Explore Scripture from its uniquely Jewish Perspective.

The Friends of Israel introduces a quality biblical education that’s as close as your computer!

FINALLY! AN AFFORDABLE, CONVENIENT BIBLE EDUCATION IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME.

For 22 years, the Friends of Israel’s Institute of Jewish Studies was only available through an on-campus program in the Philadelphia area.

Now, this same quality education is available worldwide via the Internet at an affordable cost. And with its easy access and flexible schedule, it’s the perfect choice for studying Scripture in its Jewish context!

Your IJS education will provide a wide array of information not commonly found elsewhere. And as an IJS student, you’ll quality to join us on one of our amazing study tours of the land of Israel where the facts and places you learn about will literally come alive.

You’ll learn from the expert faculty as you pursue lessons online that guide you to:

- Explore the Jewish background, culture and history of Scripture.
- Broaden your worldview by understanding Israel and the role of the Jewish people in redemptive history.
- Develop a thorough working knowledge of the Bible.
- Enrich your life and ministry.

It’s a lifelong Christian learning experience that you can access whenever it’s convenient for you. Go online for more information!

The Institute of Jewish Studies

Biblical truth that makes a difference.

EDUCATION ONLINE FROM THE FRIENDS OF ISRAEL

For more information, visit us online at www.fol.org/ijs.
Reading a Premature Obituary
by Elwood McQuaid ...................................10
To hear the secular news media tell it, Christianity in America is one small wheeze away from death. Well, that isn’t exactly accurate. Here’s the rest of the story.

The Kingdom and the Power
by Herb Hirt.............................................14
Political turmoil, power struggles, wars and rumors of wars. The prophet Daniel lived through such times. And his record gives us hope while teaching an essential truth for today.

Facing the Furnaces of Life
by Richard D. Emmons..............................18
Why do bad things happen to good people? Many have tried to deal with that question. Here is an answer from the book of Daniel that may both surprise and comfort you.

Antiochus and the Antichrist
by Douglas Bookman ...............................22
Some say the unspeakably evil man in Daniel is Antiochus IV only. That is not correct, and here is why.

The Great World Kingdoms
by Charles E. McCracken ........................28
God ordained that four Gentile kingdoms will rule the earth before His Kingdom comes. He gave this amazing prophecy to Daniel, and everything is playing out exactly as Daniel wrote it.

The theme of this issue, the book of Daniel, has something for everyone. Wonderful stories of faith and courage for children; history lessons from Israel’s past that will challenge you; invaluable instructions on how to pray; the earmarks of biblical prophecy that chart the future, including a portrait of the coming Antichrist; and practical life-lessons that we all would do well to apply. And you won’t want to miss the helpful charts that will guide your understanding of the composition of this amazing book of prophecy.

With this issue we’re also inaugurating a new feature: Craig Parshall’s column, “A More Perfect Union.” It will keep you abreast of what’s happening in the nation’s capital that affects Christians or Israel. Our cover depicts the beasts that represent the Gentile kingdoms in Daniel 7. (FOI Archive; digital composition and enhancement, Thomas E. Williams)
Making her way to me through the crowd, Helene spoke with emotion: “It’s because of your kind of Christians that people like me even exist. They hid my father and his parents during the Holocaust.”

I met Helene recently at a regional reception of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), where The Friends of Israel was acknowledged for its support of the Jewish state. Helene is a first-generation American, the child of a Holocaust survivor. Her family had lived in great fear in Vienna, Austria, where her grandmother was even forced to wear a sign declaring, “I am a Jewish pig.” Then, in 1938, came Kristallnacht, the “Night of Broken Glass.” It unleashed horrendous, widespread violence against the Jewish people, their homes, and their businesses.

As the Nazis started rounding up Jews for deportation to concentration camps, Helene’s family threw whatever “valuables” they had in the Danube River rather than let the Germans seize them.

It was then their Christian landlady moved Helene’s father, a child at the time, along with his mother and father into a basement room where she hid them for about a year. This woman, whose name is unknown today, demonstrated her faith with acts of kindness that meant survival for Helene’s father and grandparents. Gestures like lowering milk and bread on a rope into their basement hideaway spelled the difference between life and death.

Lamenting the continuing impact of the Holocaust in the lives of many Jewish people, Helene explained how her grandfather and one of his brothers were the only two survivors of 11 siblings. “There’s a big hole in our family history—one that you cannot fill no matter how hard you try. You see large families around you gathering for happy family times—holidays, birthdays, and other special occasions. I have only one cousin—with us there’s a lack of a real sense of belonging.”

Although Helene’s father is profoundly grateful for his family’s Christian landlady, he personally witnessed how Hitler used the church and its masses of people as part of his plan. Given the history of church-related anti-Semitism, it would surely be difficult for him to view what happened to the Jewish people of Europe as anything other than “Christian.”

Unfortunately, many Bible-believing Christians do not understand the extent to which the organized church has persecuted the Jewish people. Even here in America, Helene has faced the taunting words of a neighbor who told her, “You killed my Lord.” Jewish people have routinely been called Christ-killers and other epithets by people who claim spiritual residence under the umbrella of Christianity.

As you reflect on Helene’s story, I hope you understand why The Friends of Israel encourages Bible-believing Christians to demonstrate that they are a different type of Christian from what Jewish people have known historically. Helen understands this difference, but many do not.

How do we demonstrate our Christian faith? We start by believing God’s promises to Abraham and the Jewish people: “For all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever” (Gen. 13:15). Then we support what God is doing to fulfill His promises in founding the modern State of Israel in 1948 and protecting it: “I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel” (Ezek. 11:17).

We continue by fighting anti-Semitism whenever and wherever we find it. Finally, we reflect God’s heart for His Chosen People: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you” (Jer. 31:3).
Saddam Hussein trumped up charges against his neighbor as an excuse to invade the country with a vengeance and occupy it for seven dreadful months. And while diplomacy and UN resolutions could not dissuade him to leave, U.S.-led military action spoke a language Mr. Hussein understood.

How can anyone forget the dramatic news footage of smoke and flame blackening the skies above Kuwait’s oil fields? Iraqi forces had torched the fields while retreating, as coalition troops drove them out and freed the country. But hostilities broke out again. In 2003 coalition troops invaded Iraq, and the eventual cost of Saddam’s belligerence and defeat in what he termed “the mother of all wars” would be his extraction from a hole in the ground where he was hiding. Full recompense for his folly was an appointment with the hangman in 2006.

Hussein’s big mistake was misinterpreting what the West was willing to do when the only viable action was to take the advice of famous American activist Teddy Roosevelt and apply the “big stick.”

Now a tangible reward has surfaced. For the first time, a candidate for the Kuwaiti parliament has publicly called for the Gulf state to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. “Israel,” said journalist Saleh Bahman, “is a reality and has international influence. . . . Kuwait would benefit from Israel’s influence if we establish relations with them.” Furthermore, relations between Kuwait and Israel would improve the oil-rich country’s standing in the West.

So far, Kuwait has steadfastly refused to end its boycott of Israel, and some lawmakers there want harsher penalties for dealing with Israel. Nevertheless, Saleh Bahman was allowed to speak up. Had America and its allies not rescued the Kuwaitis, Saddam Hussein would have continued his quest for superior military arms that he would have used to intimidate and conquer other states in the region. And as we should have learned by now, trouble in the Middle East ultimately means trouble for us all.

Israel’s defense and stability are indispensable. They form the lynchpin holding together hopes for freedom and some form of democracy in the region. The Jewish State of Israel represents hope and change for people too long under the fist of the planet’s most despotic elements. This is one reason why so many of its enemies would like to see Israel collapse. And if it takes a “big stick” to assure Israel does not collapse, that’s the way it must be. It’s a component in the command to pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

by Elwood McQuaid
Looking Back to See the Future

The mantra of the moment embraces the idea that we should never look back because all hope and promise are found in looking to the future. Or, to quote Satchel Paige, a baseball great from another era, “Don’t look back. Something might be gaining on you.” In a past election cycle, youthful political neophytes repackaged the phraseology, lustily piping the words Don’t stop thinking about tomorrow.

Such pop sloganeering gets people elected, but reality sets in when the past starts catching up to us. A more accurate phrase might be Look to the past, and you’ll find the future.

There’s a good illustration of this truth in Scripture, and it may be profitable for those interested in a sound and stable tomorrow.

Solomon, King David’s son, extended Israel to its largest proportions so far in a glorious era crowned by the Temple in Jerusalem that became one of the great wonders of the world. Upon his passing, he bequeathed the kingdom to his son Rehoboam, a decision that amplifies the potential pitfalls of nepotism. Rehoboam foolishly allowed the kingdom to be fractured into two entities, with the 10 northern tribes (Israel) seceding from the Davidic Kingdom.

From a human point of view, the heart of the problem was Rehoboam’s failure to take advice from the people who knew best how to advise him. He first consulted the elders, men who had served Solomon. They recognized the failures of David’s son and the burdens the acquisition of wealth and expansion of the kingdom had placed on the people, and they offered commonsense, practical advice:

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, “How do you advise me to answer these people?” And they spoke to him, saying, “If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever” (2 Chr. 10:6–7).

But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him (1 Ki. 12:8).

In other words, “Lighten up! Don’t continue to lay more on them than they and their offspring are able to bear. Learn the lessons of leadership your father had begun to neglect.” They counseled him to learn from the past and change the format for people-taking relations.

The king, however, didn’t cotton to the advice of the men with gray heads. He chose to cast his lot with the young movers and shakers who aspired to craft the future minus the drag of the old-timers and their old-school ideas. Here is a taste of their advice:

King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, and he spoke to them [the people] according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges” (vv. 13–14).

If a man destined to lead a nation sat down and thought for decades how to fail his country and alienate his people, he could not have come up with a better plan than Rehoboam’s. The king’s propensity to take the advice of radical upstarts who had passed on acquiring experience, people skills, and knowledge of governing is beyond comprehension. But the fact is, Rehoboam listened to them. He bought into the folly of thinking that the road to the future was only open to inexperienced people with a dream—albeit a completely undefined one. Yet in the end, the dream was unattainable, and the road led to ruin.

The lessons are obvious. Chief among them is that rambling into the uncharted future with fresh faces and untested formulas often brings disappointment and destruction. And what can be said of Western societies holds true for Christianity. It is one thing to adjust contemporary Christian culture to certain generational nuances. It is another to insist on change for the sake of change.

We would do well to consider where we have come from and what got us where we are. The greatness of our Christian heritage was forged in the minds and hearts of deeply spiritual men and women; and their teaching, great hymnology, and definition of our mission on Earth must not be sacrificed on the altar of superficiality.
TIME TO RENEW?

Check the mailing label on the back cover of this magazine. The date in the upper right corner of the label indicates the end of your current subscription. Use the enclosed envelope to renew.

Subscription Rates
USA: $18.95 for 1 year, $28.95 for 2 years
Overseas: $21.95 for 1 year, $34.95 for 2 years
(U.S. dollars only) Single copies $4 each
Canada: $18.95 CDN for 1 year, $28.95 CDN for 2 years

Israel My Glory is also available in Spanish.

© Copyright 2009 The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA by Waveline Direct.
We all leave footprints on the sands of time, made by the imprints of our devotion to Christ and the effect of our lives on others. And the impressions we leave behind enhance the lives of our friends and loved ones, giving them footprints to follow.

Thoughtful estate planning is one means we have to make an imprint that helps others recall our priorities. For example, consider the effect of a plan that provides for family members and leaves resources for the Lord’s work through The Friends of Israel.

When you include The Friends of Israel in the final disposition of your estate, you declare to your family and friends that you believe in and care about the mission of The Friends of Israel.

Your parting gift becomes a clear declaration of your values and priorities.

Estate gifts are especially valuable because they often come at critical times. They provide the extra boost to the budget that can make the difference between moving ahead or having to cut back on programs. Estate gifts can be designated for a specific purpose or they can be unrestricted for use where needed most.

