YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

Old Testament Apocalypses: *Daniel and Zechariah*

BOB UTLEY
PROFESSOR OF HERMENEUTICS
(BIBLE INTERPRETATION)

STUDY GUIDE COMMENTARY SERIES
OLD TESTAMENT VOL. 14

BIBLE LESSONS INTERNATIONAL: MARSHALL, TEXAS
2005

Copyright ©2005 by Bible Lessons International, Marshall, Texas (revised 2010)
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any way or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Bible Lessons International
P. O. Box 1289
Marshall, TX 75671-1289
1-800-785-1005

ISBN 978-1-892691-40-8

The primary biblical text used in this commentary is:

New American Standard Bible (Update, 1995)
Copyright ©1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by
The Lockman Foundation
P. O. Box 2279
La Habra, CA 90632-2279

The paragraph divisions and summary captions as well as selected phrases are from:

1. The New King James Version, Copyright ©1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
2. The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Copyright ©1989 by the Division of Christian Education of National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
3. Today's English Version is used by permission of the copyright owner, The American Bible Society, ©1966, 1971. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
4. The New Jerusalem Bible, copyright ©1990 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd. and Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

www.biblelessonsintl.com

This volume is dedicated
in memory of
two Board Members
of
Bible Lessons International
who recently
went to be with the Lord

T. M. (Red) Davis
and
Edwin L. Baker

both of these brothers
and their wives

Wilma Davis
and
Delores Baker

have been a great
blessing
and
encouragement
to this ministry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR DANIEL AND ZECHARIAH

Brief Explanation of the Technical Resources Used in the "You Can Understand the Bible" Commentary Series i
Brief Definitions of Hebrew Verbal Forms Which Impact Exegesis iii
Abbreviations Used in this Commentary ix
A Word from the Author: How Can This Commentary Help You? xi
A Guide to Good Bible Reading: A Personal Search for Verifiable Truth xiii
Introduction to Daniel 1
Daniel 1 17
Daniel 2 27
Daniel 3 43
Daniel 4 51
Daniel 5 75
Daniel 6 85
Daniel 7 93
Daniel 8 113
Daniel 9 127
Daniel 10 145
Daniel 11 157
Daniel 12 173
Introduction to Zechariah 185
Zechariah 1 189
Zechariah 2 205
Zechariah 3 213
Zechariah 4 221
Zechariah 5 229
Zechariah 6 235
Zechariah 7 245
Zechariah 8 251
Zechariah 9 259
Zechariah 10 273

Zechariah 11 287
Zechariah 12 295
Zechariah 13 303
Zechariah14 309
Appendix One: Introduction to Old Testament Prophecy 317
Appendix Two: Kings and Events of the Babylonian, Persian and Greek Dynasties .. 321
Appendix Three: Brief Historical Survey of the Powers of Mesopotamia 327
Appendix Four: Chart of the Entire Old Testament 335
Appendix Five: Statement of Faith 341

SPECIAL TOPICS TABLE OF CONTENTS

This Age and the Age to Come, Dan. 2:28 36
Cornerstone, Dan. 2:34 38
The Names for Deity, Dan. 4:2 54
Hebrew Poetry, Dan. 4:3 57
Holy, Dan. 4:8 60
Jesus the Nazarene, Dan. 4:15 63
Righteousness, Dan. 4:27 67
Almsgiving, Dan. 4:27 69
Lions in the Old Testament, Dan. 7:4 96
Fire, Dan. 7:10 101
Degrees of Rewards and Punishment, Dan. 7:10 102
Boasting, Dan. 7:11 103
OT Titles of the Special Coming One, Dan. 7:13 106
Angels and the Demonic, Dan. 10:13 151
Where Are the Dead?, Dan. 12:2 176
Matthew 27:9, Introduction to Zechariah 186
Predestination (Calvinism) vs. Human Free Will (Arminianism), Zech. 1:3 192
Repentance, Zech. 1:3 196
Glory, Zech. 2:5 207
Satan, Zech. 3:1 215
The Trinity, Zech. 4:6 223
The Tension Between Old Covenant Prophetic Models and
New Covenant Apostolic Models, Zech. 6:12 240
Covenant, Zech 6:15 243
Biblical Attitudes Toward Alcohol and Alcoholism, Zech. 10:7 279
Ransom/Redeem, Zech. 10:8 281
Eleph (Thousand), Zech. 12:6 299

BRIEF EXPLANATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL RESOURCES USED IN THIS OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY SERIES

I. Lexical

There are several excellent lexicons available for ancient Hebrew.

A. *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. It is based on the German lexicon by William Gesenius. It is known by the abbreviation BDB.

B. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, translated by M. E. J. Richardson. It is known by the abbreviation KB.

C. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by William L. Holladay and is based on the above German lexicon.

D. A new five volume theological word study entitled *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, edited by Willem A. Van Gemeren. It is known by the abbreviation NIDOTTE.

Where there is significant lexical variety, I have shown several English translations (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB) from both "word-for-word" and "dynamic equivalent" translations (cf. Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 28-44).

II. Grammatical

The grammatical identification is usually based on John Joseph Owens' *Analytical Key to the Old Testament* in four volumes. This is cross checked with Benjamin Davidson's *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon of the Old Testament.*

Another helpful resource for grammatical and syntactical features which is used in most of the OT volumes of "You Can Understand the Bible" Series is "The Helps for Translators Series" from the United Bible Societies. They are entitled "A Handbook on _____."

III. Textual

I am committed to the inspiration of the consonantal Hebrew text (not the Masoretic vowel points and comments). As in all hand-copied, ancient texts, there are some questionable passages. This is usually because of the following:

A. *hapax legomenon* (words used only once in the Hebrew OT)

B. idiomatic terms (words and phrases whose literal meanings are not applicable)

C. historical uncertainties (our lack of information about the ancient world)

D. the poly-semitic semantic field of Hebrew's limited vocabulary

E. problems associated with later scribes hand-copying ancient Hebrew texts

F. Hebrew scribes trained in Egypt who felt free to update the texts they copied to make them complete and understandable to their day (NIDOTTE pp. 52-54).

There are several sources of Hebrew words and texts outside the Masoretic textual tradition.

1. The Samaritan Pentateuch
2. The Dead Sea Scrolls
3. The Nash papyrus (Decalog)
4. The Severus scroll (Pentateuch)
5. Some later coins, letters, and ostraca (broken pieces of unfired pottery used for writing)

But for the most part, there are no manuscript families in the OT like those in the Greek NT manuscripts. For a good brief article on the textual reliability of the Masoretic Text (A.D. 900's) see "The Reliability of the Old Testament Text" by Bruce K. Waltke in the NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 51-67.

The Hebrew text used is *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) from the German Bible Society, 1997, which is based on the Leningrad Codex (A.D. 1009). Occasionally, the ancient versions (Greek Septuagint, Aramaic Targums, Syriac Peshitta, and Latin Vulgate) are consulted if the Hebrew is ambiguous or obviously confused.

BRIEF DEFINITIONS OF HEBREW VERBAL FORMS WHICH IMPACT EXEGESIS

I. Brief Historical Development of Hebrew

Hebrew is part of the Shemitic (Semitic) family of southwest Asian language. The name (given by modern scholars) comes from Noah's son, Shem (cf. Gen. 5:32; 6:10). Shem's descendants are listed in Gen. 10:21-31 as Arabs, Hebrews, Syrians, Arameans, and Assyrians. In reality some Semitic languages are used by nations listed in Ham's line (cf. Gen. 10:6-14), Canaan, Phoenicia, and Ethiopia.

Hebrew is part of the northwest group of these Semitic languages. Modern scholars have samples of this ancient language group from:

A. Amorite (*Mari Tablets* from 18th century B.C. in Akkadian)

B. Canaanite (*Ras Shamra Tablets* from 15th century in Ugaritic)

C. Canaanite (*Amarna Letters* from 14th century in Canaanite Akkadian)

D. Phoenician (Hebrew uses Phoenician alphabet)

E. Moabite (Mesha stone, 840 B.C.)

F. Aramaic (official language of the Persian Empire used in Gen. 31:47 [2 words]; Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:4-6; 7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26 and spoken by Jews in the first century in Palestine)

The Hebrew language is called "the lip of Canaan" in Isa. 19:18. It was first called "Hebrew" in the prologue of Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Ben Sira) about 180 B.C. (and some other early places, cf. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, pp. 205ff). It is most closely related to Moabite and the language used at Ugarit. Examples of ancient Hebrew found outside the Bible are

1. the Gezer calendar, 925 B.C. (a school boy's writing)
2. the Siloam Inscription, 705 B.C. (tunnel writings)
3. Samaritan Ostraca, 770 B.C. (tax records on broken pottery)
4. Lachish letters, 587 B.C. (war communications)
5. Maccabean coins and seals
6. some Dead Sea Scroll texts
7. numerous inscriptions (cf. "Languages [Hebrew]," ABD 4:203ff)

It, like all Semitic languages, is characterized by words made up of three consonants (tri-consonantal root). It is an inflexed language. The three-root consonants carry the basic word meaning, while prefixed, suffixed, or internal additions show the syntactical function (later vowels, cf. Sue Green, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 46-49).

Hebrew vocabulary demonstrates a difference between prose and poetry. Word meanings are connected to folk etymologies (not linguistic origins). Word plays and sound plays are very common (*paronomasia*).

II. Aspects of Predication

A. VERBS

The normal expected word order is VERB, PRONOUN, SUBJECT (with modifiers), OBJECT (with modifiers). The basic non-flagged VERB is the *Qal,* PERFECT, MASCULINE, SINGULAR form. It is how Hebrew and Aramaic lexicons are arranged.

VERBS are inflected to show

1. number—singular, plural, dual
2. gender—masculine and feminine (no neuter)
3. mood—indicative, subjunctive, imperative (relation of the action to reality)
4. tense (aspect)

a. PERFECT, which denotes completion, in the sense of the beginning, continuing, and concluding of an action. Usually this form was used of past action, the thing has occurred. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says

> "The single whole described by a perfect is also considered as certain. An imperfect may picture a state as possible or desired or expected, but a perfect sees it as actual, real, and sure" (p. 36).

S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, describes it as,

> "The perfect is employed to indicate actions the accomplishment of which lies indeed in the future, but is regarded as dependant upon such an unalterable determination of the will that it may be spoken of as having actually taken place: thus a resolution, promise, or decree, especially of Divine one, is frequently announced in the perfect tense" (p. 17, e.g., the prophetic perfect).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, defines this verbal form as

> "views a situation from the outside, as a whole. As such it expresses a simple fact, whether it be an action or state (including state of being or mind). When used of actions, it often views the action as complete from the rhetorical standpoint of the speaker or narrator (whether it is or is not complete in fact or reality is not the point). The perfect can pertain to an action/state in the past, present or future. As noted above, time frame, which influences how one translates the perfect into a tense-oriented language like English, must be determined from the context" (p. 86).

b. IMPERFECT, which denotes an action in progress (incomplete, repetitive, continual, or contingent), often movement toward a goal. Usually this form was used of Present and Future action.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says

> "All IMPERFECTS represent incomplete states. They are either repeated or developing or contingent. In other words, or partially developed, or partially assured. In all cases they are partial in some sense, i.e., incomplete" (p. 55).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, says

> "It is difficult to reduce the essence of the imperfect to a single concept, for it encompasses both aspect and mood. Sometimes the imperfect is used in an indicative manner and makes an objective statement. At other times it views an action more subjectively, as hypothetical, contingent, possible, and so on" (p. 89).

c. The added *waw*, which links the VERB to the action of the previous VERB(s).

d. IMPERATIVE, which is based on the volition of the speaker and potential action by the hearer.
e. In ancient Hebrew only the larger context can determine the authorial-intended time orientations.

B. The seven major inflected forms and their basic meaning. In reality these forms work in conjunction with each other in a context and must not be isolated.
1. *Qal* (*Kal*), the most common and basic of all the forms. It denotes simple action or a state of being. There is no causation or specification implied.
2. *Niphal*, the second most common form. It is usually PASSIVE, but this form also functions as reciprocal and reflexive. It also has no causation or specification implied.
3. *Piel*, this form is active and expresses the bringing about of an action into a state of being. The basic meaning of the *Qal* stem is developed or extended into a state of being.
4. *Pual*, this is the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Piel*. It is often expressed by a PARTICIPLE.
5. *Hithpael*, which is the reflexive or reciprocal stem. It expresses iterative or durative action to the *Piel* stem. The rare PASSIVE form is called *Hothpael*.
6. *Hiphil*, the active form of the causative stem in contrast to *Piel*. It can have a permissive aspect, but usually refers to the cause of an event. Ernst Jenni, a German Hebrew grammarian, believed that the *Piel* denoted something coming into a state of being, while *Hiphil* showed how it happened.
7. *Hophal,* the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Hiphil*. These last two stems are the least used of the seven stems.

Much of this information comes from *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, by Bruce K. Walke and M. O'Connor, pp. 343-452.

Agency and causation chart. One key in understanding the Hebrew VERB system is to see it as a pattern of VOICE relationships. Some stems are in contrast to other stems (i.e., *Qal - Niphal; Piel - Hiphil)*

The chart below tries to visualize the basic function of the VERB stems as to causation.

VOICE or Subject	**No Secondary Agency**	**An Active Secondary Agency**	**A Passive Secondary Agency**
ACTIVE	*Qal*	*Hiphil*	*Piel*
MIDDLE PASSIVE	*Niphal*	*Hophal*	*Pual*
REFLEXIVE/ RECIPROCAL	*Niphal*	*Hiphil*	*Hithpael*

This chart is taken from the excellent discussion of the VERBAL system in light of new Akkadian research (cf. Bruce K. Waltke, M. O'Conner, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, pp.354-359.

R. H. Kennett, *A Short Account of the Hebrew Tenses*, has provided a needed warning.

> "I have commonly found in teaching, that a student's chief difficulty in the Hebrew verbs is to grasp the meaning which they conveyed to the minds of the Hebrews themselves; that is to say, there is a tendency to assign as equivalents to each of the Hebrew Tenses a certain number of Latin or English forms by which that particular Tense may commonly be translated. The result is a failure to perceive many

of these fine shades of meaning, which give such life and vigor to the language of the Old Testament.

