

Daniel
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The Sovereignty of God

Nebuchadnezzar's testimony concerning God's Sovereignty appears in Daniel 4:34-35:

"For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth; and no one can hold back His hand or say to Him, 'What have you done?'"

Daniel 6:25-27:

"Then King Darius (his later and more prestigious title was Cyrus, king of Persia) wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: 'May you prosper greatly!' Issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

This may have been the conversion experience of Darius or the prelude to it. But he was definitely coming to see that the God of Israel was sovereign. God has always been the ultimate ruler over the earth (after all He created and sustains it). His rule however, is destined to become more and more manifest (evident and apparent) upon the earth. How did Jesus teach us to pray? "Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." According to this prayer, does the Lord Jesus want God's kingdom to diminish or increase upon the earth? Is the job of the Church to see God's kingdom diminish or increase? (see Daniel 7:13-14 and 27)

Jeremiah 25:8-12

"Therefore (in light of the wickedness of Judah and the nations surrounding her) the LORD Almighty says this: 'Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar (an ego driven tyrant when he first became) king of Babylon,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity . . . and I will make it an everlasting desolation.'"

Jeremiah 29:10-11,

"For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you (the children of Israel in captivity) and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place'" (the land of Israel).

In chapter 6, Daniel saw the fulfillment of Jeremiah 25:8-12 (Babylon was overthrown by the Median-Persian Empire). And he knew that the rest of the prophecy was also going to be fulfilled. Was Israel going to return to the land and march forward with God from that time on? No. What God revealed to Daniel in chapters 7-12, was that Israel's greatest days of glory (the coming of the Messiah) and her darkest hours of judgment were still ahead.

The vision of Daniel 7, occurred during the first year of Belshazzar's reign (553 B.C.). The vision of Daniel 8, took place in the third year of Belshazzar's reign (550 B.C.). The vision of Daniel 9, occurred in the first year of Darius' reign (Cyrus - 539 B.C.). The vision of Daniel 10-12, took place in the third year of Cyrus' rule (536 B.C.).

Daniel 7

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon (553 B.C.), Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying on his bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. Daniel said: `In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea (some have suggested that the four winds of heaven are referring to the children of Israel who were scattered among the nations. Because of their witness concerning the true and living God, the great sea - the unbelieving people they witness to were churned up - agitated). Four great beasts (world empires - v. 17), each different from the others, came out of the sea (the unbelieving peoples of the world).

The first was like a lion (Babylonian Empire), and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a man, and the heart of a man was given to it (most likely referring to Nebuchadnezzar's humbling conversion).

And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear (Median-Persian Empire). It was raised up on one of its sides (the Persians eventually became the dominate force of this kingdom - see Daniel 8:3 and 20), and it had three ribs (possibly three tusks) in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, `Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule (the Greek Empire - see Dan. 8:21-22).

After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast - terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left (the Roman Empire). It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns (kings - verse 24). While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

John Calvin believed that the fourth beast of Daniel 7, was the Roman Empire, which was the most powerful kingdom on earth in the days of Christ. Calvin thought this was so apparent that he didn't spend much time in proving it. After all, it was the consensus of all the early church fathers.

However, many years later, some students of Scripture came up with a different viewpoint. It was believed that the fourth beast of Daniel 7, represented the Roman Empire of the NT, plus a revived Roman Empire which will become a dominant world force at the end of this age in which we live. Why do people believe that the fourth beast represents a world empire that is yet to be? Primarily because they do not see fulfillment of the ten horns and the little horn which came up after them. Because they do not see past fulfillment, they have pushed these events into our future.

I share John Calvin's preterist view of the fourth beast of Daniel and want to share with you why. Liberal scholars, who do not believe the Bible is a supernatural book, have put forth the theory that the book of Daniel was written sometime around 165 B.C. after Antiochus Epiphanes died. They change the four beasts to the kingdoms of Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece. Therefore, the amazing prophecies of Daniel, are not prophecies after all, but were written after the facts and falsely attributed to Daniel. Liberal scholars also do not see clear fulfillment of the fourth beast in the Roman Empire. They have speculated that the writer of Daniel (who, according to their view, lived around 165 B.C.) actually tried to foretell future events and messed up.