There is something about a well-planned estate gift that influences others to “go and do likewise.” When you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received of the goods of this life—only what you have given. By God’s grace and careful planning, your footprint can be one worth following.
The note read, “Dr. Sidlow Baxter passed away in Minneapolis last week. Funeral arrangements pending.” Word of the death of Dr. Baxter, a personal friend and unqualified favorite of the congregation I pastored at the time, was a shock.

The message arrived Wednesday night before prayer meeting, and it was suggested that I read the announcement and ask prayer for his widow, Ethel. But something caused me to hesitate, and I decided to wait until the next day and call the Baxter home in Santa Barbara, California.

When I called, the phone was immediately picked up by Mrs. B. with a cheery greeting. “Hello Elwood. So glad to hear from you. I’ll call Sid.”

The question now was how to break the news of the untimely announcement to the declared deceased. After a few halting stabs at small talk, I arrived at the point. “We received word last night that you had passed away in Minneapolis.”

There was a long silence. Then came a somewhat somber, theatrical reply. “Oh, Elwood, it sounds like a grave situation. But I must say, it’s somewhat premature.”

That episode came to mind recently as I read the rash of obituaries for Christianity in America coupled with announcements of the dawn of a new “post-Christian” era. And, as with the premature posting of my friend’s departure, the pronouncements are vastly overstated.

**Nothing New Here**

There is nothing revolutionary in the notion that atheism is slowly winning the day, despite a rise in the number of people declaring themselves atheists. Nor is it novel that people believe “provincial,” traditional, Western Christian values are going by the boards.

Many of us remember when the “flower children” of the 1960s revered the hedonistic, “God is dead” howlers as avant-garde soldiers of the future, liberators of a generation that had been stuck in the mud of orthodox Christianity for too long. Interestingly, those who fancied themselves dancing on deity’s grave and initiated what became the “Godless Christianity movement” were pseudotheologians at the United Methodists’ Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

While we recognize there is nothing new in the post-Christian mindset’s rejection of traditional religious affiliations, there is a very great difference in how the new cultural state of mind is being expressed.

A sentence in John Meacham’s April 13 Newsweek article, “The End of Christian America,” tells the story.
Meacham interviewed R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, who analyzed the differences between today’s trends and the ‘60s “God is dead” movement:

“The post-Christian narrative is radically different; it offers spirituality, however defined, without binding authority,” he [Mohler] told me [Meacham]. “It is based on an understanding of history that presumes a less tolerant past and a more tolerant future, with the present as an important transitional step.” The present, in this sense, is less about the death of God and more about the birth of many gods [emphasis added].

Strikingly revealing to the biblically literate is Meacham’s reference to this movement being “about the birth of many gods.” It is nothing less than a quest to return to the monotheism that has shaped and maintained Western and American society.

Larger Implications

One of the darkest periods in Israel's history came in the days of the judges. As the last verse in the book of Judges declares, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (21:25).

Every man was out for himself, with no guiding hand of final authority in the areas of belief, conduct, values, ethics, or moral obligations and responsibilities. Matters were corrected only when God in His forbearance stepped in through appointed deliverers and brought order out of chaos.

In the current cultural context, the verse calls attention to the words of American President Barack H. Obama when he startled many by proclaiming in a speech in April in Ankara, Turkey, that America is no longer a Christian nation but “a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.”

By whose ideals and set of values? If we are no longer bound by historic Judeo-Christian fundamentals of governance, by what are we bound? We certainly cannot say we have common values if we are merely a nation of citizens with communal and personal differences regarding what constitutes right and wrong.

A Reuters article that ran in The Washington Post on May 5 reported that a 30-year-old man was stoned to death in Iran for adultery. The article said that, according to Iran’s Islamic Sharia law, men convicted of adultery “should be buried up to their waists and women up to their chests for stoning. Stones used should not be large enough to kill the person immediately.”

Although perhaps extreme, the case illustrates the diversity of ideals and practices that can exist within “a nation of citizens” who hail from a variety of cultures and customs contrary to those sanctioned under American constitutional law.

At issue are important questions: What rules will apply? By what standard will they be applied? Who will be the judge of what’s appropriate? We may yet evolve into a nation of fiefdoms where every immigrant segment and religious sect implements its own rules; and if such would ever become the case, we can kiss goodbye the America we have known and loved.

Former presidential candidate Gary Bauer spoke for the vast majority of Americans when he wrote the following:

America is a Judeo-Christian nation, built upon the values in the Ten Commandments. If you asked Americans, “Do you consider America to be a Judeo-Christian nation?” I believe the percentage of folks agreeing with that statement would skyrocket.1

A recent Newsweek poll, Bauer said, “found that at least 62% of Americans do think of the United States as a Christian nation.”2

Battleground

No matter what liberal politicians, news media advocates for radical change, or social revolutionaries sell to the uninformed public, there can be no better, brighter tomorrow through undefined change for change’s sake. Our Judeo-Christian heritage is our anchor of hope, stability, and continuity. It took centuries to build. Yet it can take only months to destroy. And for all the talk about hope; progressive change; and the brave, bold march into the future, the only word that comes to mind about what lies ahead is uncertainty.

Now, about the well-oiled fiction that the church is sucking its last breath before slipping into a coma. We don’t believe it for a minute. Yes, war has been declared on the followers of Christ. And yes, it will intensify. But it is essential to understand that the most violent assaults are not being leveled at the church in general but at the segment that is evangelical—particularly the Christian Zionists.

These are the Bible-believers who have not joined the book burners at the festivals of denial. Nor do they chant for change or long for a rollback into the murky world of self-inflicted neopaganism. These are the people whom the far left targets and the religious lynch mobs delight in branding as intolerant obstructionists whom the country would do well to get rid of.

These Bible-believers are no different from the millions of true followers of Jesus who have marched with Him across the centuries. They are honest people who go to work every day to support their families. They love their country, fight for her and the freedom of others, pay their taxes, go to church on Sunday, listen to what the Book has to say to them, and believe it. You’ll find the names of people just like them in the Hebrews 11 chronicle of the Bible’s “hall of heroes” and on the pages of John Foxe’s Book of Martyrs.

They show up every year in Poland to join Holocaust survivors for the March of the Living. Their cars still fill church parking lots across this country; and as the most church-going people on earth, they are charitable; considerate; and on their knees consistently for national, international, and local leaders—even for those with whom they disagree.

They are not sinless, plaster saints but ordinary people who will never make the headlines or TV newscasts except to be caricatured or ridiculed as misfits taking
up space where they are not welcome. However, they are still here; and they compose the fabric of a real world of compassion, faith, and fidelity to truth—a world the radical change-makers do not know. Nor, if things continue as they are, will they ever know.

Nobel Prize recipient and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, wrote,

_In those times there was darkness everywhere. In heaven and on earth, all the gates of compassion seemed to have been closed. The killer killed and the Jews died and the outside world adopted an attitude either of complicity or of indifference. Only a few had the courage to care._

Among those who had the courage to care was a young woman unheard of until a short time ago. Her name was Irena Sendler. We’ve written of her inspiring story on these pages before, but I feel compelled to include parts of it here.

When the Nazis locked up Jewish people and their families in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland during World War II, it was a death sentence for them all. Irena, a young Christian nurse, saw their suffering and was so deeply moved that she mustered the courage to care enough to risk her life to save as many children as possible. She organized a small group of nurses and made repeated trips into the disease-infected enclosure where 5,000 Jews were dying every day.

Before the Ghetto was burned and razed, Irena had rescued 2,500 Jewish children, given them Polish identities, and placed them with families all over Warsaw. This meant that thousands of Christians and Gentiles willingly risked their lives to help her save those children. Each was fully aware that to be caught with a Jewish child meant death.

These are the types of Christians I’m talking about. They don’t live in a post-Christian era. Their faith is the genuine article. They’re here in America today and will remain here, whatever the statistics to the contrary claim to say.

**END NOTES**

2 Ibid.

Elwood McQuaid is executive editor for The Friends of Israel.
Iran is an increasing concern for the Middle East and the world, and no one seems to have a workable plan for how to control it. Its radical Islamist leader, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has pledged to destroy Israel and bring down the Western democracies; and though his quest for nuclear weapons receives significant coverage, almost nothing is reported concerning the situation of the approximately 300,000 Christians remaining in the country.

The latest news on conditions there is not encouraging. There has been a new crackdown on Christians, reports Compass Direct News:

Declaring three Iranian Christians guilty of cooperating with “anti-government movements,” a court in Shiraz . . . ordered the converts [from Islam] to discontinue Christian activities and stop propagating their faith. An Islamic Revolutionary Court judge handed an eight-month suspended prison sentence with a five-year probation . . . The judge said he would enforce their prison sentence and try them as “apostates,” or those who leave Islam, if they violate terms of their probation—including a ban on contacting one another.

A new penal code under consideration by the Iranian Parliament includes a bill that would require the death penalty for apostasy. “The warning that they will be arrested and tried as apostates if they continue their Christian activities is quite chilling,” said a regional analyst who requested anonymity.

Dr. Richard Land, a commissioner with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, released the group’s annual report recently and said religious restrictions in Iran tightened during the past year and government action has worsened conditions for a variety of communities, including evangelical Christians and Jews.

A key reason for the upswing in anti-Christian activity is the growing number of Muslim conversions to Christianity. Reports International Christian Concern: “Last year alone, 50 Christians were arrested for practicing their faith, some of whom were tortured. There have also been reports that Christians died due to the torture they were forced to endure.”

An especially regrettable case involves two women who were arrested for practicing Christianity. After Iranian security officials searched their apartment and took their personal effects, they were taken to the police station in handcuffs. They appeared before a Revolutionary Court and were sent to “the notorious Evin prison” and told they could make bail by posting the “staggering amount” of $400,000. Both women were allowed only a one-minute telephone call per day to their immediate families. They also are ill, one seriously. She told her family she was dying.

The Christian presence in Iran dates back to the earliest days of the church. And for 2,000 years, Iranian Christians lived in relative security there. After the radical Islamic revolution that brought Ayatollah Khomeini out of exile in France, the situation evolved into what it is today.

As we report consistently, the situation is not restricted to Iran. In every country radical Islamists control, Christians suffer the same abuse. And it is going from bad to worse, particularly where repressive Muslim Sharia law is central to the judicial system.

The message for you and me is to intensify our prayers for the Christians of Iran.

ENDNOTES


2 Ibid.
Artifacts of ancient kingdoms. Clockwise from top left: Statue of Assyrian King Tigrath Pilesar III (Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY); relief of Mede dignitaries (DeA Picture Library/Art Resource, NY); male head with beard (Sargon) from Nineveh (Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY).
The prophet Daniel lived in tumultuous times. In a life that stretched to possibly 90 years, Daniel experienced the demise of Judah’s kingdom at the hands of Babylon and then the destruction of Babylon by the Medo-Persians. During this political upheaval, when the superpowers of the time faced off against each other, vying for control of the Ancient Near East, God revealed to Daniel that everything was under His control and was according to His plan for His people Israel and the coming of God’s Kingdom to earth. 

During the sixth and seventh centuries B.C., the kingdom of Judah was caught in a conflict between three great empires: Assyria, Babylon, and Medo-Persia. The Assyrian Empire, based in Nineveh, had ruled the Ancient Near East from the time of Tiglath-Pileser III in the mid-eighth century B.C. This was the nation that had conquered Samaria and taken the northern kingdom of Israel captive in 722 B.C. By the end of the following century, Babylon was slowly encroaching on Assyria, sacking Nineveh in 612 B.C.

In 609, a coalition of Assyrian and Egyptian armies attempted to restrain the Babylonians at Carchemish. But by 605, under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon proved victorious; and so Judah became subservient to the Babylonian Empire.

That year Nebuchadnezzar took Judean captives that included Daniel. He did so again in 597 after King Jehoiakim rebelled. Jehoiakim died in Babylon; his successor, Jehoiachin, was then taken prisoner (along with the prophet Ezekiel); and Zedekiah became king. Finally, in 586 B.C., after Zedekiah rebelled, King Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and exiled the rest of the Jewish nation. Since Babylon already controlled the northern kingdom of Israel, captured by Assyria, it now had total domination over world Jewry.

