

## I, DANIEL, UNDERSTOOD

The Book of Daniel<sup>1</sup> is the record of divine revelation given to the people of ancient Israel through the Hebrew prophet<sup>2</sup> and seer Daniel more than twenty-five-hundred years ago. In its pages are found prophecies unlike any others in the Bible, detailed predictive prophecies that set forth a comprehensive chronology encompassing the history of the Jewish people from the time of the exile in Babylon<sup>3</sup> down to the present day. Despite their evident specificity, though, the chrono-specific prophecies in Daniel have been impossible for anyone to interpret conclusively over the years. The reason why they have defied interpretation for so long is explained in the text of Daniel itself. There we are told that the prophecies were sealed up in Babylon by an angel of God. At the same time, we are told why the prophecies were sealed—so as to keep them from being understood until the time of the end.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, a survey of the many contradictory interpretations of the Danielic prophecies published in the years since they were handed down provides confirmation that their exact meanings have been divinely sequestered from the beginning. Over the centuries, no expositor has interpreted all of the prophecies with any degree of certainty, nor has anyone been able to correlate all of the prophesied events with events documented in history. Acclaimed Torah sages and Talmudists, world-renowned Bible scholars, even one universally recognized scientific genius—Sir Isaac Newton—all have strived to produce the definitive exposition of the prophecies, and all of them have come up short of achieving their goal. Their labors have produced valuable insights and thought-provoking interpretations that have advanced our understanding of biblical prophecy. Still, one undeniable fact remains: Every exposition of the chrono-specific prophecies in Daniel published prior to modern times has now been shown by the events of history to have been inaccurate or incomplete in some substantial way.

Expositions of Daniel published in recent years have proven to be unsatisfactory in various ways as well. All too often, modern expositors have relied on using approximations of history as substitutes for exact fulfillments of prophesied events. This method of close-is-good-enough interpretation is typical of most contemporary expositions of Daniel, chapter 8, for example. Other expositors, in an attempt to achieve the precision necessary for claiming an exact fulfillment of a chrono-specific biblical prophecy, have gone to the opposite extreme, such as resorting to complicated mathematical formulas based on a postulated 360-day “prophetic year” that matches nothing in the Bible, Jewish history, or observable astronomy. This latter method of chronological manipulation is most often associated with expositions

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<sup>1</sup> See *Appendix One: Background Notes on the Book of Daniel* on p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel never referred to himself as a prophet in the Book of Daniel, even though he did see visions and record prophecies.

<sup>3</sup> 605-536 B.C.E.; Daniel is assumed to have been taken captive to Babylon after the Battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C.E.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel 12:9: “*And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end*” (KJV).

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 unmatched events to the time of the end by default, with no justification for doing so other than the fact that the events do not fit anywhere else in their interpretive scheme. These and similar exegetic compromises have produced frequently well-received but nevertheless flawed interpretations of the Danielic prophecies.

Before continuing, let me acknowledge that the above comments may seem to be unflattering criticism at first read. However, they are not meant to disparage in any way the fine work of previous expositors of Daniel, nor are they calling into question the scholarship or spiritual integrity of the many dedicated expositors who have provided commentaries in years past. Their efforts have edified and sustained the faithful through good times and bad, and for that alone they deserve our appreciation and respect. Instead, the comments are simply pointing out the obvious—that God, after giving the chrono-specific prophecies to Daniel, immediately 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 specified time of the end had arrived. No matter how clever the interpreter and diligent the effort, a definitive exposition of the 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, and that was that. Yet, the Bible clearly foretold that they would be unsealed for full understanding at the time of the end.

Recent Jewish history indicates that we are now living in the appointed time of the end. Events central to the Jewish people—the birth of Zionism<sup>2</sup> in 1897, the Palestine Mandate passed by the League of Nations in 1922, the Holocaust in Europe during World War II, the influx of Jews seeking refuge in their ancestral homeland in Palestine after the war, the partition of Palestine by the United Nations in 1947, and the establishment of the modern nation of Israel there in 1948—all of these events taken together are an unmistakable end-time indicator to those who believe the biblical prophecies that require a regathered Jewish people living in *Eretz-Israel*<sup>3</sup> at the end of days. Collectively, those events are an eschatological benchmark that should not have been overlooked by Bible expositors at the time they were happening, although most did so back then. Even the Zionist leaders themselves did not claim eschatological meaning for their movement. Nevertheless, the rebirth of Israel as an independent nation in Palestine was a prophetic turning point. That event, and the accelerated ingathering of Jews from nations all around the world that began immediately afterwards, confirmed for Bible believers that the time of the end was at last underway.<sup>4</sup> This meant that it would henceforth be possible for the chrono-specific prophecies in Daniel to be unsealed by God at any time. The stage was set.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan. 12:8: “*And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?*” (KJV).

