Nebuchadnezzar could justifiably be proud of the empire he was building. It surpassed anything that

existed before his time. He would have seen himself as a head of gold towering over all that went before.

Although the Babylonian Empire was limited to the Middle East, Nebuchadnezzar is said to reign over everywhere where men dwell. This will prove significant in understanding the geographic scope of much scriptural prophecy.

The Chest of Silver and Thighs of Bronze

"And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth." Daniel 2:39

Little time is spent describing the second and third empires. We will come back to them in a later prophecy. The metals indicate progressive inferiority, which is confirmed by the interpretation. Man talks about the rise of civilization. God sees decline. The two empires, which followed Babylon, are first the Medes and Persians then the Greeks. As with Babylon the third empire is described as ruling over 'all the earth' and yet it covered only the Middle East from Greece to the Indus River.

We now hit a problem, which is the identity of the fourth kingdom. The Medes and Persians and also the Greeks all ruled the city and territory of Babylon. Following the demise of the Greek Empire the city of Babylon fell into an area of disputed territory. It lay between the rival Roman and Parthian Empires. By the first century BC the city, which had been in decline for centuries, was uninhabited and desolate. Our trail of interpretation runs cold. So who are the legs of iron?

The Legs of Iron

"Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces." Daniel 2: 40

A traditional answer to this problem is not to interpret the statue as the history of the city of Babylon. Instead it is regarded as the

history of the empires which will control the Holy Land and Jerusalem. Under this system the fourth empire becomes Rome. The Romans followed the Greeks in the control of Israel. The Byzantine Roman Empire controlled what was then called Palestine until the 7th Century AD when they were driven out by Islam.

The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay

"And in that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom will be divided; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. "And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. "And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery."

Daniel 2: 41-43

The fifth empire is frequently ignored. Many interpretations regard it as a deterioration of the Roman Empire. Some translations of the Bible even go as far as inserting a 'finally' in front of the fourth empire to reinforce this interpretation. There is no finally in the original text. In the initial description of the dream, the statue is clearly divided into five distinct parts. That division continues in the interpretation. In fact the interpretation is mainly focused in this fifth empire. That the iron and clay are a fifth empire is confirmed by history and other scriptural prophecies. If we accept that the fourth empire was Rome then the empire, which followed Rome in the control of the Holy Land, was Islam. Islam has lasted longer than all the other empires put together. A description of Islam as an empire or iron and clay is very apt; throughout its history it has been an empire that is both strong and deeply divided.

It is said of this final empire, *"And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men"*. At the time of Daniel there was a people who were known as a

mixture of races. They were the descendants of Ishmael and Esau who had freely intermarried with other races. Because of this they were given the name 'mixed'. We still use today the Aramaic word for mixed to describe them. The Aramaic for mixed used in the above verse is Arab. Therefore, the very definition of Arab as understood in the ancient world, fits the description in verse 43 of a people combined with other races. Islam, the religion of the Arabs, dominates the Middle East and much of the rest of the world.

An important aspect of this vision is continuity. It represents a continuous history from Babylon to the time when Jesus establishes His eternal kingdom. There is no hint of a gap in the succession of empires. By ending the succession of empires with Rome, a significant time gap is introduced. By accepting that the vision is of five not four succeeding empires the problem of a time gap is resolved.

The Kingdom of Heaven

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. "In as much as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy." Daniel 2: 44-45

The key characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven are described as follows:

- It will be set up during the time when these kingdoms rule.
- It will never be conquered or destroyed by another kingdom.
- It will crush these other kingdoms and put an end to them.

When crushed they will completely disappear.

- It will last for ever

- It is cut without hands symbolizing that it is a work of God not man.

Has this prophecy been fulfilled? The answer is almost but not completely. The five empires have come one after the other. Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome are all now history. Islam in a revived form remains.

The kingdom of God already exists. It is comprised of a people who accept Jesus as their king. They are a people who, although loyal to the nation in which they live, know that there are times when, like Daniel, they must put loyalty to God first. At present they live within the kingdoms of this world and are often dominated by them. The statue is still in existence and rules.

The final conflict, in which the stone strikes the statue and completely destroys it, is yet to come. We cannot say yet, that the kingdoms of this world have vanished without leaving any trace. They dominate world affairs and as time passes seem to become increasingly powerful. Their citizens believe that the destiny of this world is in the hands of men. But it is not in their hands. It is in the hands of God. The nations of our present world need to learn that it is God who holds ultimate sovereignty. Nebuchadnezzar also had to learn that lesson, but that is the subject of a later chapter.

Repeatedly scripture declares that the King, who Christians follow, will one day return to receive His kingdom. That return is referred to as the 'Second Coming'. The coming of Christ as King is one of the most significant themes of prophecy running through both Old and New Testaments. When Jesus comes, He will reign over all the earth. The nations, which in our time seem so powerful, will submit to His authority, ushering in an age of peace. His kingdom will last forever.

