

## **Synthetic Bible Studies**

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible  
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and  
Bible Expositions

By

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### **LESSON THIRTY-FOUR**

#### **DANIEL**

Chapter 1 of the book of Daniel gives his early history, and relates the facts of his captivity and his training for service in the court of Babylon. The story is very familiar, even to children, and requires no special explanation.

It is at the second chapter, and particularly beginning at verse 36, that the interest of these lessons begins.

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream teaches us several things about the history of the world from that date to the end of the present age which it is important for every student of the Bible and of GOD's providences to know:

1. It teaches that GOD, having cast aside His own people Israel for a time, has in the meantime committed all the power and dominion of the earth into the hands of the Gentiles, who, for the time being, were represented by the Babylonians (vv. 36-38).
2. It teaches that after the decay of the Babylonian monarchy this power and dominion should be entailed to three other kingdoms in successive order, which subsequent chapters of the book, supplemented somewhat perhaps by secular history, show to apply to Persia, Greece and Rome respectively (vv.39-43).
3. It teaches that during the period of the fourth kingdom, Rome, GOD Himself would set up a

kingdom, which would destroy earthly or human dominion altogether and in its turn last forever (vv. 44, 45).

It is this kingdom of GOD which all the other prophets have been speaking of, which shall be set up in Israel again, penitent and restored, and over which the Messiah shall reign.

A difficulty suggests itself in that the fourth kingdom, Rome, is not now in existence, but this difficulty is only apparent and not real.

In the first place, the territory covered by that kingdom or empire, still exists, being identical with the nations of eastern and western Europe bordering on the Mediterranean Sea; and in the second place, the subsequent teachings of our prophet show that these nations are to be gathered together again, federated under one head, the Antichrist, at the close of the present age.

In the meantime, the terms of the prophecy before us (vv. 40.. 43), very fittingly represent that fourth kingdom in its present condition:

- (1) It is strong, for assuredly no power, or powers of the earth could stand against the united purpose of those nations which now exist within the former compass of the Roman Empire.
- (2) It is divided, the two legs of the image being symbolical of the eastern and western divisions, while the toes suggest the ten nations of which it is apparent the federation will be composed at the end.
- (3) It is brittle, part of iron, and part of clay. in the sense that while these nations have in them the forms of monarchical government, they have also to a greater or less degree the spirit of democracy.

### **Vision of the Four Beasts**

We may pass over chapters 3 to 6, inclusive, very briefly, since they are historical rather than prophetic in character, and carry their explanation on their face.

In chapter 3 we have a manifestation of Nebuchadnezzar's pride in consequence of the revelation of his greatness just made to him, with the result of it to the faithful Hebrews.

In chapter 4 there follows an account of Nebuchadnezzar's abasement by the hand of GOD in punishment of his pride, together with the salutary lessons it taught him.

In chapter 5 the kingdom, or rather the world-dominion, has passed out of the hands of Babylon altogether into those of Persia.

In chapter 6 Daniel, who has been pushed out of sight for a while, "turned down" as we would say in these days, comes into power again as the premier under Darius, and the president in almost supreme control, it would appear, of that part of the Persian domain formerly known as Babylon.

In chapter 7, we have his vision which constitutes the next advance in the march of prophetic truth.

In the interpretation of this vision let the law of recurrence be kept in mind, for the ground covered is the same as that of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, except that here certain details are to be brought out, or certain features emphasized, which were not noticed before:

1. We have a hint as to the geographical location of these four world-empires, i. e., "**the great sea**" is referred to (v. 2).

The Mediterranean in the historico-prophetic sense is the center of the world, and the ruler of its waters is the ruler of the world. The empires before us, each in its turn, had the possession of "**the great sea**" as its goal, and when it reached that it reached world dominion.

2. We have a hint as to the moral character of these empires in succession, inasmuch as they are represented by ferocious and voracious beasts (vv. 3-10).

The idea is that cruelty and oppression, and selfishness in one form or another will prevail in these world-powers, and in increasing ratio, to the very end of the age. Particular attention should be called here to the third of these powers, Greece, represented by the leopard with the four wings and four heads (v. 6). The number four in this case points to the subsequent division of the Grecian empire after Alexander's death, to which further reference is made in a later vision. The similarity of the symbolism in the fourth beast to the iron part of Nebuchadnezzar's image also, is emphasized very sharply both in its superabounding strength and its ten horns.

