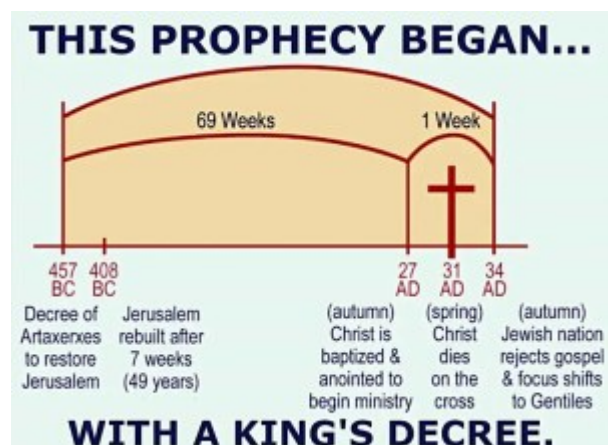


The Divine Programme of The World's History Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part IV. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks



Continued from [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part III.](#)

Note: This is definitely the most comprehensive explanation of the prophecy of the 70 Weeks of Daniel I have ever heard! It has facts and details I have never read anywhere else! Please share it with your friends who hold to the Futurist doctrine of the 70th Week of Daniel being an Endtime event. Teaching the true explanation of the 70th Week of Daniel is the most important message for truly born-again believers of Jesus Christ that I want to share on this website. The vast majority of evangelical Christians today are unknowingly holding a false interpretation of the 70th Week which originated with Jesuit Francesco Ribera in 1585. Protestants at the time rejected Ribera's interpretation but it seeped into the Church through the doctrines of John Nelson Darby and his Plymouth Brethren in the 19th century, and those doctrines were made popular by C.I. Scofield, his Scofield Reference Bible, and the Dallas Theological Seminary in the 20th. Century. For the rest of my days on earth, I want to do my best to educate my brothers and sisters in Christ to the true interpretation of the 70th. Week fulfilled in the first advent of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

But we must turn now to a consideration of the second great feature of the Daniel programme. If the first be, as we have seen, a world-wide and most comprehensive outline of the political changes of twenty-five centuries, the second is an absolute contrast to it.

The Messianic revelation of the ninth chapter of Daniel relates mainly to a single half-century of history, to Daniel's own people, to one individual among them, and a few years of his one brief life. If the earlier visions threw their beams abroad over the known world, and onward through the ages of

history, this concentrates its rays on one limited spot,—sheds its brilliant blaze of prophetic light on one specified era, on one human life, the life of all lives—the life on which the salvation of the world depends.

The political prophecies were like a wide landscape painting, with a Babylonian and Persian foreground, a Greek and Roman middle distance, and a papal extreme distance, stretching away to a glorious golden horizon line where earth and heaven meet and mingle in the coming kingdom of God. But this Messianic prediction is, on the contrary, like a beautiful portrait, and the eye, that like Noah's dove could only rove restlessly over the blood-stained scenes of earth's ever-shifting empires, can rest with joy on this matchless miniature, for the impress of Divinity sits on the holy brow, and the light of infinite love and benevolence beams from the eye, while the lips have language and utter wondrous words of pardon, peace, reconciliation, renewal, and everlasting righteousness.

Of all the prophecies in the Bible, Daniel's of the "seventy weeks" is the most wonderful and the most important. It stands erect among the ruins of time like the solitary and colossal obelisk amid the mounds of Heliopolis, grandly evident, archaic in its rugged simplicity, covered with an ancient script, whose decipherment demands indeed some study, but richly repays it; its authoritative assertions cut clear and deep in the hard granite, defying time's power to efface their record; its sentences few, but full of meaning, their very style betraying their origin and Divine authority.

Not dynastic but personal, not Gentile but Jewish, not temporal so much as spiritual, this prophecy is framed in a setting altogether unlike that of the previous ones. They were given in dreams and visions, and expressed by hieroglyphic signs. This falls gently from angelic lips on the ear of the man greatly beloved, and comes at a moment when the prophet's heart is tender from recent prayer, his spirit contrite after heartfelt confession, his hope fresh kindled by study of previously given predictions, and his faith strengthened by earnest supplication.

Daniel had set his face unto the Lord, with prayer and fasting, sackcloth and ashes; making a confession remarkable in its fulness of the sins of his people. Thirteen times over in the course of his prayer he uses expressions confessing sin—we have done wickedly, we have rebelled, we have transgressed, we have sinned. He speaks of "our sins and the iniquities of our fathers," "my sin and the sin of my people," and makes earnest supplication for pardon. "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem . . . and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that's desolate." He urges the Christian argument, if we may so say, "for the Lord's sake," and pleads, "We do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies."

