



Daniel Masterclass

Copyright © Chris Hamer-Hodges, Living Rock Church, 2021

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system without permission in writing from the author.

| Contents

The Visions of Daniel

2.4 Daniel 10

- Christophany
- Daniel's Christophany
- Commander of the Lord's armies
- The Archangel Michael
- Detained by the Prince of Persia

2.5 Daniel 11

- Historic details
- At the time of the end

2.6 Daniel 12

- The Resurrection
- Time, times and half a time
- Conclusion



| The Visions of Daniel

2.4 Daniel 10

The last three chapters of the book of Daniel comprise one single remarkable vision that the prophet had. It is the last of his recorded visions. Whilst chapter 10 is an introduction to the vision in chapters 11 and 12, it is remarkable in its own right. Even if this was the only chapter in the book of Daniel it would still make it worthy of study, for it is in this chapter that we have recorded the clearest *Christophany* in the whole of the Old Testament.

Christophany

A Christophany is a theological term that simply means: *an appearance of Christ*. We generally exclude the time of the incarnation, between his birth and his death when using this term. So it is generally used for pre-incarnate, or post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

Other possible Christophanies

The post-resurrection Christophanies are clearly recorded in the Gospels and Acts. The pre-incarnate Christophanies – the appearances of Christ in the Old Testament – are not so easy to spot. There are however a number of occasions where it is possible that what is recorded is actually a Christophany: God walking in the Garden with Adam and Eve, the angel of the Lord who wrestled with Jacob, the commander of the Lord's army who appeared to Joshua and the fourth person in the fiery furnace in Daniel chapter 3.

Since God the Father is spirit and has no physical body, and since we are told that no-one has seen Him except the Son, there are some who would state the case that whenever we see the Lord in physical form in the Old Testament, this must be a Christophany. However we must add a number of caveats to this approach.

Anthropomorphisms to not indicate a Christophany

Although God is spirit and has no physical body, we have already come across many occasions where he is described in terms of human attributes; for example *the arm of the Lord*, or *the finger of God*. We have already mentioned that these are *Anthropomorphisms*, and are simply God condescending to our understanding by using human terms that we are familiar with. They do not mean a literal physical arm of the Lord, or his literal physical fingers. Thus we

should be careful to avoid jumping to the conclusion that we are seeing a Christophany every time anthropomorphic language is used.

Types of Christ do not indicate a Christophany

Throughout the Old Testament there are many individuals who are used as types or patterns of the Christ who was to come. We have already mentioned that Daniel himself falls into this category, because of the events in his life that parallel Christ's own. As well as Joseph who we have already mentioned, there are several others – Joshua, whose name when transliterated into Greek is Jesus, and who led the people of God into their inheritance; Elisha - whose name means Lamb of God, and whose way was prepared by Elijah, and whose miracles closely parallel the Lord's own; David – the king of the Kingdom, who established peace, conquered all God's enemies, and established an “eternal” kingdom of worship and righteousness; even Moses himself, who left the glory at Pharaoh's side to become Israel's deliverer and saviour, and who is used as a type of the prophet who would come. The list goes on and on, we could also mention less prominent characters like Phineas, who was consumed by the zeal of the Lord, atoned for the people's wickedness, and received an eternal priesthood, or Sampson, who also was Israel's deliverer and who accomplished more in his death than he did during his life.

The important point about all these *types* of Christ is that that is what they are - examples and foreshadows of the reality to come, not the reality itself. They were real men with real failings that the scriptures make no attempts to hide. They were not Christ himself, they merely pointed prophetically towards him with their lives. When we see a type of Christ we are not seeing a Christophany.

The most common confusion in this area is over Melchizedek. It is clear that he is a type of Christ, but some would argue that he is actually a Christophany. The former is easy to prove as the New Testament and Psalms clearly portray him as representing Christ, but the later is far from clear, and cannot be proven from the scriptures.