Due to the unique circumstances in which this dream and the interpretation was revealed, we too may have confidence that, "the dream is true, and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Chapter 3

The Sovereignty of God

Daniel Chapters 3 to 6

The book of Daniel was written in two languages. From chapter 2: 4b through to 7: 28 the language used is Aramaic. The remainder of the book was written in Hebrew. It is widely understood that the languages define the parts of the book which have relevance to either the Gentiles or Israel. Therefore chapters 2 through to the end of 7 are mainly for the Gentiles.

Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 contain four well known stories. In a study on prophecy it is tempting to jump over this section and move on to the next series of visions beginning with chapter 7. That would miss the purpose of including these events in the flow of prophecy. Two of the stories encourage the faithful to persevere in the face of opposition. God is sovereign and able to rescue those who trust Him. The other two warn the world that power is held on the authority of God. If rulers abuse that power they will be held to account. These lessons are especially relevant to us who are living at the end of the age, at the time when the stone cut without hands is about to strike the empires of this world and remove them forever.

The Aramaic section begins with Nebuchadnezzar's dream that we have just studied. The dream looks forward to the great future event of history when the kingdoms of this world are swept away and replaced by the kingdom of God. The vision of chapter 7 takes us to the final crisis following which the everlasting kingdom is established. The stories recorded here each contain important lessons with regard to the triumph of the kingdom of God.

The Fiery Furnace

Chapter 3 opens with the statement that Nebuchadnezzar made a vast golden statue and set it up in the plains of Dura. We do not know

why he made the statue. Was he carried away by the importance his dream appeared to confer on him? Was the statue of himself or perhaps of his gods Nebo or Belteshazzar? Nebuchadnezzar means 'Nebo protect the boundary'. None of that is explained because it is not important. What is of importance to us is the response of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to a crisis.

All the administrators of the empire were gathered to attend the dedication ceremony for the statue. They were commanded to bow down and worship the statue as soon as they heard music. Throughout history leaders have used worship to enforce obedience. The Caesars claimed to be god and demanded worship. On what was called the 'Lord's Day' all the citizens of the Roman Empire were required to bow down and worship Caesar. Many Christians gave their lives because they refused to worship anyone other than the true and living God.

The true believer knows that God alone is to be worshipped. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the statue. In rage, Nebuchadnezzar commanded them to bow down or be thrown into the blazing fire. The three refused. Daniel 3: 16 to 18 is a wonderful testimony to their faith that God, if He wished, could deliver them or if not they were content to die.

At the very end of the present age another crisis will occur. Revelation 13: 15 foretells of another image which will be set up. All who do not worship it will be killed. At that time the saints are called on to persevere (Rev 13:10). Some will be killed, others put in prison. Those who refuse to bow down will be the privileged ones. They will have played their part in the shattering of the kingdom of this world. Of the faithful it is said; *"and they overcame him (the accuser) because of the blood of the lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even when faced with death."* Rev 12:11. They are the ones who will *"follow the Lamb wherever He goes."* Rev 14:1-5.

May we all ask God for the courage to stand when that time comes; that like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego we will face it with total trust in the power of God, either to save us, or take us to be with Him. Through their courage, Nebuchadnezzar came to recognise the supremacy of their God.

There is one more thing that should encourage us all. In the midst of their trial, the Son of God came to be with them. Jesus has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age.

I am reminded of a story that Corrie Ten Boon used to tell. She believed that Christians will be called on to pass through the time of great suffering before Jesus returns. She told this story to encourage us when facing the prospect of suffering. "When I was a little girl I went to my father and said, "Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ." "Tell me," said Father, "When we take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the ticket for the train? Three weeks before?" "No, Daddy, you give me the ticket just before we get on the train." "That is right," my father said, "and so it is with God's strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need – just in time..." Many years later in a Nazi concentration camp she proved her father's advice to be true.

Nebuchadnezzar's Madness

Some are sceptical regarding this story of Nebuchadnezzar's madness, scepticism based on there being no records of this event in his reign. But in fact very few records have survived from the final 8 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

The madness that came on Nebuchadnezzar was in response to his pride. He claimed the glory of Babylon as his own. The 5th Century BC historian Herodotus described Babylon in all its magnificence. The walls stretched for 56 miles. They were over 300 feet high and 85 feet thick. The city was entered through one of the 100 bronze clad gates. The river Euphrates ran through the city. Inside the walls were

temples and statues of gold. Although the description by Herodotus was exaggerated it was still a city to be proud of. In his pride he had not learned that even the greatest kings are subject to God. For seven periods of time he became an outcast until eventually he humbled himself before God.

At the end of this present age God will act in judgement on a sinful world, a world which has rejected the Gospel. The judgement of God is not vindictive. It has a purpose to bring leaders, nations and peoples to repentance. Nebuchadnezzar was blessed by having Daniel to guide him to understand the significance of what would happen. Will we, as Christians, be a blessing to our world in enabling it to understand that the final judgements are sent to bring people back to God?

Speaking of the final day of the Lord, the prophet Joel declares; *"And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered"*. Even when the wrath of God is being poured out on a sinful world, the door is open to those who repent.