Daniel was an old man at this time. The monarch whom he had served so faithfully for over forty years, Nebuchadnezzar, had long since passed away, with all his weak and unworthy successors. The short-lived empire of Babylon was over, and Darius the Median was now master of the city. Cyrus, the promised deliverer of Israel, was commander of the army, though not yet king. Daniel was still honoured and respected at court, but his heart yearned more

intensely than ever over his fatherland, though he had been exiled from it since boyhood. His longing for the restoration of his people was a perfectly unselfish one, as he knew that he personally could never again set foot on Mount Zion. *His* tomb in any case would have to be by the banks of the Euphrates, for the patriarch of fourscore years could not journey over desert and mountain back to Palestine. But Daniel thought not of himself, but of his people, of the house of God, of the sanctuary of Israel lying desolate, of the name of Jehovah dishonoured; he thought, too, of the cause of all this, and blameless and holy as his own life had been, he appropriates all the sins of his people both before and during the captivity, confesses with heartfelt contrition the righteousness of God in afflicting them, praying that the Divine displeasure may cease, and that Israel's sin may in mercy be forgiven.

While asking the restoration of Israel, his *deepest* desire seems to be for forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God. What a contrast this to Nebuchadnezzar's frame of mind when revelations of the future were made to him! The mighty monarch cared for worldly matters only, and such alone were made known to him. The holy prophet yearns after heavenly blessings, pardon, peace, and purity; and Gabriel's visit is God's answer to his holy aspiration.

"He touched me about the time of the evening oblation," says Daniel, "and he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am now come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." – Daniel 9:21b-27

It will be perceived that this prediction given in response to Daniel's prayer says nothing at all about the restoration of Israel, which was then close at hand. The reason for this is evident: the restoration, and even its date, had already been predicted with singular distinctness by Jeremiah, and the name of the appointed deliverer, Cyrus, had actually been mentioned by Isaiah. Daniel had not prayed that any further revelations should be granted on this point; such were needless. He had prayed rather that the thing promised might be performed. His prayer was itself a fulfilment of prophecy.

Jeremiah had said, "After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. . . . Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. I will be found of you, and will turn away your captivity." The great burden of Daniel's petition was not therefore for any new prediction of Israel's return to their own land, but it was an echo of David's words when he received the promise of God: "Now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said" (2 Sam. vii. 25). There was therefore no need for Gabriel to inform Daniel that the restoration edict of Cyrus would be issued within twelve months or so. The prophet well knew that the captivity was all but over, and that fact is taken for granted in the new prediction, and that restoration becomes the starting-point instead of the goal, the *terminus a quo* of a fresh prophetic period, the point of departure for this prophecy of seventy weeks.

As the ambassadors of God are never lavish in their performance of miracle, so His angelic messengers never waste words. Gabriel's message here goes directly to the heart of the matter. The thing about which Daniel had been most deeply exercised was the forgiveness of sin, and the answer which was given promised first that blessing—addressed itself to the fundamental desire of his heart, lifted once more the veil of futurity, and allowed him to behold what the earlier visions had not shown him—the *first* advent of Christ "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

From Nebuchadnezzar's dream and his own vision he had learned the coming and kingdom of Messiah at the end of the fourth empire, but that glorious reign seemed to have no connection with the question of sin and its pardon. Now a new thing is revealed to him—an advent of Messiah "to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Here indeed was a response to Daniel's deepest yearnings; here was strong consolation for the aged saint. The promise in Eden, the covenant with Abraham, were then approaching their fulfilment; sin was to be put away; redemption was to be brought into the world; God would actually bring near to man His everlasting righteousness. This was a renewal of all the highest and holiest hopes of the nation through whom the redemption of the world was to come; and, for the first time, *the period* of Messiah's coming was indicated.

Many things had been revealed about it before, but never its time. The period of the second advent had been fixed in history as at the close of the fourth empire, though this assigned no actual date. But now the precise interval to the appearance of Messiah the Prince is revealed, together with the results both spiritual and temporal of His first advent. The spiritual results were to include the putting away of sin, making reconciliation for iniquity, the introduction of everlasting righteousness, the scaling up of vision and prophecy, the anointing of a most Holy One, and the establishment of a covenant with many—a new covenant, a covenant that should replace that of Sinai, and secure all these blessings for ever to those who have a share in it.

The *temporal* results were to be strange indeed, and to Daniel probably

incomprehensible. Messiah—and the word is here used for the first time as a proper name—the name of the hope of Israel—Messiah was indeed to come and to accomplish this glorious redeeming work; but He was not at that time to rule over Israel as expected, or to establish the kingdom so long foretold. Instead of that, He was to be “cut off” Cut off? How Daniel must have paled and started at the strange announcement! Messiah the Prince, the glorious King who was to reign in righteousness, and whose kingdom was to be like a mountain filling the whole earth for ever—Messiah—to be “cut off”! The word admitted of no double sense, however; it was one used for the execution of a judicial sentence by death. Messiah was to be “cut off.” What could the unexpected announcement mean? The next words of the angel implied that this cutting off would be the result of His rejection by His people. They are rendered in our version by a clause which is beautiful, but incorrect,—“but not for Himself.” However true this thought as regards Christ, the original here does not bear this translation, and contains no intimation of the vicariousness of the death of Jesus. It would, indeed, be out of place in this immediate connection—the treatment of Messiah at His advent by the Jewish nation. The marginal reading is a better rendering of the brief and rather obscure clause in the Hebrew. Messiah will be “cut off” and “shall have nothing.” The literal expression is, “and none unto Him,” the meaning being apparently that no one was for Him, no one on His side in the crisis of His fate, that He would be rejected as Messiah by His people, and “cut off” because of this rejection.