Angelic Visitations are not Christophanies

There are numerous occasions in both the old and new testaments where angels appear to the servants of God. In many of these cases the one to whom the angel appears falls down in awe as if he was seeing the Lord himself. This is further confused by the fact that the word angel just means “messenger”, and thus Jesus could, and sometimes is referred to as “The Angel of the Lord”. Another problem is that when angels come they do not bring their own message, but the word of the Lord, God speaks through his angels, thus we also see some confusing passages where an angel appears, but the Lord speaks. Thus there is often some ambiguity between what is an angelic visitation and what is a

Christophany. However an angel as a created being will never receive the worship that is due to God, so when a man falls down before an angel to worship him (obviously making the mistake himself that he is seeing the Lord) the angel always instantly corrects him, and instructs him to worship God alone.

Oh, the raging of many nations-- they rage like the raging sea! Oh, the uproar of the peoples-- they roar like the roaring of great waters!

Isaiah 17:12

Daniel's Christophany

So how do we know that Daniel's "vision of a man" in chapter 11 is a Christophany, and not just an angelic visitation? There are a number of factors that show not just that it is, but that it is the clearest of all the Christophanies in the Old Testament.

His appearance

I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

Daniel 10:5-6

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

Revelation 1:12-16

There are remarkable similarities between Daniel's vision of "a man" and John's vision of Christ in Revelation chapter 1. Both have the characteristic gold sash, blazing eyes, limbs of bronze, and voice like a multitude.

His appearing

I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves.

Daniel 10:7

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

Acts 9:3-7

Daniel's reaction

Daniel has seen angels before. He had seen both Gabriel and Michael, the great archangels who announce his first and second comings. But here his reaction is quite different. He is overwhelmed and falls face down to the ground. This is also the identical reaction of John, Ezekiel, and the 24 elders in Revelation when they come face to face with the Lord.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

Revelation 1:17

Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell face down, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Ezekiel 1:28

And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God.

Revelation 11:16

The Lord's response

The way the Lord responds is also another clue, if we needed any further evidence, as to his identity. He touches Daniel and raises him up, he speaks to him and imparts strength, and he touches his lips and enables him to speak. These events parallel John, Ezekiel, and Isaiah's own encounters with the Lord.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.

Revelation 1:17

As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

Ezekiel 2:2

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Isaiah 6:6-7

Thus we are led inescapably to the conclusion that this is none other than Jesus himself that Daniel is seeing here. This is quite amazing, as if the revelations of Jesus that Daniel received were not enough; he now meets the Lord himself face to face! The Lord himself appears to Daniel and calls him highly favoured – what a remarkable man this prophet was.

Commander of the Lord's armies

Jesus is revealed here, as he is in the christophany in the book of Joshua as *the commander of the Lord's armies*. He is the all conquering king who rides out to subdue all other powers whether natural or spiritual. He does battle with the enemies of God and brings them into submission to his will.

I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

Revelation 6:2

Prince of Persia, Prince of Greece

We are introduced in this chapter to two of these spiritual enemies – the prince of Persia and the Prince of Greece. These are apparently the spiritual representations of the two kingdoms, the one that was currently in power – the Medo-Persian kingdom (dominated by the Persians) and the power that was yet to arise – the Greek kingdom. Nothing more is said about these spirits, thus they are not mentioned to give us a pattern of naming and identifying territorial spirits as part of spiritual warfare, but to remind us that our battle is not against flesh and blood. Our true enemies are not physical whether in the form of individuals or nations, but the spiritual forces behind the scenes that are at work manipulating them against the purpose of God.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:12

The Archangel Michael

This is also the first passage of scripture where we are introduced to the angel Michael. He is the only angel referred to in scripture as an “Archangel” although traditionally Gabriel is also described with this title.

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Jude 1:9

Michael’s function seems to be to announce the second coming of the Lord Jesus, Just as Gabriel was commissioned to announce the incarnation.

“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be

delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Daniel 12:1-2

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Michael is also the angel who leads the angelic host in battle, to resist Satan, and to protect the people of God. Because he is the commander of the angels, and because Jesus himself is revealed as the commander of the Lord's armies, it has led many to suppose that Michael and Jesus are actually one and the same. But although there are many similarities in this respect, and Michael's name means *like the Lord*; this chapter in Daniel reveals that they are separate. The man in Daniel 10 (who we have identified as Christ) speaks of being aided in his spiritual battle by Michael, and thus presumably by all the angels he commands too.

but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.)

