

TWO PROPHETIC ERRORS

POST-MILLENNIALISM AND DISPENSATIONALISM

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PROLOGUE: THE 'MARK OF THE BEAST' IS HERE!

STARTING: WITH DANIEL'S 70th WEEK

In the past, at the beginning of each page in the **Prophecy Section** of this journal, I used to ask this question: 'Do you know what time it is?' I then explained the 70th Week of Daniel, and how close at hand the second coming of Jesus Christ truly is.



I explained how that, after examining Daniel chapter 9 and Jesus' Olivet Discourse, we can realize that the **MIDPOINT** of Daniel's 70th Week is Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in **70 AD**. And then I explained that, after examining the **FOUR VISIONS** of John's Little Book (Revelation 11-13), we can fully understand the entire Week:



ADDING: CLARIFICATION ABOUT THE 'MARK'

But now after more recent Bible study, and my continued observation of world events, I have concluded that another important aspect of 'the last days' has come; the 'Mark of the Beast'. It is a 'Mark' that the False Prophet will impose upon the entire world:

The False Prophet causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a **Mark FROM** their right hand or **FROM** their foreheads. And that no one may buy or sell except one who has the **Mark**, or an official name from the Beast, or an official number associated with his official name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number from the Beast, for it is the (identification) number of each man. That number is 666. Revelation 13:16-18

Until recently I had suspected that the 'Mark of the Beast' might be a bar code or QR code tattooed upon a person's skin. Or that it might be an RFID chip inserted underneath a person's skin. But with more recent study I have discovered that, in the original Greek of Revelation 13:16 (above), the words 'forehead' and 'hand' were not written in the **DATIVE** case (indicating that something is being done **TO** them). Rather they were written in the **GENITIVE** case; indicating that something is being taken **FROM** a person's forehead or hand.

And the Greek word translated 'mark' can also be translated as an 'image' or 'impression' of something. And so I now believe that the Beast's 'Mark' is actually a scan taken from people's faces and hands. These comprise the biometric data being collected today by many nations. And it will all come together in a worldwide system of human registration.

This registration of people will be comprised of three things; all three of which are described in Revelation 13:17:

- 1) Biometric scans (markings or images) taken from faces and hands.
- 2) An official legal name assigned by the Beast system.
- 3) An official number connected to the person's official name.

And that no one may buy or sell except one who has 1) the scan (mark, image or impression), and 2) an official name from the Beast, and 3) an official number associated with his official name. Revelation 13:17

I have not yet identified the Beast's official numbering system, based upon a 6-6-6 format. But God is just and fair. And so when the Beast's 'number' does come, I trust that it will be obvious.

My concern, however, regards the fact that all of us are already accustomed to using facial recognition and fingerprint technology. And so the Mark (**SCAN**) of the Beast will just seem like a harmless improvement upon the status quo. For a further discussion of the False Prophet and his 'Mark', I refer my visitor to my page titled '**Understanding the False Prophet**'.

In Revelation God has warned that those who embrace this 'Mark' will suffer **never-ending** torment in the 'Lake of Fire and Brimstone'. And so I am placing this message regarding the 'Mark' at the beginning of every page in this web site. What each of us does now in response to the False Prophet's 'Mark' will determine our eternal destinies:

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice "If anyone worships the Beast and his image and embraces his **SCAN**, taken from his own forehead or from his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God; which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever. And they have no rest day or night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whoever receives the **SCAN** associated with his own name." Here is the patience of the saints. Here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:9-12

CONCLUSION: WE NEED TO FOCUS

And so combining a knowledge of **1)** how close the second coming of Christ is, together with **2)** a better understanding of the 'Mark of the Beast', my warning is...

DO NOT SUBMIT TO THE MARK (SCAN**) OF THE BEAST!**

So what is it that God is calling Christians to do in this hour? To prepare for death. God now calls upon Christians to follow the three young Hebrew men, who went into the fiery furnace rather than deny their God (Daniel 3). And to follow Daniel, who risked the lion's den rather than to cease worshiping the one true God (Daniel 6). God calls upon Christians to hear His word and to understand the choice that now confronts all of mankind:

If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.
2 Timothy 2:12

And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Revelation 12:11

As I explain in my four pages on '**The Beast and its Three Allies**', the rise of Constantine to conquer the world under the banner of the Cross was seen by many as the TRIUMPH of Christianity. It represented God finally exercising dominion over the world; taking His great power and reigning (Revelation 11:17) through people and institutions authorized by Him.

This was the 'great falling away from the faith' that Paul said would accompany the rise of a 'man of sin' (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). And so today some 'professing Christians' portray the coming of artificial intelligence and other technologies as 'God saving the world'. It is hailed as the arrival of 'peace and safety' (1 Thessalonians 5:3), and of diversity, equity and inclusion. But the simple choice still confronts us. Will we embrace Constantine's 'victory'. Or will we go outside of the world's 'wide gate' (Matthew 7:13) and meet the Savior there?

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs. Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. Romans 8:16-17

Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate (of Jerusalem). Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.
Hebrews 13:12-14

THE MAJORITY VIEW ON JESUS' OLIVET DISCOURSE

For much of the history of the 'Christian Church' a great many Christians have understood that Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation'. They have reached this conclusion through a simple, side-by-side comparison of Matthew, Mark and Luke's versions of Jesus' Olivet Discourse. And by allowing Luke's version to shed light upon Matthew and Mark's, they have rightly concluded that 70 AD marks the **MIDPOINT** of Daniel's 70th Week, and the end of sacrifices and offerings in the Temple (Daniel 9:27).