Let's see if we can identify the ten kings of Daniel 7:24. Daniel 7:7, emphasizes the difference of the fourth beast from those that were before it. The difference, is that the Roman Empire was a republic and not a monarchy when it rose to world power; and the dominate force of this republic was the Tribune of the Plebs,

"By 449 B.C. they numbered 10, which then became the plenum of this office. Plebeian tribunes were elected annually by plebeian assemblies, which they convoked, over which they presided, into which they introduced bills for enactment, and whose acts they enforced. By 287 B.C. they acquired the rights to veto other magistrates' administrative acts and to propose legislation as well as senatorial resolutions, to convoke the Senate, and to exercise jurisdiction" (Encyclopedia Americana, 1987 ed. Vol. 27, p. 99).

The power of this office was broken in 83 B.C. when Lucius Sulla became dictator of Rome. He gained this status with the aid of two powerful men: Pompey, the great Roman general; and Marcus Crassus, the wealthiest man in the Roman Empire. After Sulla took control, he curtailed the powers of the Plebeian Tribune and increased the authority of the Senate. Sulla did not want Rome to be led by a king or dictator and saw himself as only a temporary dictator. Many of Rome's leading citizens were put to death during the four years of his dictatorship. One man in particular that produced problems for Sulla was a youth of 19, named Julius Caesar. Sulla demanded that Caesar divorce his wife, who was the daughter of his enemy Cinna. Julius Caesar boldly refused and went into hiding, narrowly avoiding death. He could not return to Rome until Sulla died in 78 B.C.

Of these four men, Julius Caesar was the least known and most unlikely to rise to power. And yet it was Julius Caesar who master-minded the first Triumvirate; composed of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus in 60 B.C. (The Roman Empire was divided into thirds; each man ruling over his portion). And it was this man who went on to become the founder of the "Caesars" and the Roman Empire that most people think of today.

The "great boasts" of Daniel 7:8, would fit well with the fact that Julius Caesar was worshiped by men of lower orders; "Caesar countenanced it, and even let Antony be appointed his `priest'" (Greece and Rome: A. R. Burns and J. Edwards, p. 124). After Caesar was assassinated, the Senate officially deified him (44 B.C.). Caesar worship had begun and would continue for hundreds of years.

In verse 19, Daniel desires to know the true and exact meaning of the fourth beast. The fourth beast represents the most significant kingdom because it was when the Roman Empire became a world power that Christ was born (during the reign of Caesar Augustus); was crucified (Caesar Tiberius); great multitudes of Christians were put to death (Caesar Nero); and Old Covenant Israel with its temple came to an end (set into motion by Nero, destroyed under Vespasian).

Verse 21, speaks of "that horn" which was "waging war with the saints and overpowering them." This would seem to be a reference to Caesar Nero, who was the last of Julius Caesar's line. He was the great persecuting emperor. The "horn" of verse 21, would embrace all the emperors of Julius Caesar's lineage (this is the key that unlocks the interpretive difficulties of the fourth beast). The two most emphasized kings of the Julio-Claudian line are Julius Caesar (the first) and Caesar Nero (the last). The fact that one horn can represent numerous kings is seen again in Daniel 8:20, where the shorter horn represents the kings of Media and the longer horn represents the kings of Persia.

Thus the "horn" of Daniel 7:24, stands for Julius Caesar. The "three kings" he subdued were: Sulla, Pompey and Crassus. The figure of verse 25, is Julius Caesar's last heir, Caesar Nero. The "wearing down of the saints" is a reference to the great slaughter of Christians at Nero's command. The intention to "make alterations in times and in law," would be referring to Nero's orders for Vespasian to crush the Jewish revolt. This order eventually led to the destruction of the temple, and the official end of the Old Covenant Age. Nero did not live to see this happen.

The verse goes on to say, "and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time." We cannot be certain, but some sort of three and a half time period (months, years) would be a natural way to understand this. Three and a half metaphorically stands for "persecution and defeat."