<sup>2</sup> a worldwide Jewish movement for the establishment in Palestine of a national homeland for Jews.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew-to-English transliteration meaning “Land of Israel” (*i.e.*, the land promised to the Children of Israel by God).

<sup>4</sup> See *Appendix Five: The Modern Nation of Israel - Is it Biblical?* on p. 105.

Meanwhile, as the events of Jewish national rebirth were reaching their climax in Europe and Palestine during the 1940s, I was experiencing my early childhood years in America, far too young to take note of those events or realize their importance for signaling the unsealing of the chrono-specific prophecies in the Book of Daniel. Nor could I foresee that the process of understanding the prophecies would one day involve me. My spiritual awakening came years later, as I was heading into my thirty-second year, when my curiosity about things sacred was quickened by God. Quite literally overnight, I was filled with an overwhelming desire to read the Bible around the clock for days on end, and given clarity of mind to understand what I was reading as I read. During this period of spiritual immersion and illumination, 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 required that I supplement my Bible study with a review of ancient Jewish history, and that research resulted in my exposure to the details of modern Jewish history as well. It was the latter that provided the key that unlocked everything.

The breakthrough moment—the instant when I first suspected that the prophecy in the eighth chapter of Daniel might have a modern fulfillment—came in the spring of 1974, while I was reading an account of the Six-Day War that had been fought and won by Israel in 1967. After finishing the portion describing the capture of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem by Israeli army paratroopers on the morning of June 7, the third day of the war, I was struck by how closely the result of the capture—the return of Old Jerusalem and 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 asked myself if it was possible that this then-recent event, which had happened literally before my eyes on television seven years earlier, was now to be considered the fulfillment of that ancient Hebrew prophecy? I was aware that, in the interval since it had occurred, no respected Bible scholar had come forward to single out that event as being a prophetic fulfillment, so I was cautious at first. I resisted the inner voice urging me to embrace a new interpretation, especially without further support from the Bible for doing so. Additional years of Bible study and prayer would transpire before I overcame my doubt by finding the Scriptural confirmation needed to support a modern event as a true prophetic fulfillment.

More than three decades have 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 my faith that resulted as I went through the decade-long process of questioning my interpretation against Scripture until I was certain of its accuracy, opened the door to more understanding. The knowledge gained from the interpretation of Daniel, chapter 8, provided the key for determining the chronological starting point for working out the interpretation of Daniel, chapter 12. Then, the added knowledge gained from understanding 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 that

provide the framework for understanding the remaining prophecies in Daniel. And so it went, year after year, as I continued to study and pray and seek 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.

The interpretations of the Danielic prophecies understood thus far, and the steps in the process of understanding that led to those interpretations, are explained in the pages that follow. The prophecies are presented in the order that I understood them, beginning with the all-important chrono-specific prophecy in the eighth chapter of Daniel. As you read the interpretations set forth in this exposition, you will find them to be non-traditional. Giving them a fair hearing may require that you set aside eschatological assumptions and traditional interpretations that you have read in Bible commentaries, or heard expounded at prophecy conferences, on television and radio, and in your local church or synagogue. If you will but follow the presentations set forth herein, however, reserving final judgement and keeping in mind the overall chronological framework into which the individual prophecies fit,<sup>1</sup> I can assure you that it will all come together and make sense in the end. And, as you begin to understand for yourself that the prophecies in Daniel were passed down from antiquity as a divine testimony specifically to those of us living in this end-time generation, my hope and prayer for you 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 in praise, I will extol your fame. For you have done extraordinary things, and executed plans made long ago exactly as you decreed.” – ISAIAH 25:1 (NET)*



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<sup>1</sup> The “Prophecy Overview” chart (see PLATE 1 located on inside front cover) provides an easy-to-locate reference that will help you visualize the chronological relationships between the prophecies explained in the expository chapters of this book.