Daniel 10:21

And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

Revelation 12:7

Detained by the Prince of Persia

There is however one problem with identifying Christ as the man in Daniel's vision. He is described as being detained with the Prince of Persia for twenty-one days. How can any evil spiritual force oppose Christ? Demons could not resist Christ's authority on earth. There was never any power struggle between Christ and the demons. He commanded and they left. He has all authority. He is greater than the one that is in the world. There is no contest between the uncreated almighty God, the living Word who sustains all things by his power, and one created fallen angel. How could Satan ever detain or hinder Christ?

The same argument could be used in one of the other passages of scripture generally held to be a christophany. How could Jacob wrestle with God? How can a mere man put up a fight that would allow him to resist for even a fraction of a

second against the power of almighty God, let alone wrestle until dawn? It is clear in this case that God was “pulling his punches.” Although God could have overpowered Jacob in an instant, he chose to condescend and interact with him at his level.

Right from the beginning this has been God’s sovereign way to bring about his purpose. Although he could have overcome Satan, and filled the earth with the knowledge of his glory in the bat of an eye, he has chosen to accomplish his will through the man made in his image. And in a divine mystery, without abdicating any of his divine sovereignty, he nevertheless bestowed upon man a freewill so that of his own choice he can turn to God and cooperate with his purpose, or rebel against him and resist.

In the same way Satan, can and does resist the purpose of God. But he can never prevail. The resistance of Satan can only slow the purpose of God it can never prevent it. When God does not deal with evil as swiftly as he could, it is for man’s benefit, because he is patient and does not want to sweep the righteous away with the wicked. The good news is that if rebellion slows the purpose of God, obedience speeds it up. That is how we can hasten his coming!

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance

2 Peter 3:9

You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

2 Peter 3:11b-12a

2.5 Daniel 11

This chapter is either completely confusing or truly amazing, depending on how well you know the history of the events between the fall of the Persian Empire and rise of the Roman Empire. For what we have here is history recorded before it has even happened. It is the most remarkable *foretelling* prophesy anywhere in the scriptures.

Historic details

In order to appreciate this chapter it is necessary to understand the history to which it refers. Some theologians have written a verse-by-verse history, fitting the details to the prophecy as they go along. Whilst this can be helpful, even with the best intentions, what tends to happen is that the events become somewhat forced to fit the minute detail and wording of the prophecy. I prefer to just present the history as it can be discovered in any encyclopaedia or text book, and let this amazing prophecy speak for itself

Four kings and one mighty king

Daniel received this revelation during the reign of King Cyrus. The four Persian kings who followed him were *Cambyses II*, *Smerdis*, *Darius the Great*, and *Xerxes*. There were a further eight kings before the Persian empire fell, but Xerxes is significant, because it was during his reign that Persia first launched an assault on the Greek empire. This was the beginning of the end for the Persian Kingdom, as it invoked the wrath of the Greeks. The Persian kingdom waned from this point, whilst the Greek kingdom grew stronger. The Persian kingdom would be completely conquered by Alexander the Great.

Alexander conquered almost all the known world of that time in just twelve years. But after his victories, he died suddenly in 323 BC at the age of just 32, and since he had no heir, his kingdom was divided amongst his four generals.

Kings of the South and North

There was intense rivalry between the four empires left by Alexander. Each sought to become Alexander's successor by conquering their rivals. By 281 BC only the two strongest survived. The Seleucid Empire, which occupied the northern half of Alexander's old empire, and the Ptolemaic empire in the South.



These Kingdoms would wage war for generations, many of the battles being fought in or around Judea.

Initially the first kings of these kingdoms had been allies. *Selucius I Nicator* could not immediately take command of his allotted kingdom due to fierce resistance by another pretender to Alexander's throne, so he was forced to join forces with *Ptolemy I*. However after Ptolemy's initial victories, he was soon able to take what was his and quickly consolidated it to encompass Mesopotamia, Persia and Media – the entire eastern part of Alexander's old empire. His capital was Seleucia, which is modern-day Baghdad.