It is significant that Nero began persecuting Christians after the fire of Rome in 64 A.D. It took a few months for Nero to decide on whom to pin the blame. The persecution was in full swing by 65 A.D. and lasted until Nero's death in June 68 A.D. Because Nero's death plunged the Roman Empire into civil war, the killing of Christians came to a halt at that time; which made this about a three and a half YEAR persecution period.

We can also note that from the time Nero ordered Vespasian to march on the Jews, until Titus took the city of Jerusalem in September of 70 A.D., was again a three and a half year period.

Verse 26, informs the reader that, ". . . his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever." When Nero cut his own throat, it ended forever the Julio-Claudian line of emperors. Nero put to death a great many Christians, including (according to tradition) the Apostle Paul. But the Church passed this great test and went on to outdistance the Roman Empire and many empires since.

Daniel 9:1-2, "In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made the ruler of the Babylonian kingdom (many Bible scholars believe that Darius is a title and that he later assumed greater dominion and was known as Cyrus king of Persia) - in the first year of his reign (539 B.C.), I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years."

The specific Scriptures Daniel had in mind are Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-14. Babylon began to carry the inhabitants of Jerusalem into captivity around 605 B.C. Cyrus defeated Babylon about 539 B.C. Daniel personally witnessed both of these events (Dan. 1:1-6; 5:30-31) and realized that the 70 years of captivity were nearing completion. This caused Daniel to pray as follows:

"So I (Daniel) turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed . . . we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws . . . Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses (Deut. 28), the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you . . . Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary . . . O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your name" (Dan. 9:3-19).

Shortly after Daniel uttered this prayer, Cyrus was led by God to issue a decree that allowed the Jewish people to return to their land and rebuild their temple. Notice the words of Ezra 1:1-4,

"In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: 'This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you - may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD'"

This sets the stage for Daniel 9:20-24,

"While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill (Mount Zion was the location of Solomon's original temple) - while I was still in prayer, Gabriel . . . came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, 'Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people (old covenant Israel)'"

Seventy was the number of years Israel had to endure the Babylonian captivity. There is obviously a close connection between the seventy years of Babylonian captivity and the "seventy sevens." Therefore the "seventy sevens" most likely refer to seventy units of seven years. These 490 years are broken into three subunits of time - "seven sevens" (49 years - verse 25), "sixty-two sevens" (434 years - verse 25), and "one seven" (7 years - verse 27). A key question we need to ask is: What was to take place within the "seventy sevens"? Look again at Daniel 9:24, "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city (Jerusalem) to finish transgression" It was Judah's sin that caused her to go into the seventy-year Babylonian captivity. Daniel had already learned in chapter 8, that his nation was not finished with her rebellion and therefore her judgments and curses. Because of Israel's future transgressions, God was going to allow a little horn (king Antiochus Epiphanes IV) to desecrate the rebuilt temple at Jerusalem in 167 B.C. But still Daniel's people would not be finished with their folly. Why was God putting up with all this rebellion by the nation of Israel? Because the Messiah was to be born of the Jews (II Samuel 7:11-13; Isaiah 9:6-7; Micah 5:2-4) and accomplish great redemptive victories in Jerusalem. These victories are listed in Daniel 9:24, "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."

When did the "seventy sevens" begin? Daniel 9:25 tells us, "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (this is the beginning point) until the Anointed One,

the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.'"