The Babylonian Empire, though glorious, was short-lived. Thirteen years after Nebuchadnezzar’s death, a coalition of Medes and Persians under Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon by diverting the Euphrates River and storming into the city through the riverbed on October 29, 539 B.C. Cyrus then decreed that all the captive nations under Babylon could return home. So began the unprecedented Persian Empire that ruled from India to the Mediterranean Sea for more than 200 years.

Daniel thus lived during a time of tremendous political turmoil, with the Jewish nation subservient to these greater powers. The book of Daniel, however, teaches that the world is never out of God’s control and all nations are subject to Him.

The Book

Although the Christian Bible places Daniel with the Major Prophets, the Hebrew Bible puts it with the Writings. (See “Daniel or Denial?” page 17.) This may be because Daniel worked mainly as a Babylonian and then Persian government official, so the book was placed between Esther and Ezra/Nehemiah with other writings from the post-exilic times.

Daniel’s revelations spanned almost seven decades and specify the royal years when he received visions. The book is written in both Hebrew (1:1–2:4a; 8:1–12:13) and Aramaic (2:4b–7:28), the international language of the day, telling us that Daniel wrote to both Jews and Gentiles.

Daniel’s revelations were given to the chosen people to be faithful to Him while under Gentile rule, but they also instruct Gentile rulers as to who really is God.

This thrust then becomes the theme of chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 is King Nebuchadnezzar’s autobiographical description of his encounter with the Most High God. It is the story of Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and humbling through seven years of boanthropy, when he lived in humiliation as an animal in the field until he recognized that his kingdom and power came from God. (See “Facing the Furnaces of Life,” page 18.) In the same way, God protected an elderly Daniel (chap. 6) in the lions’ den when he continued to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s image. (See “Belshazzar’s Bash,” page 29.) The additional revelation in 7:8, 24 is that a little horn sprouts up among the 10 to blaspheme God. The Most High then judges that little horn through the Son of Man, and the kingdom is then given to the saints.

Chapters 3 and 6 correspond to each other in that they demonstrate God’s preservation of the faithful under these Gentile rulers. Chapter 3 is the famous story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and God’s protection of them in the furnace when they would not bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s image. (See “Facing the Furnaces of Life,” page 18.) In the same way, God protected an elderly Daniel (chap. 6) in the lions’ den when he continued to bow down to the true God in violation of the law of the Medes and Persians. Both accounts not only instruct God’s Chosen People to be faithful to Him while under Gentile rule, but they also instruct Gentile rulers as to who really is God.

Chapter 5 recounts King Belshazzar’s blasphemy and God’s response when Belshazzar used the holy vessels from the destroyed Jewish Temple in his drunken feast. (See “Belshazzar’s Bash,” page 34.) Both accounts warn Gentile rulers to recognize that their sovereignty over Israel comes from God. It is not theirs or that of their gods; and they
should honor the Most High and His people, or they will be judged.

Chapters 8 through 12 consist of three visions, or revelations, written in Hebrew and dealing with Israel’s future under the four Gentile kingdoms. All three focus on Israel’s continued judgment or suffering at the hands of the Gentiles until God’s Kingdom comes. Chapter 8 is a vision revealed in 551 B.C. that deals with the oppression of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), a Seleucid king from the Greek Empire, when he profaned the yet-future second Temple in Jerusalem in 167 B.C., thus sparking the Maccabean revolt. This king is also described in the vision of 11:21–35. (See “Antiochus and the Antichrist,” page 22.)

Chapter 9 is God’s response to Daniel’s prayer in 539–538 B.C. over Jeremiah’s prophecy that Jewish people would be in exile 70 years (Jer. 25:11–12; 29:10). Daniel understood that it was the time for the exile to be completed (609–539 B.C.).

God revealed to Daniel that 70 times seven years of further judgment was decreed for Jerusalem until all atonement had been made for Israel. At the end of 483 years the Messiah was to be “cut off” (Dan. 9:26), leaving one final “week” (seven-year period) of judgment before the end (vv. 24–27).

The final vision, recorded in chapters 10–12, was given in 536–535 B.C. and deals with the nation of Israel in the “latter days” (10:14). Chapter 11 envisions the conflicts between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies during the time of the Greek Empire, which culminated in Antiochus Epiphanes’ abomination of desolation in the Temple (11:31). (“See “Who’s Who in Daniel 11,” page 32.)

But Antiochus Epiphanes is pictured as but a type of a greater, future ruler: the Antichrist, who will exalt himself against God. The book ends with the establishment of God’s rule and the reward of resurrection for the saints.

The Message

The book of Daniel has a message for both Israel and the Gentile nations. For Israel, the message is to remain faithful to the one true God despite suffering under Gentile rule while awaiting God’s Messiah and Kingdom.

For Gentiles, the message is to recognize the God of Israel as the Most High God and acknowledge His plan for Israel and the world. God is to be recognized as sovereign; and honor and glory given to Him. As Nebuchadnezzar came to recognize, “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation” (4:34).
Although the text of the book of Daniel is the same for Christians and Jews, profound differences exist in its interpretation. If understood literally and historically, the book is easy to explain. If not understood literally, God’s incredible control of the world is reduced to meaningless fable.

The narrative is simple: Around the sixth century B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians took many Jewish people captive. One was a young man named Daniel who remained steadfast and faithful to the God of his fathers. Possessing a God-given ability to tell and interpret dreams, he used that ability for Nebuchadnezzar and was promoted to a position of great stature and power in the government. He became an authority throughout the kingdom of Babylon and then Persia.

Daniel also received apocalyptic visions from the Lord, providing an understanding of Israel’s Messiah, world history, and the future Messianic Kingdom.

As Bible-believing Christians, we accept the literal account, viewing Daniel as a prophet much like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. We believe the book is crucial to understanding Jesus and His Second Coming, and we see it as key to understanding the New Testament book of Revelation.

The Jewish interpretation is quite different. The accepted commentary (Midrash) is often regarded as more important than the text itself. Because the apocalyptic portions of the text are associated with Christian teaching, Jewish interpreters remove the prophetic implications: “Daniel was evidently considered a prophet at Qumran and elsewhere in early Judaism (Josephus, Antiquities 10.266-68), but because prefigurations of Christ and Christian resurrection were seen in Daniel by the early church, the rabbinic tradition hesitated to embrace the visions of Daniel.”

Daniel’s placement in the Jewish Bible is also used to justify a nonliteral interpretation. The Jewish Scriptures are divided into three distinct parts: Torah (the Law), Neviyim (the Prophets), and Ketuvim (the Writings). The Ketuvim consist of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs (Solomon), Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Daniel. Most Jewish people regard the Writings as less inspired than the Law or Prophets. Consequently, Ruth, Esther, and Daniel are regarded as fictional.

Jewish scholars who do regard Daniel as apocalyptic believe it was written during the Maccabean period, rather than in 537 B.C., about 375 years earlier, as evangelical scholars believe. The later date makes it impossible for Daniel to have been the author and turns the prophecies about Antiochus IV (Dan. 11:21–35) into past history. The Jewish Study Bible speaks of “the anonymous author.”

In an effort to explain away difficulties with the text, chapters 1 through 6 are considered “legends” of “the adventures of Jewish heroes,” while chapters 7 through 12 are apocalyptic visions, “revelations of the events that lead to the cataclysmic end and transformation of history.”

The assumption seems to be that Daniel acts like a prophet; but because he can’t be a prophet, the book’s content must be explained some other way.

In response to this lack of acknowledgment of the divine inspiration of Scripture, a Jewish woman recently asked me, “What’s the use of having a Bible if it’s just like any other book?” It is a fair question. Her frustration is with the Jewish denial of the authenticity of the text.

God’s Word is timeless in its personal application. That’s because it is just that: the Word of God. Instead of adjusting the text to conform to us, we should let the text adjust us; and we should conform to it.

Endnotes

1 Adele Berlin and Mark Zvi Brettler, eds., The Jewish Study Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1642.
2 Ibid., 1640.
3 Ibid.

Torah scroll and pointer (The Jewish Museum, NY/Art Resource, NY).
Facing the Furnaces of Life

Artist’s rendition of Nebuchadnezzar pointing to the fiery furnace (Spencer Arnold/Getty Images; digital colorizing, Thomas E. Williams).
S

ometime in your life you probably have asked, “Why does God let us suffer?” Why do we go through adversity and pain?

There are several answers. Sometimes hardship is God’s chastening. When we’re not walking with Him as we ought, He steps in like a loving father to provide circumstances designed to bring us back to Him. Sometimes we suffer simply because we live in a world filled with sin, brokenness, and heartache.

Yet sometimes God allows us to suffer to benefit those around us. In Daniel 3 we encounter three young Jewish men who were carried away captive to distant Babylon where they endured a hardship that enabled God to reveal Himself to the most powerful Gentile kingdom on earth.

The Charge

To understand their story, we must remember that in Daniel’s second year of captivity (603 B.C.), King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. Not only did he want someone to interpret the dream, but he demanded that no one could until Daniel and his three friends went to the Lord in prayer. Then Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar what he saw: a statue of a man with a head of gold. That statue provided a nutshell picture of the future of the world. Nebuchadnezzar represented the head of gold—the Babylonian Empire.

So Daniel revealed and explained the dream. Nebuchadnezzar misunderstood something of the scope of what transpired because he declared, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings” (2:47). Yet he apparently forgot that fact because several years later, his response to the dream was to erect a 90-foot-high statue overlaid with gold and command every man in the kingdom to bow down and worship it. Three men would not: Daniel’s friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Their Babylonian names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So the Chaldeans brought them up on charges before the king. (Daniel was not there, and Scripture does not say where he was.)

Nebuchadnezzar asked them, “Is it true . . . that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?” (3:14).

The next verse is the crux of the chapter: “If you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” (v. 15). At this point, Nebuchadnezzar saw himself as God. The three responded, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up (vv. 16–18).

Sometimes, when God brings hardships and difficulties, it’s not because you did something wrong or because of the normal circumstances involved with living in a fallen world that’s cursed with sin. Sometimes God wants to say something to those around you, and He wants to use you to convey His message.

That’s what He did with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. This was not a pleasant experience for them. Scripture says the furnace was hot; and in his anger and pride, the king ordered that it be heated “seven times more than it was usually heated” (v. 19). It was so hot, in fact, that the fire instantly destroyed all the soldiers who threw in the young men.

The Challenge

So God entered into a contest, as it were, with Nebuchadnezzar. He wanted to make clear the extent of His power, sovereignty, goodness, and grace.

It may well be that something that you are going through has less to do with you (although you will grow from it) than it does the people around you. Perhaps God has chosen you as a vessel for reaching others.

These men had a regard for God that enabled Him to use them. Whereas the world thinks highly of itself, believers regard God. That is, they honor His truth and His ways and respect and serve Him. That’s what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego did. So they were tied up and thrown into the furnace.

Serving God does not come with guarantees that we will survive every adversity unscathed. Nor does it mean that we will always survive. It means we are at His disposal, and He can do with us as He wishes. In the case of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, God delivered them.

Astonished, Nebuchadnezzar asked, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered . . . True, O king” (v. 24). Then he declared, “Look! . . . I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (v. 25).

The Choice

But you know what? Those three men had no guarantee going in, and neither do we. We never know if it’s God’s plan to glorify Himself through our martyrdom or through our deliverance.

That was where John the Baptist was in Matthew 11. About two years into Jesus’ ministry, John sat in jail, probably scratching his head and thinking, Wait a minute. I thought I was the forerunner of the Messiah. So he sent messengers to Jesus asking, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” (Lk. 7:19). Things didn’t compute. He thought Jesus would deliver Israel from Rome and set up the Davidic Kingdom. Yet there he was, the forerunner (Lk. 1:17; 7:27), in jail. Soon thereafter his head was cut off.
We are servants of the living God. That means we are expendable. We are at His disposal. And we must choose to think of ourselves, not as priceless porcelain, but as paper cups that God may use for what He wants to accomplish. You cannot out-give the Lord. God never takes anything away that He doesn’t replace many times over.