The difficulty in the use of the Hebrew verbs lies solely in the point of view, so absolutely different from our own, from which the Hebrews regarded an action; the *time*, which with us is the first consideration, as the very word, 'tense' shows, being to them a matter of secondary importance. It is, therefore, essential that a student should clearly grasp, not so much the Latin or English forms which may be used in translating each of the Hebrew Tenses, but rather the aspect of each action, as it presented itself to a Hebrew's mind.

The name 'tenses' as applied to Hebrew verbs is misleading. The so-called Hebrew 'tenses' do not express the *time* but merely the *state* of an action. Indeed were it not for the confusion that would arise through the application of the term 'state' to both nouns and verbs, 'states' would be a far better designation than 'tenses.' It must always be borne in mind that it is impossible to translate a Hebrew verb into English without employing a limitation (of time), which is entirely absent in the Hebrew. The ancient Hebrews never thought of an action as past, present, or future, but simply as *perfect*, i.e., complete, or *imperfect*, i.e., as in course of development. When we say that a certain Hebrew tense corresponds to a Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future in English, we do not mean that the Hebrews thought of it as Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future, but merely that it must be so translated in English. The *time* of an action the Hebrews did not attempt to express by any verbal form" (preface and p. 1).

For a second good warning, Sue Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, reminds us,

"There is no way of knowing whether modern scholars' reconstruction of semantic fields and sense relations in an ancient dead language are merely a reflection of their own intuition, or their own native language, or whether those fields existed in Classical Hebrew" (p. 128).

C. MOODS (Modes)
   1. It happened, is happening (INDICATIVE), usually uses PERFECT tense or PARTICIPLES (all PARTICIPLES are INDICATIVE).
   2. It will happen, could happen (SUBJUNCTIVE)
      a. uses a marked IMPERFECT tense
         (1) COHORTATIVE (added h), first person IMPERFECT form which normally expresses a wish, a request, or self-encouragement (i.e., actions willed by the speaker)
         (2) JUSSIVE (internal changes), third person IMPERFECT (can be second person in negated sentences) which normally expresses a request, a permission, an admonition, or advice
      b. uses a PERFECT tense with *lu* or *lule*
         These constructions are similar to SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL sentences in Koine Greek. A false statement (protasis) results in a false conclusion (apodosis).
      c. uses an IMPERFECT tense and *lu*
         Context and *lu*, as well as a future orientation, mark this SUBJUNCTIVE usage. Some examples from J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament* are Gen. 13:16; Deut. 1:12; I Kgs. 13:8; Ps. 24:3; Isa. 1:18 (cf. Pp. 76-77).

D. *Waw* - Conversive/consecutive/relative. This uniquely Hebrew (Canaanite) syntactical feature has caused great confusion through the years. It is used in a variety of ways often based on

genre. The reason for the confusion is that early scholars were European and tried to interpret in light of their own native languages. When this proved difficult they blamed the problem on Hebrew being a "supposed" ancient, archaic language. European languages are TENSE (time) based VERBS. Some of the variety and grammatical implications were specified by the letter WAW being added to the PERFECT or IMPERFECT VERB stems. This altered the way the action was viewed.

1. In historical narrative the VERBS are linked together in a chain with a standard pattern.
2. The *waw* prefix showed a specific relationship with the previous VERB(s).
3. The larger context is always the key to understanding the VERB chain. Semitic VERBS cannot be analyzed in isolation.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, notes the distinctive of Hebrew in its use of the *waw* before PERFECTS and IMPERFECTS (pp. 52-53). As the basic idea of the PERFECT is past, the addition of *waw* often projects it into a future time aspect. This is also true of the IMPERFECT whose basic idea is present or future; the addition of *waw* places it into the past. It is this unusual time shift which explains the *waw's* addition, not a change in the basic meaning of the tense itself. The *waw* PERFECTS work well with prophecy, while the *waw* IMPERFECTS work well with narratives (pp. 54, 68).

Watts continues his definition

> "As a fundamental distinction between *waw* conjunctive and *waw* consecutive, the following interpretations are offered:
>
> 1. *Waw* conjunctive appears always to indicate a parallel.
> 2. *Waw* consecutive appears always to indicate a sequence. It is the only form of *waw* used with consecutive imperfects. The relation between the imperfects linked by it may be temporal sequence, logical consequence, logical cause, or logical contrast. In all cases there is a sequence" (p. 103).

E. INFINITIVE - There are two kinds of INFINITIVES

1. INFINITIVE ABSOLUTES, which are "strong, independent, striking expressions used for dramatic effect. . .as a subject, it often has no written verb, the verb 'to be' being understood, of course, but the word standing dramatically alone" J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*" (p. 92).

2. INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, which are "related grammatically to the sentence by prepositions, possessive pronouns, and the construct relationship" (p. 91).

   J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, describes the construct state as

   > "When two (or more) words are so closely united that together they constitute one compound idea, the dependent word (or words) is (are) said to be in the construct state" (p. 44).

F. INTERROGATIVES

1. They always appear first in the sentence.
2. Interpretive significance
   a. *ha* - does not expect a response
   b. *halo'* - the author expects a "yes" answer

NEGATIVES

1. They always appear before the words they negate.
2. Most common negation is *lo'*.
3. The term *'al* has a contingent connotation and is used with COHORTATIVES and JUSSIVES.

4. The term *lebhilit*, meaning "in order that. . .not," is used with INFINITIVES.
5. The term *'en* is used with PARTICIPLES.

G. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES
   1. There are four kinds of conditional sentences which basically are paralleled in Koine Greek.
      a. something assumed to be happening or thought of as fulfilled (FIRST CLASS in Greek)
      b. something contrary to fact whose fulfillment is impossible (SECOND CLASS)
      c. something which is possible or ever probable (THIRD CLASS)
      d. something which is less probable, therefore, the fulfillment is dubious (FOURTH CLASS)
   2. GRAMMATICAL MARKERS
      a. the assumed to be true or real condition always uses an INDICATIVE PERFECT or PARTICIPLE and usually the protasis is introduced by
         (1) *'im*
         (2) *ki* (or *'asher*)
         (3) *hin* or *hinneh*
      b. the contrary to fact condition always uses a PERFECT aspect VERB or a PARTICIPLE with the introductory PARTICLE *lu* or *lule*
      c. the more probably condition always used IMPERFECT VERB or PARTICIPLES in the protasis, usually *'im* or *ki* are used as introductory PARTICLES
      d. the less probable condition uses IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVES in the protasis and always uses *'im* as an introductory PARTICLE

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS COMMENTARY

AB	Anchor Bible Commentaries, ed. William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary (6 vols.), ed. David Noel Freedman
AKOT	Analytical Key to the Old Testament by John Joseph Owens
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts, James B. Pritchard
BDB	A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by F. Brown, S. R. Driver and C. A. Briggs
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, GBS, 1997
IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (4 vols.), ed. George A. Buttrick
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (5 vols.), ed. James Orr
JB	Jerusalem Bible
JPSOA	The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text: A New Translation (The Jewish Publication Society of America)
KB	The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner
LAM	The Holy Bible From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts (the Peshitta) by George M. Lamsa
LXX	Septuagint (Greek-English) by Zondervan, 1970
MOF	A New Translation of the Bible by James Moffatt
MT	Masoretic Hebrew Text
NAB	New American Bible Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NET	NET Bible: New English Translation, Second Beta Edition
NRSV	New Revised Standard Bible
NIDOTTE	New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (5 vols.), ed. Willem A. VanGemeren

NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
OTPG	Old Testament Passing Guide by Todd S. Beall, William A. Banks and Colin Smith
REB	Revised English Bible
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SEPT	The Septuagint (Greek-English) by Zondervan, 1970
TEV	Today's English Version from United Bible Societies
YLT	Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible by Robert Young
ZPBE	Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia (5 vols.), ed. Merrill C. Tenney

A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR: HOW CAN THIS COMMENTARY HELP YOU?

Biblical interpretation is a rational and spiritual process that attempts to understand an ancient inspired writer in such a way that the message from God may be understood and applied in our day.

The spiritual process is crucial but difficult to define. It does involve a yieldedness and openness to God. There must be a hunger (1) for Him, (2) to know Him, and (3) to serve Him. This process involves prayer, confession, and the willingness for lifestyle change. The Spirit is crucial in the interpretive process, but why sincere, godly Christians understand the Bible differently is a mystery.

The rational process is easier to describe. We must be consistent and fair to the text and not be influenced by our personal, cultural, or denominational biases. We are all historically conditioned. None of us are objective, neutral interpreters. This commentary offers a careful rational process containing three interpretive principles structured to help us attempt to overcome our biases.

First Principle

The first principle is to note the historical setting in which a biblical book was written and the particular historical occasion for its authorship (or when it was edited). The original author had a purpose and a message to communicate. The text cannot mean something to us that it never meant to the original, ancient, inspired author. His intent—not our historical, emotional, cultural, personal, or denominational need—is the key. Application is an integral partner to interpretation, but proper interpretation must always precede application. It must be reiterated that every biblical text has one and only one meaning. This meaning is what the original biblical author intended through the Spirit's leadership to communicate to his day. This one meaning may have many possible applications to different cultures and situations. These applications must be linked to the central truth of the original author. For this reason, this study guide commentary is designed to provide a brief introduction to each book of the Bible.

Second Principle

The second principle is to identify the literary units. Every biblical book is a unified document. Interpreters have no right to isolate one aspect of truth by excluding others. Therefore, we must strive to understand the purpose of the whole biblical book before we interpret the individual literary units. The individual parts—chapters, paragraphs, or verses—cannot mean what the whole unit does not mean. Interpretation must move from a deductive approach of the whole to an inductive approach to the parts. Therefore, this study guide commentary is designed to help the student analyze the structure of each literary unit by paragraphs. Paragraph and chapter divisions are not inspired, but they do aid us in identifying thought units.

Interpreting at a paragraph level—not sentence, clause, phrase, or word level—is the key in following the biblical author's intended meaning. Paragraphs are based on a unified topic, often called the theme or topical sentence. Every word, phrase, clause, and sentence in the paragraph relates somehow to this unified theme. They limit it, expand it, explain it, and/or question it. A real key to proper interpretation is to follow the original author's thought on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis through the individual literary units that make up the biblical book. This study guide commentary is designed to help the student do that by comparing the paragraphing of modern English translations. These translations have been selected because they employ different translation theories:

A. The New King James Version (NKJV) is a word-for-word literal translation based on the Greek manuscript tradition known as the Textus Receptus. Its paragraph divisions are longer than the other translations. These longer units help the student to see the unified topics.
B. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is a modified word-for-word translation. It forms a midpoint between the following two modern versions. Its paragraph divisions are quite helpful in identifying subjects.
C. The Today's English Version (TEV) is a dynamic equivalent translation published by the United Bible Society. It attempts to translate the Bible in such a way that a modern English reader or speaker can understand the meaning of the original text.
D. The Jerusalem Bible (JB) is a dynamic equivalent translation based on a French Catholic translation. It is very helpful in comparing the paragraphing from a European perspective.

6. The printed text is the 1995 Updated New American Standard Bible (NASB), which is a word for word translation. The verse by verse comments follow this paragraphing.

Third Principle

The third principle is to read the Bible in different translations in order to grasp the widest possible range of meaning (semantic field) that biblical words or phrases may have. Often a phrase or word can be understood in several ways. These different translations bring out these options and help to identify and explain the manuscript variations. These do not affect doctrine, but they do help us to try to get back to the original text penned by an inspired ancient writer.

Fourth Principle

The fourth principle is to note the literary genre. Original inspired authors chose to record their messages in different forms (e.g., historical narrative, historical drama, poetry, prophecy, gospel [parable], letter, apocalyptic). These different forms have special keys to interpretation (see Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr., *Cracking the Old Testament Codes,* or Robert Stein, *Playing by the Rules*).

This commentary offers a quick way for the student to check his interpretations. It is not meant to be definitive, but rather informative and thought-provoking. Often, other possible interpretations help us not be so parochial, dogmatic, and denominational. Interpreters need to have a larger range of interpretive options to recognize how ambiguous the ancient text can be. It is shocking how little agreement there is among Christians who claim the Bible as their source of truth.

These principles have helped me to overcome much of my historical conditioning by forcing me to struggle with the ancient text. My hope is that it will be a blessing to you as well.

Bob Utley
East Texas Baptist University
June 27, 1996

A GUIDE TO GOOD BIBLE READING:
A PERSONAL SEARCH FOR VERIFIABLE TRUTH

Can we know truth? Where is it found? Can we logically verify it? Is there an ultimate authority? Are there absolutes which can guide our lives, our world? Is there meaning to life? Why are we here? Where are we going? These questions—questions that all rational people contemplate—have haunted the human intellect since the beginning of time (Eccl. 1:13-18; 3:9-11). I can remember my personal search for an integrating center for my life. I became a believer in Christ at a young age, based primarily on the witness of significant others in my family. As I grew to adulthood, questions about myself and my world also grew. Simple cultural and religious clichés did not bring meaning to the experiences I read about or encountered. It was a time of confusion, searching, longing, and often a feeling of hopelessness in the face of the insensitive, hard world in which I lived.

Many claimed to have answers to these ultimate questions, but after research and reflection I found that their answers were based upon (1) personal philosophies, (2) ancient myths, (3) personal experiences, or (4) psychological projections. I needed some degree of verification, some evidence, some rationality on which to base my world-view, my integrating center, my reason to live.

I found these in my study of the Bible. I began to search for evidence of its trustworthiness, which I found in (1) the historical reliability of the Bible as confirmed by archaeology, (2) the accuracy of the prophecies of the Old Testament, (3) the unity of the Bible message over the sixteen hundred years of its production, and (4) the personal testimonies of people whose lives had been permanently changed by contact with the Bible. Christianity, as a unified system of faith and belief, has the ability to deal with complex questions of human life. Not only did this provide a rational framework, but the experiential aspect of biblical faith brought me emotional joy and stability.

I thought that I had found the integrating center for my life—Christ, as understood through the Scriptures. It was a heady experience, an emotional release. However, I can still remember the shock and pain when it began to dawn on me how many different interpretations of this book were advocated, sometimes even within the same churches and schools of thought. Affirming the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible was not the end, but only the beginning. How do I verify or reject the varied and conflicting interpretations of the many difficult passages in Scripture by those who were claiming its authority and trustworthiness?

