



Daniel and Revelation I

International Alpha Bible Course
by Ralph Vincent Reynolds

DANIEL AND REVELATION

Part I

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INTERNATIONAL ALPHA BIBLE COURSE

RALPH VINCENT REYNOLDS
Writer

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Lesson One

THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

A. DANIEL AND REVELATION

The question might be asked, “Why study Daniel and Revelation together?” The answer lies in the fact that neither of these books can be properly understood without some knowledge of the other.

The books to be studied in this series have many similarities. Daniel was written by the prophet greatly beloved, Revelation by the beloved disciple. Both deal with many of the same subjects: times of the Gentiles, rise of the Antichrist, the great tribulation, Armageddon, and the millennial kingdom, to name a few.

In Daniel and Revelation lies the key to biblical prophecy. The writer strongly recommends that the student reads both books in their entirety before starting this study.

B. METHOD OF INTERPRETATION

Throughout these studies the author has striven for simplicity and clarity. The purpose has been to lay a sound foundation of clear understanding of basic prophecies, not probe depths offered in these books. The student, at a later time, may expand these studies as he carries on his own research into these tremendous prophecies.

There are two methods of interpretation used in this study:

1. Literal

These books mean just what they say in the original languages, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek. No attempt is made to spiritualize the meaning of these prophecies. Spiritualization of Scripture is a very dangerous method of Bible interpretation.

It is recognized that both books are symbolic. Many times, however, the Scriptures themselves will interpret the symbolic language. If at any time the writer suggests the meaning of the symbolism, he will always state that this is his understanding and will only suggest it for the student’s consideration.

2. Futurist

This method of interpretation will be dealt with further in Lesson Eight of this unit. Suffice it to say here that much of both prophecies remains to be fulfilled. Some of Daniel's prophecy certainly has been fulfilled in history, but some still remains to be brought to completion. In Revelation, the church will be raptured at the beginning of chapter four. The pre-millennial return of our Lord is surely the truth of the Scriptures and is taught throughout these two units of study (*Daniel and Revelation I and II*).

C. THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Daniel is divided into two divisions of six chapters each. The first six chapters are chiefly historical, while the second six are prophetic.

Daniel wrote this book in two languages, Aramaic (Daniel 2:4- 7:28) and Hebrew (Daniel 1:1-2:1-3 and 8:1-12:13). What concerns the Gentiles is written in their language, Aramaic, and what relates to the Jews is written in Hebrew.

The writing of Daniel is one of the most interesting portions of the Bible. It contains both completed and unfulfilled prophecies. These prophecies are comprehensive, giving the consecutive history of world empires from Daniel's day to the coming of Christ to establish the millennial kingdom.

It should be noted that Daniel was instructed to shut up the words and seal the prophecy (Daniel 12:4) to the time of the end. The fact that this prophecy is no longer sealed and can be understood is certain proof that we are now living in the end time.

D. THE PROPHET DANIEL

1. Meaning of His Name

The very name of Daniel brings us face to face with the great eternal truth that God is the judge of all sin. *Dan* means "to judge"

and *el* means "God." Therefore, the name of *Daniel* means "God is my judge" or "God will judge."

Circumstances surrounding the times of Daniel occurred because of the judgment of sin. Over one hundred years before, Hezekiah, king of Judah, had shown the holy vessels of the Temple to heathen Babylonians who had come to visit. In II Kings 20:17-18, we read of the judgment spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

"Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house . . . shall be carried into Babylon . . . saith the Lord. And of thy sons . . . shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

This prophecy was literally fulfilled in Daniel 1:3. God delayed judgment for one hundred years, but it came just as the prophet had spoken.

2. The History of Daniel

Daniel, known for his piety and wisdom, has always been one of the favorite characters of the entire Bible. Ezekiel mentioned Daniel three times and joined his name with Noah and Job. Jesus mentioned Daniel by name and regarded him as a prophet. Daniel was of the tribe of Judah. Of noble blood, he could have probably traced his ancestry back to King David.

The first invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar took place in the third year of Jehoiakim, 606 BC. Shortly afterwards Daniel, probably twenty years of age, and his three companions were taken captive to Babylon. This was eight years before Ezekiel was taken captive.

Daniel was made a eunuch as was prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 39:7) and was placed under the command of Ashpenaz, the master of the king's eunuchs. After a period of training, Daniel became so powerful in the kingdom that, by the age of ninety, he was the head of 120 princes under Darius the Mede. He served in the courts of Babylon and of the Medes and Persians for seventy-two years, living until the reign of Cyrus who allowed the remnant to return to Jerusalem. Thus he lived through the entire seventy years of captivity. Very likely, his age prevented him from returning to Jerusalem. The elderly prophet died in his mid-nineties.

Daniel was a contemporary with Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, and Obadiah.

3. Daniel's Character

It is Daniel's character which caused him to be remembered. Although he lived under the most adverse and discouraging condition, he never compromised with sin and idolatry, standing tall and straight in the midst of pagan darkness. This is why he became a favorite of heathen kings. These same characteristics resulted in him being so honored by God that Jehovah once sent a special message that Daniel was "greatly beloved" (Daniel 10:11).

Daniel was intelligent, handsome, and well built. He was chosen, having no blemish and being well favored (Daniel 1:4). He was morally pure and upright with strong convictions and a firm purpose. He was a man of prayer who refused to change his prayer life even though he faced the den of lions. He was a man whose faith stopped the mouths of those powerful beasts (Hebrews 11:33).

Because of his character, he received three things:

- a. Revelation: He interpreted dreams and visions and became God's channel for tremendous prophecies concerning the future.

- b. Preservation: Even though he had enemies, he lived into his nineties. He was the object of God's miraculous preservation in the den of lions.
- c. Exaltation: He was promoted to the office of prime minister under heathen kings and held their confidence. He was elevated to the highest positions Babylon had to offer.

4. Separation Necessary

Few voices are raised today against worldly conformity in the church. Holiness preaching is not very popular. Power with God, however, comes with dedication and separation from the world. The subject of separation was Daniel's first great test in Nebuchadnezzar's palace; he refused to compromise this conviction as far as his diet was concerned.

Daniel 1 refers to pulse or herbs. Therefore, we can assume Daniel had become a vegetarian. There were two reasons for the four young Israelites' attitude toward Babylonian food. The law of the Jews forbade eating meat that was considered unclean such as pork and the flesh of carnivorous animals. Also in heathen cultures, meat was often dedicated to heathen gods before eating. Daniel refused to compromise his conviction and abstained from eating unclean meat.

The church is called to separation today (II Corinthians 6:14-18). God honored Daniel because of his separation. For God to honor the church today and endue her with power, she must separate from sin and worldliness.

The challenge is still before us: Dare to be a Daniel; Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known.

E. THE IMPORTANCE OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY

The importance of this book can hardly be overestimated. It has been attacked more than any other book of the Old Testament. The fierceness of these attacks is proof within itself of just how important the enemies of God's Word consider this prophecy to be.

1. The prophecy of Daniel is one of the greatest proofs of the full inspiration of God's Word. Prophecies given by Daniel were literally fulfilled in detail. There is no greater proof of inspiration than to see God's Word come to pass as prophesied. Daniel foretold of Gentile kingdoms that came to be just as they were predicted. The prophecy of Daniel was history prewritten.

There will continue to be a Bible as long as the Book of Daniel lasts. For that reason, in spite of the fierce attacks of agnostics, God has preserved and placed His blessing upon Daniel's prophecies.

2. An understanding of this book is essential if the rest of God's prophetic Word is to be understood. It is only when we receive a revelation of the prophecies given here that we can understand the great truths concerning the end times and the coming of the Lord.

POWER TO DELIVER

A. THE FOUR HEBREW CAPTIVES

There were three other Hebrew young men, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who were Daniel's companions in the captivity. According to the words spoken by Isaiah to King Hezekiah, they were descendants of Hezekiah and were also made eunuchs.

“And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon” (Isaiah 39:7).

These four young Israelites were handed over to the Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs, who had charge of them for three years. In an effort to convert them to the religion and culture of Babylon, Ashpenaz changed their names.

It is profitable that we study these names, for in the ancient world names had great significance:

- Daniel (God is my Judge) was changed to Belteshazzar (Whom Bel favors).
- Hananiah (Beloved of the Lord) was changed to Shadrach (illuminated by the Sun God).
- Mishael (Who is as God) was changed to Meshach (Who is like Venus).
- Azariah (The Lord is my Help) was changed to Abednego (The servant of Nego).

However, Ashpenaz did not succeed in changing the faith of these young men. They remained true to God and were ready to die for their faith. And because of their loyalty to God, they were miraculously delivered from a horrible death.

B. POWER TO DELIVER

In the historical section of Daniel, two incidents are recorded which reveal God's power to deliver. Recognition of this power was expressed by four prominent people in the book.

The three Hebrew young men verbalized their faith, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king” (Daniel 3:17).

Darius voiced his hope that Daniel's God would deliver him, “Thy God whom thou

servest continually, he will deliver thee” (Daniel 6:16).

The stories of God delivering the three Hebrews from the fiery furnace and Daniel from the den of lions are well-known. We need to study both of these accounts, observing the practical lessons they teach and the prophetic meaning.

C. THE FIERY FURNACE

1. History

Daniel 3 is the story of the three Hebrew young men who would not bend, budge, nor burn. They had been faithful servants and had obeyed the law of the land until it conflicted with the law of God. The threat of a terrible death could not shake their purpose of being true to God.

Nebuchadnezzar was not satisfied in being a great political power; he desired also to control the religion of his day and to make himself an object of worship. He built an image of himself sixty cubits high and six cubits wide. Since a cubit is approximately eighteen inches, the image would be about ninety feet high and nine feet wide. It was erected outside the walls of Babylon upon the Plain of Dura where the largest crowd could be accommodated and from where the image could be seen for the greatest distance. Travelers approaching Babylon would be able to see the gold shining in the sun for miles away, for it is possible that the image was placed on a high platform or a tall pedestal.

Nebuchadnezzar’s image was simply a continuation of Babylonianism, the system which started at the tower of Babel under Nimrod. This was man’s attempt to establish a world empire combined with a religious system. Babylonianism began with a tower and will end with an image (Revelation 13). Likewise, the prophecy of Daniel deals with the times of the Gentiles which begins and ends with an image.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered all the men of influence and authority to assemble for the dedication of his image. At the sound of music they were ordered to bow and worship the idol.

The three Hebrew young men refused. And when brought before the king, they would not compromise. The threat of death did not affect their faith in their God. They were willing to die with unshaken faith.

When thrown into the fire, three spectacular things happened:

1. Their enemies were slain.
2. Their fetters were burned off.
3. Jesus Christ, as a theophany of God, appeared in the fire with them.

For the second time Nebuchadnezzar came face to face with the power of the one true

God. As a result he recognized that no other God could deliver like this and decreed that nothing could be said against the God of Israel. The three Hebrews were then promoted because of their dedication to their faith and convictions.

