

CHAPTER VIII

The Prophecy Concerning Daniel's People Among the Nations Especially at the Time of the End DANIEL 10:14; 11:36-45; 12:1-3

The last three chapters of Daniel are one oracle, not three. In this respect the chapter divisions of Daniel do not do the book justice. Up to the end of chapter nine the chapter divisions do separate distinct prophecies, but the chapter divisions between chapters 10, 11, and 12 serve only to confuse the reader, for the section is one prophecy. If the parts were united, they would compose one chapter of seventy-nine verses (chapter two has 49).

The prophet's experience herein is a marvelous culmination of growing spiritual experience in the life of Daniel, and in his function as a prophet and seer. In chapters two and four he interprets the dreams of another; in chapter five he interprets a divine writing; in chapters seven, eight, and nine he sees visions of his own and in the *rapt* state one (Gabriel) appears to interpret his dream to him. But in this last culminating prophetic experience, he seems to see visions in the *natural* state--divine revelations evidently are brought before him in his ordinary waking condition (*vide*, 10:4-7).

A large portion of this prophecy has been suspected by many evangelical scholars as spurious. It is often said to be overlaid with a Targum. Suspected portions are 10:1, 15-21; 11:1, 5-25. No convincing textual evidence, however, has ever been produced against these sections. Really, about all this criticism has done has been to sort out most of the non-eschatological material.

In harmony with the procedure in the previous portions of this dissertation, I shall treat in detail only those portions which relate to eschatology. Here, however, a real problem arises. How much of these chapters is eschatological?

Before entering into a formal discussion of this problem, a sketch of the whole prophecy is in order. This I shall present in the form of an outline.

OUTLINE OF THE PROPHECY

- I. The Introductory Revelation (chapter 10)
 - 1) The circumstances of the Revelation (1-4)
 - 2) The description of the revealer (5,6)
 - 3) The effect of the revelation (7-9)
 - on Daniel's companions (7)
 - on Daniel (8,9)
 - 4) The reason for the granting of the revelation (10-12)

- 5) The scope of the prophecy (13,14)
- 6) The strengthening of the prophet (20,21)
- 7) The encouragement of the prophet (20,21)

II. Prophecies Concerning the Nations as They Move Toward Final Conflict with Israel (chapter 11)

- 1) Introduction (1)
- 2) Prophecy concerning Persia (2)
- 3) Prophecy concerning Grecia (3,4)
- 4) Prophecy concerning the historic king of the south and of the north (5-20)
- 5) Prophecy concerning the vile person, last of the so-called kings of the north (21-35)
- 6) Prophecy concerning the willful king (36-45)

III. Prophecies Concerning Israel at the time of the end (chapter 12)

- 1) Concerning the great tribulation (1)
- 2) Concerning the resurrection of the dead (2)
- 3) Concerning the final reward of the just (3)
- 4) Concerning the disposition of the prophecy (4)
- 5) Concerning final questions (5-12)

Conclusion to the Prophecies of Daniel, final words to the prophet (13)

Eschatological Sections of the Prophecy

There is small doubt in the minds of any except a very few that the first portion of chapter 12 is prophecy concerning "last things"--in the theological nomenclature, "eschatology." Events connected with the resurrection of the dead and final rewards and punishments can hardly be otherwise.

If there were a clean break in thought between chapters 11 and 12, it might be possible to say that all of the previous section of the prophecy relates to events of now past history. But such a break does not exist. Rather, a chronological connection is clearly provided between the last of chapter 11 and the first of chapter 12 by the opening words of chapter 12. Referring to the destruction of a certain king whose career is predicted in the last part of chapter 11, chapter 12 opens thus: "And at that time (*ubhaeth hahi*) shall Michael stand up," etc. Thus a clear connection with the eschatological prediction of chapter 12 is established for the last portion, at least, of chapter 11.