Belshazzar's Feast

God is merciful. In words taken from the second letter of Peter: *"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."*

The lesson of the next story is that one day the patience of God will come to an end. Belshazzar took the gold and silver vessels which had been dedicated to the service of God in the Temple and treated them with contempt. He used that which was Holy to entertain his friends. That which was created to express purity was used for drunken revelry. In our present world everything that the Christian holds dear is seen as suitable for ridicule. The things we regard as holy are treated with contempt. Those who do such things are treading on very dangerous ground. For Belshazzar the party suddenly went sour. God gave His verdict and that night Belshazzar died.

God will not be mocked. The time is perhaps not far off when the sky will be split apart and men will try to hide from the wrath of the Lamb. At that time they will find out, to their cost, that the one whom they had ridiculed and scorned, is the Judge of all mankind.

Daniel in the Lion's Den

The final story is perhaps the best known of them all. Daniel in the lions' den is a favourite for Bible Story books. Not quite so cheerful if you are the one being fed to the lions.

Jesus said; *"blessed are you when men falsely accuse you, rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven"*. When men could not find a charge to bring against Jesus they made false accusations. Through the centuries the followers of Jesus have fared no better. Lies and falsehood have led to many being imprisoned or killed. Jesus warned that at the end of the age there will be a time when Christians are hated by all nations. We will be hauled before courts on false charges. When that happens we are to make up our minds in advance not to prepare to defend ourselves but trust God to give us the words which will bear testimony to Him.

Daniel went to the lions, not protesting his innocence, but trusting God. Due to that quiet testimony the king broadcast to the whole of his dominion that the God of Daniel is the Living God. It is my belief that the willingness of Christ's church to accept false accusation and suffering at the end of this age will prove to be the way in which the gospel is finally taken as a testimony to all nations.

Later in this book we will find that it is over issues of conscience that Christians will be persecuted. At the end of the present age we will be presented with a choice, of obeying the ruling powers, or obedience to God. Through the testimony of Daniel and his companions our Lord encourages us to stand firm without compromise. It is the rulers of our world who will one day bow down

and submit to the Lord Almighty. Those who will not submit will be punished.

Jeremiah's release

Before moving on from this chapter there is one, more incident which I would like to comment on. It is recorded in Jeremiah Ch. 39 and 40. Twenty years after Daniel had been taken into exile, Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar's armies. The people remaining in the city were taken away as captives. Among the captives was the prophet Jeremiah.

As the column of prisoners started moving north, something extraordinary took place. The army chief of staff receives a letter from the Emperor commanding him to release Jeremiah. Have you ever stopped to think about that? In Israel no one considered Jeremiah a person of significance. We may look on him as one of Israel's greatest prophets, but at the time he was regarded as a nuisance and troublemaker. Why should the most powerful man in the world suddenly take an interest in him? I see the hand of Daniel at work here.

When the news came through that Jerusalem had been taken, Daniel knew that there was one man in the city who was entirely undeserving of this punishment. I believe that Daniel, who was by now one of Nebuchadnezzar's trusted advisors, took it upon himself to plead Jeremiah's case. The king listened and released Jeremiah.

Sometimes we may find ourselves in a position to intervene on behalf of others. It may even be that God has placed us in a position of authority for that very reason. Many years later a young girl, recently elevated to the position of Queen found herself in a similar position. The story of Esther speaks of how the sovereignty of God extends to placing the right people, in the right place, at the right time. In whatever role we have in life, God has a purpose in placing us there.

Chapter 4

The Three Beasts

Daniel Chapter 7 part 1

The empire of Babylon was established through victory over the Assyrians in 609 BC and fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 BC. When Babylon fell the prophecy of Jeremiah that Babylon would last 70 years was fulfilled (Jeremiah 25:12). The vision in chapter 7 was given in the first year of Belshazzar. He was appointed co-regent with Nabonidas in 553 BC and would become the last king of Babylon.

By this time Daniel had been in exile over 50 years. During those years He must have often thought about the remarkable dream of Nebuchadnezzar's with its promise of the setting up of an eternal kingdom. A kingdom not built by man but built by God. When and how would this come about? The following prophecy focuses on the time when the eternal kingdom will be established. We will look at the prophecy in two parts. In this chapter we will consider the identity of the first three beasts. In the next chapter we will look at the fourth beast and the time when the kingdom is given to the saints.

The Beasts

With this prophecy the Aramaic section of the book ends. It is about four beasts that come up out of the great sea. The beasts resemble a lion with eagle's wings, a bear devouring meat, a leopard with four wings and four heads and a beast which is not described other than it is dreadful, terrifying and extremely strong. They represent gentile empires.

Often this vision is interpreted as a repeat of the message of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The beasts are understood to represent Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome respectively. If we accept that the statue represents five empires not four then that interpretation no longer fits.

There are a number of reasons within the passage for questioning the idea that this vision merely repeats in a different form the former prophecy. In verse 3 the description implies that these beasts are all future and will arise at about the same time. By this time Babylon was in decline and certainly not a future kingdom. Then the fourth beast tramples the first three. This would be difficult to understand if the beasts had been consigned to history by the time the last beast appears. When the nations are judged the fourth beast is destroyed while the other three are allowed to continue for a time (v 11,12). In the vision of the statue all five kingdoms disappeared without trace.