2. Practical Lesson

All believers go through fiery trials. I Peter 4:12 states, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” However, if we keep true to our faith, we will see the same spectacular results as did the three Hebrew children. The most important thing to remember is to refuse to bend or budge. God will see that we do not burn.

The words *but if not* are worthy of deep thought. Whether God delivered or not, the three Hebrews would still serve Him and bow down only at a true altar.

The place that music has here is also worthy of consideration. Music has a tremendous power for good or bad. Just as it did upon the Plain of Dura, satanic music is being used today to cause mankind everywhere to worship the wrong god.

3. Prophetical Interpretation

- a. Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the man of sin who is still to be revealed (II Thesalonians 2:3; Revelation 13).
- b. The image is a type of the image of the beast (Revelation 13:14).
- c. Six is the number of man. Six hundred sixty-six is the number of the beast (Revelation 13:18). One scholar (Seiss) wrote, “Six is the bad number and when multiplied by tens and hundreds, it denotes evil in its greatest intensity and most disastrous manifestation.”
- d. The three Hebrew young men are a type of:
 - The nation of Israel brought through the fires of persecution
 - The 144,000 sealed during the Tribulation (Revelation 7).
 - The testimony of deliverance that shall be given during the Tribulation.

D. THE DEN OF LIONS

1. History

Daniel 6 contains the beloved story of Daniel and the lions’ den.

Darius placed 120 princes over his kingdom and made Daniel the first president. This made Daniel the most powerful man in the kingdom, next to Darius himself. What a tremendous testimony of God’s grace! Daniel was a true servant of God and had served for some seventy-two years under heathen kings. However, because of his complete dedication to God, he was continually elevated and promoted.

When Daniel was approximately ninety years old, jealous rivals tricked King Darius into signing a law stating that no god could be worshiped except the king. Yet, Daniel continued to pray in the same manner and, to the regret of the king, was thrown into the den of lions.

The following morning, King Darius rose very early “and cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel.” When Daniel answered, the king was “exceeding glad for him.”

Darius then commanded that Daniel’s accusers, their wives, and their children be brought and cast into the den. They were eaten before they reached the bottom.

Daniel’s prayer life is a major focal point of this lesson. Note the phrase “as he did aforetime” (verse 10). The fact that his enemies were plotting to destroy him and the den of lions faced him did not make him pray more or less. This great man of faith did not have a “fox-hole religion” nor did he make “fox-hole prayers.” He had:

- a. Regular periods for prayer-the habit of prayer
- b. A definite objective in prayer
- c. A definite place for prayer
- d. A definite attitude in prayer

2. Practical Lesson

This story clearly teaches the value of:

- a. A life of faithfulness and dedication
- b. A life of prayer
- c. A life of faith

Daniel’s life teaches the value of faith. His faith in God is clearly revealed by continuing to open his window toward Jerusalem. This was not an act of presumption but rather an expression of faith. Like all Jews, Daniel had the habit of praying while facing Jerusalem. He did not change because of the threat on his life. His enemies knew his habit and relied on his consistency. Even those who hated him had faith in his faithful habit of prayer. Undoubtedly, he is the one mentioned in Hebrews 11:33, “Who through faith . . . stopped the mouths of lions.”

It is possible for us today to have a testimony like Daniel. It is possible to live such a godly, Spirit-filled life that it can be said of each of us:

“Then this Daniel was preferred . . . because an excellent spirit was in him . . . they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God (Daniel 6:3-5).

In summary, let us note verse 23. Daniel was delivered because “he believed in his God.”

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I John 5:4).

3. Prophetical Interpretation

Darius demanded worship, homage and prayer from all people. He is a type of the person of Antichrist who will demand that as many as will not worship the image of the beast should be killed (Revelation 13).

Daniel, preserved in the den of lions, is a type of the 144,000 who are sealed and preserved during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:1-4; Revelation 14:1-5).

The enemies destroyed are a type of the judgment of God falling upon the godless nations at the close of the Tribulation at Armageddon.

Lesson Three

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

A. INTRODUCTION

Daniel 2 contains what some call “The ABC of Prophecy,” just as the Book of Revelation may be called “The XYZ of Prophecy.” In this chapter God revealed an outline of history from Daniel’s day until the second coming of Jesus Christ to establish His millennial kingdom. There is no need to continue with a study of prophecy unless this chapter is fully understood.

Daniel 4:32 expressed the theme of God’s dealings with Nebuchadnezzar: “The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”

It must be remembered that God is still dealing with nations, both Gentile nations and Israel. To attempt to spiritualize Israel is to do violence to the Word of God.

B. THE INTERPRETATION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

In response to an unexpressed desire on the part of Nebuchadnezzar to show the future of his great empire, God gave him a dream which furnished a revelation of the rise, progress and fall of Gentile world power during the period described by Christ as “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). When the king awakened, he was deeply troubled, for he could not remember the dream he knew to be very important. It was so disturbing that he was determined that the dream would be recalled and interpreted.

He called for the wise men and they offered to tell him the meaning if he would tell them the dream. The king became furious, accusing them of lying and corrupt words. He said if they could not tell him the dream, they also would be unable to interpret it. When they were unable to do so, the king was irate and commanded them to be destroyed. This would have also included Daniel although at that moment he was ignorant of the problem.

Daniel inquired of the captain, Arioch, concerning the situation. When informed, he went to the king, requesting more time. Daniel assured the king that he would be able to reveal the dream with its meaning. Knowing the power of united prayer, he called for his three friends and they bowed before God. In the night God gave Daniel a vision and showed him the dream and its meaning. Daniel was then able to confidently go before Nebuchadnezzar with all that the king desired.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen a great image with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver,

belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of part iron and part clay. A stone cut out of a mountain without hands smote the image on its feet. The stone crushed the image into fine dust which was carried away by the wind. The stone then became a great mountain which filled the entire earth.

Daniel said that the varied metal of each part of the statue represented a different Gentile kingdom. The kingdoms began with Babylon and will end at Armageddon when Christ returns to set up His kingdom. The ten toes represent ten kings which will reign one hour with the beast (Revelation 17:12). Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, “Thou art this head of gold” (Daniel 2:38).

It should be noted that each metal would become of less value, but stronger, until the feet which would be extremely weak, for the iron and the clay would not cleave to one another.

C. THE DREAM DEALT WITH THE FUTURE

Bible critics have tried to prove that this book, because of its accuracy, was written long after much of it was fulfilled. However, let us note these terms:

“In the latter days” verse 28

“Come to pass hereafter” verse 29

“What shall come to pass” verse 29

Because Nebuchadnezzar was concerned about the future, God gave him the dream. The dream and its interpretation were entirely prophetic.

Today much of it has been literally fulfilled in detailed accuracy. The closing events of the dream, however, have never taken place. The stone has never smitten the image on its feet, nor have we seen God’s millennial kingdom set up upon the earth. We are living down in the time of the feet and soon this world will witness the final happenings foretold in this dream.

D. THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

The “times of the Gentiles” is the era beginning with the captivity of Judah and ending with the second coming of Jesus. This revelation was made right at the beginning of the Gentile age in order to assure the faithful that God had not forgotten His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. In due time the Lord would terminate this period of Gentile domination and restore the glorious kingdom that He had promised. Let us note that this term was used by our Lord (Luke 21:24) and refers to Gentile dominion and rule.

“Times of the Gentiles” must never be confused with the term “fulness of the Gentiles” which refers to the church. “That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Romans 11:25). In this dispensation God is visiting the Gentiles

to take a Gentile bride which is the church. This is the “fulness of the Gentiles.” “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name” (Acts 15:14).

E. GENTILE KINGDOMS

Man has tried to set up kingdoms without God throughout history. This actually began under Nimrod (Genesis 10 and 11) who built the kingdom of Babel. In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the succession of world empires is set forth under the figure of a gigantic image composed of various metals. In the diminishing value of the metals may be seen the deterioration of world empires in relation to their character of government.

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream may be seen in history as:

Head of Gold	Babylon	606-538 BC
Breast and arms of silver	Medo-Persia	538-330 BC
Belly and thighs of brass	Greece	330-146 BC
Legs of iron	Rome	146 BC -AD 408

Let us note the following:

1. Alexander died in 323 BC during his thirty-third year. After wards his empire was divided among his four generals.
2. The two legs of the image represent the Roman empire divided into two parts (eastern and western). The ten toes represent the ten kings of the end times prior to Armageddon.
3. The stone cut out without hands is Jesus Christ who will set up His kingdom.

F. THE FUTURE GENTILE KINGDOMS

Future Gentile kingdoms are pictured and revealed by the two feet and the ten toes. The two feet reveal there will be a division of east and west. The clay and the iron represent two ideologies. The ten toes represent ten nations that will combine to establish the final kingdom out of which the Antichrist will arise. It is not certain just what political and religious ideologies are represented. Undoubtedly the iron will still represent Rome and there is a strong possibility that the clay will be socialistic democracy, possibly communism.

G. THE STONE CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN

The “Smitten Stone” of Calvary becomes the “Smiting Stone” of Armageddon. Let us note the following Scriptures: “I will tread them . . . in my fury (Isaiah 63:3). “Taking vengeance on them who know not God” (II Thessalonians 1:8). “Fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Revelation 19:15). There can be no universal peace until the Prince of Peace comes.

H. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND DREAM

In chapter four we read of Nebuchadnezzar's second dream. He saw a great tree that reached into heaven. The fowls dwelt in its branches and the beasts of the field were sheltered in its shade. He then saw a holy one come down and who cried, "Hew down the tree." However, the stump was to be left bound with a band of iron and brass. In the dream, the watcher declared a beast's heart was to be given until seven times passed over. When the wise men were unable to interpret the dream, the king called for Daniel.

Daniel was silent for an hour. He hesitated telling the king the dream's meaning, for it was a message of judgment. Nebuchadnezzar was the great tree that reached to heaven and the sight was to the end of the earth. Judgment was to fall upon Nebuchadnezzar for a period of seven years. During this time, he would lose his sanity and become wild as a beast. After the seven years he would pray and repent and his reason would return to him. His kingdom then would be restored. The stump in the ground would show that the kingdom would not be completely destroyed during this period of insanity.

I. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S CONVERSION

In this fourth chapter is the testimony of a pagan, Gentile king, relating his conversion and how he came to the knowledge of the true God. Let us study carefully the steps in Nebuchadnezzar's conversion:

1. He recognized God. "Your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings" (Daniel 2:47).
2. He acknowledged that there was no other like God. "No other God that can deliver after this sort" (Daniel 3:29).
3. He gave his testimony (Daniel 4:2-3).
4. He was admonished to break off his sins by righteousness (Daniel 4:27).
5. He was lifted up with pride (Daniel 4:30). Note that after twelve months he had completely forgotten his vision and the interpretation.
6. He was humbled for seven years. He lost his sanity and became as a beast.
7. He lifted up his eyes to heaven (Daniel 4:34).

J. PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION

Nebuchadnezzar's tree represented the Gentile kingdoms. The vision revealed the following regarding the future:

1. Man will reach a peak of pride and arrogance where God is completely ruled out.
2. Following the rapture of the church there will be seven years of madness and insanity. All restraints will be lifted, and it will be a time of lawlessness which will have no parallel.
3. The stump shows that the Gentiles will not be completely destroyed during this period.