The decree in view was the proclamation of Cyrus in 538 B.C. This royal decree is referred to in II Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-4. If we count 483 years (49 + 434) after Cyrus' decree, we come to the year of 55 B.C. Is this when atonement for sin and everlasting righteousness was achieved? Some, in an effort to make this come out exactly 483 years, have made the starting point of Daniel 9:25, the decree of Artaxerxes (445 B.C.) during the days of Nehemiah. However, even if we make 445 B.C. the starting point, 483 years later brings us to A.D. 38. Sir Robert Anderson, by using a very convoluted calculating process, has made it come out to A.D. 32 - supposedly the year of Christ's death. This is all very artificial and futile. At the time of Daniel, the Jewish people used the lunar (Babylonian) calendar whose years equaled 342 days. Most of our current date setting however, has been with the aid of Ptolemaic chronologies based upon solar calendar years of 365 and 1/4 days. Much work has to be done in this area before we can confidently pinpoint the exact times of either Cyrus or Artaxerxes' decrees. However, it is very doubtful that God intended to give Daniel the precise moments of the events listed in Daniel 9:24. After all, did atonement for wickedness happen at the same time vision and prophecy were sealed up? God only gave Daniel an approximate time-frame for this series of very significant achievements (compare with Matthew 24:34 and 36). A more important issue is: Why did God divide the "seventy weeks" into "seven sevens" and "sixty-two sevens?" I believe the answer is because the numbers "seven" and "sixty-two" are very significant in the book of Daniel. For example, most interpreters concur that the "seven sevens" refer to the period of time required by the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. According to Daniel 9:25, Jerusalem was to be rebuilt "in times of trouble." The Jews began returning to their land in great joy around 538 B.C. The new temple was started about 536 B.C., but was halted by Israel's enemies for sixteen or seventeen years (Ezra 4:1-23). It was finally finished and rededicated in 516 B.C. We do not know how long Jerusalem itself was under construction. The "seven sevens" therefore, refer to a time of humiliation in the midst of Israel's joy. This parallels what earlier took place in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. Just as king Nebuchadnezzar (God's servant - Jeremiah 25:9) went through a "seven times" period of humiliation in the midst of great blessing (Daniel 4:16), so too Israel (God's servant - Isaiah 41:8) was to experience a "seven sevens" period of humiliation in the midst of great blessing (Ezra 4). What is the significance of the "sixty-two sevens?" Let's look together at Daniel 9:26-27,

"After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He (the Anointed One) will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Who is the "anointed one" in view here? Let's reflect upon the following facts: (a) The "anointed one" is synonymous with the "ruler" whose people would destroy Jerusalem and the temple - verses 25 and 26; (b) he was to be cut off and have nothing - verse 26; (c) he was to confirm a covenant with many, but would break that covenant and cause sacrifice and offering to cease - verse 27; (d) this "ruler" would also set up an "abomination that causes desolation" (great ruin) - verse 27; and finally (e) he was to suffer ruin himself - verses 25 and 27. Grammatically speaking, the personage of verse 27, must be the "anointed one" and "ruler" of verses 25-26. We know this because in verse 27, Daniel used the pronoun "he" when referring to him. Daniel could not have used a pronoun if a different person was in view. Because of these facts, I do not believe the "anointed one" of Daniel 9:25-27, is referring to Jesus Christ. If not Christ, then who? I believe the "ruler" was Nero Caesar. Here are some reasons why I say this: (a) Everyone agrees that the armies of Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. There must be a close connection between the "anointed one" and the armies of Rome. The ruler who gave the command for the Jewish revolt to be crushed was Nero Caesar. (b) Nero committed suicide before his order was carried out. This follows the sequence laid out in Daniel 9:26, ". . . the Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing. The people of the ruler . . . will destroy the city and the sanctuary." (c) To be "cut off and have nothing" is not an accurate description of Christ's death. Our Lord Jesus did not LOSE everything at the cross. It was Satan who lost (Hebrews 2:14-16). Calvary is where Jesus GAINED everything (Hebrews 12:2). Nero Caesar, on the other hand, committed suicide with no heirs to the throne. His death forever ended the rule of the Julio-Claudian Emperors. (d) The "desolations" of Daniel 9:26-27, are directed at both apostate Israel and "the ruler." This accurately applies to Nero but not to Christ. (e) The covenant that would be confirmed with many, fits Nero's inaugural promise to rule justly. Nero kept that oath until the middle of his fourteen-year reign. His rulership then became so corrupt and