The strange prediction was therefore doubly clear: Israel’s Messiah would come at the close of a certain definite period, and—marvel of marvels!—His people would doom Him to die. In punishment of this crime, the city and temple about to be rebuilt would be again destroyed, and the people and land given up to desolation. There is some obscurity as to certain points of this great prediction, though the drift of the whole is perfectly clear. The extreme condensation and brevity which mark it are one cause of the difficulty, and an occasional ellipsis in the Hebrew affords room for alternate constructions in one or two of the expressions.

An immense amount of controversy has for ages been carried on about this prophecy—controversy attributable to several causes: first, its absolute clearness as a whole combined with its difficulties in minor points; secondly, the inveterate determination of the Jews to silence its glorious witness to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; thirdly, the equal anxiety of infidels to blunt the edge of a prophecy which establishes indubitably Divine inspiration; and, lastly, the intrinsic difficulties of sacred chronology. We cannot here enter into any controversial exposition of the prophecy, as that would require a volume, and it is not necessary to our argument to settle the exact force of every word, or the precise application of every detail. The obvious and unquestionable meaning of the prediction as a whole, together with its marvellous fulfilment, are all that we need establish.

This prophecy was given just as the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon was drawing to a close. It announced the duration of the restored national existence of Israel, up to the great epoch of all history—the advent of

Messiah the Prince. It was foretold that within 490 years from the date of the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem, the long-foreshadowed, long-predicted atonement for sin was to be accomplished by the advent of Messiah, reconciliation for iniquity effected, and everlasting righteousness brought in; that vision and prophecy should be sealed up, and the Most Holy anointed.

The period was then subdivided into three parts: 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and one week; i.e. 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. The rebuilding of the city and the re-establishment of the Jewish polity would occur in the first forty-nine years, or "seven weeks." Four hundred and thirty-four years more would elapse, and then Messiah the Prince would appear. After that, at some time not accurately defined, but within the limits of the seventieth week, or last seven years, of the period, Messiah would be cut off and "have nothing." It is further foretold that Jerusalem and its temple would subsequently, and as a consequence, be destroyed; and that a flood of foreign invasion would overthrow the land. But though thus cut off, Messiah would confirm the covenant with many (not the whole nation) during the course of the "one week" (i.e., the last week of the seventy); in the midst of it He would "cause sacrifice and oblation to cease." Jerusalem should then be made desolate, until a certain predetermined doom should fall upon the power that should desolate it; a fact which our Lord afterwards foretold in the words, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

All this was accomplished with wonderful exactness. The edict to restore and build the city was issued by Artaxerxes, and Ezra and Nehemiah were the two great restorers of the Jewish people, polity, and religion. Their joint administration occupied about "seven weeks," or forty-nine years; the wall and the street were rebuilt in troublous times. After the lapse of 434 years more, Messiah the Prince did appear, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand"; i.e., the time indicated by this very prophecy. He came unto His own, and, alas! His own received Him not! He was cut off, and had nothing.

Shortly after the Roman soldiery—"the people of a prince that shall come"—(Titus) —destroyed the city and the sanctuary; the end of Jewish independence came with a flood of foreign invasion, and predetermined desolation fell on land and people. But though the nation was thus judged, Messiah *did* "confirm the covenant" with many; not with Israel as a people, but with an election according to grace.

What covenant? and how did He confirm it? "This is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you," said He to His disciples the night before His passion; (Luke xxii. 20) or as Matthew and Mark give the words: "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." "He shall confirm the covenant with many," said the angel to Daniel. "My blood of the new covenant shed for many," said Christ. Is not His blood declared to be "the blood of the everlasting covenant"? And is not He Himself repeatedly styled, "the Mediator of the new covenant"? (See Heb. viii. 6: ix. 15; xii. 24) And can any Bible student doubt what is the event predicted, when in immediate connection with the coming and cutting off of Messiah, it is added, "He shall confirm the covenant with many"?

The chronological precision with which this prophecy was fulfilled is most remarkable, and the more so because it was accomplished both in solar and lunar years. To prove this, it is necessary to go a little more carefully into the chronological measures and historical facts. The starting-point was to be a decree to restore and to build Jerusalem, and thy terminus was to be "Messiah the Prince." Now there were two restoration decrees issued by Artaxerxes, and they were thirteen years apart. Either of them may be taken as the starting-point, as each involved a measure of rebuilding of Jerusalem and of re-establishment of Jewish polity and national existence. The two decrees are associated with the two names of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the second of the two—that given to Nehemiah—answers most fully to the terms of the prophecy. The first was given by Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, B.C. 457, and the second in the twentieth year of his reign, B.C. 444. The 490 years ran out on the solar scale from the first date, in A.D. 34; and, more accurately, on the lunar scale from the second date, A.D. 32-3. In both cases the last or seventieth week of years included most of the ministry of Christ, His death, resurrection, and ascension; together with the formation of the Church by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the early proclamation of the gospel in Palestine.