If these beasts do not represent the same empires as the statue who are they? In verses 17 and 18, the four beasts which arise, and the saints receiving the kingdom, are in some way connected. This is more clearly expressed in verses 26 and 27, when following the judgement of the fourth beast the saints receive the everlasting kingdom. Therefore I conclude, that we have been taken in this prophecy, to the time when the stone will collide with the statue. The vision provides detail on that final conflict, after which the kingdom is handed over to the saints. We are looking at the world at the end of the present age. An age dominated by the kingdoms of this world. These four kingdoms all play a significant role in the end time events. How are we to identify them? We will use a similar formula to that used to identify the nations represented by the statue in Daniel 2.

Previously in interpreting the dream we identified the kingdoms as those which controlled the Holy Land. This explained why only five empires are mentioned out of the many that have ruled different parts of the world. These kings are those who at the end of the age have a strong connection with either the Holy Land and the Jews or they dominate the Middle East. Either approach will lead us to the same nations.

The vision starts by describing the four winds of heaven stirring up the great sea. There is little doubt that the great sea is a reference

to the Mediterranean. Some have concluded that these kingdoms must therefore be located in the vicinity of the Mediterranean. I am not sure that this is what it would have represented to Daniel. The great sea is in contrast to the Dead Sea. If you stand on the shore of the Dead Sea, it is possible to see across to the mountains on the far side. It is a landlocked sea of limited extent. On the shore of the Mediterranean, you look out on a vast expanse of water. The great sea was gateway to the wider world. By Daniel's time traders were travelling at least as far as the British Isles. In 1 Kings 10:22 it is recorded that Solomon had ships at sea, on voyages lasting three years. This was sufficient time to have travelled to far-flung parts of the globe. One destination was Ophir. The location of this land has been speculated as Arabia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaya or even as far away as Australia. Therefore in the description coming up from the great sea we are being notified that these empires emerge from the wider world stage and are not limited to the confined area of the Middle East. If this definition is accepted, then the description of each beast has a strikingly modern identification.

The Middle East

At the beginning of the 20th Century, when Zionism was becoming a growing movement, there were three powers competing for influence in the Middle East. The same three nations were to have a major impact on the destiny of the Jews during the first half of the century. Their national symbols reflect the beasts described in this passage; the British Lion, the Russian Bear, and the German Leopard. Admittedly, the Leopard is only an unofficial symbol for Germany and not as strong a connection as with the other two.

Although French influence was considerable in the countries bordering the Mediterranean, she had less influence further east. During the second half of the nineteenth century the whole area from the Euphrates to the Indus River and the Aral Sea to the Persian Gulf fell under the territorial ambitions of Britain and Russia. By the

beginning of the twentieth century the balance of power was shifting. Both Russia and Britain were concerned by the growing influence of Germany in the Persian Gulf and inland. This influence was symbolised by the German; Berlin to Baghdad Railway Project. Britain in particular took exception to being displaced by a new rival. She saw her traditional influence over the declining Ottoman Empire supplanted by the Germans.

These same three nations were also to become the principal players with regard to the destiny of the Jews during the first half of the twentieth century.

The British Lion

The British lion controlled the Holy Land from 1917 through to 1947. The lion when connected with government is always portrayed as standing. Initially the lion was the great friend and protector of the Jews. Tragically in the 1940's it became their implacable enemy. By resisting Jewish immigration to the Holy Land, both during and after the Second World War, it was both directly and indirectly the cause of death to hundreds of thousands of Jews. The eagle's wings symbolise the extent of her power. Britain once governed the largest empire in the history of mankind. When Britain chose to oppose God and prevented the Jews returning to their land, her wings were plucked off. Within 20 years her empire had been stripped away and she had fallen from world supremacy to become a third rate impoverished nation.

A human heart (mind) is given to the lion. Is that good or bad? Sadly, it is probably bad. Jesus said it is what comes out of a man that defiles him. It was expediency, which caused Britain to turn on the Jews. She did not dare upset the Arabs and lose access to both oil and empire. Expediency is a trait of men's minds, which causes them to turn away from the right and do what benefits them most. Prior to that time Britain had been the prime mover in aiding the Jews to

establish a homeland in the Holy Land. Now she became their opponent.

The Russian Bear

Pogroms launched by the Russian bear on the Jewish community during the late 1800s and early 1900s gave impetus to the early Zionist movement. The suffering experienced increased the desire for a homeland where at last Jews would be free from persecution. The Russian Empire once contained the largest Jewish population in the world. Due to on-going persecution of the Jews, Russia and the states that made up its former empire have been the prime source of immigration to Israel. The bear is told to arise and devour much meat. Russia has always been a greedy nation pursuing its own self-interest.

The German Leopard

There is little need to enlarge on the central role played by the German leopard in driving the Jews back to their homeland. Although her identity as a leopard is less clear. The leopard is sometimes listed as an unofficial symbol of Germany. Without the Holocaust there would be no Jewish State. That statement is not in any way an attempt to justify the horrors of what happened.