4. Nebuchadnezzar's repentance and faith show that the Gentiles can be saved during the Millennium.

Note: The summary of this is found in Acts 15:14. At the present time God is visiting the Gentiles, but when His kingdom is set up the Gentiles who are left will be converted through the means of judgment.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

Text: Daniel 5

A. KING BELSHAZZAR

Bible critics have claimed for years that Belshazzar was not the king of Babylon when it was overthrown. Historians have named Nabonaid as being the last king of Babylon. God, however, has His own way to verify the accuracy of the Bible.

In 1853 an inscription was found in a cornerstone of a temple built by Nabonaid. In this inscription, Belshazzar is mentioned as being his first born and favorite son.

In the interpretation of the handwriting, Daniel called Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:22). This offers no problem, for in the language of that day there was no word for grandfather or grandson. It is quite evident that he was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. The king of Babylon, Nabonaid, was his father and Belshazzar was the vice-regent of the empire. It was for this reason that Belshazzar promised to make Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:16). Apparently, at this time Nabonaid was away on some military expedition and had left Belshazzar in charge of Babylon.

B. THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

This is the second time that it is recorded in the Bible that God Himself wrote. The first time was upon Mount Sinai when God wrote the law on the tables of stone. Here upon the walls in Babylon, God wrote a message of judgment. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ stooped and wrote a message of grace upon the dust of the floor of the Temple.

Belshazzar had called for a great feast. He invited a thousand lords and princes with their wives and concubines. In the midst of the drunken revelry there was much licentiousness and gross sin. However, this was not sufficient for Belshazzar. He thought of a new way to entertain his guests and show his defiance for God. He called for the sacred vessels that had been brought from Jerusalem and used them in drinking to the pagan gods.

Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote on the wall by the candlestick where it could be seen by all. All laughter and gaiety turned to soberness and fear. They trembled at the super natural sight and Belshazzar called for the wise men to tell the meaning of the writing. The words were: MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN.

These words were apparently written in Aramaic and could be read by everyone. No one, however, knew the meaning. When the wise men could not interpret the message, the Queen Mother came into the banquet hall and told Belshazzar to call for Daniel.

Daniel was now about eighty-eight years of age. It had been some sixty-five years since he had interpreted the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Very likely it was in the middle of the night and Daniel was awakened from his slumber. He was hurried to the scene of fearful confusion.

Belshazzar offered him many gifts if he could interpret the message upon the wall. Daniel was not interested in reward but agreed to interpret the message. First of all he reproved Belshazzar for not humbling himself even though he knew how God had dealt with his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar.

Then Daniel gave the following interpretation:

Mene Numbered finished it.	God hath numbered thy kingdom and
Tekel Weighed found wanting.	Thou art weighed in the balances and
Peres Divisions Medes and Persians.	Thy kingdom is divided and given to the

Even while Daniel was giving the message of judgment and doom to Belshazzar, the enemy was entering the city.

C. BELSHAZZAR'S SIN

Belshazzar was guilty of more than one sin. There were several ways in which Belshazzar brought God's judgment:

1. **He was drinking and reveling** while the enemy was at the gates of the city. His character was revealed in the drunken debauchery which he was leading.
2. **He was arrogant and presumptuous.** He was aware, of course, of the enemy army besieging the city. He had a false sense of security and showed a boastful arrogance in having a drunken feast.
3. **He refused to humble himself** even though he knew the way God had dealt with Nebuchadnezzar. Undoubtedly the sin of pride was the root of all other sins in his life.
4. **He was blasphemous.** This was his most serious sin. He blasphemed God by desecrating the sacred vessels which had been consecrated to the Lord. Swift judgment

came when he used these vessels in idolatrous worship.

D. THE FALL OF BABYLON

Babylon had been founded by Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah. Over the years it had been fortified until by the time of Belshazzar it was thought to be invincible.

The city was built astride the Euphrates River which divided it into two almost equal parts. The double walls surrounding the city were so wide that four chariots could drive abreast on the tops. The walls extended thirty-five feet below the ground and were surrounded by wide and deep moats. The city was fifteen miles square, enclosing an area over 200 square miles.

It was in this fortification that Belshazzar trusted. He felt so secure that he could have a drunken feast with the enemy at the gates.

Darius conquered Babylon while Cyrus was busy fighting wars elsewhere. Darius reigned as king of Babylon for about two years until the arrival of Cyrus.

Darius gained entrance to the city by diverting the water of the Euphrates into the moats that surrounded the city. The army of the Medes and Persians then walked into the city on the river bed from both directions. Because of the feast, many of the interior gates were open and Babylon fell into the hands of the enemy with little resistance.

E. PRACTICAL LESSONS

There are several lessons from which we may profit:

1. The seriousness of desecrating the sacred vessels consecrated to the Lord.

- a. The ministry: God will quickly bring judgment upon those who would harm the ministers of the gospel. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:15).
- b. The bodies of the saints who are Spirit filled: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Corinthians 3:17). "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (I Corinthians 6:19).
- c. Our church building: Building and articles which have been dedicated to the use of the Lord should never be used in a disrespectful manner nor put to a profane use.

2. The deception of Satan-the false security that sin brings. Many times people in grave peril resent being awakened to their danger. Sometimes faithful ministers are hated because they warn of the dangers of sin. The Doctrine of Unconditional Eter-

nal Security is a very dangerous teaching because it allows people to become careless and trust in a false protection.

3. **Be quick to remember the mistakes of others and be willing to humble ourselves.**
4. **Remember that we are all being weighted in the balances.** Let us not be found wanting.
5. **Note the similarity between the sinful, licentiousness of the drunken revelry pictured here and the darkness of the world today.** People desire to go from one extreme to another to defy God and rebel against everything that is decent and right.
6. **On the positive side there is a bright lesson to be learned from Daniel's life.** In this chapter he is spoken of as one who could dissolve doubts (Daniel 5:12; Daniel 5:16). Doubts may be removed by the proclamation and the truth of God's Word. Let each of us plan to be a dissolver of doubts.

F. PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION

Belshazzar represents the kings and nations that have and will put forth their hands against Israel. They will have no fear of God and no respect to that which belongs to the Lord. They will entertain a false sense of security and boast. They will be destroyed even as Belshazzar was destroyed.

DANIEL'S DREAM AND VISION

Text: Daniel 7 and 8

A. DANIEL'S VISIONS

Chapters seven and eight contain the description of the visions that Daniel himself received. The first was seen in the initial year of King Belshazzar's reign and the second during the third year of Belshazzar's rule. Since Belshazzar was not associated with his father as king of Babylon for more than a three year period and was killed in 538 BC, Daniel, now about eighty-five years old, must have received his first vision in 541 BC. This would have been about sixty two years after Nebuchadnezzar had received the dream of the image.

B. DANIEL'S DREAM

Scripture Reference: Daniel 7

1. Divisions of Chapter Seven

- a. Night vision of the third beast (verse 1-6)
- b. Night vision of the fourth beast (verses 7-8)
- c. Judgment vision (verses 9-12)
- d. Son of Man and His kingdom (verses 13-14)
- e. Interpretation of the visions (verses 15-28)

2. Great Conflict

The term "sea" represents nations of the world. This fact is revealed in Revelation 17:15, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

The Great Sea always means the Mediterranean Sea. The four winds striving speak of the great conflict, strife and commotion. The four winds speak of this conflict coming from every direction.

3. Four Beasts

- a. Lion with eagle's wings: This is Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. The eagle's

wings speaks of swiftness of conquest while wings plucked refers of the revolt of some of the provinces.

- b. Bear: This is the Medo-Persian Empire. Since Persia was more powerful, the bear is shown raised on one side. The three ribs indicate that it had overcome three great world powers.
- c. Leopard: This is Alexander the Great. The four wings speak of great swiftness. The four heads refer to the division of the empire after Alexander's death, at which time the empire was divided among four of Alexander's generals:
 - Syria under Seleucus
 - Greece under Lysimachus
 - Thrace under Cassander
 - Egypt under Ptolemy
- d. Fourth Beast: This fourth beast was dreadful, terrible and very strong. Having iron teeth, it devoured and stamped the previous beasts with its feet. It was different from the other beasts and it had ten horns. As Daniel considered these horns, there came forth a little horn before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots.

This fourth beast is the last form of the Gentile world dominion beginning with the Roman Empire.

The "little horn" is the man of sin, the Antichrist, the superman of the end-times.

In Revelation 13, John saw the same beast rising out of the sea of the Roman Empire. The ten horns with crowns are the same ten horns of the fourth beast here in Daniel 7. We find that the leopard, the bear, and the lion are mentioned by John, but the order is reversed. The reason for this is that Daniel looked forward to the future while John looked back over past history and saw them in reverse order.

- e. Little Horn
 - The "little horn" is none other than Antichrist found in the New Testament as:
 - The Man of Sin (11 Thessalonians 2:3-8)
 - Son Of Perdition (11 Thessalonians 2:3-8)
 - That Wicked (11 Thessalonians 2:3-8)
 - Antichrist (I John 2:18)
 - The Beast (Revelation 13:1-8)

John saw him in Revelation 13 as having the combined abilities and powers of the leopard, bear, and the lion Gen tile kingdoms. In other words he will possess all the combined abilities of Nebuchadnezzar, Xerxes, Alexander, and Caesar. He will possess superhuman powers and will dominate the political scene of the

world.

- f. Length of Time of Antichrist's power
Scripture Reference: "And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25).

The expression "time and times and the dividing of time" means three and one-half years. The Antichrist will have power during the last half of the Tribulation period. During his reign he will try to change laws and customs and will do all possible to wear out the saints.

It may be noted that the devil is trying to do this even in this present day. He delights in putting pressure upon the saints to wear them out and to discourage them.

C. DANIEL'S VISION

Scripture Reference: Daniel 8

1. Time and Background of the Vision

This vision was given to Daniel during the third year of the reign of Belshazzar—the same year of the handwriting on the wall and of the fall of Babylon.

Daniel was in Babylon, but he was transported to the River Ulai, located in Shushan, the chief city of Elam, for the vision. Shushan became one of the principle cities of the Medes and Persians. The entire story of Esther took place in Shushan.

2. Ram with Two Horns

This ram represented the kings of Media and Persia (Daniel 8:20). It is significant that the national symbol of the Medo-Persian Empire was a ram. Daniel saw the second horn higher than the first and it came up last. In the beginning Media was the stronger of the two nations, but gradually Persia became the real power in the Medo-Persian kingdom.

3. The He-Goat

The he goat came from the west and traveled with great rapidity. He attacked the ram with great anger and subdued it. This he goat was the Grecian leader, Alexander the Great. In a short period of time he conquered practically the then known world. After a career of drunkenness and debauchery, he died in 323 BC at age thirty-two. He had reigned for twelve years and eight months.

In this lesson it has already been stated the names of the four generals who divided Alexander's kingdom at his death.

4. The Little Horn

Out of these four divisions would come another little horn which would become exceeding great toward the south, east and the “pleasant land.”