JESUS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The three versions of the Olivet Discourse are essentially identical, except for Jesus' words about the approaching desolation of Jerusalem that would happen in 70 AD. Below I present this specific part of Jesus' message from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Matthew and Mark's versions are very similar to each other, describing the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple as Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation':

Matthew 24:15-16 When you therefore shall see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION** (spoken of by Daniel the prophet) stand in the holy place (whoso reads, let him understand), then **let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains**.

Mark 13:14 But when you shall see the **ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**, (spoken of by Daniel the prophet) standing where it ought not (let him that reads understand), then **let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains**.

But notice the difference in Luke's version:

Luke 21:20-21 And when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its **DESOLATION** is near. **Then let them who are in Judea flee to the mountains**.

Luke goes on to explain what the armies surrounding Jerusalem represent; the fulfillment of Jesus' warnings that God would soon bring terrible judgment upon Israel:

For these are the days of **VENGEANCE**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that nurse children in those days! For there shall be **GREAT DISTRESS** in the land, and **WRATH** upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the **SWORD**, and shall be led away **CAPTIVE** into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be **TRODDEN DOWN** by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Luke 21:22-24

Matthew and Mark were writing as Jews. The Jewish people understood what an 'abomination' that brought 'desolation' was; something extremely evil (like Satan) that could bring destruction. Gentiles, however, would not have been as familiar with Daniel or these Old Testament ideas.

But Luke was a Gentile, often writing to a Gentile audience. In addition Luke was a close acquaintance and frequent traveling companion of the Apostle Paul; the 'apostle to the Gentiles'. And so, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke presented Jesus' words in a form that Gentiles would understand.

This is why Matthew and Mark had to say 'let the reader understand'; warning people to be careful with Daniel's phrase, the 'Abomination of Desolation'. By contrast Luke's gospel is very plain and straightforward, requiring no such warning.

It might be fair to say that, up until the rise of Dispensationalism in the late 1800's, this view of the Olivet Discourse was by far the majority understanding in Protestant churches, as well as in the Latin and Greek churches. In fact, it may still be the majority opinion throughout the broader 'Christian World' today, despite Dispensationalism's widespread adoption.

POST-MILLENNIALISM

But while many Christians have correctly identified the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week, they often have not gone on to consider John's Little Book, and what its four visions reveal about the entire 70th Week. Instead, they have operated on the assumption that the 70th Week is just like the first 69 Weeks of Daniel's '70-Weeks Prophecy'; a 'week' of 7 regular calendar years.

And so by combining their belief that

- 1) 70 AD marks the midpoint of that Week, and...
- 2) The 70th Week is only 7 years long (or something close to that), they have concluded that...
- 3) We are now living in the next phase of God's prophetic schedule; the Millennium.

Some of these Christians believe that a second coming of Jesus did occur, invisibly, when He supposedly came to bring judgment upon Israel and to establish His Church as the Millennium began. And they believe that a visible, bodily return of Christ will also occur after (post) the Millennium. Hence the label: 'Post-Millennialism'.

Several beliefs are often associated with Post-Millennialism:

- 1) National Israel has now been forsaken by God, and replaced with the 'true Israel'; the Christian church. This has come to be known as '**Replacement Theory**'.
- 2) Christ will not come back until the Church has 'Christianized' and subdued the world. Many Postmillennialists believe that they must 'conquer the world for Christ' before He will come back to assume His kingdom and leadership. This has come to be known as '**Dominionism**'. And so rather than observe a clear separation between 'church and state', this view tends to blur that distinction. Indeed, some Postmillennialists believe that God wants them to 'become the state'.

3) Inherent within this idea, that God has ordained that the Church will subdue the world, is an inclination toward optimism about the future. Postmillennialists are confident that **a better world will come about through their efforts**. This worldview fuels their enthusiasm for Christian service.

POST-MILLENNIAL TRUTH: CORRECTLY PLACING DANIEL'S ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION AND THE MIDPOINT OF THE 70TH WEEK IN 70 AD

**POST-MILLENNIAL ERROR:
1) IGNORING JOHN'S LITTLE BOOK,
AND 2) CREATING A FICTIONAL MILLENNIAL NARRATIVE.**

DISPENSATIONAL PRE-MILLENNIALISM

However, even though Post-Millennialism (and an associated Millennial view known as A-Millennialism) became common within Protestant churches in Great Britain and Europe, there were Protestants who opposed the Post-Millennial view. Some of those opponents were found among the 'Plymouth Brethren' of Ireland and England. And in the mid-1800's one of their leaders was a man named John Nelson Darby. Darby was correctly convinced that...

- 1) The Millennium will follow the physical, bodily second coming of Christ; to conquer and judge a rebellious world. Hence the return of Christ will be Pre-Millennial.
- 2) National Israel had not been cast off and forgotten by God. The scriptures definitely foretell a restoration of national Israel under Christ, as the promised Son of David and joint heir of the 'promised land' with Abraham.
- 3) Pre-Millennialists hold a more pessimistic view of the days before Christ's second coming; days characterized by increasing moral deterioration and overt hostility toward God.