After conflict lasting a generation their successors once again declared a truce. Peace was declared between *Antiochus II Theos* and *Ptolemy II*. To seal this alliance Antiochus took Ptolemy's daughter in marriage. The only problem was that he was already married. For the sake of political security, he sent his old wife Laodise away, and wed Bernice. In an apparent change of heart, he later reneged on this new marriage and returned to his first wife. She however did not forgive her husband for his betrayal, and had him murdered by poisoning. She later had Bernice and her infant son murdered too, and thus cleared the way for her own son *Seleucus II Callinicus* to become king. The fragile alliance was immediately broken and war broke out once again. Bernice's brother *Ptolemy III* invaded the Seleucid kingdom in vengeance for his sister's death.

Seleucus II Callinicus was succeeded in succession by his two sons: *Seleucus III Ceraunus* and *Antiochus III the Great*. During the reign of the latter the tide would turn once again in favour of the northern kingdom. Antiochus invaded Ptolemy's Egypt as far as Raphia, but in this battle he suffered a heavy defeat and was forced to retreat. He then consolidated his kingdom to the north, before pushing south once again. In 198 BC in a fresh offensive against Judea, Antiochus captured it and took possession. Judea had finally passed from Ptolemaic to Seleucid control. After this he turned his attention to the coastlands, but this proved a costly mistake, as he made an enemy of the rapidly emerging Roman Empire. In order to secure his position he was once again forced to forge an alliance with his old enemy. He gave his daughter *Cleopatra* to *Ptolemy V* in marriage to secure the peace.

This peace once again proved short lived, as when war broke out between Rome and the Seleucid Empire, Ptolemy sniffed an opportunity and sided with Rome. The tide was now turning in the favour of the south. Antiochus was heavily defeated by the Roman general Manius Acilius Glabrio at the battle of Thermopylae 191BC, and forced to withdraw back to Asia. Sensing weakness the kingdoms previously conquered by Antiochus broke away and reasserted their independence. Antiochus died a year later in 187 BC.

His son *Seleucus IV Philopator* inherited the northern kingdom in a bad way. Not only had it lost most of its power, but it was also crippled with debt due to the

levies imposed by the Romans. In order to survive he was forced to launch an ambitious taxation policy. He was later assassinated by one of his own ministers.

The Contemptible Person

Seleucus was succeeded by Antiochus IV Epiphanies. He was Seleucus' younger brother, and not the rightful heir. Because Seleucus' infant son was too young to rule, he somehow managed to get himself declared coregent, and then had the rightful heir murdered. Antiochus managed to flatter and deceive his way into favour with all the surrounding kingdoms and so buy himself enough time to rebuild his own empire. That done he once again resumed the old battle with the Ptolemaic empire. He invaded Egypt twice, and it was only the intervention of the Romans that stopped him from taking it completely.

In events that we have already referred to earlier he plundered Jerusalem in 169 BC and returned a year later to quash a rebellion and stopped the daily sacrifice and set up an altar to Zeus in the Holy of Holies in the temple. He also forbade all forms of obedience to the Jewish law and treated with barbaric cruelty any who dared to defy him. Many Jews forsook their faith at this time, as the alternative was certain death. But a band of rebels held out against Antiochus and waged a guerrilla war against him. This was the Maccabean Uprising.

At the time of the end

As can be clearly seen, so far we have a startlingly accurate account of the events that were to take place in the rise and fall of the kingdoms that would affect the people of God. However when we come to verses 40-45 we have a problem, as these do not fit with the events of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms. There are three views as to why this is.