And sometimes He delivers in a miraculous way. Nebuchadnezzar “went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here’” (Dan. 3:26).

They emerged from the fire unscathed. It had no effect on them. Their hair was not singed, their clothes were not damaged, and the smell of fire was not on them. God had chosen to protect them by an angel of the Lord.

The world was forced to regard God because of three young Jewish men who resolved to worship Him only:

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this” (vv. 28–29).

Sometimes God desires to demonstrate His greatness and power and is looking for people who are willing to walk with Him through the fierce furnace. Perhaps you’re in that furnace now. Or perhaps you will be six months from now. Although it can be a scary place, you need to know that God is totally able to deliver you through the furnace as well as from it. The decision is His. What He requires from us is faith.

This experience was one of three major “God events” in Nebuchadnezzar’s life that turned the first king of the Times of the Gentiles into a worshiper of Yahweh.

If you and I are willing to put God first, then those around us will see Him also. They’ll see how you trust Him as you go through difficulties and will marvel at what He does in and through your life.

Richard D. Emmons is senior professor of Bible and doctrine at Philadelphia Biblical University and senior pastor of GraceWay Bible Church in Hamilton Township, New Jersey.

---

**If you want to understand God’s Word, you need The Most High God by Renald E. Showers.**

In fascinating detail, this captivating book will unlock the mysteries of biblical prophecy. It is clear, concise, easy to understand, and sheds extraordinary light on the course of human history.

God is in control. And no book demonstrates that truth better than The Most High God

**Still only $10.95!**

Ask for B26. In Canada/Australia, $12.25 CAD/AUD (Price includes GST.)

USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO ORDER.
The Jewish prophet Daniel was born to Judean nobility, probably during the time of King Josiah’s reforms (621 B.C.). As a boy, he endured Josiah’s tragic death at the hands of Pharaoh Neco (609 B.C.) and Egypt’s initial subjugation of the Judean kingship of Jehoiakim.

When the Babylonians defeated the Egyptian-Assyrian coalition at Carchemish in 605 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem to elicit Jehoiakim’s loyalty by seizing the children of Jewish nobility, of whom the teenager Daniel was one (2 Ki. 23:28—24:1; Dan. 1:1–7). This was to be the Babylonians’ first deportation, or exile, of the Judeans.

The second occurred in 597 B.C. after Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar returned, captured then-King Jehoiachin, took 10,000 captives, and placed Zedekiah on the Davidic throne (2 Ki. 24:2–20).

When King Zedekiah rebelled, Nebuchadnezzar came one last time to Jerusalem (587–586 B.C.). He captured the king and his family, took the city, burned the Temple, and exiled the people of Judea, thus ending the Davidic rule of Jerusalem that had lasted more than 400 years (25:1–12).

In exile Daniel quickly rose in Nebuchadnezzar’s administration, not only because of his wisdom and skill but also because God had enabled him to reveal the meaning of dreams and visions concerning the Gentiles and Israel’s future (Dan. 1:20–21; 2:19–24). What was revealed to Daniel was God’s rule over Israel through four Gentile kingdoms beginning with Babylon until the coming of God’s Kingdom in the person of the Messiah.

In Babylon, Daniel personally experienced the fulfillment of the first of these transitions of empires when the Medo-Persians conquered the city on October 29, 539 B.C. (5:30–31). Daniel then served the Persians in the latter years of his life (6:1–3, 28), receiving his last vision from God in 535 B.C. (chaps. 10—12).

It was probably then, before his death in exile after almost 70 years of service at nearly 90 years old, that Daniel compiled his inspired memoirs into the book of Daniel.
This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper.” Thus did the modernist poet T. S. Eliot conclude his melancholy poem, *The Hollow Men*. Many are convinced this description will likely be close to reality—that the earth will finally roll to a meaningless stop, and the world of men will simply shuffle off into a quiet oblivion.

But Eliot was wrong. The world will end not with a whimper, but with a bang of God’s making—indeed, with a breathtaking drama described in remarkable detail in Scripture. And that drama will commence with a cataclysmic, seven-year period (the Tribulation, Mt. 24:21, 29) that will be God’s way of bringing in His righteous Kingdom over which His Messiah will rule.

Central to that drama is the Antichrist, a person of almost unimaginable wickedness and hatefulness who was prefigured by another evil character. God showed the prophet Daniel both of these men in a vision where each appeared as a little horn.

Daniel saw four beasts representing the four Gentile kingdoms destined to dominate and trouble Israel until the time of Messiah’s Kingdom (Dan. 7). The element that startled and terrified him most was a little horn that arose from the fourth beast, Rome (vv. 7–8). The pride, destructiveness, and blasphemy of that horn were horrific.

After the vision, Daniel begged the interpreting angel to explain the fourth beast in more detail, specifically, “the other [i.e., little] horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows” (v. 20).

In fact, the entire end-times drama cannot be properly understood...
without understanding the role of the little horn. For that reason, Yahweh not only provided careful scriptural descriptions, but a remarkable historical antecedent as well.

During the 400-year intertestamental period, there arose in the latter stages of the Greek kingdom a Gentile ruler named Antiochus IV. History records much about this despicable and villainous ruler, but more remarkable is the prophetic anticipation of Antichrist.

In Daniel 7—8, two little horns appear, with one deliberately anticipatory of the other. Chapters 11—12 foretell the reign of the Seleucid dynasty, culminating in the cruel reign of Antiochus IV (through 11:35, according to most students of the passage). Then the focus shifts abruptly to the end-times Antichrist (11:36—12:3).

We will focus only on the first of these passages. But it is important to note that these two extended sections of Daniel (chapters 7 and 8) are framed to emphasize dramatically that Yahweh has allowed the former villain (Antiochus IV) to live out his ignoble career in order to prepare people for the coming of the latter-day villain (Antichrist).

### Chart #1 Origin of the Little Horns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Little Horn of Daniel 7: The Antichrist</th>
<th>The Little Horn of Daniel 8: Antiochus Epiphanes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arises from the fourth of the four kingdoms, meaning Rome (v. 7—8).</td>
<td>Arises from the second of two kingdoms (the third of the four kingdoms of Daniel 7), meaning Greece (v. 8—9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An 11th horn, arising from the fourth beast and ripping up three of the original 10 horns (v. 8, 25).</td>
<td>A fifth horn, arising from one of the four earlier horns (v. 8—9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will persecute Israel for three and one half years (v. 25).</td>
<td>Will persecute Israel for 2,300 days (v. 13—14).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chart #2 Descriptions of the Little Horns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daniel 7</th>
<th>Daniel 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Antichrist</strong></td>
<td><strong>Antiochus Epiphanes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A man of awful cruelty and violence; rips up three of the horns (kings) that had appeared before he did (7:8, 24).</td>
<td>A man of awful cruelty and violence who “destroy[s] fearfully” and “destroy[s] the mighty” (8:24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has “the eyes of a man”; sees all things from a human perspective, with no regard for God or His Law (v. 8).</td>
<td>Has “fierce features,” “understands sinister schemes,” and “cause[s] deceit to prosper under his rule” (v. 23, 25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stunningly blasphemous and defiant of God, with a mouth that speaks pompous words against God (w. 8, 25).</td>
<td>He shall “exalt himself in his heart… even rise against the Prince of princes” (v. 25).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As the Ancient of Days (God) takes His throne, this horn continues to blaspheme, amazing Daniel (v. 11).</td>
<td>Culmination of a vision that caused Daniel to faint and left him sick for many days, astonished by the vision (v. 27).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grows to great fame, celebrity and power, greater than all his fellows (v. 20).</td>
<td>Grows to become exceedingly great, prospering greatly (w. 9, 24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes war with Israel and cruelly prevails against it until deliverance comes (w. 21—22, 25).</td>
<td>Removes the daily sacrifices in the Temple and casts revealed truth to the ground (v. 12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Daniel 7 foretells four Gentile kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Daniel 8 is explicit that the vision recorded there concerns two of those Kingdoms: Medo-Persia (the ram, vv. 18—20) and Greece (the male goat, vv. 21—22). As readers finish Daniel 7, they are struck by the rage and arrogance of the little horn that arises from the fourth beast (Rome) in the end-times. But as they move on to Daniel 8, they are startled again to encounter another “little horn” (v. 9). It is similar to the first but also extremely different. (See Chart #1.)

The two little horns cannot possibly be the same person. And yet a careful reading of chapters 7 and 8 yields a catalog of remarkable similarities. (See Chart #2.) Both chapters were future to Daniel’s day. From today’s perspective, however, the villain of Daniel 8 has appeared; but history still awaits the latter-day little horn of Daniel 7.
Antiochus IV

Given the fact that God uses Antiochus IV to prefigure the person and reign of the Antichrist, we are well advised to ponder the ignoble career of that intertestamental conqueror.

After the death of the great Greek conqueror Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., a 22-year struggle ensued. When the dust settled, Alexander’s kingdom had been divided four ways—as Daniel had foretold two centuries earlier. (See Daniel 7:6; 8:8, 22.)

The division north of Israel (primarily Syria) was ruled by a general named Seleucus. Antiochus IV, the eighth king in the Seleucid line, ruled from 175 B.C. to 164 B.C. He was a treacherous, vengeful monarch who eventually unleashed his hatred toward his subjects who lived to the south: the people of Israel.

The reign of Antiochus IV (he took the title Epiphanes, meaning “Illustrious One”) is chronicled in the apocryphal books of 1 Maccabees (1:10–64) and 2 Maccabees (6:18–31; 7:1–42). It is a gut-wrenching narrative that tells of his methodical destruction of the Hebrew Scriptures; the outlawing of circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, and the observance of Jewish feasts; the wanton slaughter of thousands of Jewish women and children; and, as a deliberate insult, the building of an altar to a Greek god in the Temple in Jerusalem and the sacrificial slaughter of swine in those sacred precincts.

Anyone who would properly anticipate the terror of the end-times drama to come is well-advised to ponder that melancholy narrative.

A further parallel exists between Antiochus and the Antichrist. As cruel and powerful as Antiochus was, God, in His kind providence, raised up a family (the Hasmonaean/Maccabee) who led a revolt that brought the cruel reign of Antiochus IV to an ignominious end (Dan. 8:25; cf. 1 Macc. 6:8–16).

As stunning and fearful as the Antichrist’s reign will be, God will send His Messiah to destroy him and his armies. Thus the history of Earth as we know it will end, not with a whimper but a bang, as Messiah Jesus returns to rescue Israel and destroy His enemies (Rev. 19).

Douglas Bookman is professor of New Testament Exposition at Shepherds Theological Seminary in Cary, North Carolina. He also teaches and preaches across America and abroad. He can be contacted through his Web site, bookmanministries.com.

The 70 Weeks of Daniel Determined for Israel

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week [70th week—the final seven years]; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate (Dan. 9:24–27).

Definition: In Hebrew, “seventy sevens,” or 70 groups of seven years each, totaling 490 prophetic years.

Began: With the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in 445 B.C. (Neh. 2).

Interruption: Between the 69th and 70th weeks (483 years after the decree of Nehemiah 2). The 69th week ended when the Messiah was “cut off” (Jesus was killed). Clearly, the events of the 70th week (final seven years) are yet future.

The 70TH Week of Daniel

Definition: The last week (seven years) of Daniel’s 70-week prophecy. It is also referred to as the Day of the Lord, the Tribulation, and the Time of Jacob’s Trouble.

Will Begin: With the confirmation of a covenant with many (Dan. 9:27).