3. We have a hint as to the reason for the destruction of these world-powers at the end, and the necessity for the setting-up of the kingdom of GOD on their ruins (v. 8). This necessity grows out of the fact that their iniquity and God-defiant attitude as concentrated in the "**little horn**," becomes at length intolerable.

4. We have a hint as to the circumstances attending the investiture of CHRIST with the earthly kingdom (vv. 9-14).

(1) There is a heavenly scene revealed, the thrones placed, GOD the Father seated, the books opened, (vv. 9, 10).

(2) There is an earthly scene revealed, wickedness culminated, the world-powers (or power) destroyed (vv. 11,12).

(3) A heavenly scene again, the glorified Son of Man in the presence of the Father receiving the kingdom (vv. 13, 14).

5. We have a hint as to the application of the whole in detail (vv. 15-28).

For example, we see:

(1) who are meant by the beasts (v. 17);

(2) the ten horns of the fourth beast (v. 24):

(3) we have a fuller description of the nature and history of the "**little horn**," including an allusion to the period covered by his personal power (vv. 24-26);

(4) the saints of GOD are brought into prominence as fellow-possessors of the coming kingdom

of CHRIST with Himself (v. 27).

Touching the period covered by the personal reign of the "**little horn**," "time" is thought to mean a year, "times" two years, and the "dividing" or half a time, six: months, in all, three and a half years.

### Grecian Supremacy

It will be seen that the second vision of Daniel now to be considered (chap. 8), was revealed to him two years after the previous one, although both date during the Babylonian period, and while Belshazzar was on the throne. It will be seen, too, that while in this case the law of recurrence applies as usual, yet there are only two kingdoms whose history is set before us out of the four.

These two are the two middle ones, Persia and Greece, the most attention being given to Greece (vv. 20, 21).

About two-thirds of the chapter is taken up with the description of the vision, the other third, especially verses 19-16, being devoted to its explanation and application by the angel.

1. Notice first, the time of its fulfillment, "**in the last end of the indignation,**" "**at the time appointed the end shall be.**" "**the latter time,**" "**it belongeth to the appointed time of the end.**"

This does not mean the end of the Babylonian period, or the Persian or the Grecian in the sense in which as world-monarchies they are now all past, but it means what we have come to understand those phrases, or that phrase, to mean in the other prophets we have studied, viz., the end of the present age or dispensation. And, if it be asked how the end of the age can be intended when the record of events mentioned seems to be continuous, and those monarchies as such have long since disappeared, the answer must be sought in what has been said on that point in this and in other studies which have preceded it.

The Roman Empire in a very practical sense exists to-day in the nations bordering on the Mediterranean, of which empire the Grecian was, and still is and must continue to be, an integral part. It has been stated that (according to prophecy to be considered still further when it is reached in these lessons), the Roman Empire, or the ten kingdoms of which it shall be constituted, shall at the end be federated under a single head, "**the little horn**" (the Antichrist). But the federation of the Roman Empire carries with it and includes that part of it which was formerly known as the Grecian. This vision is to teach us, I think, that in the startling events of the end of the age, the Grecian division of the old Roman Empire shall bear a most conspicuous part.

2 Notice secondly, that it is the history of the Grecian rather than the Persian monarchy which is dwelt on more at length in this case. The great horn between the eyes of the rough goat is identified by all historians and Biblical expositors as Alexander the Great (v. 21). The four kingdoms following his personal rule, and foreshadowed in the earlier vision by the four heads and wings of the leopard, are the four divisions of his kingdom consequent upon his death, and

which were taken by his four leading generals (v. 22). Attention is now released from the four to be concentrated upon one, and this one particularly "**in the latter time,**" "**when the transgressors are come to the full**" (v. 23). It is the king in this case who particularly commands attention.

3. Notice thirdly, that the description of this king here tallies very remarkably with that of the "**little horn**" of the preceding vision, and suggests that the two may be identical. Observe his satanic vision, his intellectual acumen, his military power, his destructive and persecuting spirit, and especially his hypocrisy and deceit (vv. 23-25).