On the other hand, the predictive portion of the prophecy, which begins with 11:2, deals with ancient kings and kingdoms throughout the early portion of the chapter. First, the kings of Persia, then the king of Greece, and next the kings of Egypt and Syria after the age of Alexander come to view. This brings us down to verse 20. Commentators are quite in agreement up to that point. From verse 21 onward, however, there is not this agreement. A "contemptible person" is introduced in verse 21 and traced through verse 35. By far the majority of commentators feel that he is none other than Antiochus Epiphanes--the little horn of chapter eight. A very few think he is the Antichrist of the end-time. Keil feels that he is primarily and directly

Antiochus and typically Antichrist--just as he feels about the little horn of chapter eight. Some of these interpreters think that Antiochus is the theme of the prophecy to the end of chapter 11.

My own opinion (following the majority of recent Premillennial commentators) is that the prediction relates to Antiochus from verse 21 to verse 35, but that beginning with 36, Antichrist, by the designation of "the king who shall do according to his will," is the theme of the prophecy, to the close of chapter 11. With the view mentioned above, that Antiochus is described in verses 21-35, and that the history detailed is typical of Antichrist's future career, I have no quarrel. Yet I do contend that verses 36-45 are *directly* predictive of the career of Antichrist and of him alone.

In pursuance of this contention, I present a brief of the evidence that the prophecy concerning the willful king in Daniel 11:36-45 is an eschatological prediction relating to the career of the final Antichrist:

(1) The scope of the prophecy, as indicated by the angelic revealer, permits, if it does not demand, an eschatological element in the prophecy. I have reference to Daniel 10:14, which reads: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for the vision is yet for many days." There are two expressions here, designating the scope of the vision--"latter days" and "for many days." The first is a technical term taken out of the previous prophetic literature of Israel, and always in Scripture includes some eschatological reference. This is recognized by the vast majority of evangelical scholars of all schools of eschatology. Leupold's comment (*in loco*) is quite typical: "In all instance that we know of, this term reaches out into the Messianic age. Obvious instances are Genesis 49:1; Numbers 24:14; Isaiah 2:2. We believe that the same is the case in this instance." The other expression, "for many days," is literally "for the days." Whether it be taken as referring to the "latter days" or only, as most commentators allow, to long extended futurity, this expression also counts for an eschatological reach to this prophecy.

For those who believe in the accuracy of predictive prophecy, it is of most importance that

(2) the correspondence of the predictions of chapter II with now past history breaks down at the end of verse 35. I mean to say that if verses 36-45 were intended to refer to Antiochus, the last great Seleucid king, then the author appears to be guilty of introducing error into the Scriptures. There is nothing known in history which corresponds to the prediction of Daniel 11:36-45. Evidence of this is the utter confusion in the commentaries of those who insist that Antiochus is the chief figure down to the end of the chapter.

(3) The statement in 11:36 that "he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished" suggests that the fulfillment of the predictions of the willful king is in eschatological times. "The indignation" is another technical term out of Israel's prophetic literature, referring frequently to the wrath of God on men in the last times. We have previously dealt with the Great Tribulation of Israel in the end-time. During the time of that tribulation of

Israel, God will be dealing in wrath with the Gentiles also, and frequently that wrath on the nations of men is called *zaam*, "indignation." The word appears twenty-two times in the Old Testament, and while it does not always refer to this particular indignation, it sometimes does. Isaiah 26:20 is a good illustrative passage. It is not conclusive, of course, but it does bear some weight.

Of greater weight is the fact that

(4) this predictive section corresponds so precisely with other unquestionable predictions of Antichrist that the identity of the reference can hardly be doubted. Leupold, Young, and Keil of the Amillennial school as well as most of the Premillennial writers agree in this. The behavior of the "little horn" of chapter seven, the "man of sin" of II Thessalonians, and of "the beast" of Revelation 13 is so strikingly similar that on this basis of correspondence alone a strong case could be built. This king not only does according to his will, but he "shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods" (11:36), just as John reveals (Rev. 13:6) of "the beast." He also "shall magnify himself above all" (11:37), just as Paul says of the man of sin (II Thes. 2:3 ff.). He meets his end at the end of "the indignation" (11:36,45) and that in an unusual manner, just as Revelation 19:20 says the "beast" will come to his end. Each one of these features is found, as indicated above, also in chapter 7 in relation to the "little horn."