lawless that the Jews revolted and stopped sacrificing for Rome in A.D. 66. Nero then gave the command for the revolt to be crushed, which ultimately resulted in the temple being destroyed (ending forever the sacrifices and offerings conducted at that temple). Why would a tyrant like Nero be called God's "anointed one?" In the first part of the book of Daniel, God's people were held captive by the Babylonians. The "anointed one" who destroyed Babylon's power and freed the Israelites was Cyrus (see Isaiah 45:1). If Cyrus was the same person as Darius the Mede, then he was 62 years old when he conquered Babylon and freed God's people (Daniel 5:30-31). Notice the parallels between Cyrus and Nero. Nero came on the scene after "sixty-two sevens." His armies destroyed Jerusalem, a "Babylon" for the New Testament Church (Read I Peter 5:12-13, keeping in mind that Jerusalem was where Peter, Silas and Mark lived. Read Revelation 17:1-6, 16-18 and 11:8. These verses deal with a spiritual prostitute who had "Babylon the Great" written on her forehead. Revelation 17:18 explains that the prostitute was synonymous with the great city. According to Revelation 11:8, the great city is where the Lord Jesus was crucified. Surely this is a reference to unfaithful Jerusalem, the great prostitute of the Old Testament - Isaiah 1:1-21; Jeremiah 3:1-3; Ezekiel 16:1-42). Nero, the "anointed one" of Daniel 9:25-27, was used of God to destroy the "Babylon" which was greatly afflicting the followers of Christ (see I Thess. 2:14-16). All the events of Daniel 9:24-27, occurred within the "seventy sevens" time span (which began with the decree of Cyrus and reached to A.D. 70). What about the "sealing up of vision and prophecy" spoken of in Daniel 9:24? The completion of the New Testament was the sealing up of vision and prophecy. God accomplished this through the Apostles during the "last days" of the Old Covenant Age (Acts 2:17-18; Heb. 1:1-2). According to Hebrews 8:13, the Old Covenant was made obsolete by Christ's death on the cross, but was still aging and about to disappear when the book of Hebrews was written (A.D. 67). The Old Covenant Age was officially swept away when Jerusalem and the Old Covenant temple were destroyed (Matt. 24:1-3). Many Bible scholars concur that the New Testament was completed before A.D. 70. The anointing of "the most holy" refers to the out pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). That was when God's NEW AND GREATER TEMPLE on earth (I Cor. 3:16 and Eph. 2:19-22) was dedicated and activated for service. There are no compelling reasons for maintaining that Daniel 9:24-27, is speaking about any events in our future. The blessings that Christ secured at Calvary continue to unfold and change lives. The judgments that took place against Old Covenant Israel and Rome continue to teach us about God's power and sovereignty. However, the events of Daniel 9:24-27, took place over 1900 years ago. To place those events into our future is to mishandle God's Word.

Daniel 11:1-35, gives an overview of the Persian, Grecian, Egyptian and Syrian Empires. The emphasis is on the Syrian Empire under the Seleucid Dynasty; not because it was the most wonderful, but because it most affected Israel ("the Beautiful Land", "the Jewel"). It should also be noted that what happened to Israel under Antiochus the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes, could very well have served to foreshadow the greater judgment by God at the hands of the Romans. Verse 35, sets the stage for Rome. The transition from the Syrian Empire to the Roman Empire comes when the angel says, "until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time." The "end time," according to this view, is the end of Old Covenant Israel doomed for her rejection of Christ.

The "king" of verse 36, started with Julius Caesar and ended with his last heir - Caesar Nero (48 B.C. - 68 A.D.). The statement "he will exalt and magnify himself above every god" fits Caesar worship very well. The text goes on to say, "and he will prosper until the indignation (God's judgement against Apostate Israel) is finished, for that which is decreed will be done." The Jews revolted under Nero - which sealed their doom.

In verse 37, the angel states, "And he will show no regard for (1) the gods of his fathers or (2) the desire of women" Julius Caesar was an atheist. The only objects of worship which excited the Caesars were themselves. Caligula had the heads of all the idol gods around Rome removed and a likeness of his own head put in their place. Nero erected a 120 foot statue of himself and had it placed in the Temple of Mars; the most sacred temple among the Romans.

The "desire of women," may be a reference to Jesus Christ. To be the mother of the Messiah was the desire of all Jewish women. Christianity was ignored by Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius; and despised by Nero.

Verses 38-39, mention "he will honor a god of fortresses (power - military might); a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver" Michael Grant in his book, *The World of Rome*, states,

"Augustus . . . maintained unchallengeable authority because, in spite of careful lip-service to Republican institutions, he controlled the army and the empire's financial resources" (p.13). This was true for all the Caesars. Their wealth was incredible and they freely dispersed it to those who did their bidding.

