

## I, DANIEL, UNDERSTOOD

The seven chrono-specific prophecies found in chapter 4 and chapters 7-12 of the Book of Daniel<sup>1</sup> are unlike any others in the Bible. They are remarkably detailed predictive prophecies that tell the story of God's people Israel from the time of their captivity<sup>2</sup> in ancient Babylon down to the present day. Despite their chronological and historical specificity, though, the chrono-specific prophecies recorded by the prophet Daniel have proven to be an enigma. They have resisted conclusive interpretation by anyone for more than twenty-five-hundred years. Surprisingly, the reason why the prophecies have defied interpretation for so long is the one thing about them that should not have been a mystery to expositors, the one thing that they should have understood from the start. That reason is plainly stated in the Book of Daniel itself, at the end of the twelfth chapter. There we are told that the prophecies were sealed up by commandment of God as soon as they were handed down to Daniel. We are also told how long the prophecies would remain sealed. The text clearly states that the prophecies would stay closed up and sealed until the time of the end.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the very profusion of contradictory interpretations of the Danielic prophecies offered and rejected since their revelation in antiquity provides the best evidence that the exact meanings of the prophecies have been divinely sequestered from the beginning. Heretofore, no expositor of Daniel has been able to interpret their meanings with certainty, nor has any expositor been able to correlate all of the prophesied events with events in history. Acclaimed Torah sages and Talmudists, renowned Bible scholars and theologians, even one universally-recognized scientific genius—Sir Isaac Newton—all have strived to produce the definitive exposition of the Danielic prophecies, and all have come up short of achieving their goal. Their labors over the centuries have produced valuable insights and thought-provoking interpretations that have advanced our understanding of biblical prophecy, yet one undeniable fact remains: Every single exposition of the chrono-specific predictive prophecies in Daniel published prior to modern times has now been shown by history to be inaccurate.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Appendix One: Background Notes on the Book of Daniel* on page 123.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 BCE, after the Battle of Carchemish.

<sup>3</sup> Dan. 12:9: *“And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end”* (KJV).

Expositions of the Danielic prophecies published in recent years have proven to be unsatisfactory in various ways as well. All too often, modern expositors have used what I call “approximations of history” as substitutes for exact fulfillments of prophesied events. That method of interpretation is typical of the most popular interpretations of Daniel, chapter 8. Other expositors, in an attempt to achieve the precision expected of biblical prophecy, have gone to the opposite extreme, employing esoteric “prophetic calendars” and using complicated mathematical formulas to interpret the chrono-specific prophecies. The most popular of these manipulations depends on using a 360-day “prophetic year” for which evidence is found nowhere in the Bible, Jewish history, or astronomy. This latter method of interpretation is quite often associated with interpretations of Daniel, chapter 9. Additionally, many modern expositors, unable to find exact matches in history for events mentioned in the prophetic text, have simply consigned all such events to an indeterminate “end time” by default, with no justification for doing so other than the fact that the events do not fit anywhere else in their interpretive scheme. Still others have forgotten that the Danielic prophecies are focused almost exclusively on explaining the redemptive history of God’s people and nation Israel. These and similar interpretive errors have produced frequently well-received but nonetheless flawed interpretations of the Danielic prophecies.

Before continuing, however, let me be quick to emphasize that the above comments are not motivated by any desire for one-upmanship on my part, nor are they intended to disparage in any way the work of previous Daniel expositors by calling into question their biblical scholarship or spiritual integrity. Over the years, their efforts to expound Daniel have edified and sustained the faithful through good times and bad, and for that alone they deserve our respect. Instead, the comments are simply pointing out the obvious—that God, after giving the chrono-specific prophecies to Daniel in Babylon, directed that they be sealed up until the time of the end. That act of divine sealing made it impossible for any expositor to expound them fully until the appointed time had arrived. No matter how clever the interpreter and diligent the effort, a definitive exposition of the Danielic prophecies simply could not be done until then. Even Daniel himself wrote that he did not understand everything that had been revealed to him.<sup>1</sup> The prophecies were sealed up, and that was that. Yet, the Bible clearly indicated that they would be unsealed for full understanding at the time of the end.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan. 12:8: “*And I [Daniel] heard, but I understood not: ...*” (KJV).

So, is there any indication of when the “time of the end” foretold in Daniel will begin?<sup>1</sup> Yes, there is. Biblical prophecy and recent Jewish history indicate that we are already living in those prophesied days. The emergence of Zionism in the late 1800s, the Palestine Mandate approved by the League of Nations in 1922, the Holocaust during WWII and the subsequent influx of Jews seeking refuge in Palestine after the war, the partition of Palestine by the United Nations in 1947, the declaration of the nation of Israel in 1948, and the passage of the Law of Return in 1950, all of these events taken together are an unmistakable end-time indicator to those who believe the prophecies that require a regathered Jewish people living in *Eretz-Israel*<sup>2</sup> at the end of days. Even without the hindsight we enjoy today, those events, once underway, indicated a clear eschatological progression that should not have been ignored by Bible scholars at the time, although most did so back then. Even the early Zionist leaders themselves did not embrace eschatology as the primary justification for seeking support for their movement. Nevertheless, the modern rebirth of Israel as a sovereign nation in Palestine was a prophetic turning point. That event, followed by the accelerated ingathering of Jews from around the world that began soon thereafter, signaled that the time of the end was at last underway.<sup>3</sup> This meant that it would henceforth be possible for the prophecies in Daniel to be unsealed at any time. The stage was set.