Will End: When the Messiah returns to reign over the entire world from Jerusalem, Israel.

by Thomas C. Simcox
As a child I loved to read adventures set in the far-flung future or the wild and woolly West. These tales held my interest, especially as the heroes interacted with the villains. Almost every bad guy was impressed with his own significance and was egotistical, arrogant, and proud; yet he always lost to the good guys.

King Solomon declared, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Unfortunately, pride is a problem in the real world, too, and it is the key theme of Daniel 4.

This chapter was written by Nebuchadnezzar and recounts an amazing event in the life of this great king of Babylon. It begins with a dream he had that made him "afraid, and . . . troubled" (v. 5). So he summoned "all the wise men of Babylon" (v. 6). He had been down this road before and had found them useless, as they were this time as well. No one could help him except the Jewish prophet Daniel:

_The tree that you saw, . . . is you, O king, who have grown and become strong: . . . And . . . the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots . . . and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him" (vv. 20, 22–23)._

The dream explained what would happen to Nebuchadnezzar because of his pride. He would live like an animal, be driven from his palace, and endure degradation and humiliation until he knew "that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses" (v. 25).

This was not encouraging news. Daniel had grown fond of the king, declaring, "May the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!" (v. 19). The Lord was warning Nebuchadnezzar to humble himself before God, or God would do the job for him.

Daniel pleaded with the king: "Break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity" (v. 27).

That did it! That very hour, "he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven" (v. 33); and he lived like an animal for "seven times." Scripture does not explain whether this period was seven weeks, months, or years. But it had to take time for his physical appearance to undergo the radical transformation described in verse 33: "His hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.”

The good news is that this account does not end with the king in a feral, inhuman state:

_At the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever. For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice (vv. 34, 37)._

Then the Lord returned his kingdom to him and restored his honor and splendor (v. 36). God changed Nebuchadnezzar from a bad guy to a good guy and from a man filled with pride to someone who bowed the knee before the true God of heaven.
One of the more intriguing prophecies in the book of Daniel concerns the final of the four Gentile kingdoms that will rule the world. It is represented in Scripture by legs of iron (Dan. 2:33, 40) and a “dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong” beast (7:7, cf. vv. 23–24) that
becomes Satan’s powerful and merciless instrument to make humanity serve him.

Both first-century Jews and Christians understood this final empire to be Rome. Has this prophecy been fulfilled? In Daniel 2 and 7, the fourth kingdom is terminated by the apocalyptic end of this age and the establishment of God’s promised Messianic Kingdom. How do these prophecies correlate with the first-century coming of Christ and the history of the Roman Empire since then?

Jesus Himself gave us the clues. In teaching His disciples about the future of Jerusalem, He made two references to Daniel. In Luke 21:20–24, He foretold the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, declaring it would be trampled by the nations until the Times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. This means Rome’s kingdom was not ended by Jesus’ First Advent.

Correspondingly, in Matthew 24:15, Jesus warned His disciples about a future “abomination of desolation,” a typological reference to Antiochus Epiphanes who earlier, in 167 B.C., had erected an image of the Greek god Zeus in the Temple in Jerusalem to reflect himself. This act relates to the little horns of Daniel 7 and 8 together. The little horn of Daniel 7 comes out of the Roman Empire, while the little horn of chapter 8 comes from the Greek Empire. They are seen typologically together in Daniel 11:21–45. Thus Jesus revealed a future, blasphemous king who will arise during the Great Tribulation and desecrate the Temple by erecting an image of himself in it (cf. Rev. 13:15–18).

The book of Revelation completes the picture. The 10 toes of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar’s image in Daniel 2 and the 10 horns of the terrible beast in Daniel 7 relate to the 10 horns of the beast in Revelation 13:1–18 and 17:8–13. Revelation 17:12 indicates, along with Daniel, that these 10 kings all rule with the beast (the Antichrist) and/or a revived Roman Empire. This event has not yet happened in history.

Consequently, we are still in the Times of the Gentiles, and the Roman Empire has not yet finished its course. Just as the old Roman Empire was characterized by religious pluralism, military strength, and economic incentive, its end-times culmination will be a worldwide empire of the same character (Dan. 7:23). According to Daniel 7:7, this empire will already exist when the “little horn” takes it over.

It is not difficult to see that the world today appears headed gladly toward a politically, religiously pluralistic and economically globalized world. This will be the revived Roman Empire.

Pictured in Revelation 12—13, it is often compared with the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9) as a bastion of humanity’s hubris in uniting in rebellion against God’s rule. In its fallen state, even at its peak of unity, mankind can only offer a corrupt perversion of God’s intentions for the race created in His image. Thus this revived Roman Empire, in all its totalitarian might, will become Satan’s instrument to destroy all that is noble in man and will do nothing but enslave humanity to do his will.

At the same time, the Antichrist who will rule this evil empire personifies man’s rebellion against God. When God’s final bowl judgments rain down on Earth, instead of repenting, people will blaspheme the God of heaven (Rev. 16:9–11). In other words, the Antichrist is what sinful humanity will want in its insurrection against God.

King David described the world’s reaction to God’s establishing His Anointed as King over the earth: “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed” (Ps. 2:1–2; cf. Acts 4:23–31).

What is God’s response? He laughs and scoffs at them and tells them in anger to do homage to His Son (Ps. 2:4–6, 12). Thus all creation will one day acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:11).

All of human and satanic might are nothing in God’s sight (Isa. 40:12–17). During this rebellion, the saints are pictured as demonstrating their faith by caring for the Lord’s brothers and so are welcomed into the Kingdom and eternal life (Mt. 25:34–40).
It’s an exhilarating experience; everyone stands as the triumphant strains of the “Hallelujah Chorus” flood the auditorium:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! . . .
For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. . . .
The kingdom of this world

A bronze coin, struck after the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem. The front (top), bears a portrait of Roman Emperor Vespasian. The back contains the Latin inscription Judea Capta: “Judea is vanquished” (Erich Lessing/ Art Resource, NY).

Babylon (Gold)
Medo-Persia (Silver)
Greece (Bronze)
Rome (Iron)
Revived Roman Empire (Iron and Clay)

(POI Image Archive; digital enhancement, Thomas E. Williams).
was among them. This was the first deportation. The last ended in 586 B.C. with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple King Solomon had built.

In Babylon, Daniel served God resolutely. He demonstrated such exceptional wisdom that he earned a place of prominence that spanned the reign of several kings and outlasted the Babylonian Empire. It is not surprising the Lord entrusted him with the synopsis of world history, since he was “greatly beloved” of God (Dan. 9:23; 10:11, 19).

Shortly after arriving in Babylon, Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s troubling dream of a massive image with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay (2:31–35). While the king watched, a stone smashed the feet, bringing the colossus crashing to the ground.

Daniel explained that the head of gold depicted Babylon. Then followed three successively inferior Gentile empires that were ultimately ground to dust and blown away by the wind.

### The First Three Beasts

Approximately 50 years later, Daniel had a dream paralleling Nebuchadnezzar’s. Out of a turbulent and surging sea emerged four beasts corresponding to the four kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Both dreams highlight the same world empires. Seen from man’s perspective, wrote Bible scholar John Walvoord, they appear “glorious and imposing”; but from the divine vantage point, the predominant characteristics are “immorality, brutality and depravity.”

---

Is become the kingdom of our Lord, 
And of His Christ; . . .
And He shall reign for ever and 
ever. . . .
King of kings! and Lord of lords! 
Hallelujah!

The climax of George Frideric Handel’s Messiah, taken from the last book of the Bible, describes the most significant event in prophecy: the revelation of Jesus Christ. The apostle John penned the words, and they augment a prophecy in the book of Daniel that outlines the progression of human history that culminates in the same glorious event.

In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem. Receiving news that his father, Nabopolassar, had died, he returned to Babylon to assume the throne, taking with him vessels plundered from the Temple and a select group of young Jewish captives. Daniel

---

### TIMES OF THE GENTILES

(Dan. 2:31–45; 7:4–28) by Thomas C. Simcox

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition:</th>
<th>Gentile domination of Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Began:</td>
<td>605 B.C. (first Jewish deportation to Babylon) or 586 B.C. (third deportation, destruction of the Temple, and cessation of independent Jewish rule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will End:</td>
<td>With the Lord’s return (Dan. 2:34–35, 45; 7:13–14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROPHESIED GENTILE EMPIRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of Gold</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>Winged Lion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest / Arms of Silver</td>
<td>Medo-Persia</td>
<td>Bear With Three Ribs in its Mouth Raised Up on One Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belly / Thighs of Bronze</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Four-Winged, Four-Headed Leopard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legs of Iron</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>Dreadful Beast With Iron Teeth and 10 Horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Toes of Iron and Clay</td>
<td>Revived Roman Empire</td>
<td>10 Horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Not Cut With Human Hands</td>
<td>Kingdom of God (Davidic)</td>
<td>Kingdom Without End</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lion. The first beast was like a lion, had eagle’s wings, and is almost universally recognized as Babylon (7:4; cf. Jer. 49:19–22). As Daniel watched, the wings were plucked off, limiting its potential for further conquest (Dan. 7:4).² It was “made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it” (v. 4). Many believe this refers to the time God judged Nebuchadnezzar for his pride, turning him into an animal of sorts for seven years. He emerged with a new attitude toward God (4:36).

Bear. Lumbering across the beach behind the winged lion was a creature “like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth” (7:5). The hulking bruin with a ravenous appetite accurately depicts the Medo-Persian Empire. Large and powerful, it conquered by “force of numbers, by an elastic capacity for absorbing casualties.”³ The bear raised up on one side seems to indicate the increasing Persian dominance that ultimately absorbed the Medes.⁴

The ribs between the bear’s teeth represent three kingdoms it devoured, likely the Lydian Kingdom, which fell to Cyrus in 546 B.C.; the Chaldean Empire annexed in 539 B.C.; and the Egyptian Empire acquired under Cambyses in 525 B.C.⁵ The bear was urged, “Arise, devour much flesh!” (7:5).

In yet another of Daniel’s visions, the empire is portrayed as a ram with one horn higher than the other, “pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him” (8:4).

Leopard. The next creature springing from the surf was “like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it” (7:6). The leopard’s speed, accelerated by four wings, accurately characterized the armies of Greece commanded by Alexander the Great who conquered the world in approximately a decade. History verifies that shortly after his death in 323 B.C., the Greek Empire split four ways between Antipater (succeeded by Cassander), Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.⁶

In the subsequent vision, the Greek Empire is depicted as a male goat with a large horn that is broken and replaced by four notable ones (8:5, 8, 21). Then, out of one of the four horns comes a little horn, historically personified in Antiochus IV who ruled Syria from 175–164 B.C. (v. 9). Seeking to Hellenize Israel, he outlawed Judaism, sacrificed a sow on the Temple altar, and erected a statue of Zeus with his likeness in the Temple courtyard. The Temple was later reclaimed and rededicated, as Daniel prophesied (v. 14).

The Terrible Beast

The last creature rising out of the sea was “dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. . . . and it had ten horns” (7:7). With no equivalent in the animal world, this monster symbolizes “a singularly voracious, cruel and even vindictive world power.”⁷

Wrote Walvoord: “The Roman empire was ruthless in its destruction of civilizations and peoples, killing captives by the thousands and selling them into slavery by the hundreds of thousands.”⁸

Nothing in history so far corresponds with the description: “The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom” (v. 24). Like the toes in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the 10 horns indicate a future coalition of rulers existing contemporaneously.

As Daniel watched, he saw “another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns [kings] were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words” (v. 8). Not to be confused with the “little horn” associated with the Greek Empire, the horn of Daniel 7:8 emerges after depositing three rulers and represents the final world dictator (cf. 7:24–25; 11:36–45; 2 Th. 2:3–8; Rev. 13:1–8).⁹ Under his leadership, the Roman Empire re-emerges reflecting his deceptive, blasphemous, and ruthless character.

Demanding worship from the world and destroying all who refuse to comply, this final world leader is the Antichrist. He will focus his animus on the Jewish people, resulting in “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world . . . nor ever shall be” (Mt. 24:21).