This task became my life's goal and pilgrimage of faith. I knew that my faith in Christ had (1) brought me great peace and joy. My mind longed for some absolutes in the midst of the relativity of my culture (post-modernity); (2) the dogmatism of conflicting religious systems (world religions); and (3) denominational arrogance. In my search for valid approaches to the interpretation of ancient literature, I was surprised to discover my own historical, cultural, denominational and experiential biases. I had often read the Bible simply to reinforce my own views. I used it as a source of dogma to attack others while reaffirming my own insecurities and inadequacies. How painful this realization was to me!

Although I can never be totally objective, I can become a better reader of the Bible. I can limit my biases by identifying them and acknowledging their presence. I am not yet free of them, but I have confronted my own weaknesses. The interpreter is often the worst enemy of good Bible reading!

Let me list some of the presuppositions I bring to my study of the Bible so that you, the reader, may examine them along with me:

I. Presuppositions

A. I believe the Bible is the sole inspired self-revelation of the one true God. Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of the intent of the original divine author (the Spirit) through a human writer in a specific historical setting.

B. I believe the Bible was written for the common person—for all people! God accommodated Himself to speak to us clearly within a historical and cultural context. God does not hide truth—He wants us to understand! Therefore, it must be interpreted in light of its day, not ours. The Bible should not mean to us what it never meant to those who first read or heard it. It is understandable by the average human mind and uses normal human communication forms and techniques.

C. I believe the Bible has a unified message and purpose. It does not contradict itself, though it does contain difficult and paradoxical passages. Thus, the best interpreter of the Bible is the Bible itself.

D. I believe that every passage (excluding prophesies) has one and only one meaning based on the intent of the original, inspired author. Although we can never be absolutely certain we know the original author's intent, many indicators point in its direction:
   1. the genre (literary type) chosen to express the message
   2. the historical setting and/or specific occasion that elicited the writing
   3. the literary context of the entire book as well as each literary unit
   4. the textual design (outline) of the literary units as they relate to the whole message
   5. the specific grammatical features employed to communicate the message
   6. the words chosen to present the message
   7. parallel passages

The study of each of these areas becomes the object of our study of a passage. Before I explain my methodology for good Bible reading, let me delineate some of the inappropriate methods being used today that have caused so much diversity of interpretation, and that consequently should be avoided:

II. Inappropriate Methods

A. Ignoring the literary context of the books of the Bible and using every sentence, clause, or even individual words as statements of truth unrelated to the author's intent or the larger context. This is often called "proof-texting."

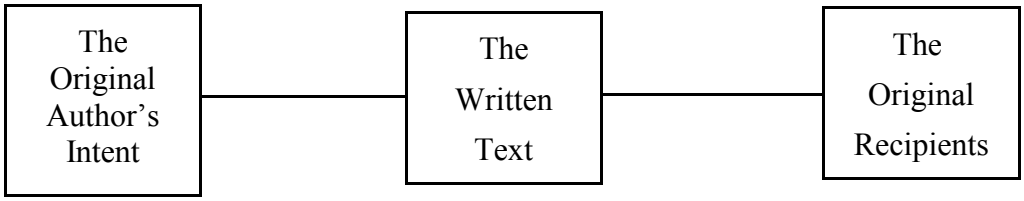
B. Ignoring the historical setting of the books by substituting a supposed historical setting that has little or no support from the text itself.

C. Ignoring the historical setting of the books and reading it as the morning hometown newspaper written primarily to modern individual Christians.

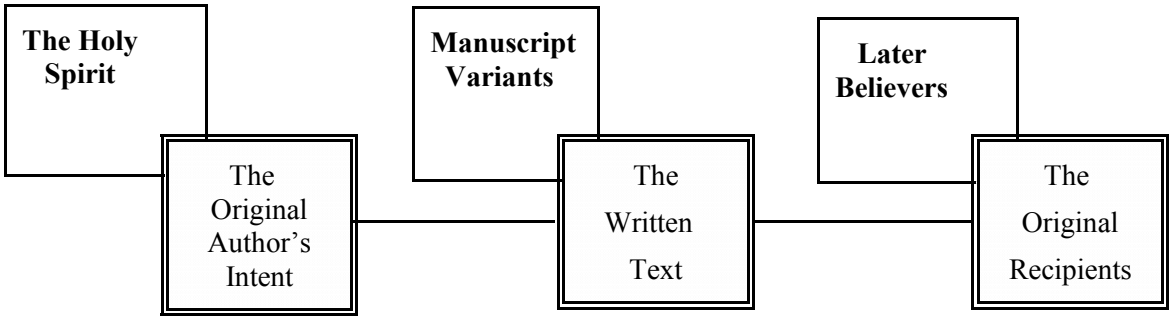
D. Ignoring the historical setting of the books by allegorizing the text into a philosophical/theological message totally unrelated to the first hearers and the original author's intent.

E. Ignoring the original message by substituting one's own system of theology, pet doctrine, or contemporary issue unrelated to the original author's purpose and stated message. This phenomenon often follows the initial reading of the Bible as a means of establishing a speaker's authority. This is often referred to as "reader response" ("what-the-text-means-to-me" interpretation).

At least three related components may be found in all written human communication:



In the past, different reading techniques have focused on one of the three components, but to truly affirm the unique inspiration of the Bible, a modified diagram is more appropriate:



In truth all three components must be included in the interpretive process. For the purpose of verification, my interpretation focuses on the first two components: the original author and the text. I am probably reacting to the abuses I have observed (1) allegorizing or spiritualizing texts and (2) "reader response" interpretation (what-it-means-to-me). Abuse may occur at each stage. We must always check our motives, biases, techniques, and applications, but how do we check them if there are no boundaries to interpretations, no limits, no criteria? This is where authorial intent and textual structure provide me with some criteria for limiting the scope of possible valid interpretations.

In light of these inappropriate reading techniques, what are some possible approaches to good Bible reading and interpretation which offer a degree of verification and consistency?

III. Possible Approaches to Good Bible Reading

At this point I am not discussing the unique techniques of interpreting specific genres but general hermeneutical principles valid for all types of biblical texts. A good book for genre-specific approaches is *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, published by Zondervan and *Cracking Old Testament Codes* by D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr., published by Broadman and Holman.

My methodology focuses initially on the reader allowing the Holy Spirit to illumine the Bible through four personal reading cycles. This makes the Spirit, the text, and the reader primary, not secondary. This also protects the reader from being unduly influenced by commentators. I have heard it said: "The Bible throws a lot of light on commentaries." This is not meant to be a depreciating comment about study aids, but rather a plea for an appropriate timing for their use.

We must be able to support our interpretations from the text itself. Five areas provide at least limited verification:

1. the original author's
   a. historical setting
   b. literary context
2. the original author's choice of

a. grammatical structures (syntax)
b. contemporary work usage
c. genre

3. our understanding of appropriate
   a. relevant parallel passages

We need to be able to provide the reasons and logic behind our interpretations. The Bible is our only source for faith and practice. Sadly, Christians often disagree about what it teaches or affirms. It is self-defeating to claim inspiration for the Bible and then for believers not to be able to agree on what it teaches and requires!

The four reading cycles are designed to provide the following interpretive insights:

A. The first reading cycle
   1. Read the book in a single sitting. Read it again in a different translation, hopefully from a different translation theory
      a. word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
      b. dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)
      c. paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
   2. Look for the central purpose of the entire writing. Identify its theme.
   3. Isolate (if possible) a literary unit, a chapter, a paragraph or a sentence which clearly expresses this central purpose or theme.
   4. Identify the predominant literary genre
      a. Old Testament
         (1) Hebrew narrative
         (2) Hebrew poetry (wisdom literature, psalm)
         (3) Hebrew prophecy (prose, poetry)
         (4) Law codes
      b. New Testament
         (1) Narratives (Gospels, Acts)
         (2) Parables (Gospels)
         (3) Letters/epistles
         (4) Apocalyptic literature

B. The second reading cycle
   1. Read the entire book again, seeking to identify major topics or subjects.
   2. Outline the major topics and briefly state their contents in a simple statement.
   3. Check your purpose statement and broad outline with study aids.

C. The third reading cycle
   1. Read the entire book again, seeking to identify the historical setting and specific occasion for the writing from the Bible book itself.
   2. List the historical items that are mentioned in the Bible book
      a. the author
      b. the date
      c. the recipients
      d. the specific reason for writing
      e. aspects of the cultural setting that relate to the purpose of the writing
      f. references to historical people and events

   3. Expand your outline to paragraph level for that part of the biblical book you are interpreting. Always identify and outline the literary unit. This may be several chapters or paragraphs. This enables you to follow the original author's logic and textual design.

4. Check your historical setting by using study aids.

D. The fourth reading cycle
   1. Read the specific literary unit again in several translations
      a. word-for-word (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
      b. dynamic equivalent (TEV, JB)
      c. paraphrase (Living Bible, Amplified Bible)
   2. Look for literary or grammatical structures
      a. repeated phrases, Eph. 1:6,12,13
      b. repeated grammatical structures, Rom. 8:31
      c. contrasting concepts
   3. List the following items
      a. significant terms
      b. unusual terms
      c. important grammatical structures
      d. particularly difficult words, clauses, and sentences
   4. Look for relevant parallel passages
      a. look for the clearest teaching passage on your subject using
         (1) "systematic theology" books
         (2) reference Bibles
         (3) concordances
      b. Look for a possible paradoxical pair within your subject. Many biblical truths are presented in dialectical pairs; many denominational conflicts come from proof-texting half of a biblical tension. All of the Bible is inspired, and we must seek out its complete message in order to provide a Scriptural balance to our interpretation.
      c. Look for parallels within the same book, same author or same genre; the Bible is its own best interpreter because it has one author, the Spirit.
   5. Use study aids to check your observations of historical setting and occasion
      a. study Bibles
      b. Bible encyclopedias, handbooks and dictionaries
      c. Bible introductions
      d. Bible commentaries (at this point in your study, allow the believing community, past and present, to aid and correct your personal study.)

IV. Application of Bible interpretation

At this point we turn to application. You have taken the time to understand the text in its original setting; now you must apply it to your life, your culture. I define biblical authority as "understanding what the original biblical author was saying to his day and applying that truth to our day."

Application must follow interpretation of the original author's intent both in time and logic. We cannot apply a Bible passage to our own day until we know what it was saying to its day! A Bible passage should not mean what it never meant!

Your detailed outline, to paragraph level (reading cycle #3), will be your guide. Application should be made at paragraph level, not word level. Words have meaning only in context; clauses have meaning only in context; sentences have meaning only in context. The only inspired person involved in the interpretive process is the original author. We only follow his lead by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. But illumination is <u>not</u> inspiration. To say "thus saith the Lord," we must abide by the original author's intent. Application must relate specifically to the general intent of the whole writing, the specific literary unit and paragraph level thought development.

Do not let the issues of our day interpret the Bible; let the Bible speak! This may require us to draw principles from the text. This is valid if the text supports a principle. Unfortunately, many times our principles are just that, "our" principles—not the text's principles.

In applying the Bible, it is important to remember that (except in prophecy) one and only one meaning is valid for a particular Bible text. That meaning is related to the intent of the original author as he addressed a crisis or need in his day. Many possible applications may be derived from this one meaning. The application will be based on the recipients' needs but must be related to the original author's meaning.

V. The Spiritual Aspect of Interpretation

So far I have discussed the logical and textual process involved in interpretation and application. Now let me discuss briefly the spiritual aspect of interpretation. The following checklist has been helpful for me:

A. Pray for the Spirit's help (cf. I Cor. 1:26-2:16).
B. Pray for personal forgiveness and cleansing from known sin (cf. I John 1:9).
C. Pray for a greater desire to know God (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 42:1ff.; 119:1ff).
D. Apply any new insight immediately to your own life.
E. Remain humble and teachable.

It is so hard to keep the balance between the logical process and the spiritual leadership of the Holy Spirit. The following quotes have helped me balance the two:

A. from James W. Sire, *Scripture Twisting*, pp. 17-18:

> "The illumination comes to the minds of God's people—not just to the spiritual elite. There is no guru class in biblical Christianity, no illuminati, no people through whom all proper interpretation must come. And so, while the Holy Spirit gives special gifts of wisdom, knowledge and spiritual discernment, He does not assign these gifted Christians to be the only authoritative interpreters of His Word. It is up to each of His people to learn, to judge and to discern by reference to the Bible which stands as the authority even to those to whom God has given special abilities. To summarize, the assumption I am making throughout the entire book is that the Bible is God's true revelation to all humanity, that it is our ultimate authority on all matters about which it speaks, that it is not a total mystery but can be adequately understood by ordinary people in every culture."

B. on Kierkegaard, found in Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 75:

> According to Kierkegaard the grammatical, lexical, and historical study of the Bible was necessary but preliminary to the true reading of the Bible. "To read the Bible *as God's word* one must read it with his heart in his mouth, on tip-toe, with eager expectancy, in conversation with God. To read the Bible thoughtlessly or carelessly or academically or professionally is not to read the Bible as God's Word. As one reads it as a love letter is read, then one reads it as the Word of God."

C. H. H. Rowley in *The Relevance of the Bible*, p. 19:

> "No merely intellectual understanding of the Bible, however complete, can possess all its treasures. It does not despise such understanding, for it is essential to a complete understanding. But it must lead to a spiritual understanding of the spiritual treasures of this book if it is to be complete. And for that spiritual understanding something more than intellectual alertness is necessary. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, and the Bible student needs an attitude of spiritual receptivity, an eagerness to find God that he may yield himself to Him, if he is to pass beyond his scientific study unto the richer inheritance of this greatest of all books."

VI. This Commentary's Method

The *Study Guide Commentary* is designed to aid your interpretive procedures in the following ways:

A. A brief historical outline introduces each book. After you have done "reading cycle #3" check this information.

B. Contextual insights are found at the beginning of each chapter. This will help you see how the literary unit is structured.