The *Critical View* is put forward by those who cannot accept the supernatural nature of Daniel's vision. They consider such accurate foretelling of future events as impossible. In order to explain it away they say that the book of Daniel must have been written during the Maccabean uprising, and thus the events that occurred before this time are recorded with total accuracy, but the events that follow, are true predictions that were not fulfilled. There is no reason for anyone who has faith in God to accept such a view. We have already seen how Ezekiel, Daniel's contemporary referred to him. Jesus himself quoted Daniel, and even the book of Maccabees quotes Daniel with the rest of scripture. Unlike the religious books that were written during the time of the Maccabees – books that now form what we call the Apocrypha, the book of Daniel is listed in the Jewish scriptures and has always been held to be authentic by both the Jews and the Christians. Also a Maccabean date for Daniel would not explain away his



remarkable accuracy in predicting the advent of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, events that would not happen for another 200 years after that period.

The *Futurist View*, sees these events as pertaining to the end times. Thus Antiochus is just a prefiguring of the final antichrist who is described in these verses. They would link this in with passages of scripture such as 2 Thessalonians 2:1-11. The problem with this view is that it revolves around Jerusalem and a rebuilt temple. Those who hold this view are often fixated with Israel, and watch the news of the Middle East, looking for signs that the temple will be rebuilt, just so the antichrist can come and desecrate it again.

The *Preterist View*, interprets these events as being fulfilled by the Roman invasion of Judea under the general Pompey. This is much more satisfactory, because not only do the events fit (Pompey later fought in civil war against Julius Caesar his former ally, and died alone in a boat betrayed by *Ptolemy XIII*), but this means that the vision spans the period from the fall of the Persian Empire to the Rise of the Roman Empire. From the empire that was in power when Daniel was prophesying to the empire that was in power when Christ came into the world. The missing history between the testaments summed up in one chapter.

There are also countless *Historicist* interpretations that range from the rise of Islam, to battles involving the British Empire. These should be discarded for the pure speculation and nonsense they really are.

Accepting the preterist view does not mean that Antiochus (or indeed Titus) cannot be a type of a final antichrist, but because these events have had their fulfilment in the past, it means we are not looking for the temple in Jerusalem to be rebuilt just so it can be desecrated and destroyed again.

2.6 Daniel 12

Like several of the other chapters in the second half of Daniel, the last chapter contains numbers that are very hard to interpret. The numbers in this chapter are probably the hardest of all those in the book to make sense of. However there is also much in this final chapter that is plain and simple and yet deeply profound. If we fixate on the numbers we might miss what is right before our eyes – the only passage in the whole of the Old Testament to explicitly mention the resurrection of the dead!

The Resurrection

There is so much in the New Testament about the resurrection that we take it for granted that it is a clear and well-understood aspect of faith. In fact Hebrews lists it as one of the elementary teachings that we must move on from if we are to mature in Christ.

In the Old Testament however references to the resurrection are few and far between and often in disguise. As we have mentioned, in the whole of the Old Testament there is only one passage where it is explicitly stated that the dead will rise, and that is here in the final chapter of Daniel. As a result the matter was one of hot debate among the Jews. Opinion was divided between the Pharisees who believed that there would be a resurrection, and the Sadducees who did not. Even among Jesus' disciples themselves it seems to have been an issue of debate.

They kept the matter to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

Mark 9:10

Once again we see the depth of Daniel's insight into the ultimate purpose of God. He has seen the eternal growth of the kingdom, the advent of Christ, his ascension to the right hand of God in glory, now he completes the picture by seeing the second coming and the resurrection of the dead! Nevertheless it seems that like so much of the rest of Daniel's revelation, the Jews did not grasp the full extent of what it meant. It would be left to Jesus and the Apostles to explain what Daniel saw.

Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Luke 20:34-38

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

John 5:24-29

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

John 11:24-25

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

Acts 4:1-2

However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Acts 24:14-15

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

1 Colossians 15:51-55

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

It seems from some of the accounts in Acts that it was the disciples bold preaching of the resurrection of the dead that marked them out from the Jews of the time. This shows that even though the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, they did not fully understand it, but more importantly it reveals that was only in the light of Jesus' own resurrection that this doctrine made sense.

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have

fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Colossians 15:12-26

The message of the resurrection is integral to the gospel. If there is no resurrection then there is no good news. But if Christ has been raised then it proves that he was and is the Son of God, that death has been defeated, and that we too can experience the eternal life he offers. *Christ risen* is the very heart of the gospel.