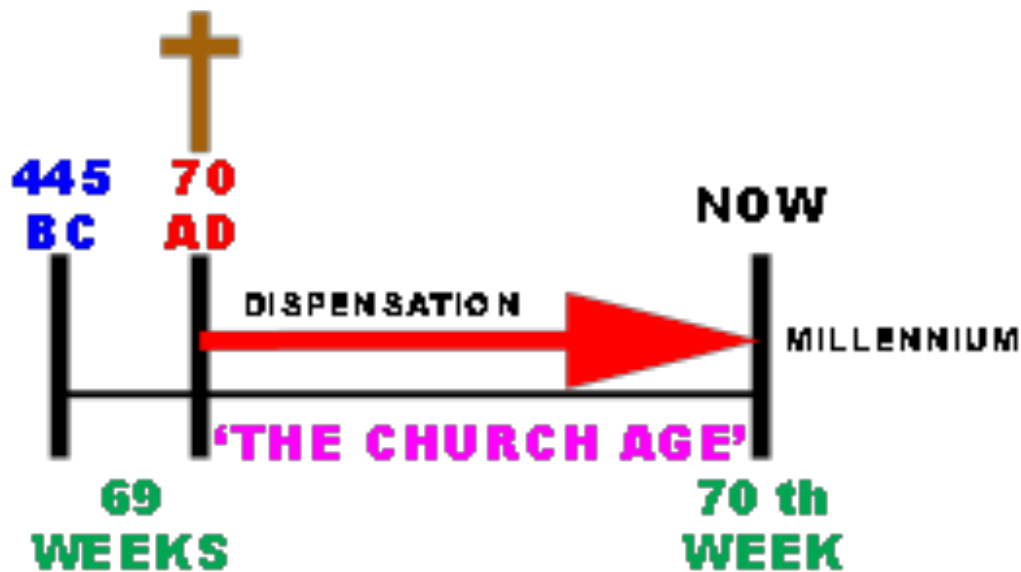
Because of this pessimistic Dispensational expectation, some Post-Millennialists refer to Pre-Millennialists as 'Pessi-Millennialists'. But the question needs to be asked: 'Is it reasonable to label anyone who believes that Christ will come to conquer sin and death, and to rule the world in righteousness and peace, a pessimist?'

I myself am Pre-Millennial in my views. This message is not critical of Pre-Millennialism. It is critical of the Dispensational version of Pre-Millennialism.

DARBY'S INVENTED GAP

Although Darby was correct in his views about the Millennium, he embraced the same mistake as the Post-Millennialists. He also assumed that the 70th Week is just like the first 69 weeks; a week of 7 literal years.

And so Darby felt compelled to separate the 70th Week from the first 69 weeks, pushing it out into the future; so that he could also move the Millennium (that follows the 70th Week) out into the future with it. Darby introduced a time gap between the 69th week and the 70th week that he called a divine 'Dispensation'.



Darby claimed that Israel's 'prophetic clock' stopped with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. And he taught that Israel's 'prophetic clock' would not start again until the beginning of the 70th Week. Darby called his gap between the 69th Week and the 70th Week the dispensation of 'the Church Age'.

This Dispensation of the 'Church Age' is the cornerstone of 'Darbyism' or 'Dispensationalism'. But in order to give their 'Church Age' credibility, Dispensationalists have gone on to divide all of human history into several successive 'divine dispensations'. And so they have turned Dispensationalism into a 'systematic theology'. This has served two purposes:

- 1) To add credibility to the 'Church Age', by portraying it as only one small part within a larger seamless 'whole'; one little 'gear' within the greater machinery of God's plans.
- 2) To obscure the fact that the 'Church Age' is the starting point, and the one and only unique characteristic of Dispensationalism.

INTERPRETIVE VIOLENCE

Darby knew that Daniel 9:27 placed the 'Abomination of Desolation' at the midpoint of the 70th Week:

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. But **in the middle of the week** He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation (which is determined) is poured out on the desolator. Daniel 9:27

And so if Darby was to move the 70th Week out into the future, he would have to find a way to move Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation' (mentioned by Matthew and Mark) out into the future with it. And so Darby argued that Jesus was referring to two different things in His Olivet Discourse; two different 'Abominations of Desolation':

- 1) Abominable Roman armies that would bring desolation upon Jerusalem in 70 AD, and...
- 2) Another 'abomination of desolation' in the middle of a far-future 70th Week of Daniel.

Darby relied upon a concept called 'Dual Fulfillment' to justify his claim. It is based upon the fact that in some cases a passage of prophetic scripture can find its fulfillment at two separate points in history. For example in Ezekiel chapter 28 the prophet was instructed to foretell the downfall of the king of Tyre. Yet it is obvious that at the same time God's words were describing the ultimate judgment and destruction of Satan.

Another example is of how both Isaiah chapter 47 and Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 foretold the destruction of ancient Babylon at the hands of the Persians around 538 BC. And yet it is clear that these passages also look ahead to the greater, final destruction of 'Babylon' that is the theme of Revelation chapter 18.

Dual Fulfillment is indeed a valid concept. But not when it tramples upon God's warning in Matthew and Mark: 'LET THE READER UNDERSTAND!' Instead of honoring this warning, and approaching this passage in a simple, careful and straightforward way (letting Luke shed light upon the words of Matthew and Mark), Darby chose to introduce complexity.