C. At the beginning of each chapter or major literary unit the paragraph divisions and their descriptive captions are provided from several modern translations:

1. The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update (NASB)
2. The New King James Version (NKJV)
3. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
4. Today's English Version (TEV)
5. The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)

Paragraph divisions are not inspired. They must be ascertained from the context. By comparing several modern translations from differing translation theories and theological perspectives, we are able to analyze the supposed structure of the original author's thought. Each paragraph has one major truth. This has been called "the topic sentence" or "the central idea of the text." This unifying thought is the key to proper historical, grammatical interpretation. One should never interpret, preach or teach on less than a paragraph! Also remember that each paragraph is related to its surrounding paragraphs. This is why a paragraph level outline of the entire book is so important. We must be able to follow the logical flow of the subject being addressed by the original inspired author.

D. Bob's notes follow a verse-by-verse approach to interpretation. This forces us to follow the original author's thought. The notes provide information from several areas:

1. literary context
2. historical, cultural insights
3. grammatical information
4. word studies
5. relevant parallel passages

E. At certain points in the commentary, the printed text of the New American Standard Version (1995 update) will be supplemented by the translations of several other modern versions:

1. The New King James Version (NKJV), which follows the textual manuscripts of the "Textus Receptus."
2. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which is a word-for-word revision from the National Council of Churches of the Revised Standard Version.
3. The Today's English Version (TEV), which is a dynamic equivalent translation from the American Bible Society.
4. The New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), which is an English translation based on a French Catholic dynamic equivalent translation.

F. For those who do not read the original languages, comparing English translations can help in identifying problems in the text:

1. manuscript variations
2. alternate word meanings
3. grammatically difficult texts and structure
4. ambiguous texts

Although the English translations cannot solve these problems, they do target them as places for deeper and more thorough study.

G. At the close of each chapter relevant discussion questions are provided which attempt to target the major interpretive issues of that chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

I. OPENING STATEMENT

I have asked myself again and again, "Why write another commentary on Daniel?" There are so many good ones from varying perspectives available. My study of Revelation piqued my interest about Daniel and Zechariah (OT apocalypses). They have been the Scriptural source for the differing theories of how to interpret many parts of the New Testament. Many very sincere and intelligent believers have expressed their opinions about these revelatory texts, but with such diversity.

In trying to sort out my own perspective several foundational questions must be explored.

1. How are OT apocalypses related to OT prophecies?
2. What is the source of apocalyptic thought and form?
3. Is the new age (1) earthly and physical or (2) spiritual and multidimensional? Does this planet remain the focal point of all creation?
4. Do these specific texts relate to events now past only (e.g. Persian period, Maccabean period, Roman period, the incarnation) or future events (e.g. the Second Coming, millennium, eternal kingdom), or both, by the use of multi-fulfillment prophecy (e.g. Isa. 7: 14)?
5. Why are some texts so seemingly historically specific (Dan. 11) and others ambiguous (Dan. 8)?
6. Is the main issue the defense of the historical setting of the author or the historical accuracy of the future predictions?

These hermeneutical interpretive questions must take precedence over exegesis. This type of literature demands an evaluation of one's presuppositions about the Bible and specifically apocalyptic literature.

So here goes an attempt to lay out my presuppositions related to these questions in order for you, the reader, to clearly understand my "interpretive stance." You also have an "interpretive stance"! Apocalyptic literature demands a literary evaluation of the reader's presuppositions. This literature is so ambiguous that many interpretive stances are possible and defensible.

A. How are OT apocalypses related to OT prophecies?

Prophet	Apocalyptist
1. spoken message	1. written and highly structured message
2. spoken to bring repentance and faith	2. spoken to bring courage and steadfastness to the faithful
3. history is the medium of God's activity (process)	3. God intervenes and reforms history (crisis)
4. message meant to change the present	4. message meant to forecast the future
5. "God said" revelation	5. imaginative visions and dreams which must be interpreted by angels

Two very helpful and insightful books are D. Brent Sandy's *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, p. 107 and John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, p. 7.

B. What is the origin of apocalyptic thought and form? Which OT book contains the earliest apocalyptic passages? Is it even fair to talk about an apocalyptic genre? Although similar in many ways to prophecy, there seem to be unique and consistent elements which denote and define apocalyptic as a literary type. (See Introduction to Daniel III. Genre C).

If we take traditional authorship of OT books (which is certainly a presupposition) then the eighth century prophet, Isaiah, must be the first Bible example of this type of literature (cf. 13-14, 24-27, 56-66) followed by the seventh century prophets, Ezekiel (1, 26-28, 35-40), Daniel (7-12), and also the early post-exilic prophet, Zechariah (520 B.C.).

Although there is controversy among OT scholars as to the date of these books and what denotes an apocalyptic passage, it seems that parts of Isaiah must have set the pattern for the developing literary creativity that would, over time, result in what we now call "apocalyptic literature."

There is a growing understanding of the existence of some features of apocalyptic in other cultures of the ancient Near East.

1. Egyptian - "Introductory Remarks on Apocalypticism in Egypt" by Bergman in *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East*, ed. David Helbohn, pp. 51-60
2. Akkadia and Persia - same book as above, pp. 77-156, 379-411

C. Is the new age (1) earthly and physical or (2) spiritual, and multidimensional? Both OT prophecy and apocalyptic literature point toward an earthly, physical future. I myself hold to a restored Garden of Eden as a model for understanding biblical promises, but always there is the gnawing doubt that I have over literalized Scripture.

The whole issue of resurrection is caught up in this discussion. What are believers to expect? Even Daniel 7:18,22 may imply an earthly setting, but 12:2 implies something beyond the physical. Two NT texts seem relevant at this point: (1) Jesus' words to Pilate in John 18:33-38a (esp. v. 36) and (2) Paul's discussion of the resurrection in I Cor. 15 (esp. vv. 35-53). Both of these texts open the door to a spiritual understanding of the future. It is hard for us as humans to comprehend (a) personality without a physical body and (b) a kingdom without a physical planet!

The more I understand the vastness of creation (Hubble telescope) the more I realize that earth was/is a specially prepared and maintained place, but that may not be the focus of redeemed mankind's future. I am committed to Scripture as the only source for faith and practice, but it is an earth-focused, redemption-focused revelation. We cannot speculate on that which Scripture itself is silent, but there is a crack in the door in Jesus' and Paul's words.

D. Is prophecy and apocalyptic literature locked into a specific historical fulfillment? Surely the specific prophecies about the Messiah establish predictive prophecy as valid (e.g. Micah 5:2). However, Isa. 14:7 (virgin birth) and Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14 are good examples of multiple fulfillment prophecy. Prophecy and apocalyptic passages are not exhausted in specific historical fulfillments. Here is a good quote on this subject from Joyce G. Baldwin, Daniel, *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*,

> "The four-kingdom scheme seems to have its significance in the four empires between the time of the exile and the death of Christ, but it may have a symbolic meaning also, representing the relationship between God's church and the world powers throughout time" (p. 68).

How do interpreters proceed?

1. seek to establish the historical event of prophetic prediction
2. look for further fulfillment at the first coming of Christ

3. look for further fulfillment at the Second Coming of Christ

It is obvious that history plays a significant part in prophetic/apocalyptic interpretation. Often it is only in history (and often only in hindsight) that these texts become understandable. I understand Gen. 1-2 better in light of modern scientific research and I understand prophecy/apocalyptic better in light of unfolding history. History itself surpasses all biblical interpreters. Scripture is surely true, but exactly how it is true is a developing understanding (see *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* by Kevin J. Vanhoozer). This developing understanding is the tricky part of prophecy/apocalyptic interpretation.

At this point let me quote from the introduction of my commentary on Revelation.

"FIFTH TENSION

The kingdom of God is both present, yet future. This theological paradox becomes focused at the point of eschatology. If one expects a literal fulfillment of all OT prophecies to Israel then the Kingdom becomes mostly a restoration of Israel to a geographical locality and a theological pre-eminence! This would necessitate that the Church is secretly raptured out at chapter 5 and the remaining chapters relate to Israel.

However, if the focus is on the kingdom being inaugurated by the promised OT Messiah, then it is present with Christ's first coming, then the focus becomes the incarnation, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Christ. The theological emphasis is on a current salvation. The kingdom has come, the OT is fulfilled in Christ's offer of salvation to all, not His millennial reign over some!

It is surely true that the Bible speaks of both of Christ's comings, but where is the emphasis to be placed? It seems to me that most OT prophecies focus on the first coming, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom (cf. Dan. 2). In many ways this is analogous to the eternal reign of God (cf. Dan. 7). In the OT the focus is on the eternal reign of God, yet the mechanism for that reign's manifestation is the ministry of the Messiah (cf. I Cor. 15:26-27). It is not a question of which is true; both are true, but where is the emphasis? It must be said that some interpreters become so focused on the millennial reign of the Messiah (cf. Rev. 20) that they have missed the biblical focus on the eternal reign of the Father. Christ's reign is a preliminary event. As the two comings of Christ were not obvious in the OT, neither is a temporal reign of the Messiah!

The key to Jesus' preaching and teaching is the kingdom of God. It is both present (in salvation and service), and future (in pervasiveness and power). Revelation, if it focuses on a Messianic millennial reign (cf. Rev. 20), is preliminary, not ultimate (cf. Rev. 21-22). It is not obvious from the OT that a temporal reign is necessary; as a matter of fact, the Messianic reign of Daniel 7 is eternal, not millennial."

E. Some modern interpreters demand a literal fulfillment to all OT prophecies and apocalyptic passages. In reality this forces a non-valid theological grid on Scripture. Even OT prophecies were conditional of human response. Jesus asserted that He is the fulfillment of OT texts (cf. Matt. 5:17-19). The NT is the proper lens through which to view the OT (cf. Matt. 5:21-48).

At this point let me quote from the introduction of my commentary on Revelation.

"FIRST TENSION (OT racial, national, and geographical categories vs. all believers over all the world)

The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but Jesus nor the NT Apostles ever focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world:

1. OT prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)

2. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezek. 37-39; Dan. 7-12; Zech.)
3. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch, which is alluded to in Jude)
4. Jesus Himself (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
5. the writings of Paul (cf. I Cor. 15; II Cor. 5; I Thess. 4-5; II Thess. 2)
6. the writings of John (I John and Revelation).

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope ("the mystery of Christ," cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13. See Special Topic at Rev. 10:7). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem in the OT is used as a metaphor for the people of God (Zion), but is projected into the NT as a term expressing God's acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the new people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) is foreshadowed in God's promise to redeem fallen mankind in Gen. 3:15 before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham's call (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) involved the Gentiles (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5).
2. In the OT the enemies of God's people are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a worldwide, cosmic conflict (cf. Colossians).
3. The promise of a land which <u>is</u> so integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises of Genesis, cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7-15; 17:8) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes down to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Rev. 21-22).
4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are (1) the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29); (2) the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:10; 2:23, quoted in Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45, quoted in II Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2, quoted in Titus 2:14); (3) the temple is now Jesus and through Him the local church (cf. I Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. I Cor. 6:19); and (4) even Israel and its characteristic descriptive OT phrases now refer to the whole people of God (i.e. "Israel," cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16, i.e. "kingdom of priests," cf. I Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6)

   The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus and Paul! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication. There is no organized, logical system to Jesus' or Paul's eschatology. Their purpose is primarily redemptive or pastoral.

   However, even within the NT there is tension. There is no clear systemization of eschatological events. In many ways the Revelation surprisingly uses OT allusions in describing the end instead of the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13)! It follows the literary genre initiated by Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, but developed during the intertestamental period (Jewish apocalyptic literature). This may have been John's way of linking the Old and New Covenants. It shows the age-old pattern of human rebellion and

God's commitment to redemption! But it must be noted that although Revelation uses OT language, persons, and events, it reinterprets them in light of first century Rome."

"THIRD TENSION (conventional covenants vs. unconditional covenants)
There is a theological tension or paradox between conditional and unconditional covenants. It is surely true that God's redemptive purpose/plan is unconditional (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). However, the mandated human response is always conditional!

The "if. . .then" pattern appears in both OT and NT. God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. This tension has caused much confusion. Interpreters have tended to focus on only one "horn of the dilemma," God's faithfulness or human effort, God's sovereignty or mankind's free will. Both are biblical and necessary.

This relates to eschatology, to God's OT promises to Israel. If God promises it, that settles it, yes? God is bound to His promises; His reputation is involved (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38). The unconditional and conditional covenants meet in Christ (cf. Isa. 53), not Israel! God's ultimate faithfulness lies in the redemption of all who will repent and believe, not in who was your father/mother! Christ, not Israel, is the key to all of God's covenants and promises. If there is a theological parenthesis in the Bible, it is not the Church, but Israel (cf. Acts 7 and Gal. 3).

The world mission of gospel proclamation has passed to the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). It is still a conditional covenant! This is not to imply that God has totally rejected the Jews (cf. Rom. 9-11). There may be a place and purpose for end-time, <u>believing</u> Isra el (cf. Zech. 12:10)."

F. Is the main purpose of a commentary to (1) defend a Bible book's author and historical setting (Daniel as a sixth century B.C. writer in Babylon); (2) seek a historical confirmation of specific details of the predictive elements; or (3) establish the major theological themes and clearly expressed truths?

As a believer how can I help other believers through a commentary? Is the trustworthiness of the Scripture itself the issue, or is the message of the author the issue? Is the focus to be (1) the history of Daniel's day, (2) the history of my day, or (3) the specific predictions of a future day? Since I am committed to the inspiration of Scripture, in a sense all three are important. Interpretation moves from (1) the then of an inspired author; (2) to the immediate recipients of the revelation (since this prophecy was to be sealed there remains doubt as to who the first readers or hearers were); and (3) then to the future readers of every generation. Proper hermeneutic procedure demands an initial focus on the historical setting and genre of the original inspired author. His/her purpose(s) become <u>the</u> focus of interpretation. I am not inspired, the original author was inspired! I must focus on his/her intended meaning (however, Daniel did not fully understand all he wrote). This becomes the touchstone of an effective evaluation of interpretations. It cannot mean something totally apart from the author's understanding.

This is why the question of authorship, date, purpose, and recipients are such crucial questions. These are the very questions over which OT scholars disagree!

The next hermeneutical procedure involves genre and context. By context I am referring to three separate issues.

1. the literary context of the book itself (literary units)
2. the literary context of other OT apocalyptic books and other non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writings (genre)
3. the larger context of Scripture (systematic theology)

After these issues have been studied then comes the exegetical work on paragraphs.