But the prophecy states that the Messiah was to be cut off before the close of the seventy weeks (or 490 years), "after" the sixty-ninth had elapsed, and before the seventieth fully ran out; that is to say, in the course of the seventieth week. He was to be cut off "in the midst of the week," i.e. of the last supreme week, the one week which is marked off from its fellows; the week which stands pre-eminent, not only among the seventy, but among all the weeks the world has ever seen; the week of seven years which witnessed the miracles, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of the Son of man and Son of God.

In the middle of this terminal week of the seventy, Messiah would, according to the prophecy, be "cut off," and by shedding of His own blood would confirm the new covenant with "many"—not with the nation of Israel, but with many, both Jews and Gentiles. He would also cause all Jewish sacrifice and oblation to cease by putting away sin for ever "by the sacrifice of Himself."

This chronological prediction was fulfilled on the solar scale from the first edict of Artaxerxes, and on the lunar scale to a day from the second. A simple calculation shows this. Seventy weeks are 490 years, but sixty-nine and a half weeks are only 486 & 1/2 years; *this* is therefore the number of the years predicted to elapse between Artaxerxes' decree and the death of Christ. Nehemiah commenced his journey to Jerusalem in accordance with the decree given in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, during the passover month, the month of Nisan, B.C. 444; and, as we know, our Lord was crucified at the same season, the Passover, A.D. 29.¹ From Nisan, B.C. 444, to Nisan, A.D. 29,—472 ordinary solar years only elapsed, not 486 & 1/2. *But 472 solar years are exactly 486 & 1/2 lunar.* Hence sixty-nine and a half weeks of lunar years, from Passover to Passover, *did* extend between Artaxerxes' decree in the twentieth year of his reign, and the crucifixion, or cutting off, of "Messiah the Prince," A.D. 29, and the prophecy was accurately fulfilled, even to a day, on the lunar scale. Who but He who foresees the end even from the

beginning could thus have foretold the exact time of Christ's crucifixion, five hundred years in advance? Let the date of Daniel be as late as any critic has ever placed it, we still have here prediction—and that of the most exact chronological kind.

¹ JULIUS AFRICANUS ON THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.

"This passage, therefore, as it stands thus, touches on many marvellous things. At present, however, I shall speak only of those things in it which bear upon chronology, and matters connected therewith. That the passage speaks then of the advent of Christ, who was to manifest Himself after seventy weeks, is evident. For in the Saviour's time, or from Him, are transgressions abrogated, and sins brought to an end. And through remission, moreover, are iniquities, along with offences, blotted out by expiation; and an everlasting righteousness is preached, different from that which is by the law, and visions and prophecies (are) until John, and the Most Holy is anointed. For before the advent of the Saviour these things were not yet, and were therefore only looked for. And the beginning of the numbers, that is, of the seventy weeks, which make up four hundred and ninety years, the angel instructs us to take from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. And this happened in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia. For Nehemiah his cup-bearer besought him, and received the answer that Jerusalem should be built. And the word went forth commanding these things; for up to that time the city was desolate. For when Cyrus, after the seventy years' captivity, gave free permission to all to return who desired it, some of them under the leadership of Jesus the high priest and Zorobabel, and others after these under the leadership of Esdra, returned, but were prevented at first from building the temple, and from surrounding the city with a wall, on the plea that that had not been commanded.

"It remained in this position, accordingly, until Nehemiah and the reign of Artaxerxes and the 115th year of the sovereignty of the Persians. And from the capture of Jerusalem that makes 185 years. And at that time King Artaxerxes gave order that the city should be built; and Nehemiah being dispatched, superintended the work, and the street and the surrounding wall were built, as had been prophesied. And reckoning from that point, we make up seventy weeks to the time of Christ. For if we begin to reckon from any other point, and not from this, the periods will not correspond, and very many odd results will meet us. For if we begin the calculation of the seventy weeks from Cyrus and the first restoration, there will be upwards of one hundred years too many, and there will be a larger number if we begin from the day on which the angel gave the prophecy to Daniel, and a much larger number still if we begin from the commencement of the captivity. For we find the sovereignty of the Persians comprising a period of 230 years, and that of the Macedonians extending over 370 years, and from that to the sixteenth year of Tiberius Caesar is a period of about sixty years.