Dispensationalism insists that three separate eyewitness accounts of ONE message, given by ONE Man, on ONE day, to ONE group of people, in response to ONE vital question (when the Temple would be destroyed) are actually communicating TWO VERY DIFFERENT THINGS.

Dispensationalism portrays Jesus as talking out of both sides of His mouth (doubletalk), and of failing to be clear when He was giving one of the most important prophetic messages in the history of the world.

However well-intentioned Darby may have been, and correct about the Pre-Millennial return of Christ (and the errors of 'Replacement Theology' and 'Dominion Theology'), his decision to twist God's word in order to justify a 'Church Age' dispensation was a terrible mistake.

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH:
THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST WILL BE
PRE-MILLENNIAL.

DISPENSATIONAL ERROR:
1) MISHANDLING THE OLIVET DISCOURSE,
2) IGNORING JOHN'S LITTLE BOOK,
AND 3) CREATING A FICTIONAL 70th-WEEK NARRATIVE.

DUAL FULFILLMENT INDEED

Through the slight variance between Luke's account of Jesus' Olivet Discourse, and Matthew and Mark's versions, Jesus was indeed using 'dual fulfillment' to communicate truth. But Jesus was not presenting ONE prophecy that would be fulfilled in two separate events. The opposite was true. Jesus was presenting TWO separate prophetic verses (Daniel 9:26 and 9:27) that would be fulfilled in one event; Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

In Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse Jesus was referring to worldly armies; and the earthly historic perspective of Jerusalem's destruction that we find in Daniel 9:26. But in Matthew and Mark's versions Jesus was referring to the heavenly perspective of Jerusalem's destruction that we find in Daniel 9:27: a verse that describes three activities of Israel's Messiah after His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven:

- 1) Confirming the Abrahamic Covenant.
- 2) Bringing an end to the old Mosaic Temple and its animal sacrifices.
- 3) Casting Satan out of heaven and down to earth as a defeated 'abomination', who would then bring desolation.

What God has done with Jesus' Olivet Discourse is to bring a defeated Satan and the Beast of Revelation TOGETHER before the eyes of the world, in the historic moment when their partnership first began; 70 AD. This was when a doomed archangel (cast out of heaven and down to the earth) reorganized the Roman Empire. Satan authorized and empowered Vespasian (and his son Titus) to become the next Roman dynasty; and thus to become tools in Satan's hands for venting his rage against the Jewish people:

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! Isaiah 14:12

The dragon gave the Beast his power, his throne and great authority. So the world worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the Beast, and they worshiped the Beast, saying 'Who is like the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?' Revelation 13:2,4

And the people of a prince (Titus) who is to come shall destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. Jerusalem's end shall be as though a flood had hit it. And until the end of the war desolations are determined. Daniel 9:26

Now when the Dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman (Israel) who gave birth to the male Child (Jesus). So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. Revelation 12:13,15

Satan is the 'Abomination of Desolation' of Daniel 9:27, who would use the 7-headed 10-horned Beast of Revelation to launch a 'flood of destruction' against Israel and the Jewish people; one that would continue for centuries. And it is this same doomed archangel who is still working through the nations of the world today, to complete the destruction of Israel and the Jews.

PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS

In the first web pages of this prophecy section, I have provided the complete and correct explanation of Daniel's 70-Weeks Prophecy. And then building upon that primary framework of the 70th Week, I have also provided accurate prophetic explanations of Israel, the Beast, the False Prophet, Rome and the United States. A correct understanding of the 70th Week is the absolutely necessary starting point for an understanding of these other prophetic subjects, and is foundational to true Christian preparedness and perseverance in these last days.

In those nine prophecy pages I chose not to comment on Post-millennialism or Dispensationalism. Instead I have simply let the proverbial 'lion' out of its cage; letting truth defend itself. But having done that, I believe it's also necessary to 'call out error'. We are admonished by God to use spiritual truth to pull down every 'stronghold' that exalts itself against the accurate knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:4). And so in this page on prophetic errors I am doing that.

Both Post-Millennialism and Dispensationalism have left many in darkness. I will not say much more about Post-Millennialism. They are guilty of omission: the lazy 'sin of neglect'. Having correctly identified the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week, they have decided to 'rest upon their laurels', and have refused to consider the possibility that there is more to know:

**And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.
1 Corinthians 8:2**

Dispensationalism's sin, however, is one of commission; the 'sin of aggression'. Dispensationalism began by assaulting Jesus' Olivet Discourse. And since then they have twisted the rest of scripture in order to make it say what they want it to say.

BEGINNING AT DANIEL 9:27

In my page titled **Daniel's 70-Weeks Prophecy**, I divide Daniel 9:27 into its three sentences; and then I explain each one. Daniel 9:27 reads like this:

- 1) Then he will confirm a covenant with many **for one week** (the 70th week).
- 2) But in the **middle** of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt.
- 3) And on the wing of abominations will come **one who destroys**, until the decreed end is poured out upon the **one who destroys**. Daniel 9:27, New English Translation

In that page I point out that there are only two possible choices regarding the 'he' in this verse; it must be one of the two persons referred to in the previous verse, Daniel 9:26. It must be either

- 1) Israel's Messiah, or...
- 2) A prince of the Roman people (who would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple.)