The term “pleasant land” would refer to Palestine. This little horn would come out of the Kingdom of Syria ruled by the general Seleucus. The little horn, a type of the Antichrist, came out of the ten horns of the end-time Gentile kingdom. This little horn (chapter 8) originates from one of the divisions of the Grecian Empire.

The little horn of Daniel 8 was literally fulfilled in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes who came out of Syria. He made many promises to the Jews, only to disregard them. He desecrated the Temple, killed the priests, and sacrificed a swine upon the altar.

5. Twenty-three Hundred Days

This was the literal length of time between the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus and the deliverance of Jerusalem under Judas Maccabeus. It was exactly 2,300 days.

There have been false teachings which would attempt to build doctrines around this period of time by symbolizing the 2,300 days. However, history verifies the accuracy of the length of time as being literally 2,300 days.

D. THE WORLD EMPIRES

	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylonian	Head of gold	Lion	
Medo-Persian	Breast and arms of silver	Bear	Ram
Grecian	Belly and thighs of brass	Leopard	He Goat
Roman	Legs of iron		
Antichrist	Ten toes of iron and clay	The beast with ten horns	
Christ's	Stone cut out of the mountain without hands		

DANIEL'S PRAYER ANSWERED

Text: Daniel 9

A. IMPORTANCE OF CHAPTER NINE

Daniel 9, because of its prophetic importance, has been spoken of as being the framework of Bible prophecy. The key verse of this chapter gives the key to correct interpretation:

“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” (Daniel 9:24).

Before Gabriel brought this revelation to Daniel, Daniel had been praying concerning the future of his people, the Jews, who had been in captivity for nearly seventy years, “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name” (Daniel 9:19).

Daniel prayed for *thy city* (Jerusalem) and *thy people* (Judah). God sent an answer which concerned the future of *thy people* (Judah) and *thy holy city* (Jerusalem).

The prophetic truth brought out in this chapter only applies to Israel. It does not deal with the Gentiles or the church. The moment an attempt is made to make it apply to the church, violence is done to God's Word. As a result, there can only be a misunderstanding concerning all prophecy. Once this is clearly and properly understood, a study may be made of the Tribulation described in Revelation. It applies to the nation of Israel and not to the Gentiles.

B. TIME

The events of Daniel 9 took place in the first year of the reign of Darius. Daniel was around ninety years of age. He was burdened concerning the future of the nation of Israel. He understood that the seventy years of captivity was coming to an end, and soon it would be time for the Jews to return home to their own land. Again they would be able to worship in the holy city, Jerusalem.

C. IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE STUDY

By Daniel's example, we can learn the value of being familiar with the Word of God. In verse 2 of this chapter, Daniel stated that he understood that the captivity would be seventy years in length, a fact he learned by reading the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. The passage to which Daniel referred is Jeremiah 25:11-12:

“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon”

This must have been very encouraging to Daniel who was also familiar with the truth taught in Leviticus 26:33-34:

“And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.”

The children of Israel had been in Palestine for 980 years from the occupation of the land under Joshua until the time of the captivity. Every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year, a law the Jews had ignored for 490 years. This meant that there were exactly seventy sabbatical years in the total period which had not been celebrated. God said that the land would enjoy rest during the time of scattering among the heathen. This was another proof to Daniel that the time of the captivity was coming to an end. (See II Chronicles 36:21.)

Daniel would never have been aware of this fact had he not been a student of the Scriptures.

D. DANIEL'S PRAYER AND CONFESSION

Just as Daniel left us an example of being a Bible student, he gave us a great example of being a man of prayer. We find recorded here one of the greatest prayers of the Bible. It was in deepest humiliation that Daniel approached the Lord. We can feel the spirit of sincerity, humility, and earnestness manifested.

Although Daniel was one of the perfect men of the Bible, yet he confessed his sins before God. He identified himself with his people. And in this prayer of intercession, he confessed the sins of the whole nation:

“And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession . . . We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments” (Daniel 9:4-5).

Some of the hardest words to say are “I have sinned.” In this Scripture, Daniel made

this difficult confession for both himself and the nation of Israel.

He set his face before God to seek, by prayer, fasting and repentance, to have the future of Israel revealed. When God's conditions are met, the answer is swift and certain. In fact, Daniels' prayer was unfinished. While he was yet praying, the answer came (Daniel 9:20-21). God sent one of His greatest messenger, Gabriel, with the answer. At the very beginning of Daniel's prayer, Gabriel had been commissioned and sent. The length of time it took Gabriel to come was the time Daniel was praying.

E. GREATLY BELOVED

Gabriel told Daniel that he was greatly beloved. This would teach us that God has special delight in those who serve Him as faithfully like Daniel. Is it possible to think of any greater honor than to have God say, "Thou art greatly beloved"? This special place in the heart of God can be won by anyone who will be true and faithful like Daniel.

F. THE ANSWER TO DANIEL'S PRAYER

There was no "Amen" concluding Daniel's prayer. While he was still praying, Gabriel touched him. It was the time of the evening sacrifice. We know that Gabriel appeared as a man for this is what Daniel called him. He came to give Daniel wisdom and understanding concerning the future of Daniel's people.

Let it be fully understood that the message Gabriel brought was relative to the nation of Israel only. It referred to "thy people" and to "thy holy city." It had no application as far as the Gentiles or the church are concerned. This is very important in understanding the Book of Revelation.

G. SEVENTY WEEKS ARE DETERMINED

Let us closely examine three key words in this prophecy:

1. Determined

The seventy weeks are determined or "fixed." This period of time is settled and planned by God. There will be no changing in the length of time.

2. Weeks of Years

The expression "seventy weeks" literally meant "seventy sevens." Seven is the perfect number with God. In the Bible we find a week of days, a week of months, a week of years, a week of millennia, and a week of ages. The context in each instance makes clear the exact meaning. In this case it is clear that it is a week of years.

In Genesis we read that seven years are called a week. "Fulfil her week, and we will

give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years” (Genesis 29:27). When Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Leah instead of Rachel, he told him that he could fulfill her week or work another seven years. Therefore, when Gabriel told Daniel that seventy weeks are fixed for the nation of Israel, he actually said that there were 490 years determined for God’s plan to be fulfilled for Israel.

It is worthy of consideration to note that God dealt with Israel in periods of 490 years:

From Abraham to Canaan	490 years	70 weeks
From Joshua to setting up the kingdom	490 years	70 weeks
From kingdom to the captivity	490 years	70 weeks
From return of the Jews to the close of God’s dealing with Israel	490 years	70 weeks

3. Seventy weeks

These seventy weeks were to be divided into three periods of time:

7 weeks	49 years
62 weeks	434 years
1 week	7 years

This period of seventy weeks was to begin with the decree to restore and build Jerusalem. From this point of time there would be exactly 483 years to the crucifixion of Christ. To find the date when this decree went forth we turn to Nehemiah 2:1, “And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.”

According to this Scripture we begin our calculation from the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. Not all reference books agree as far as the date and the calculation of the sixty-nine weeks are concerned. However, this writer, after reading many references on the subject, has concluded that this date would be the month of April, 445 BC. Taking the prophetic year to be 360 days in length, it has been calculated that this would end in April, AD 32.

Much time could be spent on calculating the dates, but whether this would be profitable is doubtful. The simple statement of God’s Word should be sufficient. The sixty-nine weeks of years would go until the “Messiah be cut off.” After this Jerusalem would be destroyed, not by Antichrist, but by the “people of the prince” or the people of the Antichrist. Antichrist does not come upon the scene in person until the seventieth week. Between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week is the fullness of the Gentiles or the church dispensation.

H. PROPHETIC PARENTHESIS BETWEEN THE SIXTY-NINTH AND SEVENTIETH WEEK

A prophetic parenthesis of time takes place between the sixty ninth and seventieth weeks for the following reasons:

1. **The fulfillment of the tremendous events in verse 24 can not be found anywhere in known history.** These events are still in the future:
 - a. to finish the transgression
 - b. to make an end of sins
 - c. to make reconciliation for iniquity
 - d. to bring in everlasting righteousness
 - e. to seal up the vision and prophecy
 - f. to anoint a most holy place

Note: The phrase to “anoint the most Holy” is given in the original as to “anoint the most holy place.” Some teachers claim that this is a reference to the anointing of Jesus at Jordan, but it actually, it refers to the building of the Temple in the Millennium.

2. **The reason the prophecy is silent about the church age is because it deals solely with Israel.** The church is the “fulness of the Gentiles” and this was not revealed to Daniel.
3. **The conclusive and final proof of this truth is given by our Lord Himself in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) two days before He was to be “cut off” (crucified).** He dealt with events that were to take place during the seventieth week and which John described in Revelation 5-19.

Matthew 24:4-14	First half of the week	Beginning of sorrows
Matthew 24:15-19	Middle of the week	Abomination of Desolation
Matthew 24:20-22	Last half of the week	Great Tribulation

Note: Revelation can only be understood when we understand the prophetic parenthesis and that the seventieth week is still in the future.

Lesson Seven

THE TIME OF THE END

Text: Daniel 10-12

A. CHAPTER TEN

1. God Answers Prayer

The tenth chapter is an interlude between Daniel 9 and Daniel 11. As far as time is concerned, chapter eleven should follow chapter nine. Chapter ten, however, is very important, for it shows again that God answers prayer.

Daniel had been fasting and praying for three weeks. An angel of great beauty and power appeared to him. Undoubtedly he was an archangel. His description is similar to that of our Lord's as given in Revelation 1.

The answer was sent on the first day although Daniel prayed and fasted for twenty-one days before receiving it. The delay was caused by the "prince of Persia" hindering the angel. Sometimes demon powers hinder the answer to our prayers, but we may be assured that God's answer is always on the way. God does answer prayer.

It should also be noted that Daniel was told the second time that he was greatly beloved by God (Daniel 10:11).

2. Michael, Daniel's Prince

Apparently Michael was especially commissioned to take care of Daniel's needs. He is called Daniel's prince (Daniel 10:21). When the angel was hindered by the prince of Persia, Michael went to his aid. Michael is an archangel and one time contended with the devil, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9).

3. Ministry of Fasting

"Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

In the spiritual battle with demon forces, prayer alone is not sufficient. Prayer alone will accomplish much, but it takes prayer with fasting to defeat demonic power. Daniel fasted for twenty-one days. It apparently was not a total fast but rather a partial fast which meant

Daniel abstained from eating meat or pastry. He very likely ate only some fruit and drank fruit juices. At any rate, it was a fast which gave his prayer power with God.

4. Ministry of Angels

We must never underestimate the ministry of angels (Hebrews 1:14). Angels have great power; they watch over and protect the saints.

B. CHAPTER ELEVEN

Chapter eleven deals with the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great, the division of his domain, and the conflicts that resulted between Egypt and Syria. The prophecies of this chapter were fulfilled in exact detail as given.

We shall examine carefully certain statements given here:

1. Verse 2

The three kings of Persia were Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, and Darius (not Darius the Mede). The fourth and most powerful was Xerxes. He was very wealthy and powerful.