Transfixed, Daniel watched until the final beast “was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame,” (Dan. 7:11) paralleling the apostle John’s revelation that “the beast was captured, and . . . cast alive into the lake of fire” (Rev. 19:20).

The Antichrist will become the first inhabitant of the Lake of Fire, and his destruction terminates Gentile domination of the world.

The Messiah, represented by the stone “cut without hands” in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, will then establish His Kingdom, as described by Daniel:

“Behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! . . . Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13–14).

At that moment, “the kingdoms of this world [will] become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ” (Rev. 11:15). Hallelujah!

ENDNOTES

4 Walvoord, 156.
5 Frank E. Gabelein, ed., Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 736.
6 Ibid.
7 H. C. Leupold, cited in Walvoord, 161.
8 Ibid.
9 H. A. Ironside, Lectures on Daniel the Prophet (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1982), 133.

Charles E. McCracken is the Canadian director of FOI Gospel Ministry in Brampton, Ontario.
King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a dream of an image made of various metals, representing different periods of Gentile world rule (Dan. 2:34–35, 44–45). In the dream, a stone cut without the help of human hands crushes the image’s feet and toes, breaking them to pieces. They become like chaff on a summer threshing floor, and a wind carries the material away without a trace. Then the stone that struck the image becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth (2:34–35).

This dream encapsulates all of world history from the Babylonian kingdom on, culminating with the establishment of the great Kingdom of God. Scholars agree the stone represents the Messiah, identified in the New Testament as Jesus Christ; and the great mountain is God’s Kingdom.

However, two questions arise concerning God’s Kingdom filling the whole earth. What is the nature of the Kingdom, and when will it fill the whole earth?

There are three main interpretations of this prophecy. Some teach that God’s Kingdom filling the earth is to be interpreted symbolically and refers to the establishment of His spiritual Kingdom through the church at Christ’s First Coming. Others teach that the church’s proclamation of Christ’s gospel will result in God’s Kingdom eventually filling the earth, producing a period of universal peace and prosperity prior to Christ’s Second Coming. Still others teach that this prophecy is to be interpreted literally and will take place in the future at Christ’s Second Coming when He will reign over all the earth.

Only the third position, held by premillennialists, can be sustained by Scripture. Here is why:

Daniel’s prophecy is to be interpreted literally, not symbolically.

Daniel’s prophecy has no relationship to the church. God’s literal Kingdom was not established on Earth through the church at Christ’s First Coming, but it will be physically established at His Second Coming.

At His First Coming, Christ did not crush the revived Roman Empire represented by the feet and toes of the image. He will do so at His Second Coming, after which He will rule the world with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). Once this final Gentile empire is destroyed, “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. 2:44). This statement presupposes that God’s everlasting Kingdom will be a literal, physical kingdom on Earth.

The image in Daniel is completely crushed at Christ’s Second Coming with a single, sudden, violent, catastrophic blow—not gradually by the church, as some teach.

The fulfillment of this prophecy fits the time of Christ’s Second Coming, when God’s Kingdom will fill the whole earth, beginning with Christ’s Millennial reign and extending into the New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 19—20).

by David M. Levy
**Who’s Who in Daniel 11**

Daniel 11 tells the future. In Daniel’s day, it pulled back the curtain of time and revealed what would take place among the nations after Daniel’s death in 536 B.C. Even today, a section of the prophecy still awaits fulfillment.

Bible prophecy is not like fortune-telling, which is occasionally accurate but most of the time not. God’s requirement was that a prophet be accurate 100 percent of the time or be stoned to death (Dtr 18:20–22). To date, this prophecy has been 100 percent accurate.

Since Daniel 11 can seem confusing, here is an easy-to-follow explanation.
Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all (v. 2).

**The Four Kings:** Cambyses (529–522 B.C.); Pseudo-Smerdis (522–521); Darius I (Darius the Great, 521–486); and Xerxes I (Ahasuerus of Esther, 485–465), who would be the richest.¹

Then a mighty king shall arise. . . . His kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity (vv. 3–4).

**Kingdom:** Greece

**The Mighty King:** Alexander the Great. After he died in 323 B.C., his kingdom was divided among his four generals: Lysimachus, Antipater (succeeded by Cassander), Seleucus, and Ptolemy.

Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes (v. 5).

**South:** Egypt

**King of the South:** Ptolemy I

**Prince:** Seleucus I of Syria

And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement (v. 6).

**North:** Syria

**Daughter of the King of the South:** The daughter of Ptolemy II, who was given to Antiochus I, a Seleucid.²

But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North (v. 7).

**Branch of Her Roots:** Ptolemy III of Egypt, who invaded Syria in 246 B.C.³

There were constant struggles between these kingdoms (vv. 9–13).

So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him . . . and he shall give him the daughter of women (vv. 15, 17).

**King of the South:** Ptolemy V

**King of the North:** Antiochus III (also called the Great) who defeated Egypt at Sidon, came to terms with Ptolemy V, and gave him his daughter in marriage.⁴

And . . . shall arise a vile person . . . he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. . . . While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant (vv. 21, 28).

**The Vile Person:** Antiochus IV (called Epiphanes), who wrested control of the Syrian kingdom.

**The Holy Covenant:** Israel and the Jewish people, whom Antiochus persecuted mercilessly.

And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation (v. 31).

**Defile the Sanctuary:** Refers to Antiochus placing an image of Zeus in the Temple’s Holy of Holies and sacrificing a sow on the altar, around 167 B.C. This is a key verse because, in speaking to His disciples almost 200 years later, Jesus referred to the abomination of desolation as a yet future event associated with the Antichrist: “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place . . . then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains . . . For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world . . . no, nor ever shall be” (Mt. 24:15–16, 21). Jesus used a well-known historical event to warn of something yet future.

With Daniel 11:36 the prophecy jumps to the Antichrist and the coming Tribulation.

Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods . . . he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know (vv. 36, 38).

**The King:** The Antichrist

He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall have power over . . . Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians (vv. 41, 43).

**The Glorious Land:** Israel

**Edom, Moab, and Ammon:** Jordan

**Ethiopians:** The Sudanese.

Yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him (v. 45).

**Come to His End:** This prophecy coincides with the Messiah’s Second Advent and His physical return to Earth to vanquish the Antichrist, rescue Israel, and establish His everlasting Kingdom. It dovetails with Revelation 19, which describes the demise of Antichrist and his false prophet:

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him [Jesus] was called Faithful and True. . . . And I saw the beast [Antichrist], the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse. . . . Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet. . . . These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev. 19:11, 19–20).

Antichrist’s death forever terminates Gentile domination of the world and ushers in the Davidic, Messianic Kingdom over which Jesus will rule from Jerusalem (Dan. 2:44–45). Israel will no longer be the tail but the head (Dt. 28:13) of all nations:

Thus says the LORD of hosts: “In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zech. 8:23).

---

² Ibid., 1358 n Daniel 11:6.
³ Ibid., n Daniel 11:7–8.
Babylon was surrounded by Medo-Persian troops, yet the palace rocked as King Belshazzar hosted a riotous banquet for more than a thousand. Believing the city was impregnable and the food supply plenteous, he partied on, ignoring the gravity of the siege.

In the middle of the bash, Belshazzar ordered that the gold and silver vessels, looted from the Israelite Temple in Jerusalem, be used to serve his guests wine. This was doubtless a premeditated act of defiance against Jehovah, the living God, because the prophet Daniel had predicted Babylon’s fall to Medo-Persia 11 years earlier (Dan. 8:20). However, Jehovah (YHWH) is not to be trifled with. He will endure much, but eventually He metes out judgment.

As Belshazzar drank, he and the crowd arrogantly used the Temple vessels to toast “the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone” (5:4). Suddenly the fingers of a man’s hand materialized out of thin air and began writing on the plaster of the wall behind Belshazzar: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" (v. 25). You can almost hear the fading echoes of laughter and boisterous talk as this dramatic, supernatural event unfolded. Fear contorted Belshazzar’s face. Scripture says his knees knocked visibly against each other (v. 6).

Moments later, he grilled the wise men, astrologers, and soothsayers in a desperate attempt to understand the enigmatic message. As coregent under Nabonidus, Belshazzar promised royal robes, a gold chain, and the position of third ruler of the kingdom to anyone who could interpret the message. No one could.

Urged by the queen mother, he summoned Daniel. She counseled Belshazzar, "There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your father [or ancestor], light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers (v. 11).

Unimpressed by the reward, Daniel castigated Belshazzar for his pride and arrogance and his refusal to learn from Nebuchadnezzar’s mistakes. Then he read and interpreted the cryptic message aloud.

MENE: “God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it” (v. 26).

TEKEL: “You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting” (v. 27). Belshazzar’s defiance toward God tipped the scale, proving him unfit to rule.

PERES: “Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians” (v. 28).

Bible scholar John Walvoord noted, “A pun may be intended on this third word. Having been interpreted to mean ‘divided,’ it is also understood as a reference to the Aramaic word for Persian, thereby hinting a Persian victory over Babylon.”1 Charles Ryrie says PERES is the singular of UPHARSIN and the U means “and.”2

But Belshazzar still did not repent. Instead, he ordered a purple robe and gold chain for Daniel and proclaimed him third ruler of the kingdom (v. 29). Belshazzar thought he could defy God with impunity; he was wrong. That night he was killed as the Medo-Persian army swept through the capital of Babylon, just as Daniel had prophesied. And the great Babylonian Empire was no more.

ENDNOTE
Thomas Jefferson once famously said, “Almighty God hath created the mind free. . . . All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens [burdens] . . . are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion.” Those words are inscribed in the marble of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC. It is a pity that a few blocks away, in the U.S. Congress, our elected officials don’t share Mr. Jefferson’s penchant for the freedom of ideas.

By the time you read this column, both the House of Representatives and Senate probably will have passed federal hate-crime legislation—a testament to the fact that true freedom of thought and opinion in America may soon vanish, along with the ability to broadcast the gospel.

Much of the lobbying pressure for this law has come from two groups: homosexual activists like the Human Rights Campaign, which wants legal advancement of the “sexual orientation” category, and pro-Muslim groups that focus on the “religion” category in hopes of quelling what they see as hostility toward Islam.

Even the basic idea underlying this legislation is flawed. From both a moral and commonsense standpoint, all crimes committed against individuals, particularly violent crimes, imply a degree of hatred or malicious indifference toward the victim.

However, the newest federal variation of hate-crime legislation takes a much more sinister turn. It creates a whole new species of federal hate crimes and, in so doing, protects categories of “sexual orientation, [and] gender identity” along with “religion.” And breaking this law requires no violence at all.

What is the net result? It is my opinion and that of several Christian legal groups that this legislation will become the basis for an assault on the free-speech rights of Christians.

Lest you think I exaggerate, consider this: The use of the term bodily injury includes such vague things as “mental trauma” and even a fleeting impairment of a “mental faculty.” This means that if a homosexual or Muslim, for example, were exposed to a sermon from the pulpit or biblical teaching on the radio that criticized homosexuality or exposed Islam’s false ideas about Christ, and the listener alleges that he was “intimidated” as a result, that preacher or radio broadcaster could be charged with a federal hate crime.

But wouldn’t the First Amendment protect that preacher and radio broadcaster? Not likely. Back in the 1990s the U.S. Supreme Court rendered an opinion that severely eroded First Amendment protection under the free exercise of religion clause. And in the free-speech arena, the news is no better. In 2002 the Supreme Court indicated that free speech can be infringed where the government articulates a concern with a “special crime problem.” And Congress has declared hate crime a national problem (despite statistics to the contrary).

Further, in the 2003 case of Virginia v. Black, the Court indicated that where mere unpopular expression, even without any actual violence, causes “intimidation,” that fact alone can form the basis for a criminal hate-crime prosecution.

My review of current case law convinces me that we live in a climate where the courts are increasingly willing to punish controversial, politically incorrect communications even when no violent act takes place.