1. contemporary word meaning

2. grammatical features
3. syntactical features
4. parallel passages

G. One of the interpretive issues that continues to challenge my thinking is how these apocalyptic passages are structured/designed. Does the revelation come to the author in specific visions or does the author structure God's message in visions? Who does the structuring?

At this point in my study I remain convinced that God reveals truth and human authors structure that truth in ways that their generation (and every generation) can understand. Apocalyptic is not how God speaks, but how humans write! The imagery is from the author's mind. The structure is from the author's day (of course, guided by the Spirit).

I. NAME OF THE BOOK

A. It is named after its chief spokesman and prophet.

B. His name means "God is my judge," "God is judge," or "God has given decision."

III. CANONIZATION

A. Daniel is part of the third and last division of the Hebrew canon, "The Writings" (*kethu'bim*).

B. This is because:
1. He was considered a statesman, not a prophet, by the Jews.
2. It reflects a later date of composition (editing, i.e. Baba Bathra 15a).
3. It contains diplomatic Aramaic portions (2:4b-7:28), like Ezra.

IV. GENRE

A. Like many of the Hebrew prophets it is a combination of genres:
1. Chapters 1-6 contain historical narratives written in the third person which reflect Daniel's life and times.
2. Chapters 7-12 are primarily future events often expressed in apocalyptic imagery in the first person (cf. 7:1,9; 8:1; 9:2).
3. The book is a prophetic unity (cf. Authorship E. And F. Chapters 2 and 7 provide a five-kingdom pattern, which is sustained throughout the book. Chapter 8 deals with the second and third kingdoms, while chapter 9 deals with the fourth and fifth kingdoms. History is moving toward a divine nexus!

B. This same structural pattern of the historical (temporal) then the future (eschatological) is also found in:
1. Isaiah, 1-39 and 40-66
2. Ezekiel 1-32; 33-48
3. Zechariah 1-8 & 9-14.

C. Apocalyptic literature is a uniquely Jewish literary genre. It was often used in tension-filled times to express the conviction that God is in control of history and will bring deliverance to His people. This type of literature is characterized by
1. a strong sense of the universal sovereignty of God (monotheism and determinism)

2. a struggle between good and evil, this evil age and the age of righteousness to come (a limited dualism)
3. use of standardized secret code words (usually from the OT prophetic texts or intertestamental Jewish apocalyptic literature)
4. use of colors, numbers, animals, sometimes animals/humans
5. use of angelic involvement by means of visions and dreams, which are usually interpreted by angels
5. primarily focuses on the soon-coming, climatic events of the end-time (new age)
6. use of a fixed set of symbols, not reality, to communicate the end-time message from God
7. Some examples of this type of genre are:
    a. Old Testament
        (1) Isaiah 13-14, 24-27, 56-66
        (2) Ezekiel 37-48
        (3) Daniel 7-12
        (4) Joel 2:28-3:21
        (5) Zechariah 1-6, 12-14
    b. New Testament
        (1) Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21,
        (2) I Corinthians 15 (in some ways)
        (3) II Thessalonians 2 (in most ways)
        (4) Revelation (chapters 4-22)
8. non-canonical (taken from D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, pp. 37-38)
    a. I Enoch, II Enoch (the Secrets of Enoch)
    b. The Book of Jubilees
    c. The Sibylline Oracles III, IV, V
    d. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
    e. The Psalms of Solomon
    f. The Assumption of Moses
    g. The Martyrdom of Isaiah
    h. The Apocalypse of Moses (Life of Adam and Eve)
    i. The Apocalypse of Abraham
    j. The Testament of Abraham
    k. II Esdras (IV Esdras)
    l. II & III Baruch
9. There is a purposeful structure of duality in this genre. It presents reality as a series of dualisms, contrasts, or tensions (so common in the Dead Sea Scrolls and John's writings) between:
    a. heaven - earth
    b. evil age (evil men and evil angels) - new age of righteousness (godly men and godly angels)
    c. current existence - future existence

    All of these are moving toward a consummation brought about by God. This is not the world God intended it to be, but He is continuing to plan, work, and project His will for a restoration of the intimate fellowship begun in the Garden of Eden. The Christ event is the watershed of God's plan, but His two comings have brought about the current dualism.

    AT this point let me quote from the introduction to my commentary on Revelation.

"FOURTH TENSION (Near Eastern literary models vs. western models).

Genre is a critical element in correctly interpreting the Bible. The Church developed in a western (Greek) cultural setting. Eastern literature is much more figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic than modern, western culture's literary models. It focuses on people, encounters, and events more than societal propositional truths. Christians have been guilty of using their history and literary models to interpret biblical prophecy (both OT and NT). Each generation and geographical entity has used its culture, history, and literalness to interpret Revelation. Every one of them has been wrong! It is arrogant to think that modern western culture is the focus of biblical prophecy!

The genre in which the original, inspired author chooses to write is a literary contract with the reader. The book of Revelation is not historical narrative. It is a combination of letter (chapters 1-3), prophecy, and mostly apocalyptic literature. It is as wrong to make the Bible say more than was intended by the original author or to make it say less than what he intended! Interpreters' arrogance and dogmatism are even more inappropriate in a book like Revelation.

The Church has never agreed on a proper interpretation. My concern is to hear and deal with the whole Bible, not some selected part(s). The Bible's eastern mind-set presents truth in tension-filled pairs. Our western trend toward propositional truth is not invalid, but unbalanced! I think it is possible to remove at least some of the impasse in interpreting Revelation by noting its changing purpose to successive generations of believers. It is obvious to most interpreters that Revelation must be interpreted in light of its own day and its genre. An historical approach to Revelation must deal with what the first readers would have, and could have, understood. In many ways modern interpreters have lost the meaning of many of the symbols of the book. Revelation's initial main thrust was to encourage persecuted believers. It showed God's control of history (as did the OT prophets); it affirmed that history is moving toward an appointed terminus, judgment or blessing (as did the OT prophets). It affirmed in first century Jewish apocalyptic terms God's love, presence, power, and sovereignty!

It functions in these same theological ways to every generation of believers. It depicts the cosmic struggle of good and evil. The first century details may have been lost to us, but not the powerful, comforting truths. When modern, western interpreters try to force the details of Revelation into their contemporary history, the pattern of false interpretations continues!

It is quite possible that the details of the book may become strikingly literal again (as did the OT in relation to the birth, life, and death of Christ) for the last generation of believers as they face the onslaught of an anti-God leader (cf. II Thess.2) and culture. No one can know these literal fulfillments of the Revelation until the words of Jesus (cf. Matt. 24; Mark.13; and Luke 21) and Paul (cf. I Cor. 15; I Thess. 4-5; and II Thess. 2) also become historically evident. Guessing, speculation, and dogmatism are all inappropriate. Apocalyptic literature allows this flexibility. Thank God for images and symbols that surpass historical narrative! God is in control; He reigns; He comes!

Most modern commentaries miss the point of the genre! Modern western interpreters often seek a clear, logical system of theology rather than being fair with an ambiguous, symbolic, dramatic genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature. This truth is expressed well by Ralph P. Martin in his article, "Approaches to New Testament Exegesis," in the book *New Testament Interpretation*, edited by I. Howard Marshall:

> "Unless we recognize the dramatic quality of this writing and recall the way in which language is being used as a vehicle to express religious truth, we shall grievously err in our understanding of the Apocalypse, and mistakenly try to interpret its visions as

though it were a book of literal prose and concerned to describe events of empirical and datable history. To attempt the latter course is to run into all manner of problems of interpretation. More seriously it leads to a distortion of the essential meaning of apocalyptic and so misses the great value of this part of the New Testament as a dramatic assertion in mythopoetic language of the sovereignty of God in Christ and the paradox of his rule which blends might and love (cf. 5:5,6; the Lion is the Lamb)" (p. 235).

W. Randolph Tate in his book *Biblical Interpretations* said:
"No other genre of the Bible has been so fervently read with such depressing results as apocalypse, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. This genre had suffered from a disastrous history of misinterpretation due to a fundamental misunderstanding of its literary forms, structure, and purpose. Because of its very claim to reveal what is shortly to happen, apocalypse has been viewed as a road map into and a blueprint of the future. The tragic flaw in this view is the assumption that the books' frame of reference is the reader's contemporary age rather than the author's. This misguided approach to apocalypse (particularly Revelation) treats the work as if it were a cryptogram by which contemporary events can be used to interpret the symbol of the text. . .First, the interpreter must recognize that apocalyptic communicates its messages through symbolism. To interpret a symbol literally when it is metaphoric is simply to misinterpret. The issue is not whether the events in apocalyptic are historical. The events may be historical; they may have really happened, or might happen, but the author presents events and communicates meaning through images and archetypes" (p. 137).

From *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, edited by Ryken, Wilhost and Longman III:
"Today's readers are often puzzled and frustrated by this genre. The unexpected imagery and out-of-this-world experiences seem bizarre and out of sync with most of Scripture. Taking this literature at face value leaves many readers scrambling to determine 'what will happen when,' thus missing the intent of the apocalyptic message" (p. 35).

D. Apocalyptic literature flourished during Israel's captivity by foreign empires.

E. Apocalyptic authors built on prophetic models. They were not innovators, but put traditional prophecies into highly symbolic structures, which focused on a future, certain, divine kingdom.

V. AUTHORSHIP

A. The book states its author in 12:4. Chapters 1-6 are written in the third person, while chapters 7-12 are in the first person, 7:2,15,28; 8:1,15,27; 9:2; 10:2,7,11; 12:5. The use of the third person is common in the ancient world. In the Ten Commandments God moves from the first person (cf. Exod. 20:2) to the third person (cf. Exod. 20:7,8-11). Jesus acknowledges the traditional authorship of Daniel in Matt. 24:15.

B. The Jewish Talmud tradition, Baba Bathra 15a, said, "the men of the Great Synagogue wrote Daniel." This means they edited or copied it. This may be the reason for its late Hebrew characteristics.

C. The following reasons are given to support either an early or late date:
1. early date, Daniel's own day (7th-6th century B.C.):

a. the book claims to be the visions of Daniel, 7:2,4,6ff, 28; 8:1,15; 9:1-2; 10:2ff; 12:4-8.
b. the presence of Persian and Greek words does not show a late date because there were trading contracts between these countries before Daniel's day.
c. the theology of an afterlife can also be seen in Job and some Psalms (cf. 16, 49, 118).
d. Daniel fits our current archaeological understanding of the neo-Babylonian and Persian royal courts.

2. late date, the Maccabean period (2nd century B.C.):
a. placement in the Hebrew canon (the Writings)
b. the presence of Persian and Greek loan terms
c. the highly developed theologies of the afterlife and angels
d. the specificity of the predictions, especially chapter 11, relating to the Seleucid and the Ptolomies' struggle for control of Palestine, but after 11:40 the predictions do not fit Antiochus IV
e. the similarity between Daniel and other apocalyptic books of the Maccabean period
f. several supposed "mistakes" in the book:
(1) use of term "chaldean" in several senses
(2) Daniel as chaldean (wise man, pagan priest)
(3) Belshazzar called "king of Babylon"
(4) Nebuchadnezzar called Belshazzar's father
(5) mention of "Darius the Mede"
(6) use of the Persian administrative term, *satrap*
g. Daniel is not mentioned in Ecclesiasticus (200 B.C.), which lists other biblical heroes during this period (cf. chapters 44-50). However, it must be mentioned that Ben Sirach also fails to mention any of the Judges except Samuel and although he mentions Nehemiah, does not mention Ezra.

D. The first person to deny the traditional dating and authorship of Daniel was a third century A.D. neo-platonic philosopher named Porphyry, who rejected Christianity and specifically denounced predictive prophecy (which is powerful evidence for the uniqueness and inspiration of the Bible).

E. The unity of the book of Daniel can be seen in:
1. the parallel relationship between chapters 2, 7 & 8 (see full char at Contextual Insights at chapter 8)

chap. 2		chap. 7	chap. 8
gold (Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon)		lion	
silver		bear	ram (Persia)
bronze		leopard	goat (Greece)
iron/clay	beast		

2. the Aramaic section runs from 2:4b-7:28, which overlaps the traditional literary division of chapters 1-6 (historical) and 7-12 (eschatological)

F. The Bible identifies the kings of these empires:
1. the gold (first kingdom) of chapter 2 as Babylon, 2:38
2. the ram (second kingdom) of chapter 8 as Medo-Persia, 8:20
3. the goat (third kingdom) of chapter 8 as Greece, 8:21
4. therefore, the fourth kingdom must be Rome. This is the kingdom in which the Messiah (fifth kingdom) will come (2:34-35,44; 9:25)

G. What we know of the man Daniel:
   1. taken into exile in 606 B.C. by neo-Babylon, 1:1 (third year of Jehoiakim, King of Judah)
   2. from an important and wealthy family in Jerusalem, 1:3
   3. highly intelligent, 1:4
   4. special gift of interpreting dreams and knowledge, 1:17; 2:25-30; 4:7-9; 5:12, 14
   5. loyal servant both:
      a. to God
      b. to Nebuchadnezzar

H. There is disagreement among OT scholars related to the Dny'L of the book of Daniel and Dn'L of Ezek. 14:14,20; 28:3, who is also mentioned in "the Aqhat Epic" in the Ras Shamra (Ugarit) texts.
   The basic problems are related to
   1. the order of the names listed by Ezekiel (Noah, Daniel, and Job)
   2. the spellings of the names are different
   3. the issue of Daniel's fame spreading so rapidly within contemporary exiled Judah
   For a good discussion compare E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, pp. 274-275, who believes it refers to the Daniel of the Bible and R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 1105, who believes it refers to a wise man of Canaanite lore.

VI. DATE

A. Daniel is taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar II in 606 B.C. (cf. 1:1).

B. Daniel is the interpreter of dreams and counselor to kings of neo-Babylon and Persia until the time of Cyrus II, "the great" (538 B.C., cf. 1:21; 6:28; 10:1). W. F. Albright, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, pp. 40, 1921, asserts a Babylonian flavor to chapter one through seven. He believes they were written in Babylonia.