(5) Another expression, "at the time of the end" (11:40), seems to indicate eschatological times. I do not feel that this evidence, taken by itself, can be pressed too far, for obviously the end of whatever series of events is in the mind of the author is designated by the expression, "time of the end." This is not necessarily a series reaching on to the consummation of the ages. However, it is quite clear from 10:14, which fixes the scope of the prophecy to include "the latter days," that the "time of the end" in this prophecy is with reference to the period consummated by the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

(6) The conclusive and decisive evidence for an eschatological setting of the prophecy of the willful king (Dan. 11:36-45) is (as noted in passing above) the phrase at the opening of chapter 12. This phrase is "And at that time." Then follows a listing of three of the most important events of eschatology-- the great tribulation of Israel, the resurrection of the dead, and the final reward of the righteous. It is unquestionably true that if the career of the willful king and his conflicts with the king of the south and the king of the north are at the time of these things, then he is none other than the final Antichrist.

But, having settled that some of the last portion of Daniel 11 refers to Antichrist, it remains to show that the portion begins at verse 36.

Tregelles was convinced (though not without qualifications) that the prophecy shifted to Antichrist with the mention of "a contemptible person" (v. 21). The parallel of the history of this person in chapter 11 with the history of the "little horn" of chapter eight led Tregelles in this direction, inasmuch

as he regarded the little horn of chapter 8 as Antichrist. That there is much to lead one in this direction is clear. Verse 35, for instance, places the persecuted saints of this section in the "time of the end," and this is called "the time appointed" in both verses 27 and 35. Furthermore, there is much obvious parallel between the respective careers of Antiochus and of Antichrist. So, while I feel that Antiochus' career (chapter 8, 11:21-35) is adumbrative of Antichrist's, it also appears that the prophecy of Antichrist (11:36-45) may be reflected backward to Antiochus. To one acquainted with the technique of the prophets, this will not appear strange. It is one of the commonest of phenomena to find events of similar nature, but separated widely in time, united in one prophetic oracle. Barnes calls it the "law of prophetic suggestion." Delitzsch said that prophecy is "apotelesmatic."

This being the case, Keil is correct when he says: "These circumstances...show that in the prophetic contemplation [Daniel 11:20-45] there is comprehended in the image of one king what has been historically fulfilled in its beginnings by Antiochus Epiphanes, but shall only meet its complete fulfillment by the Antichrist of the end" (*Commentary*, 462,463). The interested reader will find a very good history of the interpretation of Daniel 11:36-45 in Keil's *Commentary*, 461,462.

My reasons for dividing off the directly eschatological prediction at the beginning of verse 36 are four.

In the *first place*, a natural break in the thought appears at this point--a break which sets off the last ten verses from the previous narrative. This break is noted by the American Standard Version. The same version also makes a break at the end of verse 39, but the obvious sense of the passage is that the same willful king is discussed on both sides of the break.

In the *second place*, as many have noted, the known correspondence of the history of the past (during the age of Antiochus) breaks off at the end of verse 35. Since nothing in the past is known to correspond with verses 36-45, it is quite proper to look for such correspondence in the future,

In the *third place*, a totally new subject is introduced at the beginning of verse 36. Up to that point the immediate portion of the chapter is dealing with the king of the south (Egypt), the king (Antiochus) of the north (Syria), and their conflicts one with another and with Israel. Here, however, the willful king is a third party in conflict with both kings.

In the *fourth place*, since this fourth party may be identified by correspondence with other predictions of Antichrist, as Antichrist, it seems most likely that the point at which his career is begun in the prophecy (v. 36) is the place at which to begin the eschatological interpretation. Begin somewhere it must, and it is not possible to introduce it later in the chapter.

The Crucial Eschatological Data

In a commentary, all portions of this eschatological section would call for attention. However, the purpose of this dissertation, to establish that

Premillennialism alone can adequately explain all the book, requires that we turn our attention only to the verses which occasion disagreement among the various schools of eschatology.