Of course, as Christians, we need to denounce the use of hateful language. But the cure for it is the advancement of Judeo-Christian morality and the life-changing message of the gospel, not politically inspired hate-crime laws that will be used as weapons against biblical ideas that are unpopular.

In every nation where hate-crime laws have been passed, Christians have been targeted with criminal prosecution for communicating Bible-based truth. As I write this column, I am working with other Christian lawyers in trying to build protective language into law to prevent that from happening in America. Only time—and the prayers of dedicated Christians—will tell whether we will be successful.

Craig L. Parshall is a leading trial attorney who argues cases involving civil liberties, constitutional rights, and religious freedoms. He is senior vice president and general counsel for the National Religious Broadcasters, as well as a critically acclaimed novelist. His newest novel, The Rose Conspiracy, is now available.
A Sure Hope

In the previous eight verses of this chapter, the author encouraged new believers to leave Judaism and press on toward maturity in Christ. Failure to do so, he warned, would disastrously affect their spiritual lives. However, he was confident that such would not be the case for a true child of God; thus his warning is offset by an encouraging, positive message.

The Saint's Position

The author expressed confidence in the steadfast commitment of these believers: “But beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner” (Heb. 6:9). The word beloved sets the tone of this hope-filled message and underlines the author’s affection for these Christians. Beloved is never used to address unsaved people or apostates.

Furthermore, he was “confident [persuaded] of better things concerning [them].” Earlier he had misgivings about their commitment, but now he was convinced they would press on from infancy to maturity in Christ.

God had already witnessed the fruit of their salvation, and He “is not unjust [unfair] to forget” what they have done (v. 10). Verse 10 lists what God will not forget: (1) their “work and labor of love” to the point of exhausting themselves in the Lord’s service; (2) that the purpose of their service was to bring praise and glory “toward His [God’s] name”; and (3) that they did so by faithfully ministering “to the saints.” God would not forget their unselfish service helping others, because He is righteous and fair in rewarding every good deed.

The author again appealed to these believers, encouraging them to continue in their commitment to the Lord: “And [But] we desire that each one of you show the same diligence [earnestness] to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (vv. 11–12).

This is the same appeal originally made in Hebrews 5:11–14. By showing earnestness in quickly taking to heart the truth they were previously given in Christ, they demonstrated “full assurance” of the salvation hope they possessed. Without being fully persuaded of one’s salvation, an individual lacks stability in his or her walk before the Lord and will not progress toward maturity in Christ. Without settled convictions, people are tossed about by various doctrinal teachings and will eventually fall in their commitment to Him.

Consequently, believers must not “become sluggish” in the faith but must show spiritual diligence by becoming grounded in the truth of God’s Word (v. 12). In so doing, they will possess the hope, or assurance, of salvation; and that hope will carry them “until the end,” or to the day their spiritual pilgrimage on Earth has reached its goal.

Another way to guard against spiritual sluggishness is to “imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (v. 12). The word imitate means to “mimic, model, or emulate” men and women of faith who were approved by God in Scripture. In Hebrews 11 the author listed people whose faith these believers should emulate. The classic example is the apostle Paul who said, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). These believers were expected to exercise “faith and patience [endurance],” like those in chapter 11, until they inherited the promises that would be theirs in the Kingdom Age.

The Secure Promise

The author then used Abraham as proof that God’s promises are immutable:

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise (vv. 13–15).

The writer chose Abraham for many reasons: (1) Jewish believers could easily relate to him because they had a vital relationship to him in Judaism. (2) Abraham’s greatness and frequent appearance in Scripture made him a good example. (3) He is considered the father of faith (Gal. 3:16). (4) God’s promises to Abraham were extremely detailed and can be traced through the Bible. (5) God promised and delivered spiritual blessing to the world through Abraham. (6) Abraham is an example of someone who exercised faith and endurance, as he waited many years for God to fulfill His promises. (7) God swore by Himself because He could swear by no one greater, confirming that He would fulfill His promises made to Abraham (v. 13).

When making an oath, a person always vows by a greater power than himself to assure the fulfillment of his oath. In this situation, God condescended to employ the custom of the day. He
swore by the greatest authority in the universe—Himself—putting His own integrity, reputation, and honor on the line to guarantee the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham.

Proving his point, the author said, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you” (Heb. 6:14). This is a quote from Genesis 22:17 where God promised to bless Abraham by multiplying his seed. The fulfillment did not come immediately: “And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise” (Heb. 6:15). Abraham had to be content to rest in God’s promise until God chose the proper time to fulfill it.

In fact, Abraham was 75 when he received the promise (Gen. 12:4), and Isaac was not born until 25 years later (21:5). It would be another 60 years before his first grandchild would be born (25:26), 15 years before Abraham’s death (v. 7). Yet Abraham was content to endure patiently until “he obtained the promise.” Hebrews teaches believers to emulate his faith. Since God kept His promises to Abraham, He will assuredly keep the promises made in Jesus Christ to those who put their trust in Him.

Disputes in biblical times were often settled by an oath:

For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us (Heb. 6:16–18).

This passage stresses the importance of an oath. Over the centuries, the veracity of a person’s testimony in a court of law has been validated using oaths. In years gone by, in an American court of law, a person about to testify was requested to place his left hand on a Bible, lift his right hand, and swear to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.” The individual was swearing by an authority higher than himself, and the highest authority is God. He was guaranteeing the truthfulness of his testimony and invoking God as his witness.

God had no need to make an oath. His say-so would have been sufficient. But He went a step further and “confirmed it by an oath” (v. 17). He thus condescended to mankind’s level to prove without any doubt that He will unconditionally and without reservation fulfill His promises to Abraham. His oath stresses the volition of His will and the “immutability of His counsel” (v. 17). Here God is both the giver and guarantor of the promise He made not only to Abraham but also the “heirs” (v. 17) of Abraham’s physical seed. Since God’s counsel is immutable, His promises will be fulfilled.

God swore the oath based on “two immutable things”: the promise and pledge (v. 18). First are the unconditional, immutable promises He gave Abraham in Genesis 12:1–4 and 15:1–6. Second is God’s confirmation of the pledge when He vowed to fulfill the oath made to Abraham by a covenant in Genesis 15:7–21. The promise and pledge are immutable because fulfillment is based totally on God’s character. They are fully trustworthy because they are based on the truthfulness of God’s eternal Word, and “it is impossible for God to lie” (v. 18).

These facts provided not only a “strong consolation [encouragement]” to Abraham but to all believers “who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before [them]” (v. 18). The phrase fled for refuge refers to one of the six Israelite cities of refuge where people could flee for protection if they accidentally killed someone (Num. 35). In like manner, believers may flee, or “lay hold of,” refuge in Jesus Christ for salvation and protection, which is their “hope.”

In God’s Word, hope is never a wish but a settled confidence and conviction possessed by those who rest in the promise of salvation granted by God. In context, this hope is the settled confidence each believer may acquire through spiritual maturity in Christ.

The Steadfast Pledge

The author abruptly changed his figure of speech from a city of refuge to an anchor. Jesus is the believer’s “anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 6:19–20).

An anchor secures a ship from drifting. Believers are securely anchored in Christ. And though life’s storms beat against him, they can never destroy a believer’s position before God in heaven. His soul is securely anchored in God’s inner sanctuary, the safest location in the universe. Jesus has entered “behind the veil” into the inner sanctuary of God’s presence in heaven. Christ tore the veil away through His death on the cross, making it possible for us who believe to come boldly into God’s presence (4:16).

Christ is not only our “forerunner” in heaven, but our High Priest as well (6:20). He inaugurated (opened for the first time) a “new [newly slain] and living [life-giving] way” for people to come with “boldness” (confidence) into God’s presence (10:19–20). Through Christ, a believer’s hope is safely and securely anchored in heaven.

Thus the author concluded his argument on maturity by returning to the major theme of chapter five: that Jesus is a “High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (6:20).

David M. Levy is the director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel.
named Ishtar. The Babylonians conquered Sumeria around the 22nd century B.C., adopted Ishtar worship, and called Ishtar “The Holy Virgin” and “Queen of Heaven and Earth.” This false religion spread, turning nations away from acknowledging and worshipping the one true God; and it became the fountainhead of the development of pagan, idolatrous religions.

God’s Response

Significantly, the same chapter that records humanity’s rebellion after the flood and God’s judgment also narrows down the human line of descent to one particular man: Abram, who left the city of Ur—the source of the original false religion after the flood—to go to the land of Canaan (vv. 10–32).

God had commanded Abram to go to Canaan and promised to make him “a great nation” (12:1–2). In light of how the world apostatized through false religions, God thereby revealed His intention to bring a new nation into existence through Abram’s biological line. This new nation would be great in significance because of how God would work through it to accomplish His purpose for history. That new nation would be Israel. Years later God emphasized that Israel is the nation “whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him” (Isa. 43:7).

God’s Preparation of Israel

God prepared Israel for the purpose of its existence, telling Abram,

Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions (Gen. 15:13–14).

The fact that God would permit Israel’s enslavement in Egypt implies He had reasons for it. It appears there were at least three.

1. To have Israel experience firsthand through slavery the brutal, perverted practices of people who worship false, man-made gods.

2. To demonstrate the futility of worshiping such gods. God’s 10 plagues on Egypt graphically displayed that Egypt’s gods were unable to react in any way against the plagues and, therefore, did not exist. They were figments of the imaginations of people unrelated to the true and living God.

3. To prove the existence and power of the one true God who actually does exist. God demonstrated His existence and power through the plagues, as well as by bringing the Israelites out of bondage and delivering them from Pharaoh’s clutches at the Red Sea. After God’s Red Sea miracle, Moses and the people of Israel sang, “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness?” (Ex. 15:11). They recognized that the God who performed this feat for them is different from other gods.

In light of these three reasons, God said to Israel, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (20:2–3). As a result of His manifold powerful demonstration that He is different from other gods, the Israelites were to worship and serve Him exclusively.
God’s Purposes for Israel

Israel’s experience in Egypt was designed to prepare the nation for God’s purposes for bringing it into existence.

First Purpose: To have a permanent, unique relationship with God. God declared that He brought the people of Israel out of Egypt to be their God (Lev. 11:45). King David wrote,

*And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, . . . Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become our God (2 Sam. 7:23–24).*

Second Purpose: To be a holy nation. When God established the Mosaic Covenant marriage relationship with Israel at Mount Sinai, He declared, “You shall be to Me . . . a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). God told the Israelites why He brought them out of Egypt to be their God: “You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 11:45). The word *holiness* means “to divide.” The fact that God is holy means He is divided (separate) from all other gods in the sense that He is the only God who actually exists. All others are false and nonexistent. God stated, “Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me” (Dt. 32:39).

Since He is holy, divided from all other gods because He is the only true God, then Israel is to be holy, divided from all other nations in that it worships exclusively the only true God.

Third Purpose: To be God’s witness. Those who worship false gods are spiritually blind and deaf regarding the existence of the only true God (Isa. 43:8–9). Consequently, God told Israel,

*“You are My witnesses,” says the LORD, “and My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no other God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no savior. I have declared and saved, I have proclaimed, and there was no foreign god among you; therefore you are My witnesses,” says the LORD, “that I am God” (vv. 10–12).*

Again He said, “You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one” (44:8). These statements indicate that God brought Israel into existence to open the eyes and ears of other nations to the fact that the God who brought Israel out of Egypt is the only God who actually exists; all others are false and nonexistent.

The word for “witness” is derived from the root that means “return” or “repeat, do again.” Thus, “a witness is one, who by reiteration, emphatically affirms his testimony.” God intended Israel to open the eyes and ears of the spiritually blind and deaf Gentile nations to the reality of God’s existence by repeatedly and emphatically testifying to them that the God who supernaturally delivered them from slavery in Egypt is the only true God.