"It is by calculating from Artaxerxes, therefore, up to the time of Christ, that the seventy weeks are made up, according to the numeration of the Jews. For from Nehemiah, who was dispatched by Artaxerxes to build Jerusalem in the 115th year of the Persian empire, and the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes himself, and the fourth year of the eighty-third Olympiad, up to

this date, which was the second year of the 202nd Olympiad, and the sixteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, there are reckoned 475 years, which make 490 according to the Hebrew numeration, as they measure the years by the course of the moon; so that, as is easy to show, their year consists of 354 days, while the solar year has 365 and a quarter days. For the latter exceeds the period of twelve months, according to the moon's course, by eleven and a quarter days. (More accurately 10 days 21 hours.) Hence the Greeks and the Jews insert three intercalary months every eight years. For eight times eleven and a quarter days make up three months, Therefore 473 years make 59 periods of eight years each, and three months besides. But since thus there are three intercalary months every eight years, we get thus 15 years minus a few days; and these being added to the 475 years, make up in all the seventy weeks."—(Quoted by Eusebius, book V. Anti-Nicene Fathers, vol. ix., p. 182.) In his Commentary on Daniel, Jerome sets forth the measurement of the "seventy weeks" in *lunar* years, from the 20th of Artaxerxes, advocated by Julius Africanus,—“Africanus in quiuto temporum volumine, de septuaginta hebdomadibus, hec loquutus ad verbum est. . . . A vicesimo autem anno Artaxerxes regis usque ad Christum, complentur hebdomada septuaginta, juxta lunarem Hebreorum supputatione; qui menses non juxta solis, sed juxta lunce cursum numerant.”—(Jerome on Dan. ix.)

The prophecies whose fulfilment we have now traced are by no means the only ones contained in the Divine programme of the world's history given to Daniel—they are the principal ones. But the EIGHTH chapter and the ELEVENTH also contain remarkably full and detailed political foreviews of certain portions of the history. The prophecy of the four empires is like a map of Europe comprising all its countries in outline and their entire history for twenty-five centuries. The Messianic ninth chapter is, on the contrary, a map of one country only; its predictions concern the people and holy city of Daniel, it announces the duration of the restored nationality of the Jews, the advent and rejection of Messiah, with its consequences in the renewed dispersion of the Jews and desolation of their land.

The eighth chapter enlarges another detached portion of the previous all-comprehensive map. It amplifies the account of the second and third empires. It was given in the third year of Belshazzar, fifty-two years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream, when the Babylonian power was falling, and the Medo-Persian, which was to destroy it, rising. The chapter should be carefully studied, as it is profoundly interesting, and with it we must associate the eleventh chapter, which goes into similar subjects and succeeding events in still greater detail.

Space forbids our tracing the fulfilment of these wonderful predictions by quotations from the historians who narrate the facts. Suffice it to say, that the prophecy gives beforehand, with all the accuracy of history written afterwards, the events of three or four hundred years especially, and then passes on more in outline to those lying at a greater distance. The centuries whose events are so fully predicted are those which lay between the time then present and the first advent—a period when the light of prophecy was to cease, when Israel would be under the power of Gentile rulers, and exposed to

many wars and troubles and to some cruel persecutions, and when their faith in Divine providence would greatly need to be sustained by the evidence of prophecy fulfilling before their eyes. The days of miracles had passed, the age of prophets was over, and from the time of Malachi the last 400 years which preceded the advent of Messiah was a time of peculiar trial of faith to the people of God.

The revealing Spirit graciously *spans this interval with a prophecy* so full and accurate, that sceptics have rejected the entire book which contains it, on the ground that these chapters *must be historical* and not prophetic; a groundless objection to which we will allude more fully in a note at the end of this chapter.

Starting from the time then present, the close of the Babylonian empire, the eighth chapter begins by describing the rise of the Persian empire, the conquests of Cyrus westward in Lydia, northward in Armenia, southward in Babylon; while chapter xi. 2, speaks of his successors, Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius, and Xerxes: "There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion."

There are distinctly indicated the succession of Persian monarchs and their overthrow by Alexander, the rapidity of his course of victory, his mighty exploits, his total conquest of Persia, his universal dominion, his sudden death in the height of his power, the fourfold partition of his kingdom among his generals, the early extinction of his own posterity, and the division of his dominions—not among his children—but among "others beside those," (Chap. viii. 7, 85 xi. 3, 4.)

Space obliges us to refrain from any detailed explanation of the eighth and eleventh chapters of the prophecy, the last of which foretold, four hundred years beforehand, the long complicated struggles between the dynasties which succeeded Alexander, especially those between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucidae of Syria. It has been carefully expounded by many writers, and the correspondence of its statements with the records of history prove to be *absolute and exact*, although scores of persons and incidents are definitely mentioned in their order.

Jerome observed on this prophecy: "To understand the last parts of Daniel, many histories of the Greeks are necessary; namely those of Sutorius, Callinicus, Diodorus, Hieronymus, Polybius, Posidonius, Claudius, and Andronicus Alypius, whom also Porphyry professes to have followed; that of Josephus also, and those whom Josephus names, and especially of our own Livy, Pompeius Trogus, and Justin, who relate the whole history of this latest portion."

To the same effect, Bishop Newton justly observes: "There is not so complete and regular a series of these kings, there is not so concise and comprehensive an account of their affairs to be found in any other writing of

those times. The prophecy is really more perfect than any history. No one historian hath related so many circumstances, and in such exact order, as the prophet hath foretold them. So that it was necessary to have recourse to several authors, Greek and Roman, Jewish and Christian, and to collect here something from one, and there something from another, thus to explain and illustrate the great variety of particulars contained in the prophecy."