C. Some scholars who reject predictive prophecy are troubled by (1) the accuracy of the historical details of Dan. 11:2-35; (2) the partial accuracy of 11:36-39; and (3) the inaccuracy of 11:40-45. They date the book just after its last specific prediction in 11:35, about Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.).

D. The first person singular pronoun is used often in the book (cf. 7:1,9; 8:1-2; 9:1-10:2). This implies Daniel was the author of the book that bears his name. This would date the book within his life time (seventh century B.C.).

E. The literary units are not in chronological order.
   1. chapter 1 - third year of Jehoiakim, 606/605 B.C.
   2. chapter 2 - second year of Nebuchadnezzar, 605/604 B.C.
   3. chapters 3 and 4 are dated in the Septuagint in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, which would be 587 B.C. (A year before the fall of the temple)
   4. chapter 5 - Belshazzar's feast, just before the fall of the city of Babylon to Cyrus' army, 539 B.C.
   5. chapter 6 - Darius
      a. if the same as 5:31, then around 539 B.C.
      b. if later Persian ruler Darius I (Hystrapis), then 522 B.C.

6. chapter 7 - the first year of Belshazzar, who was crown prince. Nabonidus was king from 556-539 B.C., but he moved to Tema and left his son as co-regent, possibly 554 B.C. (LaSor, Hubbard, Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 665).
7. chapter 8 - in the third year of Belshazzar, possibly 552 B.C.
8. chapter 9 - in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent. If Darius of 5:31, then 538 B.C.
9. chapter 10 - in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, 536 B.C. (uncertain of date of coronation, but usually dated from 538-530, although he was king of Media earlier [559])
10. chapter 11 - in the first year of Darius the Mede (cf. 5:31)
11. chapter 12 - linked to chapter 11

Since Daniel's visions start before the events of chapters 1-6 are finished, R. K. Harrison believes that:

> "this general arrangement would suggest that if the work was not actually written by Daniel himself in the sixth century B.C., it was compiled shortly thereafter, and in the view of the present writer it was extant not later than the middle of the fifth century B.C." (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 1127)

F. The Hebrew of Daniel is closer in form to the post-exilic books of Chronicles and Ezra than the Dead Sea Scrolls and this is also true for the Aramaic.\ (LaSor, Hubbard, Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 666). This reinforces the witness of Baba Bathra that the "men of the Great Synagogue" were involved in editing or compiling Daniel in the fourth or third century B.C.

G. The current scholarly theory of a Maccabean date for Daniel was first postulated by a pagan philosopher from Tyre, Porphyrius, who wrote several books debunking Christianity (which Jerome refuted).

H. There are several good resources whose introductions deal effectively in support of the traditional view (seventh century B.C. date).
   1. Daniel in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, written by Gleason L. Archer, Jr.
   2. *Exposition of Daniel* by H. C. Leopold
   3. *Introduction to the Old Testament* by R. K. Harrison
   4. Daniel in the by Joyce G. Baldwin

VII. LITERARY UNITS

A. Daniel's Day
   1. Daniel at Nebuchadnezzar's court, chapter 1.
   2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream (the image of a man) and interpretations, chapter 2.
   3. Nebuchadnezzar's golden image and Daniel's three friends, chapter 3.
   4. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (the large tree) and its interpretation, chap. 4.
   5. Belshazzar's feast (the handwriting on the wall) and the fall of the city of Babylon, chap.5.
   6. Darius the Mede and Daniel in the lion's den, chap. 6.

B. The Future
   1. the vision of the four beasts, chap. 7.
   2. the vision of chap. 7 explained and expanded, chap. 8.
   3. Daniel's concern and prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple, but he is shown future problems for the Jews in Palestine, chap. 9.
   4. an introduction to the message of chapters 11-12, chapter 10

5. future struggle between the Seleucids and Ptolomies over Palestine, chapters 11-12.

VIII. PURPOSE

A. The book spans the period of Judean exile (from Nebuchadnezzar II to Cyrus II). It brings theological perspective and hope in the midst of the tragedy of Judah's being taken out of the promised land. YHWH's promises seem to be rescinded. YHWH's covenant love seems to be ended. Daniel steps into this void.

The events of chapters 1-6 at the courts of pagan rulers, who come to acknowledge YHWH and honor His spokesperson(s), are the theological purpose for recording these events! God cares for Gentiles, but antiGod world empires will be judged for their arrogance and their attack on God's people. It looks as if the world has won, but wait, God is triumphant! Monotheism is defended and established.

B. Daniel shows not only God's love and guidance for Judah, but for Israel and also for "the nations." God is working on a larger redemptive scheme than just one group of Jews. At this point let me quote part of the crucial introduction to my commentary on Revelation.

"SECOND TENSION (monotheism vs. an elect people)

The biblical emphasis is on one personal, spiritual, creator-redeemer, God (cf. Exod. 8:10; Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7,14,18,21-22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7). The OT's uniqueness in its own day was its monotheism. All of the surrounding nations were polytheists. The oneness of God is the heart of OT revelation (cf. Deut. 6:4). Creation is a stage for the purpose of fellowship between God and mankind, made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen.1:26-27). However, mankind rebelled, sinning against God's love, leadership, and purpose (cf. Gen. 3). God's love and purpose was so strong and sure that He promised to redeem fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15)!

The tension arises when God chooses to use one man, one family, one nation to reach the rest of mankind. God's election of Abraham and the Jews as a kingdom of priests (cf. Exod. 19:4-6) caused pride instead of service, exclusion instead of inclusion. God's call of Abraham involved the intentional blessing of all mankind (cf. Gen. 12:3). It must be remembered and emphasized that OT election was for service, not salvation. All Israel was never right with God, never eternally saved based solely on her birthright (cf. John 8:31-59; Matt. 3:9), but by personal faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6, quoted in Rom. 4). Israel lost her mission, turned mandate into privilege, service into a special standing! God chose one to choose all!"

IX. OCCASIONS

A. It seemed to the Jews that the Assyrian exile which affected northern Israel by deportation (722 B.C., fall of Samaria) and the neo-Babylonian exile which affected Judah (586 B.C., fall of Jerusalem) negated God's promises to Abraham and his seed in Gen. 12, 15, 18 and II Sam. 7. How could God's eternal covenant promises be set aside by a foreign empire (cf. Habakkuk)? The prophets answered this dilemma by asserting (1) the sinfulness of the Jewish people, not YHWH's powerlessness, as the cause and (2) that God would gather His people and re-establish them in the promised land. Notice the nationalistic and geographically limited scope of this response. What about the universal aspects of God's promises (cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 18:18; Exod. 19:5-6)?

B. It is the apocalyptic aspect of Daniel and Zechariah, which expands the Jewish restoration into universal categories. Even the demise of the Jewish state was a part of the larger plan of God (cf. Rom. 9-11) to include all mankind into His covenant (cf. Matt. 24:14,15).

C. Daniel as a servant of a foreign ruler opens a new door of understanding that God reveals Himself to the non-Jewish, yes even Israel's conquering rulers. Chapters 1-6 record visions given to Gentile rulers, but explained by YHWH's spokesperson. God is in control of history for His redemptive purposes. Israel was a means of reaching the whole world, not an end in itself.

X. MAIN TRUTHS

A. The book is addressing God's people through historical events and future prophecies.

B. God was/is in control of events and history as these pagan kings acknowledged (historical kings, cf. 2:46-49; 3:28-30; 4:34-37; 5:17-29; 6:25-27 and future kings, cf. 7:27; 8:25e; 9:24a,26b,27b; 11:35,45). God's people are to trust in Him and remain faithful in difficult times. God's people will receive the kingdom forever (cf. 7:17)!

C. God's people will suffer and be exposed to torture and death by pagan rulers. Joyce G. Baldwin, Daniel, *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, says it well:

> "The people of God as a whole are to find themselves at the mercy of a ruler who will systematically impose on them heathen ways and at the same time forbid them to worship the God of their fathers" (p. 66)

Notice the progressively antiGod attitude

1. Nebuchadnezzar (chapters 1-4)
2. Belshazzar (chapter 5)
3. the courtiers of Darius the Mede (chapter 6)
4. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (chapters 8,11)
5. Roman governmental leaders (NT)
6. the Antichrist (cf. II Thess. 2 and the Revelation)

D. God will set up an eternal kingdom through His Messiah (cf. 7:13-14). God will deliver His people and all people.

E. There will be a resurrection of both the righteous and wicked, who will be judged by God, who alone determines the eternal status.

DANIEL 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS*

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Daniel and His Friends Obey God	Daniel and His Friends	The Young Men at Nebuchadnezzar's Court	Introduction
1:1-7	1:1-2	1:1-2	1:1-2
			The Young Hebrews at the Court of Nebuchadnezzar
	1:3-7	1:3-7	1:3-7
1:8-13	1:8-17	1:8-10	1:8-17
		1:11-13	
1:14-16		1:14-16	
1:17-21		1:17-21	
	1:18-21		1:18-21

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

---

*Although not inspired, paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Each modern translation has divided and summarized the paragraph divisions as they understand them. Every paragraph has one central topic, truth or thought. Each version encapsulates that topic in its own way. As you read the text, which translation fits your understanding of the subject and verse divisions?

In every chapter you must read the Bible first and try to identify its subjects (paragraphs). Then compare your understanding with the modern versions. Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation at the paragraph level, can one truly understand the Bible. Only the original author was inspired—readers have no right to change or modify the message. Bible readers do have the responsibility to apply the inspired truth to their day and lives.

Note that all technical terms and abbreviations are explained fully in Appendices One, Two and Three.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS TO DANIEL 1

A. This chapter sets the historical setting of the entire book. Daniel and his friends are captive servants of a pagan world power of the Fertile Crescent.

B. God's hand is providentially with these young Jewish boys. He has allowed the Gentile powers to dominate His people because of His people's sin. Through them He will show His power over all nations and point toward the culmination of His redemptive plan (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13).

C. This chapter reveals an appropriate faith response to culture. Daniel and his friends act respectfully, but faithfully to their Jewish faith, in the context of a pagan court. Their example gives Christians insight into how to deal with a post-Christian, post-modern society.

D. This chapter reveals the lexical problems involved in
   1. Persian loan words
   2. Babylonian idioms
   3. our lack of knowledge related to the ancient Near East (both language and history)

E. Daniel 1:1-2:4a and chapters 8-12 are in Hebrew, but the intervening text, which deals with Daniel's messages to foreign kings, is in Aramaic (as are Jer. 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:1-2

[1]In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. [2]The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god.

1:1 "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim" This is Babylonian dating (also used by the northern tribes, Israel) dating, while Jer. 25:1,9; 46:2 are Egyptian dating (also used by Judean scribes). Obviously Daniel was in Babylon and Jeremiah was back in Judah. Jehoiakim (609-598 B.C.) was one of Josiah's sons who was placed on the throne by Pharaoh Necco II after he exiled Jehoahaz, another son of Josiah, who reigned only three months. His name (BDB 220) means "YHWH raises up" or "YHWH establishes," but he was an evil king (cf. II Kgs. 23:37; II Chron. 36:5; Jer. 36).

▣ "**Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon"** The name (BDB 613) in Babylonian has several possible meanings.

1. "Nebo, protect (the) boundary (or frontier)"
2. "Nebo, protect (my) progeny"
3. "Nebo, protect (my) inheritance"
4. "Nebo, protect (the) crown"
5. "Nebo, protect (thy) servant"

In Daniel, like Jeremiah, it is spelled two ways, Nebuchadrezzar (most accurate spelling) and Nebuchadnezzar (found in OT 27 times). The difference is due to the transliteration from Babylonian to Aramaic/Hebrew. But why both spellings are in one book is uncertain, possibly different scribes were used. The original name in Akkadian would have been Nabu-kudurri-usur.

He was not really king yet because his father Nabopolassar (626-605 B.C.) did not die until the summer of 605 B.C. He was the crown prince in charge of the military campaign. We have no other historical record of this raid. However, II Kgs. 24:1-7 and II Chr. 36:1-7 surely imply a confrontation between Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim before 597 B.C. Jerusalem seems to have fallen into Babylonian hands in 605 B.C. (Daniel and his friends taken), 597 B.C. (Jehoiachim and nobles and artisans taken), 586 B.C. (general deportation) and 582 B.C. (all who could be found taken).

1:2 "the Lord gave. . .God granted. . .God gave" These phrases are found in verses 2, 9 (both *Qal* IMPERFECT), and 17 (*Qal* PERFECT). Each combine to show God's control of history! This is a recurrent theme in Daniel. In the ancient world every army fought under the banner/name of their god. Success in battle showed the supremacy of one god over another. However, the Bible clearly asserts that it was because of Israel's and Judah's sins and rebellion against YHWH that YHWH allowed, yes even engineered, the invasion of the promised land.

▣ **"the Lord"** This is the Hebrew term *Adon* (BDB 10), which was commonly used in the sense of "husband," "owner," "master" (cf. v. 10 of Nebuchadnezzar). It is comparable to (1) *Ba'al* in the OT and (2) the NT term *kurios*. When used of YHWH it denotes His rule and reign.

In English "Lord" is used (1) to translate *Adon* and (2) because the Jews became nervous of pronouncing the covenant name for God - YHWH, all capitals LORD became the way to designate it. For pronunciation the Jews used the vowels for *Adon* with the consonants for YHWH. See Special Topic: The Names for Deity at Dan. 4:2.

▣ **"Judah"** The Jewish nation that developed from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was organized around thirteen tribes (Joseph's two sons became tribes). These tribes were united under Saul, David, and Solomon (the united monarchy), but split because of Solomon's sin (cf. I Kgs. 11) and Rehoboam's arrogance (cf. I Kgs. 12) in 922 B.C. The northern tribes under Jeroboam I became Israel and the southern tribes (Simeon, Benjamin, Judah, and most Levites) became Judah.

▣ **"vessels of the house of God"** This refers to the utensils and furniture of the temple (cf. Jer. 27:19-20; II Chr. 36:7). These are mentioned again in Dan. 5:2 and Ezra 1:5-11.

▣ **"Shinar"** This is another name for Babylon (cf. Gen. 10:10; 11:2; 14:1,9; Isa. 11:11; Zech. 5:11). The meaning of *Shinar* is uncertain (BDB 1042). It somehow relates to the Sumerian civilization of southern Iraq (cf. Gen. 10:10), which is the earliest known civilization to use writing (cuneiform script on clay tablets). It is the site of the building of the tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 11:1-9). It becomes an idiom for evil and rebellion (cf. Zech. 5:11).