And then I go on to explain why it is Israel's Messiah who is the subject. The 27th verse reveals the three things that Jesus would be able to do as a result of His death:

- 1) Confirm the Abrahamic Covenant.
- 2) Bring an end to the old Mosaic Covenant.
- 3) Cast Satan out of heaven and down to earth; a winged abomination who would bring desolation (destruction).

Dispensationalists, however, have embraced the other choice. They claim that the 'he' of Daniel 9:27 is the 'prince who is to come' from Daniel 9:26. And here Dispensationalists use the 'doubletalk' of 'dual fulfillment' to propose two princes:

- 1) To acknowledge that this 'prince' may indeed be Titus in 70 AD.
- 2) But to propose that Titus also **foreshadows** another future prince; who will become an 'abomination of desolation' in the middle of a far-future '70th Week'.

This creation of two 'princes' out of Daniel 9:26 is the very cornerstone of Dispensationalism. For Dispensationalists this 'future prince' is also the apostle Paul's 'Man of Sin', and the apostle John's 'Antichrist' (both rolled up into one person). And this 'Man of Sin'/Antichrist will supposedly fulfill the three sentences of Daniel 9:27 in the following ways:

- 1) He will establish a new covenant with the Jewish people at the beginning of a future '70th Week'; a week of 7 regular years.
- 2) He will bring an end to Jewish sacrifices and offerings in the middle of that 'Week'.
- 3) He will become an 'abomination of desolation' by standing in the Temple and calling himself God.

In order to refute this Dispensational fiction, I will discuss the four people whom they use to create and support their false narrative:

- 1) PAUL'S MAN OF SIN (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)
- 2) ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES (found in Daniel chapter 11)
- 3) THE ANTICHRIST (found in the 1st and 2nd epistles of the Apostle John)
- 4) THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL CHAPTER 8

PAUL'S MAN OF SIN

Paul's 'man of sin' is described in 2 Thessalonians:

Let no man deceive you by any means. For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. So that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

For centuries Protestant Christians have understood Paul's 'Man of Sin' to be the Roman Catholic priesthood. The Roman Catholic priesthood steals the three divine offices of Jesus Christ: Prophet, Priest and King.

Rome's priests portray themselves as God in three ways:

- 1) Beginning with Constantine, and his Council of Nicea, Rome began to confer upon itself the prophetic authority to not only decide what the Bible says, but also eventually to add to the Bible.
- 2) Also beginning with Constantine, priestly authority to administer 'saving sacraments' began to be embraced (a concept called 'sacramentalism'). Eventually Roman priests would claim that they are offering the living body and blood of Christ before God in the Catholic Mass; as an atonement for people's sins.

The author of Hebrews tells us that this is a Priesthood reserved for the Son of God alone; that He alone is God who has stood in the heavenly Temple of God with His own blood (Hebrews 9:24). The Bible says that we must come directly to Jesus to be saved. But Rome says that we must come to Rome to be saved.

- 3) Beginning with Constantine, Rome's leadership has claimed kingly authority to declare and wage 'holy war' under the banner of the cross; thus making Rome the 'king of kings, and lord of lords'.

And before going any further, I would add two things:

- A) The biblical word 'desolation' always means severe destruction; often as a judgment from God. The world experienced desolation in the flood of Noah's day. Sodom and Gomorrah experienced desolation. Jerusalem experienced desolation at the hands of Babylon in 586 BC, and again at the hands of Rome in 70 AD. And 'Babylon the Great' will someday be made desolate (Revelation 17:16, 18:19).
- B) There is nothing said by Paul (in 2 Thessalonians) about the 'Man of Sin' confirming covenants, bringing an end to sacrifices and offerings, or desolating anything.

Darby departed from this common Protestant perspective on Paul's 'Man of Sin', because he believed that he had found a 'precedent' that would enable him to call Paul's 'Man of Sin' an 'abomination of desolation'.

That 'precedent' was Antiochus IV Epiphanes (A4E). Darby claimed that God Himself had called A4E an 'abomination of desolation' in Daniel 11:31, because A4E had called himself God while standing in the Temple in Jerusalem in 167 BC. And so Darby proposed that it was therefore reasonable to view Paul's 'Man of Sin' as an 'abomination of desolation' also.

Darby and the Dispensationalists have made much of A4E's last name; 'Epiphanes'. It means 'God revealed' or 'God manifested'. And it is certainly reasonable to believe that A4E was arrogant, and that at some point he may have even called himself 'God' as he stood in Jerusalem's Temple. It was not uncommon for kings and rulers in his day to attribute divinity to themselves, and to demand reverence or worship from others.

But for Dispensationalists this question is about more than a simple examination of history and the scriptures. For them it is a matter of life and death. The entire Dispensational narrative desperately hangs upon one question; "Did God indeed call Antiochus IV Epiphanes an 'abomination of desolation' in Daniel 11:31?"

SETTING THE STAGE: DANIEL 11:29-31

After the famous Greek general, Alexander the Great, finished conquering much of the world, he died a short time later in 323 BC. After his death his Greek Empire was divided among his generals into four smaller Greek kingdoms. The people of Israel found themselves living between two of those kingdoms; the Seleucid kingdom to the north, and the Ptolemaic kingdom (in Egypt) to the south.