The Rev. T. R. Birks remarks: "If any one continuous history of these wars and alliances were now extant, the correspondence between the prophecy and the events would be easier to trace. But now, when it results from the careful collation of separate fragments, gathered from eight or ten authors, Polybius, Diodorus, Appian, Josephus, Justin, and Trogius Pompeius, the writers of the two books of Maccabees, Livy, Porphyry, and Dexippus with medals and inscriptions; and in several of them, from incidental allusions, or brief and passing statements, where the leading object of the history is quite different; the moral evidence becomes far more striking to every ingenuous mind."

NOTE To CHAPTER VI. ON THE DATE OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

The prophecies of Daniel stand pre-eminent among all others in their evidential value. Not only does his brief book give a foreview of twenty-five centuries of Jewish and Gentile history, including the first and the second advents of Christ, but it also fixes the chronology of various episodes of the then unknown future, with a simple certainty which would be audacious if it were not Divine. Would any mere man dare to foretell, not only a long succession of events lying far in the remote future, but the time at which some of them would occur and the periods they would occupy? This Daniel did, and the predictions have come to pass.

This unquestionable fact can be explained away only on one of three grounds.

I. The accord between prediction and fulfilment must be purely accidental and fortuitous; or,—

II. The events must have been manipulated, so as to fit the prophecy; or,—

III. The prophecy must have been written to fit the events, i.e. after them; it must, in other words, be a forgery of a later date.

None of these three explanations can account for the agreement between Daniel's predictions and history, as reflection will show. For,—

1. Such an agreement cannot be merely fortuitous. It is too far-reaching and detailed, too exact and varied. Chance might produce a few coincidences of fulfilment out of a hundred predictions, not a hundred or more *without a single exception*. Common sense perceives this at a glance. As far as time has elapsed *every single point* predicted in Daniel has come true, and there remain but a few terminal points yet to be fulfilled.

2. *The events were certainly not made to fit the prophecy by human arrangement.* The rise and fall and succession of monarchies and of empires, and the conduct and character of nations, for over two thousand years, are

matters altogether too vast to be manipulated by men. Such a notion is clearly absurd. What! did Babylonian and Persian monarchs, Grecian and Roman conquerors, Gothic and Vandal invaders, mediaeval kings and popes, *conspire for long ages* to accomplish obscure Jewish predictions, of which the majority of them never even heard?

3. The third and last solution is consequently the only possible *alternative* to a frank admission of the Divine inspiration of the book, and of the Divine government of the world amid all its ceaseless political changes. *Can the prophecy have been written to fit the events?* In other words, can it be a forgery of a later date? This is the theory adopted by all the unbelieving critics, who *start with the assumption that prophecy in any true sense is impossible*. They endeavour to assign to the book a date later than the true one, a date towards the close of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in the second century before Christ. Then they endeavour to compress all the four empires into the four centuries previous to that date, excluding therefore from the prophecy any allusion to the Roman empire and the first advent of Christ. Multitudinous have been the attacks made on these lines on the fortress of this Book of Daniel; for skepticism has realized that while it stands impregnable, *a relic of the sixth century before Christ*, all rationalistic theories must fall to the ground, like Dagon before the ark.

But *the fortress stands firm as ever*, its massive foundations revealed only the more clearly by the varied assaults it has repelled. The assailants, German as well as English, have been beaten off time after time by one champion after another, earnestly contending for the faith. The superficial and shallow nature of the linguistic, historic, and critical objections has been demonstrated, and one line of assault after another has had to be abandoned.¹ But even if this were not the case, and the later date could be substantiated, it would not in the least establish the skeptical denial of the existence of prophecy in Daniel. The predictions of the first advent and of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem would be in no wise affected by the later date, nor those of the tenfold division of the Roman empire, and of the great Papal and Mohammedan apostasies.

¹ It is simply a historical fact, that unbelief has been always the parent of this criticism, not the criticism the cause of the unbelief. The pseudo-criticism is a mere plea for unbelief.

Candour is shut up to the conclusion that real, true, and marvellous foreknowledge is, beyond all question, indicated by the predictions of the book, since twenty-five centuries of history can be proved to correspond with it accurately, in their chronological as well as in all their other features. If this be so, the question of inspiration is settled for honest minds. Nor that alone. For the rule of God over the kings of the earth—the fact that history is working out His Divine purposes, and that all the changing kingdoms of the Gentiles are merely introductory to the eternal kingdom of the Son of man and of the saints—is also established beyond controversy.

It was alleged by the skeptical school that the late origin of Daniel was demonstrated by the presence of Macedonian words, and of impure Hebrew expressions; that its spurious character was proved by its position in the

canon, as not among "the prophets," but among the "hagiographa"; that it contained historical errors, and irreconcilable contradictions; that it had traces of later ideas and usages; as well as—and this was evidently the head and front of the offending—that the predictions were so clear and definite, that they must have been written after the events.