▣ **"to the house of his god"** This is literally "gods" - *Elohim* (BDB 43). Marduk was the chief neo-Babylonian god. This god is also known as Bel ("Lord," cf. Jer. 51:44) and in Hebrew as Merodack (cf. Jer. 50:2). He took over the functions of *En-lil* (storm god and creator) about the time of Hammurabi in the second millennium B.C. Putting the vessels of YHWH in his temple was (1) a sign of respect, so as not to offend the gods, but mostly (2) a sign of YHWH's defeat by Marduk.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:3-7

[3]Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, [4]youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every *branch of* wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and *he ordered him* to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. [5]The king appointed for them a daily

ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. [6]Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. [7]Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

1:3 "Ashpenaz" His name's meaning is uncertain (BDB 80), but (1) a possible Persian origin would suggest "guest" or "chief eunuch" or (2) an Armenian origin, "guest," "friend," or "stranger."

▣

NASB "the chief of his officials"
NKJV "the master of his eunuchs"
NRSV "his palace master"
TEV "his chief official"
NJB "his chief eunuch"

This title reflects an Akkadian phrase, "he who is of the king's head," therefore, it contains no implication of castration. In Isa. 56:3; Jer. 38:7, and Esther 2:3 the Hebrew term (BDB 710) reflects castration. In Gen. 37:36; 39:1 it is used of Potiphar, who was married (cf. Gen. 39:7). The term came to be used generally of court officials. Some were castrated, especially those who worked with the harem, but not all. Josephus says the youths were tortured (i.e. castrated, cf. *Antiq*. 10.10.1).

▣ **"to bring some of the sons of Israel"** The VERBAL is an INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT. There are also two in v. 4 and one in v. 5.

This fulfills Isa. 39:5-7 and II Kgs. 20:16-18. Israel here refers to Jacob, not the northern Ten Tribes. Nebuchadnezzar took youths from all the people groups he conquered and used them in his palace and courtroom as a way of showing his military conquests (cf. v. 10 and H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, p. 58).

▣

NASB "some of the royal family and of the nobles"
NKJV "some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles"
NRSV, TEV "some. . .of the royal family and of the nobility"
NJB "a certain number of boys of royal or noble descent"

The term "royal" (BDB 574) is from the Hebrew root *mlk* - king (BDB 572). The fact that Nebuchadnezzar could do this showed his total control of Palestine. The added word "nobility" is another Persian loan word (BDB 832).

1:4 "youths" This word has a wide usage (BDB 409) from newborns (cf. Exod. 1:17,18; 3:6,7,8,9,10; II Sam. 12:5) to young men able to be trained for court service (cf. Dan. 1:4,10,15,17). Therefore, the age of these four youths cannot be determined by the word, but only by context.

▣ **"no defect"** This word (BDB 548) is used in Leviticus in relation to (1) acceptable priests (cf. Lev. 21:16-24) and (2) acceptable sacrifices for complete destruction (cf. Lev. 22:17-25). Its basic meaning is "perfection" or "completeness." These youths had to be physically and intellectually the best of the captive youths of Judah.

▣

NASB "showing intelligence in every *branch of* wisdom, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge"

NKJV "gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand"
NRSV "versed in every branch of wisdom, endowed with knowledge and insight"
TEV "intelligent, well-trained, quick to learn"
NJB "versed in every branch of wisdom, well-informed, discerning"

There must have been some kind of testing and questioning involved in the choice. These skills were developed in training, but present before their capture. These were bright, insightful, and teachable young men.

Basically the word "wisdom" (BDB 315) has a practical orientation, like the Proverbs. Wisdom Literature in the OT was a guide for the individual to learn how to have a happy and successful life. Israel developed a group of "wise men" or "sages" (cf. Jer. 18:18) who advised their kings.

▣ **"the literature and language of the Chaldeans"** This refers to the cuneiform language. In northern Babylon this was known as Akkadian (Semitic); in southern Babylon as Sumerian (non-Semitic). These youth would be trained in several related languages, but all written in cuneiform script.

The context seems to imply a knowledge of all Chaldean literature (ethnic sense, cf. Gen. 11:28,31; II Kgs. 24-25; often in Isaiah and Jeremiah; Dan. 1:4; 5:30; 9:1; Ezra 5:12) rather than just magical, astrological, and religious texts (magi sense, cf. 2:2-5,10; 4:4; 5:7,11, used by Herodotus, Diodorus, and Strabo).

▣ **"Chaldeans"** Herodotus (450 B.C.), *Hist.* I, uses this term to refer to an ethnic group (cf. II Kgs. 24:1-4; Dan. 5:30) as well as a priestly class (cf. Dan. 2:2; 3:8; 4:7; 5:7,11) whose usage goes back to Cyrus II. Even before this Assyrian records used the term (BDB 505) in an ethnic sense (cf. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 1113). Also read the good discussion of the possibility of a confusion of two similar terms (i.e. Kal-du vs. Kasdu) in *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 14-15 or Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, series 1.

Because Gen. 11:28 states that Ur of the Chaldeans was the home of Terah and his family. Chaldeans may have been ethnically Semitic (i.e. same racial group as the Hebrews).

1:5
NASB "the king's choice food"
NKJV "the king's delicacies"
NRSV "the royal rations"
TEV "as members of the royal court"
NJB "from the royal table"

These youths, like all the youths, both those in training and those who served Nebuchadnezzar, shared in the king's food and drink (literally in Persian, "kingly delicacies," or "honorific gifts," or "royal table rations" (cf. BDB 834 and Dan. 1:5,8,13,15,16; 11:26). These royal provisions were a real honor and perk. This was the best quality and best variety of food available anywhere. It was also provided to Jehoiachin in exile (cf. II Kgs. 25:30; Jer. 52:34). However, it was not levitically "clean" (cf. Lev. 11: Deut. 14). It was not kosher.

▣
NASB "enter the king's personal service"
NKJV "serve before the king"
NRSV "could be stationed in the king's court"
TEV "appear before the king"
NJB "enter the royal service"

This is literally "stand before the king," (BDB 763, KB, *Qa*l IMPERFECT), which is an idiom for service (cf. Deut. 10:8; 17:12; 18:5,7). The NRSV catches the historical setting of Nebuchadnezzar stationing young men from all the conquered lands around his court room to show how extensive his empire was.

1:6 "Daniel" His name means "God (*El*) is my Judge" (BDB 193).

▣ **" Hananiah"** His name means "YHWH (*iah*) has been gracious" (BDB 337).

▣ **"Mishael"** His name means "Who is what God (*El*) is" (BDB 567).

▣ **"Azariah"** His name means "YHWH (*iah*) has helped" (BDB 741).

1:7 The names were changed to: (1) break the ties with the past or (2) associate with the Babylonian deities.

▣ **"Belteshazzar"** This is the Babylonian name, *balatsu-usur*, which means "protect his life" (BDB 117). Many suppose that the name of the Babylonian god *Nabu* (*Nebo*) was the assumed prefix.

It is also possible that another origin is *Belet-sar-usur*, meaning "lady (wife of Marduk or Bel) protect the king" (cf. A. R. Millard, "Daniel 1-6 and History," EQ, XLIX, 2, 1977 mentioned in *Tyndale Commentary*, p. 81 footnote #1).

▣ **"Shadrach"** Scholars suppose that the later Jewish scribes slightly changed the Babylonian names to make fun of their gods. The original Akkadian names may have meant "Command of Aku" (the Sumerian moon god (BDB 995). Joyce G. Baldwin, Daniel, *Tyndale Commentaries* p. 81, says that Shadrach comes from Saduraku, which means "I am very fearful (of God)." Obviously these Babylonian names are lost to us because later Jewish scribes substituted vowels to make puns on the names in order to ridicule them.

▣ **"Meshach"** Originally this would have been "Who is what Aku is" (BDB 568). Again Joyce G. Baldwin, in the Tyndale Commentaries on Daniel, says it is from *Mesaku*, meaning "I am of little account," p. 81.

▣ **"Abed-nego"** Originally this would have been "Servant of *Nabu*" (BDB 715, the Babylonian god of wisdom, also called *Nebo*).

Joyce G. Baldwin, in the Tyndale commentary on Daniel, says it is from an Aramaic word play on "servant of the shining one (*Nabu*)," p. 81.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:8-13

[8]But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself. [9]Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials, [10]and the commander of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink; for why should he see your faces looking more haggard than the youths who are your own age? Then you would make me forfeit my head to the king." [11]But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, [12]"Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. [13]Then let our appearance be

observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

1:8 "not defile himself" Two possibilities are: (1) because the food had been offered to Babylonian idols or (2) because of restraints of the Jewish food laws (cf. Lev. 11: Deut. 14). It is surprising that Daniel did not object to (1) his name change, which reflects a pagan god or (2) his study of magic texts, but he did express his Jewish tradition in relation to his diet. It is interesting that both Joseph and Moses faced similar cross-cultural experiences in Egypt. There were precedents!

▣ **"so he sought *permission* from the commander of the officials"** Notice Daniel purposed in his heart and then with tact and politeness asked the eunuch's permission. Daniel 1-6 shows how these four Jewish youths dealt tactfully and graciously with their captors. They trusted in God, but did not flaunt their faith!

1:9 "God granted" This verse, like v. 17, shows God's presence and purpose in the situation. God was with them and would use them for His purposes.

The book of Daniel is unique in the OT as God reveals truths and manifests His power to Gentile kings, YHWH shows His love, concern, and redemptive plan for "the nations." Isaiah saw "the nations" inclusion, but Daniel shows how God was in control of the history of all nations for His redemptive purposes (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13).

Apocalyptic literature, of which Daniel is surely a classic example, is characterized by a sense of divine sovereignty, even determinism. One God is in control of all events, persons, and nations. This theological view of monotheism is unique in the ancient Near East, whose religions were polytheistic and cyclical (i.e. the dying and rising of gods).

▣ **"favor"** This is the non-covenant use of the Hebrew word *hesed* (BDB 338), which came to denote YHWH's special covenant love and loyalty to Israel.

▣ **"and compassion"** These two terms "favor" and "compassion" (BDB 933) are used often to describe God's actions toward Israel (cf. Ps. 25:6; 40:11; 69:16; 103:4).

1:10-13 Daniel acknowledges the eunuch's fear and concerns. Daniel proposes a test period to determine if the Hebrew youths can grow and prosper on vegetables (i.e. "sown things") only! He submitted to the eunuch's authority (cf. v. 13). Daniel's faith is verified in vv. 14-16.

1:10 "forfeit my head to the king" This shows the power of the king and the fear of his servants over even minor problems.

1:11

NASB	**"the overseer"**
NKJV	**"the steward"**
NRSV, TEV, NJB	**"the guard"**

This Babylonian word (BDB 576) is used only here in the Bible. Its meaning is disputed, but it obviously refers to a servant under Ashpenaz, who would directly be involved in daily food services. The KJV made this a proper name, *Melzar*, but the title here and in v. 16 has the article, which denotes a rank of servant, not a name.

1:12 "some vegetables" This term refers to things sown or grown from seeds (BDB 283). It is not certain if these types of food were part of the royal diet or special ordered items. These youths wanted to avoid the royal meat and wine possibly because (1) had been dedicated to pagan Persian gods and (2) also did not conform to Levitical regulations (Lev. 11; Deut. 14).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:14-16

[14]So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. [15]At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food. [16]So the overseer continued to withhold their choice food and the wine they were to drink, and kept giving them vegetables.

1:14-16 This is a summary of the results of the test.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:17

[17]As for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and intelligence in every *branch of* literature and wisdom; Daniel even understood all *kinds of* visions and dreams.

1:17 "God gave" Again, like v. 9, it was not the natural talents or intelligence of these young men, but the power of God. God had a purpose for their lives.

This is a good word for those who feel called by God, but feel inadequate for the task. When God calls, God equips and He equips in such a way that He gets the glory, not the human agent.

As these youths honored God in what they did know (food laws), God gifted them in areas they did not know. Their one step of faith opened other opportunities. Believers must act on what they do understand, then more knowledge and opportunities will be provided (cf. Rom. 1:17).

▣ **"Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams"** This was a special gift from God that only Daniel of the four Jewish youths possessed (cf. 2:19; 7:1; 8:1). It was similar to Joseph's ability in interpreting Pharaoh's dream (cf. Gen. 37,40-41). God would use this gift to equip Daniel to receive His revelation (1) to pagan kings; (2) to Daniel himself; and (3) from angels. The rest of the book is based on these revelations and their interpretations.

God equipped Daniel to minister to a culture where dreams were a primary way of receiving information from the spiritual realm.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:18-21

[18]Then at the end of the days which the king had specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials presented them before Nebuchadnezzar. [19]The king talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's personal service. [20]As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* conjurers who *were* in all his realm. [21]And Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.

1:18 "at the end of the days" This refers to v. 5.

1:20 The Hebrew youths in their conversations with Nebuchadnezzar, proved to be much (the idiomatic use of ten) better than (1) the other youths from other conquered countries who studied with them and (2) even all the established counselors (magicians and conjurers).

▣ **"ten times better"** Eastern literature uses many figures of speech, metaphors, and hyperboles. It also uses numbers in symbolic ways (see *Biblical Numerology: A Basic Study of the Use of Numbers in the Bible*, by John J. Davis). Ten is the number of completeness (cf. Gen. 31:7,41; Exod. 34:28; Lev. 26:26; Num. 14:22; I Sam. 1:8; 25:38; II Sam. 19:43; I Kgs. 6-7; 11:31,35; II Kgs. 20:9-11; 25:25; II Chr. 4; Neh. 4:12; Job 19:3; Eccl. 7:19; Jer. 41; Ezek. 45;48; Dan. 1:12,14,15,20; Zech. 8:23, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word in Dan. 7:7,20,24. Also notice Rev. 2:10; 12:3; 13:1; 17:3,7,12,16). To miss the symbolic nature of 1,4,6,7,10, & 12 is to miss a basic literary technique of eastern literature.

This recognition of the Hebrew youths' superiority (cf. chapters 1,2,4,5) over all the other Chaldean wise men will cause great jealousy (cf. chapters 3 & 6).