In the 11th chapter of the book of Daniel, God gave the people of Israel very specific prophecies regarding the future interactions and wars that these two kingdoms would have with each other. This very accurate foretelling of events was given by God because Israel would be trampled upon by these two kingdoms. These prophecies would be needed to strengthen, encourage and reassure the people of Israel during those difficult times.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (A4E) is the last Seleucid leader mentioned in Daniel chapter 11. His father, Antiochus III (Antiochus the Great), had been defeated and conquered by the Romans. As a result of that defeat, A4E had seen Rome and its power firsthand. The Bible describes A4E as a 'vile' man who would not rise to power in a dignified way, but through cunning, deceitfulness and treachery (Daniel 11:21). He would not be viewed as royalty by others.

Daniel 11:29-31 describes A4E's third and final trip from his own land north of Israel, to confront the Ptolemaic Egyptian kingdom to the south of Israel (in 168 BC). A4E was pursuing further territory and wealth. But this third trip would not go well for A4E.

Below I present the Dispensational understanding of this passage. I have divided the passage into two parts (splitting verse 30 in half), for reasons which I will explain shortly. Dispensationalists claim that every 'HE' and 'HIM' in both of these two parts refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This is because they need A4E to be 'the abomination of desolation' mentioned in the final sentence. Therefore I have highlighted every instance of 'HE' in red:

At the appointed time **HE** shall return and go toward the south. But it shall not be like the former or the latter. For (Roman) ships from Cyprus shall come against **HIM**. Therefore **HE** shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant (of Israel), and do damage.

So **HE** shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by **HIM**, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress. Then **they** shall take away the daily sacrifices, and establish there the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 11:29-31

Historians tell us that when A4E approached Egypt for the third time in 168 BC, the Ptolemaic dynasty called upon Rome for protection. And as A4E was preparing to attack, he was confronted by a Roman representative; Gaius Popilius Laenas. This Roman leader ordered A4E to retreat. And when A4E said that he wanted 'to think about it', the ambassador drew a circle around him in the dirt and told him that if he did not provide an answer before leaving the circle, it would be seen as a declaration of war against Rome.

These are the humiliating circumstances in which A4E bowed to Rome, and then did damage to Jerusalem on his way home. He might have even been told while on his way to Egypt that the God of Israel had foretold his failure. If so, this might help to explain his rage against God's city, Temple and people during his return from Egypt.

But to this day the witness of the Jewish people is not that A4E desolated (destroyed) the Temple in his rage, but that he **DESECRATED** (defiled or polluted) it. Many Jewish people still celebrate the cleansing of the Temple, and its restoration for worship in traditions like Hanukkah. They look back to the re-dedication of the Temple, not its rebuilding. And A4E's presence in Israel did not last long. After attacking Jerusalem in 167 BC, he returned to his homeland and died not long after; in 164 BC.

WHAT DANIEL 11:29-31 REALLY SAYS

According to Dispensationalists, it was Antiochus IV Epiphanes who defiled the Temple, took away its sacrifices, and established 'the Abomination of Desolation' in verse 31. But as I present these three verses once again, I would propose a different understanding.

I have purposely divided this passage at the midpoint of verse 30, because I believe that the 'he' referred to after that midpoint is not Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but the **Roman Empire**. And so in this second presentation of this same passage, I continue to label references to A4E in red, but references to Rome in blue:

At the appointed time **HE** (A4E) shall return and go toward the south. But it shall not be like the former or the latter. For (Roman) ships from Cyprus shall come against **HIM**. Therefore **HE** shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant (of Israel), and do damage.

So **HE** (Rome) shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. And forces shall be mustered by **HIM** (Rome), and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress. Then **they** (Rome) shall take away the daily sacrifices, and establish (serve) there the abomination of desolation. Daniel 11:29-31

What I am proposing is that the midpoint of verse 30 marks a scripturally important transition point; from Greek dominance over Israel to Roman dominance. When A4E bowed to Rome's demand that he cease his aggression against Egypt and return home, that moment marked the final and total dominance of Rome over every remaining trace of the Greek Empire; bringing the people of Israel under Roman dominance at the same time.

In support of my argument, I would first point out that the numbering of Bible verses is not divinely inspired. People have created numbered verses for the convenience of finding things easily within the Bible. Therefore we are not obligated to assume that the 'he' in the first half of verse 30 is the same person as the 'he' in the second half of that verse.

Also in support of my argument I would emphasize two things:

1) God's prophetic words about A4E were given within the larger context of Israel's subjection to four successive Gentile empires. Israel had already passed through Babylonian and Persian domination. And A4E was a Greek 'king'. But God was revealing that A4E would be the last Greek king to dominate Israel; that he would bow and submit to the Roman Empire, and thus transfer dominion over Israel to Rome at that time.

2) God did not want the world to be unaware of this important moment in history. God has gone out of His way to draw attention to it. After first coming to power, A4E made three trips to Egypt. And with each of those trips, God made it plain that He was very much in control of everything that was happening, and that He was pointing to a specific moment:

A) Regarding A4E's first trip to Egypt, God said...

"He shall devise his plans against the strongholds, **BUT ONLY FOR A TIME**". (Daniel 11:24).

B) Upon A4E's second trip to Egypt, God said...