With the main portion of the prophecy of Antichrist (11:36-45), there is no necessary quarrel either with Amillennialists or with Postmillennialists. Reputable representatives of both these schools join with Premillennialists in recognition of the fact of Antichrist, and of the general character of his person and career. Neither is there any disagreement over the final reward of the righteous (12:3). All Christians are in agreement on this.

The conflict arises chiefly with the recent expressions of Amillennialism over three things: first, the predicted conflict of Antichrist with Israel (11:41,45), the tribulation of Israel (12:1), the resurrection of the dead (12:2). Few commentators provide extended treatment of these at this stage of their commentaries, for the same subjects (except for the resurrection) appear much earlier in Daniel and hence the views have been expressed previously. I shall follow their example in making my remarks as brief as possible--and for the same reasons.

(1) *The conflict of Antichrist with Israel* (11:41,45)

The passages involved are now presented, as follows:

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon....And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him (Daniel 11:41,45, A.S.V.).

Premillennialists have a reasonable explanation of this passage. The passage means literally what it says. He (Antichrist) shall seek to destroy Israel in his own "glorious land" (Palestine) and to obliterate the then revived worship of Israel in the land. This is the most obvious explanation of the statements that "he shall enter also into the glorious land," and that "he shall plant the tents of his palace between the sea and the glorious holy mountain." Most commentators of all schools admit that this is, indeed, the *literal* meaning. We further believe that the prophecy, "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him," is fully explained in a literal fashion by Paul (II Thes. 2:2 ff.) and by John (Rev. 19:11 ff.). This interpretation accepts the doctrines of a final Antichrist, of a restoration of Israel to the land in the latter part of this age, and of a millennium during which Israel is blessed to follow this age.

Postmillennialists and Amillennialists have almost nothing but hopeless guesses to offer by way of interpretation of this section. The Amillennialists especially, since they generally believe in the literal existence of the Antichrist in the last days and in a literal interpretation of the willful king, are hard put to explain these verses.

I submit Dr. Young's comments on verse 45--hopeless confusion of literal

interpretation, symbolical interpretation, and of pure speculation--as constituting their own refutation and a demonstration of the inability of Amillennialism to interpret this passage.

The *tents* of his pavilion is about equivalent to *his royal pavilion*. This he will plant (note that the future is employed. We are dealing with the language of predictive prophecy) as one plants a tree, i.e., he will establish between the sea and holy mountain of Delight (lit., between seas to the mountain of the delight of holiness). The plural, *seas*, is poetic (cf. Deut. 33:19) and the reference is to the Mediterranean Sea. The *glorious holy mountain* is Jerusalem or Zion. Hence, the king is to make his final stand between the Mediterranean Sea and Jerusalem. This statement cannot possibly apply to Antiochus, since he died at Tabae in Persia. It should be noted that in placing the destruction of the great world power which opposes the people of God near to Jerusalem, Dan. is in harmony with other similar references (cf. Joel 3:2, 12 ff.; Zech. 14:2). However, inasmuch as such names as Egypt, Moab, Edom, Ammon, etc., are employed in these verses in a symbolical sense, so also is this present description employed. Precisely what is the significance is difficult to determine. At any rate, the great final enemy of the people of God, the Antichrist, will make his last stand and will come to his end in territory which is sacred and holy (peculiarly delighted in by the people of God--note the expression *mountain of the delight of holiness*--does this have reference to the church?). His end will be complete, apparently brought about by the glorious return of the Son of God from heaven" (*op.cit.*, 253).

I rejoice, of course, that Mr. Young plainly affirms his belief in the validity of predictive prophecy here. It gives me assurance that I read the writing of one who believes in a supernatural Christianity and a divine Christ--one with whom I can have true Christian fellowship. His affirmation that Antichrist is the king herein gives added fellowship in the Word and leads me to believe that we share the "Blessed Hope." I do not rejoice, however, that while insisting on the literal meaning of the prophecy down to the mention of things which plainly pertain to God's people Israel and to their land--in an eschatological setting--he immediately shifts into a symbolical interpretation. There is absolutely no justification for interpreting the prophecy of Antichrist's end in a literal Palestine and then interpreting "the mountain of the delight of his holiness" as the church, unless it is a system of theology which will not accept the restoration of Israel. And I think it is this prejudice alone which explains this shift. Neither is there any evidence that the other nations mentioned in the chapter are symbolical only.