Fourth Purpose: To be God’s servant. “The children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 25:55), and “you, Israel, are My servant” (Isa. 41:8). Through forced slavery, the Israelites served the Egyptians for many years: “Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt” (Dt. 5:15). God delivered them so they could serve Him. “Yahweh demands the total obedience of” Israel His servant, and Israel owes total “allegiance to this one Lord.”

Fifth Purpose: To be God’s “glory.” Concerning Israel, God said, “I have created” him “for My glory” (Isa. 43:7), and “the LORD has . . . glorified Himself in Israel” (44:23). In addition, God called the nation “Israel My glory” (46:13).

Glory is what is impressive or influential concerning someone. God glorifies Himself through His historic dealings with Israel. He promised to bless Israel greatly and set it high above all nations when it diligently obeyed all His commandments, which He revealed specifically to that nation (Dt. 28:1–14). But He also promised that many curses would overtake the nation if it failed to obey (vv. 15–68).

Through this twofold way of dealing historically with Israel, God would use the nation as an object lesson (v. 10, 37) to impress the world with two truths concerning Himself: He (1) will bless those who will heed and obey the revelation He has given to mankind but (2) will curse those who will not. Through Israel, He intends to have life-changing influence on the rest of mankind.

In light of this purpose for Israel, God placed the nation in the most strategic geographical location on the earth. Canaan was the crossroads of three great continents: Africa, Europe, and Asia. People who traveled by land from Africa to the other two continents, or from the other two continents to Africa, traveled through Israel. They could observe the blessings and cursings and thereby be exposed to revelation concerning the existence and ways of the one true God.

It is no mistake that God has placed Israel in that same strategic location today for the same purpose. Note how the entire world’s attention is repeatedly drawn to that same nation in a way that is extremely out of proportion for Israel’s size.

The next article will examine another purpose God has for Israel and the significance that all these purposes have for His name Jealous.
Israel to be alone in world?

**Arutz-7**—Warnings abound that the Obama administration’s policies will leave Israel to face Iran and Hamas alone.

The warnings are summed up in recent articles by the West’s two main pro-Israel female commentators: Melanie Phillips and Caroline Glick. Phillips warns, “Obama is attempting to throw Israel under the Islamist bus.” She cites the report that Obama’s national security adviser told a European foreign minister that Obama will be “forceful” with Israel and plans to impose, with the EU and moderate Arab states, “a satisfactory endgame solution” upon Israel.

“This is all not only evil,” Phillips says, “but exceptionally stupid. . . . The Arab states are beside themselves with anxiety about Iran. They want it to be attacked and its nuclear program stopped. They are desperately fearful that the Obama administration might have decided that it can live with a nuclear Iran. . . . A Palestine state will be Iran, in the sense that it will be run by Hamas as a proxy for the Islamic Republic. The idea that a Palestine state will not compromise Israel’s security is ludicrous.”

After expressing incredulity at the American demands for further Israeli concessions in the light of the utter failure of the disengagement, Phillips writes that U.S. Jews are reacting “with a total absence of spine. . . . Almost 80 per cent of American Jews voted for Obama despite the clear and present danger he posed to Israel. They did so because their liberal self-image was and is more important to them than the Jewish state whose existence and security cannot be allowed to jeopardize their standing with America’s elite.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu must therefore take Israel’s message to “the ordinary American people,” she concludes: “He must tell the American people the terrible truth: that America is now run by a man who is intent on sacrificing Israel for a reckless and amoral political strategy which will put America and the rest of the free world at risk.”

Caroline Glick, writing in *The Jerusalem Post*, states, “The Obama administration is ratcheting up its anti-Israel rhetoric and working feverishly to force Israel into a corner.”

Yet another milestone in the U.S. path towards abandoning Israel is the “humiliating reception” President Shimon Peres received from Obama.

In addition, another point was raised by Glick and Eli Lake of *The Washington Times*: U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller told the UN that Israel and others must adhere to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), thus effectively abrogating a 40-year-old U.S.-Israeli understanding that the U.S. would remain silent about Israel’s nuclear program because it understood that it is defensive, not offensive in nature. The statement also erases “any distinction between nuclear weapons in the hands of U.S. allies and democratic states and nuclear weapons in the hands of U.S. enemies and terror states,” Glick wrote.

“The fact that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, all chance of peace between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and the Arab world will disappear,” Glick continues, “is of no interest to Obama and his advisers. They do not care that the day after [Hamas said it was] suspending its attacks against Israel from Gaza, the Iranian-controlled terror regime took credit for several volleys of rockets shot against Israeli civilian targets from Gaza.”

Abdullah to Bibi: Accept PA state!

**Arutz-7**—Jordan’s King Abdullah II, hosting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, demanded he “immediately declare his commitment to a two-state solution, [declare] acceptance of the Arab peace initiative and to take necessary steps to move forward toward a solution.” He also said Israel must open all crossings into Gaza, which was taken over by the Hamas terrorist organization two years ago.

After King Abdullah’s discussions with President Obama in Washington in April, the monarch warned that war will break out within the next 18 months if Israel does not accept the Saudi Arabian 2002 Peace Plan, based on shrinking the size of Israel to that which existed in 1949. The plan also calls for the right of approximately five million foreign Arabs to immigrate to Israel on the basis of their families having once lived there, prior to fleeing during the 1948 War of Independence.

The election of President Obama, who was heavily backed by dovish American Jews, has built a nearly universal platform of support for PA demands.

Call for biological attack aired

**Arutz-7**—Al-Jazeera recently aired footage of Kuwaiti professor Abdallah al-Nafisi. In the video, translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Nafisi expresses ardent support for terrorism and suggests that terrorists use biological warfare against the United States in order to kill hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Nafisi also suggests that Muslims pray for the success of white supremacist groups that seek to carry out attacks within the U.S.

In addition, Nafisi attacks those in the Arab world whom he perceives as traitors, to laughter and applause from his audience. Among those in the Arab world who should be silenced using “any means possible” are journalists who oppose terrorism, anyone who supports dialogue with Jews, and senior Palestinian Authority officials Saeb Erekat and Mahmoud Dahlan, Nafisi says.
I f you adhere to the literalist-premillennialist interpretation of Daniel’s prophecy of 70 weeks (Dan. 9:24–27), here is what you believe: The 70th “week” (seven-year period, also known as the Tribulation) still remains unfulfilled. At its conclusion, Christ will return and reign over Earth for a literal 1,000 years (a millennium), after which the Kingdom is handed over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24) and “eternity” begins. Although many people interpret the prophecy differently, the literal-premillennial view is preferred on several counts.

First, it honors the prophecy’s unmistakably Jewish character. All nonpremillennial interpretations construe the prophecy as speaking of the provision of salvation for all men, with no special focus on the Jewish people. But the angel Gabriel, who delivered the prophecy to Daniel, said specifically that it concerns Daniel’s people (the Jews) and Daniel’s holy city (Jerusalem, 9:24). Furthermore, it is in the section of the book penned in Hebrew for a Hebrew audience, and it was given in response to a Hebrew prayer uttered by a Hebrew prophet in entirely Hebrew terms.

Second, the literal-premillennial view makes this passage fit perfectly in the development of the book. In Daniel 2, Daniel received an overview of the Gentile nations destined to dominate Israel until the coming of the Messiah and His Kingdom. Chapter 7 focuses on the final Gentile ruler (Antichrist) and his role in the horrific drama that will culminate in a divine Kingdom in which a redeemed Israel will honor its Messiah. Given a literal-premillennial understanding, the 70-week prophecy provides the precise chronological framework within which that drama will unfold. On the other hand, to divorce it from all that and make it a cryptic foretelling of an abstract, non-Jewish kingdom is to divorce it entirely from the argument being made in the book.

Third, it understands all of the elements of the prophecy simply and coherently, especially the key chronological details. Nonpremillennial interpretations are almost always crippled by two commitments:

1. They cannot, as does the literalist, allow a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks because, by their reading, the “cutting off” of Messiah in 9:26 and the “confirming” of a covenant in verse 27 both refer to Calvary. But the grammar is explicit: the two events of 9:26 (Messiah’s death and the destruction of the city and sanctuary) happen after the 69 weeks (seven weeks plus 62, v. 25) but before the 70th (v. 27).

2. They refuse to take the 70th week literally. One nonpremillennial expositor takes the first seven weeks as 560 years, the 62 weeks as 1900 years, and the final week to be a period of undefined length. Another has the 70th week extending to A.D. 70 when the Temple was destroyed. The variations on the theme are endless, but common to all of them is the insistence that the final 70th week is not future and is not a literal period of seven years. The premillennial interpretation, however, is consistent and can allow the passage to say what it is saying.

Finally, the premillennial interpretation makes the passage entirely consistent with all other eschatological passages, especially with Jesus’ words in His Olivet Discourse. There He explicitly said the “abomination of desolation,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Mt. 24:15; cf. Dan. 9:27) will be a sign of the immediate end of the age—just as it is understood only by a premillennial reading of the 70-weeks prophecy.

by Douglas Bookman
Believe it or not, many schoolchildren in Israel have never heard of the Holocaust. So when Holocaust Memorial Day draws near in the spring, schools look for survivors to come and tell what they experienced during World War II, more than 60 years ago. Not many of us are left. You can almost count the number on your fingers.

So schools invite me to speak. Of course, I want to speak about faith in the Lord. Ordinarily, I cannot go to a school and speak of faith in Christ. But when they call me, I am free to speak about Him in whom I have believed. This is a wonderful opportunity to tell the children something they have never heard: the truth about our Savior Jesus Christ.

But I cannot do so quickly. I must go slowly and surely. So I have a long presentation—about two hours. For some of the students, what I say is a big surprise. They ask how I came to believe as I do. “After all,” one said recently, “we are Jewish.”

“Yes,” I said. “We are the Chosen People of God. The Lord told us, ‘You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified’ [Isa. 49:3]. The Lord also told us, ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 13:47; cf. Isa. 49:6). I explained that it is our obligation before God to tell people the truth.

“But you are not as the Lord would want you to be because you speak to us about another faith,” a student told me.

So I asked, “To whom was the Holy Bible given?”

“They all declared.”

“Yes,” I said. “And as His Chosen People, do we have the right to choose which parts of the Bible are good to read and which are not? Where is it written that we have the right to decide such a thing? Who has permission from God to say what is forbidden for the people of Israel to read?”

The classroom grew extremely quiet. The students did not understand and wanted to know what I was talking about. “Do the rabbis have a right to say which chapters of the Bible are kosher [fit and acceptable] and which are not?” I asked.

“This is all very strange,” someone said. “We have never heard anyone speak as you do.” Then they all wanted
to know which chapter of the Bible the rabbis claim should not be read.

I replied, “Have you read chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah? Have your teachers ever spoken to you about this chapter?”

The students looked at me with surprise, and all agreed they had not read Isaiah 53. This time I told them, “Now we have come to the main point. I will read for you. And if you like, you may read and I will listen. After, we will have time for questions to see if we can determine why the rabbis are not interested in teaching you the truth about what is written here. They are afraid of the truth; therefore, they do not teach you this chapter.”

So the students took turns reading. Afterward, one asked, “Why is this such a secret?”

“The Bible,” I said, “was written by the Holy Spirit of God. No one has the right to erase anything from this Holy Book, not even a single letter. Do you see what they have done? They do not want the Chosen People of God to know the truth and to know what great things God has done for us. But as you know, it is hard to fight against the truth, especially against what was written by the Holy Spirit of God.”

The students then started asking me, “Are you one of us, or are you not an Israeli?”

“I am surely an Israeli,” I replied. “And I believe all that is written in the Bible. And if that is not enough for you, I have fought in every war beginning with the War of Independence in 1948 through the Yom Kippur War in 1973. I am not like those who never served in the army and never fought for this country, yet who try to tell you how holy they are and what portions of the Bible you can and cannot read.” (The ultra-Orthodox do not serve in the Israeli military.)

The students continued to ask good questions, and slowly we came to the subject of how to place your faith in the Lord. At the end of the class, they said this was the most interesting lesson they ever had and one they will never forget.