"Both of the kings hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table. But it shall not prosper, for **THE END WILL STILL BE AT THE APPOINTED TIME**". (Daniel 11:27).

C) And then God gave His description of A4E's third and final trip to Egypt:

"AT THE APPOINTED TIME he shall return and go toward the south". Daniel 11:29

It is important that we recognize this '**APPOINTED TIME**'; this historical transition point in the middle of verse 11:30; from Greek dominance to Roman dominance over Israel.

ROME'S FULFILLMENT OF DANIEL 11:30b-31

I now present the second half of the above passage again, beginning with verse 30b:

And thus shall he (**ROME**) do. He shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part. And they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice. And they shall establish the abomination that makes desolate. Daniel 11:30b-31

All of the things mentioned in these verses were done by the Roman Empire:

1) Rome did indeed return to Israel after confronting Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

2) Rome did indeed exercise influence through Jews who were not faithful to God's covenant. Jewish support for the Idumean family that began with Antipas, the father of Herod the Great, is an example of this. Such Jews are called 'Herodians' in the New Testament. Their close cooperation with Rome and the family of Herod was a source of wealth, power and prestige.

The fact that Jewish leaders would politically blackmail Pontius Pilate, 'twisting his arm' with a warning that "If he showed mercy to One who called Himself 'the King of the Jews', he would be betraying Caesar" (John 19:12), also sheds light upon the political interactions between Rome and unfaithful Jews.

And the fact that Roman leaders were willing to keep the apostle Paul in chains (despite his Roman citizenship) in order to please Jewish leaders (Acts 24:27, 25:9), also points to the dark connections between Rome and unfaithful Jews.

3) And military 'arms' were established for Rome against Israel. By contrast, after his humiliation by Rome and his temper tantrum in Jerusalem, military power was never again possessed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. As I have already pointed out, he would return home from Jerusalem to die 3 years later; in 164 BC. By contrast, because its military power would be caused to 'stand', Rome would be able to...

4) Pollute the Temple (the sanctuary of strength).

5) Take away the daily sacrifices.

6) Establish (give dominance to) the abomination (Satan) that brought desolation to Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

And the rest of Daniel chapter 11 goes on seamlessly to describe the long history of Rome since 70 AD; leading right up to Christ's second coming.

Dispensationalism's failure to recognize the transition that occurred in the middle of verse 30, from Greek dominance over Israel to Roman dominance, has led them to attribute the 'abomination of desolation' in Daniel 11:31 to the wrong person. The 'abomination that makes desolate' in Daniel 11:31 is Satan; using Rome to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, just as the Lord Jesus was indicating in His Olivet Discourse.

Neither do Dispensationalism's claims about A4E find support in Jewish tradition. Some Jewish authors during the times of the Maccabees (who fought against the Greeks) did indeed view A4E as the 'abomination of desolation' in Daniel 11:31. But their words were not divinely inspired.

And their words were not faithful to the biblical definition of desolation. A4E did not desolate the Temple; he desecrated it. The Maccabees could not appreciate the momentous transition from Greek to Roman dominance that was happening right before their eyes. They were too close to the events. They were not able to see the 'big picture' of Daniel 11:29-31; as people coming later would be able to do with the benefit of hindsight.

THE ANTICHRIST

The Antichrist is mentioned in only four verses, all written by the apostle John, and found only in two of his letters. The word 'antichrist' never appears anywhere else in the scriptures. It means what it appears to mean; one who is against or opposed to Christ.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

1 John 2:18-19

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 1 John 2:22

And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. 1 John 4:3

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 2 John 8

As we examine John's words, the one thing that defines the antichrist is false doctrine. More specifically, John defines antichrists as...

- A) Those who profess faith in Christ, but have departed from biblical Christianity.
- B) Those who deny the Father and the Son (the Trinity).
- C) Those who deny that the Son of God has come into the world in human flesh.

John's description of an antichrist could apply to any one of a number of people, religions or cults that have claimed to be Christian (or to have respect for Christ), but have departed from the true Christian faith.

It should be observed that John never says anything about the Antichrist establishing covenants, ending sacrifices, claiming to be God, having miraculous powers, cooperating with the Beast or being destroyed at the second coming of Christ. Nor does he link 'the Antichrist' with any other passage of scripture. The term 'antichrist' is not even found in the great prophetic book which John himself wrote; Revelation.

Rather than take caution from this, many have taken advantage of it. Because of his sinister name, and because so little is said about him, many have dared to plug the Antichrist into their end-times stories wherever they please. For Luther and the Calvinists the Antichrist was the Pope. For others the Antichrist has been 'the Prince who is to come' (of Daniel 9:26), the 'Abomination of Desolation', Paul's 'Man of Sin', and 'the Beast'. One cannot count all of the books, articles and movies that have flowed out of John's very limited words about 'the Antichrist'.

Although John says that there are many antichrists, in 1 John 2:18 he seems to refer to one specific person; 'the Antichrist', who maybe surpasses all other antichrists in his opposition to God. So who is this Antichrist? I do not know. One candidate to consider would be Mohammad. Islam claims Biblical roots and speaks well of Jesus, but fiercely denies that God has a Son, and that Jesus was 'Emmanuel'; 'God with us' in a human body. There is no other religion that more directly and forcefully denies the deity of Christ than Islam.