The defence has been twofold. First, a demonstration which leaves nothing to be desired of the utter *baselessness of the objections*; and, secondly, an array of unanswerable arguments in support of the authenticity and date of the book. The contention has given rise to a whole literature, to which we can merely allude in a few sentences. Those who wish to examine into the subject for themselves will find the works of Hengstenberg and Dr. Pusey thorough, candid, and learned, giving not the results of investigation only, *but the process* and the fullest reference to original documents. We must indicate briefly the nature of the defence, though we cannot do more.

Porphyry, in the third century, in his attack on Christianity as a whole, devoted one of his fifteen books to an assault on Daniel. He asserted that it must be the work of a Jew of Palestine, written in Greek in the time of Antiochus; and assigned as the main ground of his theory the exact correspondence of events with the predictions, asserting that Daniel "did not so much predict future events as narrate past ones,"—as Jerome remarked, "this method of opposing the prophecies is the strongest testimony to their truth, for they were fulfilled with such exactness that to infidels the prophets seemed not to have foretold things future, but to have related things past,"—and bearing thus a noble testimony to the prophet! Porphyry's book was by imperial command condemned to the flames, and we know it mostly from fragments preserved in the writings of Jerome. Spinoza, the infidel Jew, was the first modern to renew this old attack; and then Hobbes and Collins, and other English deists. It was J. D. Michaelis who made the first *scholarly* attempt to undermine confidence in the authenticity of Daniel, and even he decidedly maintained the genuineness of the greater part of it. The names of more recent German critics are legion, and we need not give them here, but simply indicate the arguments that prove the futility of the objections alleged.

To a Christian mind the highest and most conclusive testimony lies in the fact that *our Lord speaks of Daniel as a prophet*, and quotes from him. The name by which He most frequently speaks of Himself, "the Son of man," is taken from Daniel vii. 13. Many of His descriptions of His own coming and kingdom are also distinctly connected with Daniel's predictions of them.¹ Surely our Lord would not thus have endorsed an impostor! Josephus tells us that the book was eagerly studied in Christ's days; would He have treated it as Scripture, and allowed His disciples to regard it as such, if it were a forgery?

¹ Compare Dan. 13, 14, and 26, 27, with Matt. x. 23; xvi. 27, 28; xix. 28; xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64; John v. 27 3 Dan. xii. 2.

The apostles uniformly recognise Daniel as a prophet. Peter alludes to his inquiries as to the "times," and states that he was inspired by the Spirit of Christ. Paul in 2 Thessalonians ii. builds his argument on Daniel's

prediction of the man of sin and the apostasy. Hebrews xi. 33 alludes distinctly to Daniel and his companions and their heroic deeds; and the whole Book of Revelation is so closely connected with that of Daniel, that we might almost style it Second Daniel, or Daniel First Revelation.

The allusion to Daniel as one of the holiest and one of the wisest of men, by his contemporary Ezekiel, shows how early he attained his high position in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and how far the fame of his blameless, holy life had spread, even in his own days. As he most distinctly and repeatedly claims to be the author of his own book, and writes much of it as an autobiography, the very *holiness of his character* makes the thought of deliberate forgery and falsehood revoltingly inconsistent.

That the book was widely distributed and well known and revered by the pious in pre-Maccabean times can be demonstrated. The very accurate and reliable First Book of Maccabees makes exact, though brief and simple, reference to the stories in Daniel. The dying words of Mattathias to his sons are recorded, in which he encourages them to fidelity to God amid persecution by recalling various Bible histories, and among the rest that of the Hebrew children in the fire, and Daniel in the lions' den. Hence it is evident that the book was known and regarded as Scripture at that time.

Further, Josephus makes several remarkable and explicit statements on the subject. Speaking of one of the predictions, he says, "Now this was delivered 408 years before the fulfilment," thus recognising the received date as unquestionable, and as generally admitted to be so in his day. In a still more conclusive and very interesting passage he asserts that Daniel's prophecy was shown to Alexander the Great when he visited Jerusalem, and that this monarch took the prediction about a Greek who was to overthrow the Persian empire to mean himself, and was much encouraged thereby in his enterprise, and very favourably disposed towards the Jews in consequence.

Josephus was indeed much impressed by the remarkable fulfilments of Daniel's predictions, which even in his day were evident. After expounding several of these he says, "All these things did this man leave behind in writing, as God had showed them to him: so that those who read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, must be astonished at the honour conferred by God on Daniel." ("Antiquities," x. 11, 7.) This eminently learned man, whose works were published towards the close of the first century, and who lived, therefore, comparatively near the days of Daniel, thus broadly asserts the date of Daniel, expressing, of course, the conviction of the learned of his day—an opinion which had never apparently been even questioned. He affirms the *predictions* of the book to be of an extraordinary character, and challenges attention to their fulfilment. He was most unlikely to have been taken in by a mere forgery, and ought surely to have been better informed about the matter than modern critics can possibly be.

