

Understanding More About the End Times

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Understanding More About the End Times

In 605BC Nebuchadnezzar, King of the great Babylonian Empire, sent his conquering hordes west. From the heart of Babylon, located in present day Iraq, they swept through the Promised Land. Israel could not withstand the onslaught, and Jerusalem was besieged and taken.

The Temple was destroyed. The holy vessels were claimed and carried back to Babylon and presented to the pagan god Marduk, whom the Hebrews called Baal. It was a dark period of history for the Hebrews.

To top it off, the merciless Nebuchadnezzar sent the chief of his palace staff to find the best of the Hebrew youths; those of royal lineage, as well as those with special skills of wisdom or other outstanding gifts. All were to be exceptional physical specimens. In effect, he was to identify the next generation of Hebrew leadership, Israel's hope for the future.

The cream of the crop was taken to Babylon, where it was originally Nebuchadnezzar's intention that they lose their Jewish identity. They were to live in the royal palace, eat the King's food and study political science at the University of Babylon. They would enhance the Babylonian Empire as they betrayed Israel's future.

Think about it. It would have been the most bitter of defeats to be conquered in your homeland, and have your future carried away to be used against you. However, God had prepared a "way out" for the Hebrews and among the captives was a young man named Daniel.

What you've read so far is history. It's documented in secular text as well as in Scripture. History tells us what happened, but the Bible tells us "why" it happened.

The Babylonian Captivity (605-536BC) was the first of a series of "Cycles of Discipline" for Israel. God told them that if they rebelled against keeping His Law, they would be expelled from the Promised Land. This happened first at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. It happened again in 132BC at the hands of the Romans, a dispersion that lasted until 1948. And it will happen again at the hands of the dynamic leader of a new Roman Empire, who is destined to plunge the world order into the Tribulation in our time.

Now, let's get back to Daniel since this is where most of the information concerning the present age is (aside from the book of Revelation.) Daniel was given the gift of prophesy. Just like all of us enjoy reading about the prophesies of Nostradamus (who also predicts along the same lines as Daniel), Daniel was chosen by God to become part of the actual Bible. Therefore, we will study Daniel instead of Nostradamus.

Daniel predicted the rising political-military entity of the Medo-Persian Empire which was to come to world dominance in 536BC. (He predicted this in 550BC, 14 years before it happened.) The empire of Greece would come some 225 years later. Daniel 8 particularly concerns the Medo-Persian and Greek world empires.

Ancient Persia is modern day Iran, though having fallen far from their position of power and world prominence she once enjoyed. The Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran sought to restore his nature to a position of world power, but despite his best efforts, Iran continues as a mere shadow of her former glory.

Daniel's prophecy goes on to mention a "he-goat," which is symbolic for Greece, which comes from the "ram" which is Persia (Daniel 8:6-7). The two

world empires will fight to see who will be number one. In the end, Greece superseded the Medo-Persian Empire.

Then, in his prophecy, the "he-goat's" great horn was broken and in its place came four notable ones. At the height of his power, Alexander the Great dies in the city of Babylon at the age of 32. History tells us he dies a confirmed alcoholic, wallowing in sorrow because there were no more worlds to conquer.

Following his death, the empire was divided into 4 parts. Of these four parts, the north and south were the most significant, politically, militarily, and economically. Syria, to the north, and Egypt to the south, came into predominance.

Then a power struggle broke out. For about 125 years (325-198BC) Egypt and Syria fought an on-going, off-again civil war, both seeking to establish their preeminence in the world.

Israel, the Promised Land, lies between Egypt and Syria and became the battlefield, as well as a spoil of war. Egypt and Syria fought a running battle as to who would be number one in the world, and who would possess the Promised Land.

Nearly 400 years in advance, Daniel prophesied the rise of the Syrian king we know by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Antiochus Epiphanes came to power in Syria, and extended his dominance towards Egypt, Medo-Persia and Palestine. The "little horn" described in Daniel 8:9 grows out of the 3rd world empire, and refers to the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes, who severely persecuted the Jews from 171BC to 165BC.

When the people went back into the land in 536BC, they rebuilt the Temple and resumed

services and sacrifices. They did that until 168BC when Antiochus Epiphanes set himself up as ruler in Israel, and put an end to it.

Just as he persecuted the Jews, casting them to the ground, so he cast the truth of the Bible to the ground, and walked on the revelation of the holiness of God.

Daniel prophesies that Antiochus Epiphanes will rule over Israel for 2300 days, or 6½ prophetic years. History bears out that from 171BC to 165BC (or 6½ years), Antiochus Epiphanes did whatever he wished to the land of Israel.

The Syrian army, under his leadership, invaded the land and established dominance over Israel. In those days, when you conquered a land of people, you made them pay taxes. The conquering nation exacted tribute from the conquered, so that their own citizens would not have to pay taxes.

The Jews didn't like paying taxes any more than we do, so they decided, "We've had enough of this. We're going to revolt." And they refused to pay taxes. That worked until Antiochus Epiphanes got the word, and of course, he wasn't too happy about it. He was going to have to change his life-style if his income was reduced. So he headed back into Palestine to put down this tax-payer's revolt and settle the problem once and for all, by forcing Greek culture on the Jews.

He determined to "Hellenize" the Jews and make good Greeks out of them. To do that, first he looted the Temple, which was a very significant act. In that society, banking did not exist as we know it today. You didn't go down to the local bank on the corner, stick in a 24-hour bank card and transact your business. Banking transactions were conducted in the temples, both Jewish and heathen. Not only did he take all the gold and

silver vessels used in the Mosaic worship; he also took over the banking and bank assets of Israel.

Now bear with me. This Antiochus Epiphanes, who came on the scene back in 171BC and worked his awful works against the Jews, pictures someone else who will arrive in the end time. Daniel's prophecy gave us a double reference, meaning it will have a double fulfillment.

It was fulfilled once in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes and it will be fulfilled a second time in a person yet future to our own day. That person, Antichrist, will go far beyond anything Antiochus Epiphanes has done. But the reign of Antiochus gives us the backdrop against which God portrays the second face of Antichrist.

Okay, I guess your wondering why the long history lesson. It's because so many people are going around today telling others about the End-Time and scaring them to death — trying to force them to be saved.

While I pray that everyone reading this article is (or becomes) saved — nobody is telling people the reason "why" these are the End-Times. That is why it is so important to research and study people who prophesy and do it consistently correct. When we find that trait in a person well versed in Bible prophesy, we should listen to what that person has to say. Daniel was one of those people who not only predicted events after his death, but 2,000+ years after his death.

If you don't believe the fact that the times we are living in are all a part of Bible prophecy, you haven't studied hard enough. But instead of weeping and holding on for dear life — give your heart and soul to God. You'll find it to be a pleasant and comforting addition to your everyday life and you will look forward to prophecy being fulfilled as an exciting time.

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