Muslims have written 'God has no son' inside their shrine, the 'Dome of the Rock', sitting on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This will ultimately prove to be a profound embarrassment to them. It was this One who declared Himself to be the Son of God, and who predicted the desolation of the Temple and its possession by the Gentiles, whose words they now fulfill through their occupation of the Temple Mount.

THE LITTLE HORN OF DANIEL 8:9-12

And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven. And it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host (Christ). And by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary (Temple) was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices. And he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.

Daniel 8:9-12

This 'little horn' is the City of Rome; beginning as a very small power on the edge of the Greek Empire. Rome first expelled Greece from the southern Italian peninsula in 'The Pyrrhic Wars'. It then defeated another southern enemy, Carthage, in 'The Punic Wars'. And finally it proceeded to move east, conquering Greece and Asia Minor (defeating Antiochus the Great) before eventually taking over the rest of the East (including Israel).

This Little Horn exalted itself against the Prince of God's host, the Lord Jesus Christ. It then brought an end to the daily sacrifices, destroying Jerusalem and its Temple in 70 AD. Because of Israel's transgressions the Roman Empire was allowed to continue its dominance over the Jews, and to establish a religion (Roman Catholicism) that casts truth to the ground. This passage is a striking combination of brevity and accuracy regarding Rome's history.

But some Dispensationalists have claimed that this 'little horn' (who brought an end to sacrifices and destroyed the Temple in verses 11 and 12) is also A4E. This is obviously untrue.

In verse 9 this 'little horn' is not described as simply great, but as 'exceedingly great'. But A4E is described as a 'vile', unworthy person; who obtained power through craftiness and deception (Daniel 11:21). And so not ever having been great in any sense whatsoever, A4E died in 164 BC, four years after being humiliated by the Romans in 168 BC.

WHY IT MATTERS

In this final section I will start by being autobiographical. I became a Christian in 1975, at the age of 25. And the first five years of my Christian experience were blessed. But over those first five years I had embraced a perspective that is widely referred to as 'Once Saved, Always Saved'. I believed that the amazing and sovereign grace of God meant that my eternal destiny no longer rested upon my own choices, but only upon God's own 'sovereign plan and purposes'.

But as I became increasingly proud, judgmental, self-willed and lustful in my ways, God did something for me that fellow Christians would not have been able to do. He disciplined me, turning me over to Satan for my physical destruction, so that I might learn not to blaspheme against Him (1 Timothy 1:20).

This happened in the early Fall of 1980, when I sensibly felt the Holy Spirit depart from me while I was driving home from church on a Sunday evening. I knew that I had been testing the limits of God's patience. And now I became terrified at the thought that I had broken those limits and cut myself off from the grace of God forever.

This terror put me on a path to re-examine what the Bible says about 'eternal security'. And it also put me on a path to right every wrong, confess every sin, and to apologize to every person whom I had ever offended. My constant and open declaration to everyone was that I had been misrepresenting and dishonoring the God who had saved me.

It would not be until late December in that Fall of 1980 that God would providentially show me that there was still a possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation with Himself. But I was not actually restored to peace and fellowship with Him until the Fall of 1985; five years later.

I know now that He had always been with me and watching over me during those five years. But I also know that I was 'abiding in His love' (John 15:10) because I had committed myself to living out the rest of my life in fearful obedience to His commandments. I had realized that He had died in order that the 'righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in me' (Romans 8:4). And so His ongoing mercy was possible for me because I had committed myself to the fulfillment of His Law through faith (Romans 3:31).

God humbled me by putting me out in a field to 'eat grass', just as He had done with King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel chapter 4). He showed me that mental health is a precious thing, and not to be taken for granted. And during that time I came to understand three things:

A) That I am weak, and I can do nothing without Christ.

B) God likens the Christian life to the experience of the Hebrew people in the wilderness; between their deliverance from the death and bondage of Egypt, to their hopeful entrance into the 'promised land' of Canaan (Exodus, 1 Corinthians 10:1-12, Hebrews 3:7-19, Jude 5). I discovered that just as the first generation of the Hebrews failed to enter into the 'promised land' because of their disobedience, so I too can provoke the Lord and shut the door to my entrance into heaven.

C) That the United States is the 'Little Horn' of Daniel chapter 7. That America is a 'boastful' nation that will be blaspheming against God and waging war against His people in the last days; leading up to the second coming of Christ.

As someone who had grown up saying the 'Pledge of Allegiance' every day in school, and had been taught that the United States is the greatest and best nation in the history of the world, this revelation hit me like a punch in the stomach. I was greatly unsettled by it.

And so I began to consider the possibility that I might be persecuted someday within my own homeland. And given God's requirement that Christians must be faithful to the point of death (Revelation 2:10, 12:11), I began to prepare for the future by studying Bible prophecy more seriously. God's prophetic word strengthens Christians, and prepares them to endure and overcome in the face of bitter persecution.

Christian salvation requires 'continuance in well-doing' (Romans 2:7). And Bible prophecy is necessary for that 'continuance'. But most churches in America today are 'foolish virgins' (Matthew 25:1-13); careless about their readiness for Christ's coming.

Prophecy is not something distinct from the Gospel. Prophecy is a vital part of the Gospel. And so God's prophetic Gospel is still going forth across the world, to unevangelized and unchurched people who will have 'eyes to see and ears to hear'. This is why it matters.