2. Verse 3

The mighty king mentioned here is Alexander the Great, the he goat seen in chapter eight.

3. Verse 4

Alexander died young and his kingdom was divided among four generals, but not to Alexander's posterity.

Little is mentioned about two of these divisions, but emphasis is placed upon Egypt and Syria. These two countries greatly influenced the history of Palestine and the Jews. In this prophecy the king of the South refers to Egypt and the king of the North refers to Syria.

4. Verse 6

An alliance was brought about by the marriage of the Egyptian princess Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy 11, to Antiochus Theos, king of the North. This alliance failed; for when Ptolemy died, Antiochus called back his former wife and had Berenice poisoned. The brother of Berenice avenged her death by conquering Syria and returning to Egypt the silver and gold which previously had been plundered.

No attempt will be made to develop further the historical fulfillment of the prophecies of chapter eleven. However, it would be profitable for a student to do the research necessary to see just how accurately this chapter was fulfilled.

C. ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES

Scriptural Reference: Daniel 11:21-45

This man is the little horn of chapter eight and a type of the Antichrist of the end times. He was a younger son of Antiochus the Great. He is described in considerable detail:

1. **Vile**
2. **Coming Peaceable and with Flatteries**
3. **An Atheist** - “desire of women” refers to Jesus Christ (verse 37)
4. **Materialistic** (verse 38)
5. **Shall Desecrate the Temple** (verse 31)

D. PRESENT DAY CONFLICT

The present struggle and tension in the eastern Mediterranean is somewhat shown in this chapter. It is possible to see both Egypt, Syria, and possibly Russia, in the prophecy here. Although this chapter was literally fulfilled in prophecy, yet it is largely a forerunner of what is about to happen.

The Antichrist will come to power, even as Antiochus, deceitfully and with flatteries. In the beginning Israel will be deceived and make a treaty with him. When her eyes are opened to his real character, she will break the covenant and fierce persecution is the result. Antichrist will be the consummation of all ungodliness, atheism, and lawlessness.

E. CHAPTER TWELVE

The conjunction *and* links this chapter with chapter eleven. The latter part of chapter eleven was describing the Antichrist. This means that the phrase “at that time” is speaking of the time of the Antichrist.

The Antichrist will be accepted by the Jews after the rapture of the church. Jesus spoke of this in John 5:43, “If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.” He will make a covenant with the Jews but will break it in the middle of the week (Daniel 9:27).

F. BOOK OF LIFE

Special notice should be taken of the important place the Book of Life has in the Judgment (Revelation 20:15). Special attention should also be given to the statement concerning the resurrection and the rewards given to the wise and to soulwinners (verse 3).

G. SIGNS OF THE TIME OF THE END

1. Time of Trouble

This is the Great Tribulation spoken of by our Lord, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21).

There is, however, a promise for the Jews at this time. “And at that time thy people shall be delivered” (Daniel 12:1).

2. The Prophecy of Daniel Unsealed

The Book of Daniel was to remain a sealed book until this time (verse 9). The fact that only within the last hundred years has this prophecy been understood is a clear and definite sign that we are living in the time of the end.

3. Increase in Travel

The tremendous increase in the amount of travel and the speed of travel (verse 4) is a definite sign of the time of the end. Much of this increase has taken place in the twentieth century. Almost overnight man has been brought out of the horse-and-buggy age to travel by supersonic jets. In the United States some 485 million passengers travel the air routes annually.

4. Knowledge

Knowledge is increasing in the ratio as the population explosion. This explosion of knowledge is another certain sign of the time of the end.

5. Increase of Wickedness

Verse 10 gives us another sign. The wicked shall do more wickedness and shall have no understanding. There has always been sin in this world but never the corruption and perversion of the present time. This verse brings out a clear contrast between light and darkness, delusion and understanding, wickedness and righteousness.

H. THREE PERIODS OF TIMES

Scriptural Reference: Daniel 12:7, 11, 12

1. Verse 7: Time, times and an half.

This is three and one-half years or forty-two months. In Revelation 11:3 we find men-

tioned 1,260 days which undoubtedly is the last half of the Tribulation period which closes with the Battle of Armageddon.

2. Verse 11: 1,290 days

The extra thirty days could easily refer to the length of the battle, from the time Jesus appears until all resistance ceases. Some have taught that it could be a period of grace, but that is doubtful. The length of time for the great battle would seem to be the more reasonable interpretation.

3. Verse 12: 1,335 days

This extra forty-five days undoubtedly has to do with the time necessary for Christ to establish His kingdom following the Battle of Armageddon. At any rate, he that waits and sees this time come to pass is blessed by God.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN

A. REVELATION

The word *revelation* comes from the Latin *revelatio* which means “to reveal or unveil.” The title was first given to the book in the Latin Vulgate. The Greek title for this same book is “Apocalypse,” taken from the first word in the Greek text *Apokalypsis*. The meaning of Revelation is the revealing of something previously hidden, such as removing a veil from a statue or picture.

B. THE WRITER

Jesus Christ, the true Author, instructed the apostle John to write all that he saw. John, the beloved disciple and the son of Zebedee, had previously written the Gospel and three epistles.

It is believed that the book was written in the year AD 96, during the persecution of Domitian. By this time, John, the only apostle who was still living, was a very old man and had been banished to the Isle of Patmos. Patmos was a small rocky island about twenty-eight miles off the coast of Asia Minor in the Aegean Sea. The island is about eight miles long, and its greatest width is six miles. Its area is approximately twenty-two square miles. Here, shut off from the rest of the world, John entered into a communion with his Lord and was commanded to write the revelation as it was unfolded before him.

This command to write was repeated many times throughout the book:

“What thou seest, write in a book” (Revelation 1:11).

“Write the things which thou has seen” (Revelation 1:19).

“Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13).

“Write, Blessed are they which are called” (Revelation 19:9).

In Revelation 2 and 3, John was instructed to write to each of the seven churches. Not only was he commanded to write, but Jesus Christ gave him exact wording.

C. THE LORD'S DAY

Revelation 1:10 states, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Some have claimed that the "Lord's day" was the first day of the week. However, undoubtedly, it meant the Day of the Lord. This term applies to the day of the Lord's return and includes both the Tribulation and the Millennium.

John was caught up in the Spirit and saw a panorama of unfolding events that would take place during the time of our Lord's return.

D. A BOOK OF PROPHECY

The Book of Revelation is a book of prophecy as stated in several places throughout the book:

"In the days of their prophecy" (Revelation 11:6).

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy" (Revelation 1:3).

"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

"Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:7).

"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:10).

"The words of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:18).

"The words of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:19).

Revelation is a prophetic book and, as such, reveals the future.

E. INTERPRETATIONS

There have been many methods of interpretations of Revelation. We shall mention four:

1. Preterist

This is a claim that the greatest part of the book has already been fulfilled in the early history of the church.

2. Historic

This is a claim that the book deals with the whole period of church history from John's time to the end of the world.

3. Spiritualist

This interpretation spiritualizes the teaching of the book and separates the teaching of the book from any historical events.

4. Futurist Interpretation

This is the correct interpretation which affirms that the major part of the book deals with what is still future. Apart from the first three chapters, the book deals with the Lord's coming and judgments that will still take place.

The book should be given, as much as possible, a literal interpretation with an understanding that most of the events unfold in a chronological order.

F. PLAN OF THE BOOK

The key to Revelation is given in Revelation 1:19, "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

Here is stated the three clear divisions of the book which do not overlap:

1. Things which thou hast seen
2. Things which are
3. Things which shall be hereafter

Keeping to these clear divisions, we will study the book by dividing it into three parts:

1. Chapter 1 (Things thou hast seen)
2. Chapters 2 and 3 (Things which are)
3. Chapters 4 - 22 (Things which shall be hereafter)

If we keep this clear outline, we shall have little difficulty in studying and understanding the Book of Revelation.

G. PROMISE OF BLESSING

This prophecy was given to be read, studied, and understood. The book was to remain unsealed. "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:10). God planned for the book to be an open book of understanding. In fact, there is a blessing promised to the person who reads, hears, and obeys the words of this prophecy.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Revelation 1:3).

“Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Revelation 22:7).

God would never have promised these blessings if Revelation was a mystical book that could not be understood. God planned that the prophecy should be read with clear understanding.

H. THE CLIMAX OF GOD’S REVELATION OF TRUTH

As Genesis gives understanding concerning the beginning of everything, Revelation teaches concerning the consummation of all things. We might compare the two books:

GENESIS	REVELATION
Paradise lost	Paradise regained
The first city, a failure	City of the redeemed
Beginning of the curse	No more curse
Marriage of the first Adam	Marriage of the second Adam
First tears	Every tear wiped away
Satan’s entrance	Satan’s doom
Old creation	New creation
Communion broken	Communion restored

This book gives a total revelation. Nothing is to be added or taken away. A curse is pronounced upon those who would add to or take away from this book. “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life” (Revelation 22:18-19).

I. THE NUMBER SEVEN

The number seven is God’s number of perfection and completion in the Book of Revelation. There are seven sevens that we might study as we read this wonderful book:

1. Seven Churches	Revelation 2:1 - Revelation 3:22
2. Seven Seals	Revelation 6:1 - Revelation 8:5
3. Seven Trumpets	Revelation 8:7 - Revelation 11:19
4. Seven Personages	Revelation 12:1 - Revelation 13:18
5. Seven Vials	Revelation 15:1 - Revelation 16:21
6. Seven Judgments	Revelation 17:1 - Revelation 20:15
7. Seven New Things	Revelation 21:1 - Revelation 22:5

J. HOW TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE BOOK

We must keep clearly in mind that John recorded those things which he saw and heard as they unfolded before him. The revelation unfolded in a chronological order and we should accept the revelation as literally as possible. The moment we attempt to spiritualize

and explain away the meaning, we are in difficulty. It is clear that John did not understand much of what he saw, but he faithfully recorded it in terms that he understood. To illustrate, we might refer to the opening of the sixth seal (Revelation 6:12). This is a description of an atomic war, but John did not understand. He simply recorded what he saw.

When we refer to a literal interpretation, we simply mean the 144,000 were 144,000, not just a symbolical number. New Jerusalem is a real city. The Millennium is real; there will be one thousand years in Christ's kingdom upon earth.

Keeping these principles in mind this book becomes an exciting, challenging study. Just as the Lord has promised, we can be blessed throughout our study of this wonderful prophecy.

Lesson Nine**THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST****A. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST**

Scripture Reference: Revelation 1:1

In the opening verse of this book, we have the true name of these writings. It is not “The Revelation of St. John,” but rather “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The whole prophecy is an unveiling of Jesus. He is the true Author of the book, and at the same time, He is revealed throughout it. The prophecy is both by Him and about Him, for He dominates its entire action.

John was the disciple who leaned upon the Lord’s breast at the last supper. He beheld the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount and witnessed His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross. John had witnessed many scenes revealing the humanity of our Lord and had seen the tears shed by our Lord at the tomb of Lazarus. Now John beheld the glorified Christ, unveiled as the Ancient of Days, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and as the Lamb who died for our sins.