Heads in prophecy generally represent kingdoms or empires. Therefore four heads is a reference to her rising to power following the unification of the independent German states. The German Empire of 1871 was formed out of four kingdoms, Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Wurttemberg, together with 35 other Grand Duchies, Duchies, Principalities and free Cities. She has wings of a bird not an eagle. Her power never extended so far and wide as that of Great Britain.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when God began the process of restoring the Jews to their land, these three were the great powers which dominated the world. Each of them in turn resisted the return of the Jews to the Holy Land. They resisted even to the point of becoming Satan's servants in his evil desire to destroy Israel and so prevent the completion of the plan of God to reunite that nation to Himself. Their opposition to the will of God makes them stand out from all the other nations. If we accept that this vision is about the end of the age, the destiny of the Jews and dominance in the Middle East; the identity of the first three beasts becomes clear.

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Chapter 5

The Fourth Beast and the Kingdom of God

Daniel Chapter 7 part 2

We pick up the prophecy in verse 7 with the description of the fourth beast. If the identification of the first three beasts is correct there is a shock in store for each of them. The fourth beast will devour trample and crush the first three. The Bible says that this beast is different from the others. It is not identified by an animal but as being dreadful, terrifying and extremely strong. It has ten horns, indicating that this is not a single nation but a confederacy of nations.

Which is this group of nations who will trample Britain, Russia and Germany? They may be weaker than they once were but they are still strong. Who is going to overpower them? We have already learned from Daniel, that however strong a nation imagines itself to be, it is God who controls its destiny. If God decides to hand them over to another, they will be powerless to resist.

Earlier we said that there were four nations that have sought to control the Middle East during the last 100 years. Three we have identified. This fourth beast is Islam. It is not a nation as such, but many nations, all intent on the destruction of Israel. It is also the fifth empire of the statue and the link between the two prophecies. During the time of this fifth empire, all the kingdoms of this world will be brought crashing down, to be replaced by the Kingdom of God.

The fate of the first three nations has been decided from ancient times. The territorial ambitions of Britain, Russia and Germany were crushed by the rise Islam. Britain's attempts to absorb the Arab nations into the empire met with a strong rebuff and her influence in the region rapidly declined. The humiliation of the Russian Army in Afghanistan played a major role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Germany's alliance with the Ottoman Empire came to nothing.

Of the fourth empire the prophecy states that; *“It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet.* This will, I believe, prove to mean more than just the crushing of the ambition to rule that part of the world. God foresaw the opposition of these nations to His plans and declared His judgment on them. In Revelation 13, John describes how in a vision he saw a single beast arising out of the sea. It is one beast but has the characteristics of all the above four. *“And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.” Revelation 13: 1-2.*

This beast represents Satan’s final kingdom. His last attempt to rule this world. From this verse it would appear that the first three beasts, although arising as separate kingdoms, will be absorbed into this final kingdom. In judgment on their treatment of the Jews; Britain, Russia and Germany have all been condemned. They will be devoured, crushed and trampled on by Islam and become part of the final kingdom of the beast.

The Beast

Islam corresponds to one of the identifying characteristics of the beast in Revelation. *“And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;” Revelation 13:1a, 3.* The heads are identified in Revelation 17 as kings or empires. Like the statue in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream they represent consecutive empires which have ruled over the Holy Land. Seven empires because the list starts earlier than the list of five empires identified in the former interpretation. But one head appears to have died and then come back to life. In coming back to life, it becomes an eighth and final empire. This corresponds to Islam, the final empire to dominate the Holy Land. In the early 1900s, especially after the British expelled

the Turks from Jerusalem, Islam appeared moribund and finished. The ending of the Caliphate in June 1924 marked the final demise of the old empire. The Caliph in Istanbul was the one who gave some unity to Islam.

Today it has sprung back to life becoming the world's fastest growing religion. It has very aggressive intentions towards Israel. Phrases such as 'drive Israel into the sea' and 'wipe Israel off the map' are common place from the leaders of the surrounding Arab nations. As Islam comes back to life, there is a call to revive the Caliphate. Islam is looking for a universal ruler, who will lead it to dominate the world.

The Little Horn

Islam is a nation in turmoil as can be witnessed every day in the news. As feet of iron and clay it is constantly warring against itself. And yet despite this it is strong. From verses 8 and 24 we learn that in this turmoil three of the ten nations will be uprooted and in their place will arise a ruler called here a little horn. The characteristics of the little horn, as set out in the prophecy, are listed below:

- He uproots three of the former kingdoms
- He has eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts
- He is a little horn in the sight of God but compared to the other horns he looks big.
- He wages war on the saints. They are given into his hand three and a half years
- He intends to alter the times and laws.
- God will act in judgment against him destroying his kingdom.

The Bible warns that at the end of this present age a ruler will come who will lead a rebellion against God. He is often referred to as the Antichrist although this title is not widely used in scripture. The description in this vision matches the characteristics of the Antichrist in other passages of scripture.

He 'utters great boasts'. The man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2: 4 exalts himself above every so called god or object of worship.