Meanwhile, as the events of Jewish national rebirth were reaching their climax during the late 1940s, I was experiencing my earliest childhood years, far too young to realize that those events were setting the stage for the unsealing of the Danielic prophecies. Nor could I foresee that the process of understanding them would one day involve me. My spiritual awakening came many years later, when my curiosity about things sacred was overnight quickened by God. For days on end, I was filled with an around-the-clock desire to read the Bible, and given clarity of mind to understand what I was reading as I read. During this period of biblical immersion, I was especially drawn to the prophecies in Daniel, and my attention was repeatedly focused on the chrono-specific prophecy in the eighth chapter. Unfamiliarity with the historical details that provide context to the events described in Daniel soon compelled me to supplement my Bible study with a survey of ancient Jewish history, and that research ended up exposing me

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “time of the end” does not mean “end of the world” or “the end of time”; the word “time” used as a chronological unit in Daniel denotes a time period, not a moment.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew-to-English transliteration meaning “Land of Israel” (*i.e.*, the promised land).

<sup>3</sup> See *Appendix Seven: The Modern Nation of Israel - Is it Biblical?* on page 195.

to the details of modern Jewish history, and specifically to Israeli history. It was the latter exposure that would provide the key that unlocked everything.

The breakthrough moment—the instant of insight when I first considered the possibility that the chrono-specific prophecy in the eighth chapter of Daniel might have had a modern fulfillment—came in the spring of 1974, while I was reading a magazine article about the Six-Day War miraculously won by Israel in 1967. After finishing the paragraphs describing the liberation of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem by Israeli paratroopers on the morning of June 7, the third day of the war, I was struck by how closely the outcome of that event (*i.e.*, return of the Temple Mount to Jewish sovereignty) matched the fulfillment event of the prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, verse 14: "... [then] *the sanctuary will be restored to its rightful state*" (CJB). I wondered if it was possible that that event, which had happened before the cameras of the world seven years earlier for anyone with eyes to see, was now begging to be recognized as a fulfillment of ancient Hebrew prophecy? I was unaware of any Bible scholars who had come forward to single out that event as being an exact prophetic fulfillment in the years since it had occurred (only a few had), so I exercised caution, resisting the urge to embrace such a radical interpretation of events without solid biblical justification for doing so. And, not wanting to be a source of error, I was reluctant to share my discovery publicly. Consequently, many years of Bible study would transpire before I overcame my doubts by finding confirmation that the 1967 event was in fact a fulfillment of prophecy.

More than three decades have now passed since I understood how to correctly interpret the chrono-specific prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8. That breakthrough in understanding, and the gradual strengthening of faith that resulted as I went through the decades-long process of questioning my interpretation against the Scriptures, opened the door to more understanding. Knowledge gained from the eighth chapter eventually provided the key for determining the starting point for working out the chronology of Daniel, chapter 12. The additional knowledge gained from the twelfth chapter provided the key for understanding the meanings of the chronological terms "season" and "time" that are required for assembling the continuous time lines of Jewish history that provide the chronological framework for understanding the remaining prophecies in Daniel. And so it went, year after year, as I continued to study and pray for understanding. I soon found that the more I understood about one prophecy, the more I was able to understand about another, with the result that over time, one by one, all of the chrono-specific prophecies in Daniel were unsealed to reveal their secrets.

This book interprets the chrono-specific prophecies passed down to us in chapters 4 and 7-12 of the Book of Daniel, and it explains in detail how those predictive prophecies have been fulfilled in history. More specifically, it explains how they have been fulfilled in Jewish history. Beginning with the chrono-specific prophecy in the eighth chapter of Daniel, the prophecies are explained in the order that they were understood. As you evaluate for yourself the exposition of the prophecies set forth in this book, it is important that you keep two principles of interpretation firmly in mind: First, a chrono-specific predictive prophecy, when fulfilled, will always have an exact fulfillment in real time. Second, that fulfillment will match the biblical text and recorded history exactly. Those two principles are based on the assumption that the prophecies in Daniel were given for our edification, and that they can be understood. Thus, as you will see, the interpretations offered in this book are clear and precise, not interpretations based on arcane, approximate, incomplete, or unverifiable fulfillments.

You will also quickly discover that the interpretations of the chrono-specific Danielic prophecies set forth herein are anything but traditional. Giving them a fair reading may require that you set aside eschatological assumptions and familiar interpretations that you have read in other commentaries. If you will do so, however, following the explanations in the order presented and evaluating each prophecy with respect to the contribution it makes to the overall chronology of Jewish history, I can assure you that the interpretations will fit together to give undeniable evidence of God's sovereign presence in the affairs of mankind. And, as you begin to understand for yourself that the prophecies in Daniel were sealed in antiquity, preserved as a divine testimony for this appointed time, and unsealed as promised for understanding by this generation, my hope is that you will be inspired to join with me in giving praise to the Living God of the Bible:

*“O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will  
praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans  
formed of old, faithful and sure.” – ISAIAH 25:1 (ESV)*

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***Before reading the expository chapters ...***

You should become familiar with the “Prophecy Overview” chart on PLATE 1, which is conveniently located at the end of this book for quick reference.