In studying this wonderful book, we should turn our attention to the One who has the pre-eminence. The meaning and interpretation of symbols are secondary to the understanding of the position Jesus fills throughout the prophecy.

B. MESSAGE OF HIS COMING

The central message of the entire book is the declaration of our Lord’s return. Over and over again this truth is repeated. The book opens with the message of His coming and closes with the same. The book begins with John’s prayer for His return, “Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7), and ends with a similar prayer, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). John’s prayer should be the response of born again Christians everywhere.

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him” (Revelation 1:7).

“Hold fast till I come” (Revelation 2:25).

“I will come on thee as a thief” (Revelation 3:3).

“Behold, I come quickly” (Revelation 3:11).

“Behold, I come as a thief” (Revelation 22:7).

“Behold, I come quickly” (Revelation 16:15).

“And, behold, I come quickly” (Revelation 22:12).

“Surely I come quickly” (Revelation 22:20).

In this message of His coming, all the aspects of His return are brought out. He is coming quickly as a thief. He is coming for His church. He is also coming in power and glory in judgment and the whole world will see Him.

C. JESUS CHRIST REVEALED AS THE LAMB OF GOD

Jesus Christ is revealed as the glorified Christ and as the Almighty. However, His humanity is not forgotten. John had known Him in His ministry here upon earth, and as such, He was the Faithful Witness. Suffering and the cruel death upon the cross did not change this. Jesus was the Faithful Witness even unto death.

Christ’s ministry of redemption is clearly expressed in Revelation 1:5, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

Twenty-eight times in this prophecy, Christ is revealed as the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“Stood a Lamb as it had been slain” (Revelation 5:6).

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Revelation 5:12).

Along with this picture of Jesus as the Lamb who died, is the unveiling of the Christ who conquered death. He is alive for ever more. Revelation 1:18 states, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

D. JESUS CHRIST REVEALED AS JEHOVAH

Scripture Reference: Revelation 1

The revelation of Jesus that astounded John was the vision of Jesus as Jehovah in power and glory. John heard a great voice (verse 10), he turned to look (verse 12), and he fell as dead (verse 17). Jesus placed His hand upon him and told him, “Fear not” (verse 17). The student should prayerfully study the pictures of Jesus given here in His unveiling.

1. The Great I Am

Eternalness is one of the greatest attributes of God. This is the attribute of dwelling in the eternal present. The past and the future are all an eternal present with God. It was with this attribute that God identified Himself to Moses at the burning bush. “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM” (Exodus 3:14).

The Jews charged that Jesus claimed deity and accused Him of blasphemy when He said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). Yet, the attributes of eternalness and immutability were clearly revealed as possessed by Jesus Christ in Revelation 1:

“From him which is, and which was, and which is to come” (Verse 4).

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Verse 8).

“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” (Verse 11).

“Fear not, I am the first and the last” (Verse 17).

Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. It is like saying, “I am A and Z.” Not only is He the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, but He is everything in between.

With this truth so plainly stated how can anyone claim that He is the second person of a Trinity. Let us examine this truth as stated in the Old Testament.

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6).

“That ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no savior” (Isaiah 43:10-11).

There is only one God and one Savior. The Lord Jehovah of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ of the New Testament and revealed Himself to John to be recorded in the prophecy.

2. Omnipotence

In verse 8, Jesus declared Himself to be “the Almighty.” There cannot possibly be two “Almighty’s.” “The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect” (Genesis 17:1). The Almighty God who appeared to Abram was the same one unveiled to John.

3. Ancient of Days

John saw Jesus Christ with a similar description as given to the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9). This is none other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He is pictured as the Judge. He is wearing the garments befitting His royal office:

Verse 14: His eyes as a flame of fire—revealing the power of discernment that searches the inner most depths.

Verse 15: His feet like unto fine brass—speaking of righteous judgment. In judgment He will tread down all who hate Him.

Verse 15: Voice as the sound of many waters—showing power and authority.

Verse 16: His countenance as the sun—The churches are lamps reflecting the glory of Christ who shines as the sun.

4. God and Father

Scripture Reference: Revelation 1:6

The original Greek is worded here “unto God and Father.” We know there cannot be a God and then a Father of that God. The phrase here refers to one. We find a similar expression in Titus 2:13, “Glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This verse clearly teaches the truth of the deity of Jesus Christ.

E. JESUS CHRIST REVEALED AS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

There is only one church (I Corinthians 12:13). The seven churches of Asia are representative of the one church. Seven is the perfect number of completion.

Jesus Christ is unveiled as the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). He is in the midst of the church as high priest to minister but also as judge. The seven stars in His right hand are the angels of the churches (verse 20). These angels are the ministers or pastors of the churches. This teaches us that the ministry is in the right hand of Christ. The right hand speaks of the place of power. The ministry is held by Christ in the place of power. This protects the ministry in times of danger and opposition. It also speaks of judgment if the ministry is false and untrue to Christ. There is no escaping out of His hand.

F. SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

God is Spirit and there is only one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4). These seven Spirits speak of the total sum of His ministry, knowledge, and attributes, especially that of omniscience. The following seven spirits are mentioned in Isaiah 11:2:

1. Spirit of the Lord
2. Spirit of wisdom
3. Spirit of understanding

4. Spirit of counsel
5. Spirit of might
6. Spirit of knowledge
7. Spirit of the fear of the Lord

THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES Part I

A. THE THINGS THAT ARE:

Scripture Reference: Revelation 2 and 3

In Revelation 1:19, John was instructed to write:

1. The things which thou hast seen (Revelation 1)
2. The things which are (Revelation 2 and 3)
3. The things which shall be hereafter (Revelation 4 -22)

In Revelation 2 and 3, we have recorded the letters to the seven churches of Asia. There were more than seven churches in Asia when John wrote in AD 96. For example, Colossae had an important church which was not included with the seven. The number seven is always a number of perfection and completion. We also know that there is only one church from her birth on the Day of Pentecost until her translation when Jesus returns. The seven churches of Asia are the “things that are,” representative of the one church. Here we find descriptions of the spiritual history of the church from John’s day until the second coming of Jesus.

In the Book of Revelation, the church disappears from the earth at the close of chapter three and is not seen again until the nineteenth chapter.

B. THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN CHURCH HISTORY

In church history the seven churches are representative of definite period of history:

1. Ephesus

- Church of the first century
- From Pentecost to AD 96
- The apostolic church

2. Smyrna

- The suffering, persecuted church of the second and third centuries
- AD 96 - AD 312 when Constantine professed his conversion

3. Pergamos

- The Imperial church (AD 312 - AD 500)

4. Thyatira

- The dark ages
- 500 to 1520, the beginning of the Reformation

5. Sardis

- The church of the Protestant Reformation

6. Philadelphia

- The church of revival and brotherly love
- The true church which will be rapture

7. Laodicea

- The end-time church of apostasy

It should be noted that church history covers a time period of approximately two millennia. Throughout history God has always had a few who kept His Word and did not deny His name. He never left Himself without a witness. What the church lost in Pergamos and Thyatira periods, God restores completely to Philadelphia.

C. THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The seven churches were located in seven cities of Asia Minor. These cities were situated in a triangular manner. From Ephesus one goes north to Smyrna and to Pergamos, about one hundred miles north. Coming back southeasterly, one comes to Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and finally Laodicea, about one hundred miles east of Ephesus. Beginning at Ephesus one can reach each city in proper order by traveling clockwise from city to city.

1. Ephesus

Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, Ephesus was a busy trading port until its harbor began to fill up. Even though Ephesus was the seat of the worship of Diana, the fertility goddess, and the home of her temple, in the first century it was a dying city, leaning more and more to its trade of religious souvenirs and tourism. The Temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the world.

2. Smyrna

Situated on an excellent harbor and a prosperous trading port, Smyrna was famous for its schools of science and medicine and its buildings. Polycarp, a bishop of Smyrna and former disciple of John, was martyred in AD 156.

3. Pergamos

Pergamos was the capital of the area and the chief town of the province of Asia. It was the site of the first temple of the Caesar cult and an ancient seat of culture, possessing a large library.

4. Thyatira

Thyatira was a center of commerce. Lydia, who was converted in Philippi, was from Thyatira.

5. Sardis

Famous for arts and crafts, Sardis was the first center in the area to mint gold and silver coins.

6. Philadelphia

A district known for growing grapes, Philadelphia was named after its founder, Attalus II Philadelphus.

7. Laodicea

Laodicea was a wealthy city and had great commercial prosperity. It was a leading banking center and was rich enough to refuse earthquake relief from the Roman Senate. It had a medical school and manufactured collyrium, a famous eye-salve.

D. PROMISES TO THE OVERCOMERS

A profitable study may be made of the promises given to the overcomer in each of the seven churches. The saint should always be thankful for the trials and testing, for by this he is given the opportunity to overcome. There is no way one can become an overcomer unless he has a trial.

Let us study promises given to the overcomers in the seven churches:

1. Ephesus

“Will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Revelation 2:7).

2. Smyrna

“Shall not be hurt of the second death” (Revelation 2:11).

3. Pergamos

“Will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written” (Revelation 2:17).

Hidden manna is heavenly food that is hidden in God’s Word. The overcomer would be able to have deep truths from the Word revealed to him.

The white stone is a symbol of eternal acquittal. In ancient trials, the jurors would vote for acquittal by laying down a white stone.

4. Thyatira

“To him will I give power over the nation . . . And I will give him the morning star” (Revelation 2:26-28).

Jesus declared Himself to be the bright and morning star (Revelation 22:16). This promise means that the overcomer would have the presence of Jesus Christ with him.

5. Sardis

“Shall be clothed in white raiment . . . I will not blot out his name out of the book of life . . . I will confess his name before my Father” (Revelation 3:5).

6. Philadelphia

“A pillar in the temple of my God . . . I will write upon him the name of my God . . . which is new Jerusalem . . . I will write upon him my new name” (Revelation 3:12).

7. Laodicea

“Will I grant to sit with me in my throne” (Revelation 3:21).

E. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS

Scripture Reference: Revelation 2:1-7

1. Description

Ephesus means “the desirable one.” As the church was born, the apostolic church was the desired church. It was the early church with its first love burning for Christ. This church zealously preached the gospel throughout the then known world.

2. Commendation

There was much that the Lord commended: “I know thy works and thy labor, and thy patience.” This church faithfully served the Lord and did not grow weary in well doing (Galatians 6:9). Faithfulness and patience (steadfastness) are two of the greatest of Christian characteristics. These qualities were found in the Ephesian church.

This church was a separated church and would not tolerate evil. They did not accept just anyone as a minister but first tried them to see whether they be true and genuine.

This church remained true to the name of Jesus. Here has always been the true test. The name of Jesus will always be under attack. The Ephesians preached the name of Jesus and refused to compromise.

Finally, the Ephesians hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. The word *nicolaitans* comes from two Greek words: *niko* – “to conquer” and *Laod* – “the people.” This was setting up a priestly order or clerical dictatorship over God’s people. Jesus declared here that He hated this and commended the Ephesians for having the same attitude.