The beast of Revelation 13 speaks arrogant words and blasphemies. He is slain and cast into the burning fire. The same fate awaits the beast and false prophet Revelation 19:20.

The horn wages war on the saints, as does the beast in Revelation 13: 7.

Of the Antichrist scripture says; *"This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son."* 1 John 2: 22. Islam is the only movement in world history, which has built its whole reason for existence on the denial of the Father and the Son. The very earliest writings of Islam, found on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, state that the Father does not have a Son. Islam today is looking for the coming of a leader who will unite Muslims and establish their religion throughout the world.

The extent of the Antichrist's kingdom is a matter for interpretation and prayer. Interpretation; because the description in verse 23 could refer to literally every country on earth or it could, as in the interpretation of the statue, mean the nations of the Middle East. Prayer; because I believe that the ambiguity is deliberate, in order to encourage us to pray that the extent of his kingdom will be limited. Although being hated by all nations, applies to Christians in every nation of the world, in the same way that the gospel must be preached to all nations, the Antichrist does not necessarily directly rule over every nation on earth.

The Throne of God

Into the gloom, burst rays of light, we are given a glimpse of heaven. We see the Ancient of Days seated on his throne. The heavenly court over which God presides is called into session. While on earth, men fight for sovereignty, in heaven there is a true King. The one like a Son of Man is Jesus. He comes before His Father and is given the Kingdom. This vision is repeated in Revelation chapter 5, where

the Lamb receives the scroll conferring on Him the dominion of this world. At that time the whole of heaven erupts in song; *“Worthy is the Lamb”*

In chapter 2 we were told of a Kingdom which will replace the kingdoms of this world. Now we meet the King. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom which will never be destroyed or pass away.

We are warned that for a time, times and half a time (v25) those who follow God will be persecuted and worn down by the king who arises out of the fourth kingdom. This period is usually interpreted as three and a half years corresponding to the 42 months of Revelation 13: 5. At that time we will need to have the same resolve as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Our lives are in the Lord’s hands. If he calls us to give them up or if he chooses to deliver us, so be it. Whatever His destiny for us, may we bring Him glory.

The vision ends on a very upbeat note. We are told that the saints will also possess this kingdom. That is the certainty, which no one can take from us, and to which we look forward.

“But the court will sit for judgment,Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.” Daniel 7: 26 – 27

Finally what will happen to the first three nations? Eventually God will have mercy on them. They are promised an extension of life for an appointed time (v12). God will use the fourth beast to chastise them for their actions. Having suffered for a little while they will be allowed to continue during the appointed period of time when the Jesus Christ reigns on earth from Jerusalem. In the parable of the sheep and the goats some nations are judged and others spared (Matt 25: 31 -46). At the end of this age even a little mercy shown to the Lord’s brethren is enough to be rewarded with mercy.

This prophecy grants us an insight into the world in which we live as God sees it. He sees the warring empires and the power struggles. He sees the hatred and suffering. He knows that the faithful will suffer. During the final years of this age it will be tough to maintain our faith. For three and a half years the little horn is allowed to overpower the saints. We are not to plead for the preservation of our comfort or protection from suffering. The example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego has been given to encourage us. Jesus will be with us in our time of trial. Let us pray that we will be a good witness when the testing time comes.

Chapter 6

The Ram and the Goat

Daniel Chapter 8 part 1

We now return to the Hebrew portion of the book. Having surveyed the world scene, the following section foresees events that will have a major impact on Israel. Before the time comes for the saints to receive the kingdom, the Jews will face more difficult times.

A couple of years have passed since Daniel received the previous vision. In recording this vision he links it to the former by opening with the words '*subsequent to*'. There is a link between the two prophecies, which we will come to later.

The second and third empires

In the vision of the Statue the second and third empires were passed over in a single sentence. We return to them now. The second and third empires were Persia and Greece. In verses 20 and 21 it is stated, so that we are left in no doubt, that the ram represents the kings of Media and Persia and shaggy goat is confirmed as the king of Greece.

By the time of this vision Babylon was in decline. Nabonidus the king had not visited the city for several years. His adopted son Belshazzar, thought to have been a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, reigned as co-regent in his place. Daniel was by now well into his seventies. He was aware of the decline in standards. From the story of Belshazzar's dream we gain the impression that Daniel had little regard for the man. He could see that the empire was disintegrating and would not last.

Long ago in Jerusalem Daniel had heard the prophet Jeremiah declare that the Babylonian Empire would last 70 years. That period was nearly complete. What would the future hold? God provides an answer through this vision.

The vision is set in Susa, the capital of Elam, a nation which is mentioned a number of times in scripture. At that time it was ruled by Babylon. Soon it would fall to the Medes and Persians and become their principal centre of government, see Esther 1:2.

Babylon would fall to the ram coming from the East. The ram has two horns representing two kingdoms, the Medes and the Persians. Of the two kingdoms, Persia emerged later and became the more powerful. For a time no nation could stand against her until another kingdom arose in the West.