There was a king in the line of the Grecian monarchy, Antiochus Epiphanes, of Syria, B. C. 170, who in many particulars seemed to satisfy this description. So like was he, in his character and works, to the picture drawn by the prophet in this book, that the destructive critics have even gone so far as to suggest not only that he was the man, but that these prophecies concerning him were written after the event. But it is not a very hard task to disprove this late date for the book of Daniel, while on the other hand, there are certain features in the text itself which go to show that Antiochus is not the fulfillment of the prophecy, however he may be regarded as a foreshadow, or a type, of the one who will fulfill it. These textual features are the period of time already spoken of, and the fact that he shall "**stand up against the Prince of princes,**" when "**he shall be broken without hand**" (v. 25).

These observations may lead some to the conclusion that since this "**king of fierce countenance**" is apparently identified with the "**little horn**" of the former vision, the Antichrist in other words, that therefore we may expect that arch-deceiver to arise out of that part of the Roman Empire which was previously known as the Grecian? And such is my own opinion given, however, only for what it is worth.

Personally, I am of those who look somewhere in the region of Constantinople for the rise of the Antichrist, though I may be mistaken and have to change my mind on further observation and study. But in any event, the thing for us to do now is not to become entangled with the spirit of Antichrist, but keep ourselves very loyal to our Head, the Lord JESUS CHRIST, by obeying His Word through the Spirit in all things.

### **Restoration of Israel**

Thus far the visions recorded in the book of Daniel have dealt chiefly with the prophetic history of the Gentile nations, the four world-monarchies, but at chapter 9 Israel comes into view again, and in this way:-

Daniel had been searching the books of the earlier prophets, especially Jeremiah, and had become impressed with the fact that the time of the Babylonian captivity for his people of Judah, the seventy years was about accomplished. He then began to pray to GOD about it (vv. 1-3), with the result that an angel from Heaven was sent to reveal to him not only the circumstances of their immediate return, but their whole history in outline, down to the end of the age (vv. 20-23).

This prophetic outline is found in verses 24-27:

1. We are told in the first place, that a certain period of time is set off for these dealings of GOD with Israel. "**Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.**" The word for "weeks" in this case is "*heptads*," or "*hebdomads*," which means simply "sevens." "Seventy sevens" are determined, whether of weeks, or months or years is not definitely stated, but the context compels the last-named conclusion. Seventy sevens of years are 490 years.

2. The dealings of GOD are enumerated, and included in six particulars (v. 24), all of which point to a period not yet realized in Israel's history, and synchronizing with the incoming of the millennial age. It is only then that their sins will be made an end of or hidden out of sight, that the visions of the prophets will be confirmed by their complete fulfillment, and a normal relationship between them and GOD be brought about through everlasting righteousness.

3. This period of 490 years is divided again into three periods of uneven years:

- (1) seven weeks, or 49 years,
- (2) sixty-two weeks, or 434 years,
- (3) one week, or seven years (vv. 25-27).

It begins to be reckoned at the time of the "**going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.**" This may mean the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, when Ezra returned to Jerusalem (457 B. C.), or it may mean the twentieth year of his reign, when Nehemiah was granted authority to rebuild the walls, probably the latter.

The first seven weeks, or 49 years, are usually regarded as the time during which Jerusalem was restored under Ezra and Nehemiah. "The second sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, begins at the close of Nehemiah's period, and leads us to that of CHRIST, who was "**cut off**" (crucified), "**but not for himself.**" That is, the earthly kingdom anticipated by the Jews would at that time not be realized, it would come to nought. Moreover, the city and sanctuary should themselves be destroyed, as was fulfilled at the time of the Roman siege, under Titus, A. D. 70.

The last one week of years has not yet come into sight, but shall be coincident with the culmination of the age.

To understand this we should keep in mind that Israel has no history as a nation except as the people are in their own land in a national capacity of some sort, and in fellowship with GOD. Time ceased to be counted or recognized towards them as a nation from the day Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and their national life dissipated, down to this day. Nor will it begin to be reckoned again until they are once more restored to Jerusalem and take up their national life somewhat as before.

This time is coming, as all the prophets testify, and it is with reference to this time particularly that Daniel speaks in verses 26 and 27.

4. The last week, or the closing seven years of the period, is marked by the actings of the Antichrist. He is first referred to in verse 26, in the allusion to "**the people of the prince that shall come.**" These "people" were the Roman people who destroyed "**the city and the sanctuary**" A. D. 70; but "**the prince that shall come**" is the Antichrist who has been frequently

described in the earlier chapters of this book, and whose people shall be the Roman people, i. e., the federated nations of the old Roman Empire at whose head he shall appear. He "**shall come**" in the God-appointed time for him to come.