3. Condemnation

Jesus condemned the Ephesian church because she had left her first love. However, this was something that had deliberately been left behind. It was a deliberate willful act of walking away from the love they had at the beginning.

4. Admonition

The act of leaving their first love was one of failing. They were admonished to repent and return to their first love. The danger of having their candlestick removed simply meant they would be backslidden and eternally lost.

F. LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA

Scripture Reference: Revelation 2:8-11

1. Description

Smyrna comes from the word *myrrh*. Myrrh is a fragrant spice, but it has to be beaten and crushed before it gives forth its perfume. The Hebrew root word for Smyrna means “bitter.” It was bitter to the taste; only after it was crushed was the fragrance released. Myrrh was used for embalming.

In this letter to Smyrna, we find the words *tribulation*, *poverty*, *suffer*, and *prison* being used.

This was the persecuted church of the second and third centuries. It has been estimated by one historian that five million Christians were martyred during this time. Christians were thrown to hungry lions. Many were crucified; others were covered with tar and set on fire. Christians were boiled in oil and burned at the stake. Polycarp was martyred in Smyrna in AD 156. However, in spite of the persecutions, the church grew and reached its highest percentage of world population that it has ever seen.

The statement that it would have tribulation ten days (Revelation 2:10) is thought to have reference to the ten periods of persecution under Roman emperors from Nero to Diocletian.

2. Commendation

The church in Smyrna is commended for its endurance under persecution. In spite of its poverty Jesus said, "Thou art rich."

3. Condemnation

There is no rebuke to this church.

4. Admonition

- a. Fear not - They were exhorted not to be afraid of what they were to suffer.
- b. Be faithful unto death.

If the church of Smyrna could fulfill these admonitions, they were promised two blessings. First, they would be given a crown of life. Second, they would not be hurt of the second death. This promised eternal life. The crown of life is the martyr's crown.

The Lord compared the church of Smyrna with the synagogue of Satan. Those who do not teach the truth of God's Word belong to the synagogue of Satan. These will not be martyred, but the Lord knows them. Future judgment awaits those who blaspheme by claiming that which they do not possess. Tribulation, suffering, and martyrdom clearly separates the real Christian from the false.

THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

Part II

A. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS

Scripture Reference: Revelation 2:12-17

1. Description

The word *Pergamos* means “married.” When the Persians conquered Babylon, the headquarters for the Babylonish religion moved from Babylon to Pergamos. During the time of the persecutions, Antipas was one of the martyrs.

When Constantine professed conversion to the Christian faith, he united church and state. The church now became “married” to the world and was guilty of spiritual fornication. The cross took the place of the eagle as the standard of the nation, and Christianity was made the religion of the Roman Empire. The persecution ceased and the state began to dictate to the church. Images and worldliness came into the church.

In this church were two false doctrines:

a. Doctrine of Balaam

When the children of Israel had reached the land of Moab on their way to Canaan, Balak, the king, sent for Balaam to pronounce a curse on Israel. When the Lord did not permit Balaam to curse Israel, he taught Balak how Israel might be seduced to sin by committing fornication with the daughters of Moab, bringing the judgment of God upon them.

b. Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes

This was the teaching of the priesthood rule over the laity. It should be noted that this doctrine got a strong foothold at the council held at Nicea in AD 325. Here the laymen outnumbered the bishops five to one, but at its completion, the bishops had complete control of the church. God said that He hated this doctrine. It is not surprising that from this same council dominated by political intrigue came the false teaching of the Trinitarian theory.

2. Commendation

The Lord commended Pergamos for holding fast to the name of Jesus and for not denying the Lord's faith. These are two of the greatest qualities for any church. And Pergamos adhered to these principles even though the headquarters for the Babylonish religion was centered there.

One of the faithful martyrs is mentioned. We do not know much about Antipas, but the Lord saw fit to mention his name.

3. Condemnation

This church was condemned because of "spiritual fornication." She was married to the world. Constantine perverted the church by giving many large buildings and supplying the clergy with costly vestments. Although this church started out with pure doctrines true to the name of Jesus, it was polluted with a sensuous form of worship and many pagan festivals. It was during this time that the dogma of the Trinity was adopted and post-millennialism had its origin.

4. Admonition

The admonition was the simple message of repentance. The alternative would be to be judged with the Word, the two-edged sword.

B. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA

Scriptural Reference: Revelation 2:18-29

1. Description

It is fitting that this is the longest of the seven letters, for the church of Thyatira represented the thousand years of the dark ages. Thyatira comes from two words *sacrifice* and *continual*. Certainly the Roman Catholic Church was a church of continual sacrifice. The finished work of Calvary was rejected, and works, penance, indulgences, and masses were substituted in its place. The crucifix is a symbol of continual sacrifice. This was a church that had been overcome with pagan heathenism and idolatry.

In His letter, the Lord calls Himself the "Son of God," drawing attention to His deity. He describes Himself as having eyes like a flame of fire and feet of brass. His eyes were penetrating and discerning. He was able to search the reins and hearts (Revelation 3:23). Even the motives and attitudes of the heart are seen by His omniscience. His feet of brass speak of sure and just judgment.

2. Commendation

This church had many works of charity and was commended for it.

3. Condemnation

The main rebuke was tolerating the presence of Jezebel and allowing her to teach and seduce the Christians to fornication and idolatry.

Apparently there was a woman in the church of Thyatira who was a wicked influence in the church. The Jezebel of the Old Testament had been dead for almost a millennium, but the demon that possessed her was now controlling another woman in order to corrupt the church. She was a self-styled prophetess (Revelation 2:20) just as Jezebel took the lead in the religious life of Israel. We see a picture of her as a system within the harlot church of the last days (Revelation 17).

4. Admonition

The exhortation is to hold fast until Jesus comes. Although the church of Thyatira was a church of compromise, apparently there were a few that were still holding to the truth. They were told to hold fast and overcome. The promise was that they would have power over nations and reign with Christ in His kingdom.

C. THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF SARDIS

Scriptural Reference: Revelation 3:1-6

1. Description

The name *Sardis* means “escaping ones” or “those who come out.” This was the church of the Protestant Reformation, beginning when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517. Although Luther revived the doctrine of justification by faith, he sought the approval of political leaders and the result was state churches. The Reformation churches still continued ritualism and did not examine many of the false teachings of the Roman Church, including the false theory of the Trinity.

2. Commendation

The Lord commended them for their works although they were imperfect. The shortest commendation was given to this church and it actually became a condemnation. It would seem that the Lord was pleased with the early stages of the Reformation but was displeased with what followed. It is not enough to start well, but we must continue on.

3. Condemnation

They had a name that they were living, but actually they were dead. Their works were not perfect (complete). They had much ritual and ceremony but no true life.

4. Admonition

The church of Sardis was admonished to do five things:

- a. Be watchful—This refers to our Lord’s return, but the church of the Reformation did not teach the second coming of Christ.
- b. Strengthen the things which remain—This was an exhortation to strengthen the doctrines of the Reformation: salvation by faith and the authority of the Word of God.
- c. Remember therefore how thou hast received—Revive the knowledge received from the Word of God.
- d. Hold fast—This exhortation is needed today when worldliness is taking over in so many churches.
- e. Repent—If the Reformation church had been willing to repent, God would have led her on into truth.

In verse 5, we have the statement that our names will not be blotted out if we overcome. This proves the fallacy of the teaching of the unconditional security of the believer.

D. LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA

Scripture Reference: Revelation 3:7-13

1. Description

The word *Philadelphia* means “brotherly love.” This is the revival church of the last days. It undoubtedly will be the church which will be raptured when Jesus returns. The Lord had no criticism of this church and has promised an escape from the Great Tribulation.

2. Commendation

The Lord commended the Philadelphia church on several points:

- a. A little strength: This referred to their numerical strength. They were few in number, but they certainly were not feeble. They had much spiritual strength even though there were not many of them. This is true of the real church today.
- b. Kept My Word: Not only did this church believe God’s Word, but they also obeyed it. The church that is waiting for the Lord’s return will be obeying the Word of God.

- c. Not denied My name: This definitely referred to salvation in the name of Jesus. The Philadelphia church will be baptized in Jesus' name for the remission of sins. The pressure from the world will be to deny the name of Jesus, but this church will be true to the name.
- d. Kept the Word of My patience: the Philadelphia church was faithful and true. There was no compromise with the world. They were steadfast in living a life of holiness.

3. Condemnation

There is not one word of rebuke here.

4. Admonition

The exhortation was to not let go of what they had received, for Jesus is coming soon. He will have a church when He returns. If the Philadelphia church does not hold fast what they have, the Lord will raise up others to take their place.

There are two promises given to this church:

- a. An open door is set before them that no man can shut. This undoubtedly refers to the open door of preaching the gospel to a lost world. No man can stop the gospel from being preached.

This open door may also refer to the door opened in Heaven (Revelation 4:1). No man can hinder the true church from being raptured when Jesus comes.

- b. In verse 10 there is given a definite promise of escaping the Great Tribulation; the church will be raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation period.

E. LETTER TO THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA

Scripture Reference: Revelation 3:14-22

1. Description

Laodicea means “the judging of the people.” It is the very opposite of Nicolaitanism. The rule of the priest is now substituted by the rule of the laity. In history it is the end-time church of apostasy.

2. Commendation

The Lord found nothing in this church to commend—not one word.

3. Condemnation

There was much about this church that the Lord condemned. The church of Laodicea claimed to be wealthy and have need of nothing. However, the Lord stated that she was poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked. The church was lukewarm, self-satisfied, complacent, and indifferent to the presence of Jesus. This church had much profession but no possession. Such a church was disgusting and sickening to the Lord. He would spit her out.

4. Admonition

The Lord told her to repent (verse 19). She was told to buy gold tried in the fire, to buy white raiment that she might be clothed, and anoint her eyes with eye salve that she might no longer be blind.

F. THE DOORS OF REVELATION

Scripture Reference: Revelation 3:8, 20; 4:1

One of the saddest picture in the Bible is that of our Lord standing at the door knocking. This is used many times to illustrate the Lord standing at the sinner's heart. Jesus does knock at the heart's door of every unsaved man. However, this message is addressed to the Laodicean church. Here is an apostate church with its door closed and Jesus locked out. Tragic as it is, the church world today has the Lord locked out.

The other doors are doors of opportunity of preaching the gospel and the door opened in Heaven for the entrance of the church. One important fact to be noted is that when the Lord closes a door, no man can close it. At the same time, the Lord will not break down a door when man had locked the door against Him.

Lesson Twelve

A SCENE IN HEAVEN

A. THE CHURCH RAPTURED

Scripture Reference: Revelation 4:1

1. After This

The words *after this* follow Revelations 2 and 3 which deal with the church. Therefore, “after this” refers to what follows the church age. Some people are already speaking about the present time as being the “post-church age.” The church is still here, but we shall soon enter into the “post church age.” Although the church is mentioned at least sixteen times in the first three chapters of Revelation, it is significant that in no other place in Revelation can we find the church resident upon the earth. The Rapture of the church is clearly taught in the Bible.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The command “Come up hither” certainly suggests that the Rapture takes place at this point.