Time, times and half a time

So let us now return to the numbers as a secondary consideration. For what could be more important than the resurrection? The phrase “time, times and half a time” should now be familiar to us, as we have come across it already in the book of Daniel. If we find it hard to understand what it means in this context, looking at how it occurred originally may shed some additional light on the matter to assist our interpretation.

He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

Daniel 7:25

The context in this case was the siege of Jerusalem leading up to its destruction in 70 AD under Titus, the Emperor’s son. This fits with “When the power of the holy people has been finally broken.” It also ties in with the half of the final seven of the seventy sevens in Chapter 9, which also describes these events and the desecration and destruction of the temple that followed.

He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

Daniel 9:27

However what is confusing is that the context of this whole chapter is clearly about the end times. The destruction of Jerusalem happened a long time ago, but the second coming and the resurrection of the dead are yet to take place. So are these events describing things that have already happened or things that are yet to come?

Another possibility is that they describe both. This is another occasion where the events of the final day of judgement are telescoped into the account of the day of judgement on the Jews. We have a clear pattern for this in scripture not just in the previous chapters of Daniel, but also in the words of Christ himself.

When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Luke 21:20-27

Once we understand that the events of 70 AD, were not just literal events that happened in the past, but also prophetic and symbolic of events yet to come, then it will help us greatly, not just with this passage, but also with the other apocalyptic passages, such as 2 Thessalonians 2, and the book of Revelation.

In the same way the three and a half years, as well as signifying an actual period of time up to the fall of Jerusalem is also itself symbolic. In fact this time period comes up time and time again in various forms in the apocalyptic writings; it is one of those time periods, like forty days, that is deeply significant.

Other references

It occurs twice again in this same chapter for 1290 and 1335 days are both just over three and a half years.

"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1335 days.

Daniel 12:11

It occurs in Revelation chapter 11 as the 42 months and 1260 days – the trampling of the gentiles and the prophesying of the two witnesses. Both equalling three and a half years.

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth."

Revelation 11:1-3

It also occurs twice in Revelation 12 as the time the "woman" is taken care of.

The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.

Revelation 12:14

The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1260 days.

Revelation 12:6

And it also occurs elsewhere in scripture as the time Elijah shut the heavens.

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

James 5:17

Finally it also occurs not as years, but as days in Revelation 11, as the period between the death of God's servants and their resurrection from the dead and rapture into heaven.

These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

Revelation 11:6–12

Interpretation

It may not be immediately obvious what pattern emerges from these verses. This is certainly not an elementary matter of interpretation, but a picture does begin to form.

It is clearest if we start from Revelation 11 – the period of time the city is trampled by the gentiles, and compare it to Luke 21. Here Jesus says that Jerusalem will be trampled by the gentiles, until the times are fulfilled, the signs appear in the heavens, and the son of man comes in glory. In other words this is referring to the time between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the second coming of Christ. This is *the time of the Church* – who prophesy to the world in the spirit of Elijah, who are protected by God, and who will rise again on the last day to be with Christ forever.

The time, times and half a time is thus *our time*. It is symbolic of the whole church age until Christ comes again. This does not mean that we should try to twist these numbers to try and predict when Jesus will return. Such endeavour is futile and foolish; Jesus' return is not governed by the passage of years, but by the fullness of events. When the vision of Daniel 2 is fulfilled and God's unstoppable kingdom reaches its fullness in the earth – then the end will come.



Conclusion

In this book we have followed the life and visions of a great prophet. His life has inspired us, and his visions instructed us. For too long, the book of Daniel has been related as just a children's story about the lion's den; it has been abdicated to the dispensationalists with their way out interpretations of the end times; or simply left on the shelf unstudied, dismissed as simply too difficult to understand.

This book contains great truths about the ultimate purpose of God. Truths that will guard our hearts against error and fear, that will build our faith and will stir fresh awe and reverence for the God we serve. It's about the victory of the kingdom of God over all obstacles and all powers. It's all about Jesus - revealed in type, dream and vision; and it's about his coming both past and future. Daniel was a man who caught the very heart of God.

It is time we reclaimed this book as our own.