The rise of the Greek king Alexander the Great is legendary. At the age of 20, following the murder of his father, Philip, he inherited a kingdom with a very efficient army. Over the next twelve years He conquered the whole Middle East from Greece to the Indus River and down into Egypt. He conquered the city of Babylon in 331 BC and two months later Susa surrendered to him. He died in Babylon in 323 BC at the age of 32. The description of his conquests as a goat, which travelled over the surface of the earth without touching the ground, captures the speed with which he built his empire. Following his death, the empire was divided into four separate kingdoms, represented in the vision as four horns.

Between verses 8 and 9 we jump 150 years. We are told that out of one of these four empires a little horn will arise. It is with this little horn that we are mainly concerned in this prophecy. Not because he is distinguished or a great leader, but because of what he does to the Jews. He will bring about one of the most terrible times in their sorrowful history.

The historical setting given in the prophecy makes it easy for us to identify him. The little horn is Antiochos Epiphanes. We have come to the time of the Maccabees. The first book of Maccabees is included in the apocrypha. It may not have made the grade as scripture but it is accurate history.

There is one issue that concerns us here. What was it about Antiochus which caused him to be included in this vision? The answer can be found in 1 Maccabees 1: 41 to 64 which is quoted below:

“Then the king (Antiochus) wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and everyone should leave his laws. All the Gentiles agreed to command of the king. Many Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed to idols, and profaned the Sabbath. The king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the cities of Judah ordering that they should follow laws foreign to the land, and forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple, that they should profane the Sabbaths and festival days: and pollute the sanctuary and holy people. They were to set up altars, and groves, and shrines to idols, and sacrifice pig’s flesh, and unclean beasts. They should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation, to the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. Whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die.”

“In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Judah to sacrifice city by city. Many of the people were gathered to them, every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land. The Israelites were driven into secret places, wherever they could flee for refuge.”

“Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year (167 BC), they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar. They built altars to idols throughout the cities of Judah. They burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. All the scrolls of the law, which they found, they tore in pieces, and burnt them with fire. Anyone who was found in possession of a Scroll of the Covenant, or was committed to keeping the law, the king’s commandment was that they should put him to death. Month after

month these wicked men used their power against the Israelites to all who were found in their towns.”

“Now on the twenty fifth day of the month they offered a sacrifice upon the pagan altar, which was over the altar of God. At that time according to the commandment of the king they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised. And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them. Yet many in Israel were fully resolved and found the strength in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. They welcomed death rather than defile themselves and profane the holy covenant and so they died. There was very great wrath upon Israel.”

And so begins the story of Matthaias and his four sons who led the heroic resistance against this great evil. Antiochus wanted to eradicate all religion, other than that which would unify his empire. He recognised the power of religion in welding a people together. His vision to unite the empire was ruthlessly applied. Men, women and children who kept to their old faith were murdered. The books of the law were destroyed and practices contemptible to the faithful introduced.

It is against this background that, in the next chapter, we will look at the significance of Antiochus Epiphanes, for those of us who live in the twenty first century.

Chapter 7

Another Tyrant

Daniel Chapter 8 part 2

This prophecy contained a powerful message for the Jews living in Israel during the second century BC. It accurately described the world as they knew it. The Persian Empire had fallen to be replaced by the Greek empire of Alexander. This in turn had been divided into four separate kingdoms. The accuracy of this prophecy was perhaps a major reason why the Essenes living at the time of Antiochus regarded Daniel so highly. It could also have strengthened the resolve of the Maccabees to resist.

The passage directs us to Antiochus as the little horn. He emerged out of one of the four parts of the Greek Empire and in time he disrupted the temple sacrifices and flung truth to the ground. Yet he does not perfectly fit the description which we have in Daniel 8. It cannot be said of Antiochus that he was “exceedingly great”. Compared to the founder of the empire, Alexander the Great, he was insignificant. He tried but did not succeed in conquering to the South or East. He desecrated but did not destroy the sanctuary in Jerusalem. He corrupted many but never opposed the Prince of princes who we understand to be Jesus. He was not broken without human hand which implies a violent death but not by a man.

The Man of Sin

While studying Daniel chapter 7 we may have wondered what will the little horn, the final blasphemer and persecutor of the saints be like? We have here the answer to that question. Antiochus is not the fulfilment of the prophecy. He is used as a picture of the despotic ruler to come. The fulfilment will come when the final little horn described in chapter 7 arises. Chapter 8 verse 19 sets this vision “*at the last end of the indignation for it is for the appointed time of the end*”. The word

translated indignation means wrath, anger or rage. The vision is to be fulfilled at the time when at last the anger of God against Israel will be abated and the Jews as a people are restored to Him never to turn away again. Just before that time and as part of the process of restoration, a vile little man will arise. He will wage war against the saints but will eventually be overcome.

Who are the saints described here as the host of heaven and the stars who fall to the earth? Throughout the Old Testament the descendants of Abraham are likened to the stars (Genesis 15:5). In Revelation 19:14 the armies of heaven which follow the King of Kings and Lord of Lords are the believers in Jesus. Therefore the answer to the question is that the faithful Christians and Jews are the host of heaven and the stars. They are the spiritual and physical descendants of Abraham. In other places scripture indicates that both Christians and Jews will be caught up in the final wave of persecution.