We are confirmed in applying this designation to the "prince" here named, "**And the end thereof shall be with a flood,**" referring not to the end of the city but the end of the prince. This shows very clearly that the word "prince" applies neither to CHRIST nor Titus, but to the Antichrist.

He, i. e., "**the prince that shall come,**" the Antichrist, "**shall confirm the covenant with many for one week,**" i. e., seven years (v. 27).

The "many" spoken of applies to Israel. This people are now supposed to be returned to their own land, and established in some sort of national position, perhaps under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, as at present hinted at by the leaders of the Zionist movement so-called. They have re-built their temple and are worshiping the Lord somewhat after the pattern of their fathers, but as yet unconverted so far as the acceptance of the Messiahship of JESUS is concerned.

This is the moment when the words of JESUS shall be fulfilled, "**I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive**" (John 5:43). They are getting ready to receive him, i. e., the Antichrist who is coming in his own name. Now are they about to make that "**covenant with death,**" and "**agreement with hell**" of which Isaiah spoke (28:15).

The Antichrist, whoever he may be, in power and authority in the East, will make a covenant with them, a political understanding doubtless, leaving them at liberty to continue their outward allegiance at least to the Lord.

This covenant shall be confirmed with "many." The majority in the nation will favor it, but there will be a minority who will be suspicious of it and protest against it. The terms of this covenant are to maintain for seven years, but in the midst of that period, or within three and a half years, the tyrant will break the bonds thus entered into, denying to Israel freedom of worship, causing "**the sacrifice and oblation to cease**"; and "**for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate** (i. e., the Antichrist himself), **even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.**" It tallies with the utterance of JESUS, where, in referring to the tribulation of Israel in the last days, coming from the hands of this great deceiver, He employs the language of Matthew 24:15, and the following verses.

### **King of the North**

The closing chapters of Daniel, 10-12, bring us back again to the history of the Gentile kingdoms, and especially that of Greece.

We have seen in the vision of the ram and the goat (chap. 8), that the last-named kingdom, on the death of Alexander, was divided into four parts among his four generals.

The history of one of these parts, or one of these four kingdoms, was then pursued through the

line of its kings until one was reached who was notoriously wicked and God-defiant. This was in the prototype, Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, who oppressed the Jews in Jerusalem and polluted their temple about B. C. 170, or near the period of the Maccabees. But in the anti type this wicked king was seen to be the Antichrist himself who at the last shall stand up against the Prince of princes and be broken without hand.

Now, in the chapters under present consideration, we have this ground again covered on the principle of recurrence, giving us further details of the history both of the prototype and antitype, down to the period of crisis already touched upon several times, and elaborated somewhat in the prophecy of the seventy weeks. Chapter 10, which, while very interesting and important in itself, is nevertheless introductory, may be passed over for the present.

The outline of chapters 11 and 12 is about as follows:

1. We have a brief account of the Persian and Greek supremacies from Daniel's own time, down to the period of the Greek division (11:1-4).
2. We find that in this Greek division there are two of the four kingdoms which come in for all the prophetic treatment, the other two being unmentioned. These two which are emphasized are the southern kingdom, Egypt, and the northern, Syria. War is almost continuous between these two with varying fortunes. At first the king of the south is preeminent (11:5-8), but finally the king of the north prevails (vv. 9-20). It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that this brief prophetic outline found a most literal fulfillment in the history of these kingdoms down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.
3. We have the history of Antiochus set before us in some detail, especially as to his actings towards the Jews and Jerusalem, B. C. 170 (vv. 21-35). But at the very moment when we reach a kind of climax in his affairs our thoughts are carried off to another king (v. 36), who is neither the king of the north or the south (v. 40), but who seems to have been foreshadowed by the former. This person, it is believed, is the Antichrist again, whose last campaign, is outlined for us in verses 40-45, and who "**shall come to his end, and none shall help him,**" just as we have seen in all the preceding prophecies concerning him.

As a further confirmation of the fact that we are here dealing with this person and the events at the end of the age, attention is called to the opening verses of chapter 12.

Michael, the archangelic defender of Israel, is seen; the latter is passing through the tribulation, but the remnant is being delivered, thank GOD. A resurrection scene is brought before us (v. 2), which seems to coincide with that of the saints, the first resurrection, mentioned in Revelation 20, and also of the wicked, and the millennium has begun.

~ end of Lesson 34 ~

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