Verse 40, deals with the kings of the South and the North, which thus far in chapter 11, have referred to Egypt and Syria. Rome conquered both of these lands under the leadership of Augustus. The "Beautiful Land" of v. 41, is a reference to Judea, which was also added to the Roman Empire. The peoples who inhabited the ancient lands of Edom, Moab and Ammon, escaped Roman rule until the time of Trajan (A.D. 117).

Verse 43, states, "But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt." In his book entitled, *Ancient Rome*, Christopher Fagg states, "The real power of the emperor lay in his control of the army and the treasury and in the vast wealth of his own estates. Egypt was owned by the emperor himself" (p.22). Libya and Ethiopia were also subdued by Rome during these days.

In verse 44, the angel tells Daniel, "But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many." As wicked as Caesar Nero was, the Roman Empire enjoyed peace during his reign except for the regions of Judea and Parthia, which lay to the East of Rome; and the region of Britain and Germany which lay to the North.

Verse 45 mentions the tents of Rome being pitched in Judea, this happened before Jewish revolt when Cestius Gallus attacked Jerusalem in A.D. 66, and again when Nero commanded Vespasian to crush the Jewish uprising. Nero did not live to see his orders fulfilled because he was declared a public enemy by the Roman Senate and cut his own throat in June of A.D. 68.

The prophetic section ends in Daniel 12:1-3. Daniel is told:

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued" (Dan. 12:1).

How is the statement "at that time" to be understood? This viewpoint holds that the "latter days" of Daniel 10:14, refer to the last days of Old Covenant Israel (30 A.D. - 70 A.D.). During this time of great distress, Michael "the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise." The idea is that Michael would arise in order to remove his protective covering (Is the restrainer of II Thess. 2:6-7, Michael?). Old Covenant Israel would then fall at the hands of the Romans. A special group of Jews would escape; "everyone who is found written in the book." This seems to be a reference to the Jewish Christians (Luke 10:20), who fled from Jerusalem to Pella in 66 A.D. Christ also gave this promise in Luke 21:16-18. Daniel 12:2, is a verse that has puzzled most, "And MANY of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt" (emphasis added). The many who awake to everlasting life, seems to be a reference to a resurrection; but probably not to the great resurrection at Christ's Second Coming. According to the context, the resurrection of the "many" occurs in the "latter days" of Old Covenant Israel. Was there such a physical resurrection? Yes, it is recorded in Matt. 27:51-53,

"And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened; and MANY bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many" (emphasis added).

Ignatius, a disciple of the Apostle John, testifies that these were Old Testament prophets. I Corinthians 15:20 states that Christ's resurrection (accompanied by this group of Old Testament saints) is "the first fruits of those who are asleep." The rest will arise at Christ's Second Coming. Another possibility is that Daniel's reference to a resurrection parallels the language of resurrection found in Ezek. 37:12-13. The "opening of graves" that Ezekiel speaks of refers to Israel's return to the land and spiritual awakening under Ezra and Nehemiah. The ministries of John the Baptist and Christ led to a powerful awakening among the Jews. Some of them were truly regenerated and born again. Others had their eyes opened and even tasted of the Holy Spirit's healing ministry, but failed to enter into the fullness of life

that Christ offered. These are the people spoken of in Hebrews 6:4-8, and perhaps those that Daniel says would experience an awakening that led to "everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:3, goes on to say, "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." Here is a reference to believing Jews who entered into the blessings of the New Covenant and helped spread the Good News around the world. The Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Philippi states:

"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life" (Phil. 2:14-16).

A final important ramification of this view should be noted. If the fourth beast of Daniel is the Roman Empire of the New Testament, then the viewpoint of modern liberalism is shown to be false. This viewpoint holds that the fourth beast of Daniel is Greece; and that the book of Daniel was written around 164 B.C.; which means it contains no genuine prophecy. If Daniel is accurately describing 70 A.D. events, then prophecy has occurred, for not even liberals can push its date that far forward.