In similar fashion, Leupold declares that "the picture is apparently taken from the location of Jerusalem, and so Jerusalem again appears as the prototype of the church of the last days" (*op.cit.*, 523). Keil, while frequently referring to the people of this chapter as the people of God, or Israel, plainly indicates that it is not the ancient people Israel but the church of the last days (*op.cit.*, 482). The fact is, the people are not referred to as God's people (which could, indeed, taken absolutely, refer to the church) but as "the children of thy people" and "thy people" (12:1), that is, Daniel's people. Everyone knows who they were--the people of Israel.

(2) *The tribulation of Israel* (12:1, A.S.V.)

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Precisely the same situation prevails with reference to this prediction that holds concerning the one just treated. The recent Amillennial writers follow Keil in admitting, what Premillennialists also believe, that this describes conditions of the last days under Antichrist. But, contrary to the Premillennialists, they transfer all the references to Israel to the church. My discussion on the tribulation of Israel in the first part of this book and the remarks just previous on the conflict of Antichrist with Israel pertain here also.

(3) *The resurrection of the dead* (12:2, A.S.V.)

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

This is an important text, and more than passing attention must be given to it.

I think that Gaebelein was gravely in error and most inconsistent when he wrote:

Physical resurrection is not taught in the second verse of this chapter; if it were the passage would be in clash with the revelation concerning resurrection in the New Testament....We repeat, the passage has nothing to do with physical resurrection. Physical resurrection is, however, used as a figure of the national revival of Israel in that day (*The Prophet Daniel*, 22).

The thing so utterly unacceptable about this is that Gaebelein adopts the very "spiritualizing" or "symbolizing" principle of interpretation which our opponents adopt--and that in the midst of a passage where everything else is esteemed (by Gaebelein and all Premillennialists) to be literal, not figurative. He does with this passage precisely what the Postmillennialists and Amillennialists do with the reference to a first resurrection in Revelation 20. Thus he throws away the hermeneutical advantage of Premillennialism. Gaebelein's categorical assertion is so utterly without foundation that it does not merit further attention. As Robinson says: "If a resurrection of the body is not here declared, it will be difficult to find where it is, or to imagine words in which it can be" (quoted by Biederwolf, *Millennium Bible*, 236). Tregelles asks, "If the language of this verse be not declaratory of a resurrection of the dead, actual and literal, is there any passage of Scripture at all which speaks of such a thing as a resurrection?" (*op.cit.*, 168).

Now, granting, with the almost unanimous support of all believing¹ interpreters, that physical resurrection is here predicted, to what resurrection does it refer? Biederwolf (*op.cit.*, *in loco*) has classified the views as follows:

- (1) To the general resurrection at the end of all things.
- (2) To a limited resurrection immediately after the tribulation, and prior to the last and general resurrection, and one confined to Israel.
- (3) To a resurrection of the righteous just before Christ's second coming, and of the wicked at the end of time, no notice being taken by the angel of the hiatus between them.
- (4) To a resurrection of all that sleep in the dust after the time of great tribulation; the good, at that very time (immediately after), and the wicked later, at the end of all time, with no notice taken by the angel of the hiatus or intervening time.

The first of these views, that the reference is to the so-called general resurrection at the end of all things, is championed by many Amillennialists and Postmillennialists. The second, third, and fourth views are views adopted by different Premillennialists. Several of the rationalistic commentators as well adopt view 2.

The second view is acceptable to pre-, mid-, and post-tribulation rapturists (among the Premillenarians). So also is the third view. The fourth is distinctive to the post-tribulationists. Nathaniel West (*Daniel's Great Prophecy*, 197) adopts approximately the same view as the fourth, though he seems to see no prediction of the resurrection of the wicked here.