There are two promises given to the church that she will not have to go through the Great Tribulation:

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:10).

2. A Door Opened in Heaven

John looked and he saw a door opened in Heaven. The order of events is important.

John looked and then the door opened. It does not state that the door opened and then John looked. In the rapture of the church, Jesus is coming for them who look for Him. “And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28). Looking for the Lord’s return is one of the necessary conditions of being ready.

John was still upon the Isle of Patmos but was now caught up in the Spirit (Revelation 4:2). John was given a vision of what will take place in Heaven when the church is raptured. It was no longer an earthly scene.

B. THE SCENE IN HEAVEN

1. The Throne

The central place which drew John’s attention was the throne. There was only one throne and only one sat upon the throne. There is only one God and He is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. His description is likened unto that of precious stones, jasper and sardine. Jasper is a brilliant stone like a diamond. The sardine is blood-red.

This is the throne of judgment for the world during the Tribulation which is about to begin. The red sardine stone speaks of God’s wrath. However, around the throne is an emerald rainbow. This green rainbow speaks of mercy. We should note that there is no rainbow around the Great White Throne (Revelation 20). Only here during the Tribulation will judgment be administered tempered with mercy.

2. Four Living Creatures

There were four beasts on each side of the throne. The word *beasts* actually means “living creatures.” They had the appearance of a lion, calf, man, and an eagle. It cannot be proven, but it is possible that these are the same living creatures that Ezekiel saw (Ezekiel 1:5-11). Their main purpose was to worship God. This they did continuously day and night.

3. Four and Twenty Elders

Around the throne were twenty-four seats where twenty-four elders were seated. These elders represent the entire church. They were clothed in white and had crowns of gold upon their heads. The saints were made kings and priests unto God. The gold crowns speak of being kings and the white raiment speak of being priests. Their song identified them as being representative of the church. “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

4. Seven Lamps and Sea of Glass

Out of the throne came lightning and thunder which speak of judgment. Before the throne were seven lamps which were seven spirits of God. The number seven means per-

fection and in this text, shows the perfect omniscience of God. Nothing is hidden from Him.

The sea of glass was an area of peace and tranquility before the throne. This area seemed to be reserved for the tribulation saints, for they shall stand upon this sea of glass (Revelation 15).

C. ONE THRONE

Scripture Reference: Revelation 4:2

There is only one God whom we shall see in Heaven. Some believe they are going to see three, but the Bible is very definite on the matter—we shall see Jesus (I John 3:2), the one who is seated upon the one throne.

In chapter 5, John saw Jesus, the Lamb of God, take the sealed book out of the right hand of Him upon the throne. Does this not make two gods? No, it is simply our Lord acting in two offices. Not only is He the Lamb, but He is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5). This is not the only place we see our Lord revealed occupying more than one office at the same time.

Let us consider one example: “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). In this Scripture it is stated that the Lord is both the priest and the sacrificial lamb. Here we see that Jesus filled both offices at the same time. What then is inconsistent in Jesus filling two offices in Heaven at the same time?

D. THE TITLE DEED TO THE EARTH

In the right hand of God was a book which was the title deed to the earth. This book was a scroll which contained the terms by which the earth could be redeemed from the curse. The whole earth has been under a curse (Genesis 3:17-18) and has been groaning, waiting for this moment of redemption (Romans 8:22).

The book or scroll, sealed with seven seals, recalls an ancient Jewish custom. Under the law, one might not levy on an estate beyond a certain period. In the year of jubilee mortgaged property was released. When an inheritance was mortgaged to a creditor, a sealed book, a sort of mortgage deed, was given into the hands of the holder of the property. A sealed book was therefore a sign of an alienated inheritance, but an inheritance so held that recovery of it was possible on the terms specified. When the legal representative of the original property holder broke the seals and bought back the property, he was called the redeemer.

In Revelation 5, a worthy Redeemer was found to claim the inheritance long under Satan’s mortgage. The title deed to the earth is in God’s hands. Satan cannot get full possession (Romans 8:22, 23). The time will come when the Lord Jesus fulfills the promises of

God, executes the judgments and gives the inheritance to the saints.

E. THE REDEEMER OF THE EARTH

A redeemer had to have these qualifications:

1. He must have been a near kinsman
2. He must have had the price
3. He must have been willing

John wept when there was no man worthy to break the seals and meet the conditions necessary to redeem the earth. He was told by one of the elders not to weep, for the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed to open the book. Jesus is called a Lion which speaks of His deity and a Lamb which speaks of His humanity.

John saw Jesus having seven horns and seven eyes. This revealed Jesus possessing the attributes of omnipotence and omniscience. He was and is all powerful and all knowing. Only Jesus,

the Lamb who was slain at Calvary, was found worthy to take the book, break the seals, and redeem the earth from the curse.

F. WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

Scripture Reference: Revelation 5:8-14

The latter part of Revelation 5 reveals to us, in a small measure, the nature of the worship before the throne of God. Pentecostal services here are very quiet compared to the volumes of praise which will be sung at that time. The raptured church will give praise for being redeemed by the blood of Christ out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation, The church will praise the Lord for being made kings and priests and for the promise of reigning on the earth (Revelation 5:18).

Joining with the praise of the redeemed will be one hundred million angels, and millions more who will say, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:12). What a glorious time this will be!

Before we close this lesson, mention should be made regarding the importance of the prayers of the saints. They become sweet odors stored up in the golden vials. These prayers will fill Heaven with sweet incense and augment the anthems of worship being sung around the throne of God.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson One

1. Why study Daniel and Revelation together?
2. What are the two methods of interpretation used in this study?
Define the two methods.
3. Describe the background of the prophet Daniel.
4. Describe Daniel's character
5. Why is Daniel's prophecy important?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Two

Fill in the blanks.

1. _____, _____, and _____
are the Hebrew names of the three young men who were
Daniel's companions in captivity.

2. Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs, changed Daniel's name
to _____.

3. Nebuchadnezzar's image was _____ cubits high and
_____ cubits wide and was built on the Plain of _____.

4. Nebuchadnezzar ordered everyone to _____ and _____
the image at the sound of _____.

5. Nebuchadnezzar saw _____ men walking in the fiery
furnace.

6. Daniel was approximately _____ years old when King
_____ was tricked into signing the law stating that no
god could be worship except the king.

7. Because Daniel continued to pray "as he did aforetime," he
was thrown into the den of _____.

8. Daniel's life teaches the value of _____.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Three

1. Why is Nebuchadnezzar's first dream of vital importance in the study of prophecy?

2. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's first dream.

3. Which empires are represented in the dream?

4. Describe Nebuchadnezzar's second dream.

5. What was the prophetic interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's second dream?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I**Lesson Four**

Make each statement true or false.

1. _____ Belshazzar was the son of Nebuchadnezzar.
2. _____ Daniel was about eighty-eight years of age when Belshazzar called for a great feast.
3. _____ Everyone could read the writing on the wall.
4. _____ The interpretation of the writing on the wall indicated that God was well pleased with Belshazzar's reign.
5. _____ The kingdom was divided between the Medes and the Persians.
6. _____ Babylon was founded by Moses.
7. _____ Darius conquered Babylon.
8. _____ Belshazzar was proud, arrogant, blasphemous, and presumptuous.
9. _____ Darius gained entrance into the city by diverting the water of the Euphrates River in the moats that surrounded the city.
10. _____ A lesson to be learned from the judgment upon Belshazzar is that sin brings false security.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Five

Fill in the blanks

1. Daniel saw _____ beasts in his vision.
2. The bear with the eagle's wings represents _____.
3. The bear raised on one side symbolizes _____.
4. The leopard with four heads refers to the _____
Empire which was divided into _____ parts.
5. The fourth beast represents _____.
6. The "little horn" represents the _____.
7. For another vision, Daniel was transported to the River
_____, located in Shushan.
8. The ram symbolizes _____.
9. The he-goat represents _____.
10. The Temple was desecrated by _____.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Six

Short Answers

1. What is the importance of Daniel 9 in relationship to biblical prophecy?
2. The prophecy concerning Daniel's seventy weeks refer to which people? On what do you base your answer?
3. How does Daniel's example teach the importance of Bible study?
4. Summarize Daniel's prayer and confession.
5. Summarize the major points of interpretation of the seventy weeks.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Seven

Fill in the blanks.

1. Chapter 10 is an _____ between Daniel 9 and Daniel II.
2. Daniel had been _____ and _____ for three weeks.
3. Daniel was visited by _____.
4. Alexander's empire was divided among his four _____.
5. Antiochus Epiphanes is a type of the _____.
6. Israel will be deceived and make a _____ with the Antichrist.
7. The Tribulation period closes with the Battle of _____.
8. Christ shall establish His kingdom after _____.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Eight

Short answers.

1. Identify the four methods of interpretation of Revelation.
 - a. Preterist
 - b. Historic
 - c. Spiritualist
 - d. Futurist

2. Describe the division or plan of Revelation.

3. Compare Genesis and Revelation.

4. How should one read and understand Revelation?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Nine

Mark each of the following statements true or false.

1. _____ John was one of the disciples who beheld Christ's transfiguration.
2. _____ The central message of Revelation is the Lord's return.
3. _____ Christ is revealed as the Lamb of God.
4. _____ John revealed Jesus in His full humanity.
5. _____ Eternalness is one of the greatest attributes of God.
6. _____ Alpha and Omega are the first and second letters in the Greek alphabet.
7. _____ Jesus revealed Himself as the Jehovah of the Old Testament.
8. _____ There can be two "Almighty's."
9. _____ Jesus Christ is the head of the church.
10. _____ The seven spirits of God speak of the total sum of His ministry, knowledge, and attributes, especially that of omniscience.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Ten

Match the correct description with the corresponding church age:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. _____ Ephesus | a. The end-time church of apostasy |
| 2. _____ Smyrna | b. The imperial church |
| 3. _____ Pergamos | c. The apostolic church of the first century |
| 4. _____ Thyatira | d. The suffering church of the second and third centuries |
| 5. _____ Sardis | e. The church of revival and brotherly love |
| 6. _____ Philadelphia | f. The church of the Protestant Reformation |
| 7. _____ Laodicea | g. The church of the dark ages |

Fill in the blanks

8. The seven church that John addressed were actual assemblies in _____.
9. A promise is given to the _____ in each church.
10. Diana was worshiped in _____.
11. Polycarp was the bishop of _____.
12. Lydia was from _____.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Eleven

1. What two false doctrines were taught in Pergamos? Describe these doctrines.
2. What condemnation was give to the church in Thyatira?
3. What admonition was given to the church in Sardis?
4. Describe the church of Philadelphia.
5. Why was Laodicea told to repent?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Self Help Test: Daniel and Revelation I

Lesson Twelve

1. What two promises are given to the church that she will not have to go through the Great Tribulation?

2. What did John see on the throne of Heaven?

3. What was the main purpose of the four beasts?

4. Describe the twenty-four elders. Who do they represent?

5. What are the qualifications for a redeemer?