Verse 25 adds another warning. Many are destroyed while they are at ease. They are off guard allowing Satan to take them unawares. Jesus warned of the constant need to be vigilant with regard to the time of His return.

The Final Persecution

We can expect that when this final persecutor of the saints emerges he will, like Antiochus, compel people to abandon their faith. He will abolish all forms of worship other than the one he approves. He will force the dissenters out into the open. They will be given a choice of either worshipping in the way he prescribes or face death.

The passage also guides us to the possible location from where the Antichrist will rule. The geographical locations in this passage are specific. The Persian Empire covered an area from modern Turkey to Pakistan and southern Russia to Egypt. Relative to the home land of the Medes and Persians which is in modern day Iran they conquered to the North up as far as southern Russia, to the West as far as Turkey and South down into Egypt. The Goat comes from Greece which was

to the West of the Persian Empire. Therefore when the small horn is described as becoming exceedingly great towards the South and East and the Beautiful land, where is he located? The capital of the later Selucide Empire was Antioch in what is today Southern Turkey. From here it extended to the south down as far as Egypt to the east as far as Persia and it also included Israel. Will the centre of the future Antichrist's Empire be Turkey? There are a number of scriptural references that point to that possibility. The Antichrist is also referred to in Isaiah chapters 10 and 14, as the Assyrian and the king of Babylon. There is little doubt that the Antichrist will arise from somewhere in the Middle East, not Europe as so often claimed in the past.

2300 Evenings and Mornings

A period of time is mentioned in connection with the desecration of the sanctuary. It will be trampled for 2300 evenings and mornings. The Hebrew day began with the evening followed by the night. The second half of the day began with the following morning. Therefore it is possible that 2300 evenings and mornings is intended to represent 1150 full days. During the time of the Maccabees the altar was desecrated from the 15th day of the 9th month of the 145th year (167 BC) to the 25th day of the 9th month of the 148th year (164) a period of just over three years or 1105 days. This is slightly short of the period specified here. Again we have a similarity but not a true fit. The statement in verse 26 that it pertains to many days hints that this period relates to the end of the age when the final Antichrist arises.

The word 'sacrifice' in verses 11, 12 and 13 is a translator's insertion. The Hebrew word translated 'regular sacrifice' is *tamiyd*, which means, constant, perpetual, continual, or daily, not necessarily a sacrifice. My own belief is that it is a reference to the constant prayers of the saints. At the end of the age the Antichrist will forbid prayer to any but him. This situation is foreseen in the story of Daniel in the Lion's den when he was forbidden to pray to his God. All

petitions were to be made to the king. Verse 11 warns us that in magnifying himself to be equal to the Commander of the host, which we understand to be Jesus, the little horn will claim equality with Him. Jesus intercedes for us in heaven. The Antichrist will try to replace Jesus and claim that he is now the only one who can receive the prayers of the world. In this way the sanctuary where we can be alone with God will be thrown down. The period of 2300 mornings and evenings possibly refers to the time when all prayer and praise to Jesus is forbidden.

We have in this vision an insight into the final persecution of the saints. We know what to expect and can prepare. We may not be able to change things but knowing that God foreknew all that is happening to us, will be a great strength in the time of suffering. At the end of the age, the whole world will be confronted with a choice, of faith or compromise. Matthaïas Modin led a rebellion. Eventually after the sacrifice of many lives, including those of Matthaïas and three of his sons, the armies of Antiochus were driven out and freedom restored.

In our time, a rebellion would be futile. There is too much control and the forces ranged against us too great. I do not believe that that is God's will for us. The stories of the faithful in Daniel set us an example of passive resistance. Refusal to compromise will lead to imprisonment or death for us and our families. It will also be the final witness of the Church to a condemned world. May we be found worthy.

Notes

Trumpet Sounds has for more than 25 years published a quarterly newsletter commenting on the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecy. The newsletter is available free of charge either by email or printed copy by post. To request a regular copy please use the contact email at the bottom of the page.

Our Beliefs

We believe: in one God eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ is God manifest as man, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His atoning death and bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven and His return in power and glory to judge the earth.

We believe: that salvation is only through faith in shed blood of Jesus Christ which paid the debt of our sin, that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to lead a victorious Christian life, that all people who have ever lived will be raised from the dead some to eternal judgement and some to eternal life.

We believe that the Bible does not just contain but is the uniquely inspired and inerrant word of God. The Bible is the revelation of God's truth to men, truth which has been safeguarded by the Holy Spirit. We believe that the true meaning of scripture is the natural and most obvious interpretation. We pray that the Holy Spirit may lead us into that understanding and enable us to hold firmly to the truth.

The study of the prophetic events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ has suffered from many imposed systems of interpretation which have brought about considerable confusion within the church. We pray that the simplicity of the teaching of Scripture with regard to the Second Coming will be restored.

We pray that any who read this book who have not already trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ will be challenged to make that commitment. Further help is available from the email address below:

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