Now, it must be frankly admitted, by all except the most narrowly partisan, that any one of these four general views is exegetically admissible. The simple fact is that this verse is only the first in a long series of biblical revelations which directly, and in clear language, predict the resurrection of the dead. This being the case, the questions of Premillennialists concerning the order of the resurrection of the righteous in relation to the tribulation and the millennium cannot be expected to be answered here. It must be admitted, however, that the close connection (joined by *waw*, and) of verses one and two gives West, Reese, and other advocates of a post-tribulation rapture strong support.

On the other hand, if the second view is adopted, no question concerning the relation of the rapture of the church and tribulation even enters the picture.

Without being dogmatic, I advocate the second view as being the one most acceptable. My reasons are as follows.

- (1) The language favors a selective, or limited, resurrection rather than a general resurrection.

1 Rationalistic interpreters think it predicts a resurrection immediately after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, but that Daniel was mistaken.

The first clause is *werabbim miyyesheme admath apha yaqitsu*, "And many from the sleepers of the land of dust shall arise." "Many," *rabbim*, is less than all. Some insist (without warrant) that Jesus expanded this to mean *all* in John 5:28. But the word *rabbim* remains. And Dr. Keil, who, being an Amillennialist, might have wished that the word were *kal*, "all," says that we cannot "obtrude upon *rabbim* the meaning of *all*, a meaning which it has not and cannot have, for the universality of the resurrection is removed by the particle *min*, which makes it impossible that *rabbim* = *haribbim*, *hoi polloi* = *pantes* (cf. Rom. v. 15 with v. 12)" (*op. cit.*, 482). Keil's reference to *min*, "from" is correct. I quote him again on this point:

The partitive interpretation of *min* is the only simple and natural one, and therefore with most interpreters we prefer it. The *rabbim* can be rightly interpreted only from the context. The angel has it not in view to give a general statement regarding the resurrection of the dead, but only discloses on this point that the final salvation of the people shall not be limited to those still living at the end of the great tribulation, but shall include also those who have lost their lives during the period of the tribulation (*op.cit.*, 481).

If the reader will revert to my comments on the resurrection of the martyr saints of Revelation 20:4, he will see how well this view coincides with our doctrine of the resurrections and the Millennium (*vide.* also Appendix II).

(2) The Hebrew of the passage permits, and according to many of the best authorities, demands a translation favoring this view.

The translation, brought to the attention of the English reading public by Tregelles (*op.cit.*, 162 ff.) and advocated before him by Jewish commentators Saadia Haggaon (10th century) and Aben Ezra (12th century), was favored by Seiss and Fawcett, and was fully adopted by Nathaniel West. As given by Tregelles, it is: "And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time, shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt."

In favor of this translation is the plain fact (already advanced) that the resurrection is to be selective. And it may be added, so far as the specific language of verse three is concerned, it is only of righteous people. If the resurrection of "all" were intended, *rabbim* would have to be changed to *kal*. The main question is, Does the Hebrew demonstrative *elleh*, which appears at the head of each of the last two clauses, bear the meaning of "these...those"? It must be admitted that this does not appear in either of our common English versions. However, the Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon (most authoritative in the English language) gives this as one of the possible uses, and lists Deuteronomy 27:13, Joshua 8:22, Isaiah 49:12, and Psalm 20:8 as illustrations. This being the case, the proposed translation seems to be acceptable.

My closing remarks on this verse I wish to be, that the case of Premillennialism is not in the least affected by it. Taken in the usual

translations of our English Bibles, it is capable of natural interpretation in a Premillenarian fashion. If Daniel 12:2 were the only verse in the Bible on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, a case for a "general resurrection" at the end of time might be constructed. But, as the facts stand, the doctrine of two resurrections taught clearly in the New Testament remains as the best interpretation of Daniel 12:2--and I think the *only* acceptable one.

With these remarks the case is rested with the reader. I think the thesis of this book has been sustained: that the whole Bible teaches a Premillennial eschatology, and that eschatology alone can satisfactorily explain the predictions of the prophet Daniel.