A strong argument in favour of the received date may be drawn from the languages in which the book is written, Hebrew and Aramaean. Both were familiar to the Jews of the captivity era, and to those of no later date; the one was Daniel's mother tongue, the other the language in which he had been educated, and by which he was surrounded for the greater part of his life.

Hebrew ceased to be used by the Jews in and from the captivity, except as a sacred learned language. It had been *entirely superseded* before the Maccabean days, and no writer of the time of Antiochus could have counted on being even understood had he written in that language! Daniel reckons on such a familiar acquaintance with both languages, that it is evidently a matter of indifference to him and to his readers which he uses. "The use of the two languages, and the mode in which the prophet writes in both, correspond perfectly with his real date; they are severally and together utterly inexplicable according to the theory that would make the book a product of the Maccabean times. *The language is a mark of genuineness set by God on the book.* Rationalism must rebel, as it has rebelled; but it dare not now with any moderate honesty abuse philology to cover its rebellion." (Dr. Pusey: "Lectures on Daniel.")

Further, the exact knowledge of contemporary *history* evinced in Daniel is such that no writer of the time of the Maccabees could possibly have attained it. Almost every single circumstance mentioned in the book is confirmed directly or indirectly by contemporary historians, and proved to be absolutely and even minutely correct. In the Maccabean age, as existing remains prove, the utmost ignorance of the history and geography of foreign countries prevailed among the Jews in Palestine, and an exact and comprehensive knowledge of the history of a period so dark and already so remote as the captivity era, did not exist and could not have existed. And the same may be said of the accurate knowledge exhibited in the book of the institutions, manners, usages, and entire state of things, existing in the Babylonian and Medo-Persian times.

Again, it has been remarked that "the complexion of *the prophecies* of Daniel corresponds so exactly with what is related in the historical part of the circumstances of his life, that even the most crafty impostor would not have been able to produce this agreement artificially. Daniel occupied high offices of state; he was witness to great revolutions and changes of rulers and empires; and this circumstance is very significantly impressed on his prophecies. The succession of the various empires of the world forms their principal subject. In the representation of the Messianic idea also he borrows his colours from his external relations. Throughout there is apparent a religious, as well as a political gift, such as we meet with in no other prophet."

Lastly, *the canon of the Old Testament contains the Book of Daniel*, and that canon was closed by Ezra the scribe, and Nehemiah, the second Moses in Jewish estimation, about 400 B.C. Hence the prophecies of Daniel *were already at that date recognised as inspired writings*. It is true the book does not appear in the list of the prophets, because Daniel was not *officially* a Jewish prophet, but a Babylonian statesman. David, also, though a prophet, was *officially* a king, and thus his writings, like Daniel's, are classed among the hagiographa, or sacred books, rather than among the prophets. The principle of the Jewish arrangement of the canon was, that sacred writings by men *in secular office*, and not occupying the pastoral or prophetic position, were put *in a class apart from the prophets*. Hence Daniel appears not in the list with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, but rather with David and Solomon,

and Mordecai the writer of Esther. But the Jewish rabbis hold his prophetic revelations in the *highest* esteem, and the Talmud places him *above all other prophets*.

There is therefore no question at all for candid minds that the book is authentic, and rightly attributed to the time of the Babylonish captivity; and if so, it must be granted by all that it contains prophecy—definite predictions which have been most marvelously fulfilled.

The importance of this conclusion can scarcely be over-estimated, though it seems to be less appreciated by Christians than by skeptics. They regret their inability to wrest a mighty weapon out of the hands of the Church. But we—what use are we making of it? What execution are we doing with it? Is it not a pity that it is allowed to so great an extent to lie idle?

If eight or nine centuries of fulfilled prophecy drove Porphyry, in the third century, to feel that we must either admit Divine inspiration or prove the Book of Daniel spurious, ought not the twenty-five centuries of it, to which we in our days can point, be even more efficacious in convincing candid inquirers and confounding prejudiced opponents? The battle of authenticity has been fought and won; no fresh objections can be invented. Archaeological discovery may yet find Daniel's name among the Babylonian records; it will certainly produce no evidence against the book which it has already done so much to authenticate. It rests with Christian teachers and preachers to use the miracle of the last days, fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy, for the conviction and conversion of men.

Continued in [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part I.](#)

All sections of The Divine Programme of The World's History By H. Grattan Guinness

- [Introduction](#)
- [Chapter I. The Adamic Programme. – Part I](#)
- [Chapter I. The Adamic Programme. – Part II](#)
- [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part I](#)
- [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter II. The Noahic Programme. – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter III. The Abrahamic Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter III. The Abrahamic Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter III. The Abrahamic Programme – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter IV. The Mosaic Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter IV. The Mosaic Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter V. The Davidic Programme. – Part I.](#)

- [Chapter V. The Davidic Programme. – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part III.](#)

- [Chapter VI. The Daniel Programme – Part IV. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part I.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part II.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part III.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part IV.](#)
- [Chapter VII. The Christian Programme – Part V. The Apocalyptic Section of the Programme](#)