▣

NASB, NKJV,
NRSV, NJB,
JPS, NIV **"magicians"**
TEV **"fortuneteller"**

This type of counselor, magician, is used (1) in Egypt (cf. Gen. 41:8,24; Exod. 7:11,22; 8:15; 9:11; Isa. 19:11-12); (2) in Babylon (cf. 1:20; 2:2; Isa. 44:25; Jer. 50:35; 51:57; and also (3) in Persia (cf. Esther 1:13; 6:13).

The Hebrew term (BDB 355) is *chartummim*, which is from *charath*, an engraving tool from an Egyptian loan word (cf. Gen. 41:8,24; Exod. 7:11,22; 8:7,18-19; 9:11). This probably refers to the magical texts and charms found in cuneiform tablets.

For Israel these things and their practitioners are condemned (cf. Deut. 18:9-11). This is one reason why the book of Daniel was not popular with the rabbis because Daniel was involved in and identified with this type of activity.

▣

NASB **"conjurers"**
NKJV **"astrologers"**
NRSV **"enchanters"**
TEV **"magicians"**
NJB **"soothsayers"**

Brown, Driver, and Briggs (BDB 80) call this a Babylonian loan word, which denotes conjuring or necromancing. In the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 1, p. 556, it lists the possible derivation.

1. Babylonian and Aramaic - conjurer
2. Akkadian - exorcist

This type of person attempted to receive information from the dead.

1:21 "first year of Cyrus" This seems to contradict 10:1, but the meaning is that Daniel lived during the entire exilic period and into the reign of Cyrus II, "the Great" (cf. 6:28). Daniel fully lived out Jeremiah's prophecy (cf. 25:11,12; 29:10).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why would God allow such a horrible thing to happen to His people?
2. List the theological pressures imposed on the four Hebrew youths.
3. List the tactful ways in which Daniel dealt with the problem of food.
4. Why did God want to reveal prophecies to pagan kings?
5. In what way does chapter 1 set the theological stage for understanding the rest of the book?

DANIEL 2

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	Nebuchadnezzar's Dream	The King Questions His Soothsayers
2:1-13	2:1-11	2:1-3	2:1-4a
		2:4	
			2:4b-13
		2:5-6	
		2:7	
		2:8-9	
		2:10-11	
	2:12-16	2:12-13	
God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream		God Shows Daniel What the Dream Means	Daniel Intervenes
2:14-23		2:14-15	2:14-23
		2:16-23	
	2:17-23		
Daniel Explains the Dream		Daniel Tells the King the Dream and Explains It	
2:24-35	2:24	2:24	2:24-28
	2:25-30	2:25	
		2:26	
		2:27-28	
		2:29-30	2:29-30
	2:31-35	2:31-35	2:31-36
2:36-45	2:36-45	2:36-45	
			2:37-45
Daniel and His Friends Promoted		The King Rewards Daniel	The King's Profession of Faith
2:46-49	2:46-49	2:46-49	2:46-49

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to

following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Chapter two sets the stage for the interpretation of the second dream in chapter four and the visions of chapters 7-12 by the prophecy about four coming world empires.
   1. Chapter 2 reveals that the Messianic kingdom will come in the time of the fourth world empire (Rome).
   2. Chapter 7:2-8 describe all four coming kingdoms, but the emphasis of the chapter is on the fourth kingdom ("the little horn" = the Anti Christ, cf. II Thess. 2).
   3. Chapter 8 focuses on the second (Persia) and third (Greece) kingdoms, but the emphasis is on the third kingdom ("little horn" = Antiochus IV Epiphanies, 175-163 B.C.).
   4. Chapter 9:24-27 focuses in detail on the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire (also possibly 11:36-45).
   5. Chapter 10 introduces the message of chapters 11-12, which refers to the third kingdom, particularly the conflict between Babylon/Syria (Seleucids) and Egypt (Ptolomies).

B. The inter-relatedness of these chapters shows the unity of Daniel 1-6 and 7-12.

C. Daniel's gift of interpreting dreams and visions parallels Joseph's gift in Gen. 41. Many of the terms used are similar except Gen. 41 is Hebrew and Dan. 2:4-7:28 is Aramaic.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:1-3

[1]Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. [2]Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. [3]The king said to them, "I had a dream and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream."

2:1 "in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" Nebuchadnezzar began reigning in 605 B.C., so this would be 604 B.C. Apparently Daniel was still in his three year initial study (cf. 1:4-5), possibly this is why he was not with the group of wise men who the king initially addresses (cf. v. 2).

▣ **"Nebuchadnezzar"** See note at 1:1.

▣ **"had dreams"** Notice that this is PLURAL and COGNATE, "he dreamed dreams." Some have asserted that he had several dreams, but the last one was awesome and frightening. However, it seems to

me that the PLURAL may indicate that he had the same dream repeatedly. God is revealing Himself to a pagan Gentile ruler! Why? God is in control of all nations! God loves all nations! God plans to redeem all nations (cf. Gen. 3:15).

▣ **"and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him"** From an old Babylonian omen text we find this quote, "if a man cannot remember the dream he saw, his god is mad at him." This same interpretation is picked up on in vv. 5 and 8 in the King James translation, which implies that Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream, but it must remain a possibility that he was testing them (cf. v. 9).

The verb "was troubled" (BDB 821, KB 952, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT) is also used of Pharaoh (also note Isa. 19:3) in Gen. 41:8 (*Niphal*). There are many similarities between Joseph and Daniel's gifts and ministries.

The phrase "his sleep left him" is uncertain. The Masoretic Hebrew text printing implies that sleep came to him, not left him. The problem lies in how to translate a possible Aramaic idiom.

2:2 "the king gave orders to call in the" This is a series of wise men which imply that Nebuchadnezzar called in the entire group of those who claimed to know the will of the gods.

▣ **"magicians"** This is from the Hebrew word "engraving tool." See note at 1:20. A good discussion of these different kinds of wise men is found in Robert B. Girdlestone's *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 296-302.

▣ **"the conjurers"** See note at 1:20.

▣ **"sorcerers"** The general term for "magic" in Hebrew is *kšp* (BDB 506).

1. male witch, wizard - *kaššāp*
2. sorcery - *kešep*
3. witchcraft - *kešāpîm*

These people tried to know and manipulate events by the use of natural and supernatural powers through physical means, divination, magic charms, and occult potions.

For a good general discussion of all the terms see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, pp. 945-951.

▣ **"Chaldeans"** This seems to refer to astrologers. However, the term in Gen. 11:28 has a racial connotation (cf. 1:4; II Kgs. 24:2; Jer. 35:11; and also in Assyrian documents relating to Nabopolassar). Some have dealt with this changing meaning by asserting a misunderstanding in the Sumerian root, "master-builders," instead of racial lineage. The fifth century B.C. historian, Herodotus, in his *Persian Wars*, mentions a class of priests whose origins went back to Cyrus' day.

Here and in v. 10 it occurs last in a list of wise men, but in 4:7; 5:7,11 it occurs within the list. It is obvious this term had several connotations (BDB 505). It seems to be a collective term for wise men (cf. v. 4).

2:3

NASB, NKJV	**"my spirit is anxious"**
NRSV	**"my spirit is troubled"**
TEV	**"I'm worried"**
NJB	**"my mind is troubled"**

This Hebrew term (BDB 821, KB 952) originally meant strike or hit. It is also used of Pharaoh in Gen. 41:8, who was disturbed by his dreams (both in *Niphal*).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:4-11

[4]Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: "O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation." [5]The king replied to the Chaldeans, "The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb and your houses will be made a rubbish heap. [6]But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation." [7]They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation." [8]The king replied, "I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, [9]that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation." [10]The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has *ever* asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. [11]Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with *mortal* flesh."

2:4-6 It may be that Nebuchadnezzar was going to test the interpretation of his wise men by also demanding that they reveal the contents of his dream first.

2:4 "in Aramaic" At this point the text of Daniel changes from Hebrew to Aramaic and will continue through chapter 7. Aramaic was the governmental and commercial language from the Assyrian to the Persian Empires. At this point in the text Daniel begins to quote Nebuchadnezzar's fearful command of judgment on the Chaldean wise men. Therefore, a change to Aramaic fits.

The problem is why it continues through chapter seven. H. C. Leupold even makes chapter 7 a part of the literary unit starting in chapter one. The truth is no one knows why Hebrew starts, Aramaic continues, and Hebrew concludes the book of Daniel. Some compare the structural pattern of Job (prose, poetry, prose) or Hammurabi's law code following the same pattern, but these are not in two languages, rather writing styles. Aramaic is a cognate Semitic language to Hebrew. Both are written in the same characters. It was known early in the Bible by its use in Gen. 31:47 (two words) and it appears as the language of diplomatic dialogue in II Kgs. 18:26. Imperial Aramaic was used from 600 to 330 B.C.

For a good discussion of the ancient use of Aramaic see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 201-210,1125.

▣ **"O king, live forever"** This was a common honorific idiom for addressing Near Eastern potentates, (cf. 3:9; 5:10; 6:6,21; I Kgs. 1:31; Neh. 2:3).

2:5

NASB	**"The command from me is firm"**
KJV	**"The thing is gone from me"**
NKJV	**"My decision is firm"**
NRSV	**"This is a public decree"**
TEV	**"I have made up my mind"**
NJB	**"This is my firm resolve"**

Nebuchadnezzar had fully made up his mind about this issue and made his decision public.

The KJV translation often is based on (1) a textual change in the Aramaic or (2) an opinion from Josephus (cf. *Antiq*. 10.10.3).

▣ **"torn limb from limb"** This was a common method of capital punishment in the ancient Near East. Whether they were cut (1) with a knife; (2) torn by means of bended trees; or (3) being tied between two or more animals is uncertain.

▣

NASB	**"your houses shall be made a rubbish heap"**
NKJV	**"and your houses shall be made an ash heap"**
NRSV	**"and your houses shall be laid in ruins"**
TEV	**"and make your houses a pile of ruins"**
NJB	**"and your houses turned into dunghills"**

Some translations follow the rabbinical interpretation of the Targums, making this "dung-hill," (NJB, cf. II Kgs. 10:27). The reducing of criminals' homes and possessions to rubbish (cf. Ezra 6:11) was a common practice in the empires of the Fertile Crescent. To further humiliate these people, these rubbish heaps were often turned into public latrines (developed metaphorical usage from the Targums).

2:9 This verse implies that Nebuchadnezzar did not trust his own wise men. This may be because (1) their interpretation had been false in the past or (2) he saw true insight by means of the four Jewish youths (cf. 1:19-20, but this seems unlikely because of v. 13b). Whatever the reason this king is about to completely eliminate the entire group of wise men through violent means (cf. vv. 12-13).

2:10 "Chaldeans answered" There is a series of three alibis: (1) no man on earth can do this; (2) no king has ever asked this of the wise men before; and (3) only the gods can answer this question (cf. v. 11). This heightens the significance of Daniel's interpretation.

2:11 "difficult" This Hebrew term (BDB 1096) normally means "precious," "costly," "valued." It can mean "rare" (cf. KJV and marginal note in NASB).

However, in this text it has an unusual idiomatic meaning. The word can have a royal or kingly connotation which fits this context, but "difficult" is a most unusual translation. *The Bible: An American Translation* by Smith and Goodspeed, has "hard thing," while *The Living Bible* by Taylor, has "an impossible thing."

▣ **"flesh"** This term (BDB 1088) is a metaphor for the transitoriness and frailty of human beings. Here it does not denote sinfulness, but weakness.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:12-13

[12]Because of this the king became indignant and very furious and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. [13]So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill *them*.

2:12 "the king became indignant and very furious" The king's response to their alibi was extreme anger (BDB 1084). The second term, "very furious" (BDB 1111) is used of YHWH's wrath. He ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be killed. The term "Babylon" can refer (1) to the city; (2) the province; or (3) the whole empire.

Knowing how superstitious and fearful the ancient world was, it is amazing that a king would totally destroy all his diviners, astrologers, soothsayers, and wise men. In a sense he was cutting himself off from the spiritual realm. For some reason Nebuchadnezzar had lost all respect and confidence in his wise men.

Many times in Daniel the author uses hendiadys, where two words are given, but express the same idea:

1. 2:6, "gifts and a reward"
2. 2:12, "indignant and very furious"
3. 2:14, "with discretion and discernment"
4. 2:23, "wisdom and power"
5. 3:13, "rage and anger"
6. 4:2, "signs and wonders"
7. 5:11, "illumination, insight, and wisdom"
8. 5:18, "sovereignty, grandeur, glory, and majesty"
9. 5:19, "feared and troubled"
10. [also the last four paralleled phrases of v. 19])

2:13 "the decree went forth" It seems that the wise men were to be rounded up and killed at one public execution. This would give Daniel time to seek God.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:14-16

[14]Then Daniel replied with discretion and discernment to Arioch, the captain of the king's bodyguard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; [15]he said to Arioch, the king's commander, "For what reason is the decree from the king *so* urgent?" Then Arioch informed Daniel about the matter. [16]So Daniel went in and requested of the king that he would give him time, in order that he might declare the interpretation to the king.

2:14

NASB	**"discretion and discernment"**
NKJV	**"counsel and wisdom"**
NRSV	**"prudence and discretion"**
TEV	**"choosing his words carefully"**
NJB	**"shrewd and cautious words"**

This kind of approach (BDB 1096, 1094) characterizes the way these four Hebrew youths dealt with Babylonian court intrigue and political pressure. God's wisdom enabled them to fit in, but also stand out!

▣ **"Arioch"** This proper name (BDB 1082) is also found in Gen. 14:19 as the name of one of the kings who took Lot captive.

▣ **"the captain of the king's bodyguard"** The term "bodyguard" (BDB 1094) is literally "the chief slaughter" (KB 368, possibly from butcher) or "executioner." In v. 15 he is called "the King's commander" (cf. II Kgs. 25:8,11).

2:15

NASB, NKJV, NRSV	**"urgent"**
TEV, NJB	**"harsh"**

This Aramaic word is used only here and in 3:22. Its basic meaning is "harshness" (BDB 1093), but it can mean suddenly or urgently (Davidson, *Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 272).

2:16 The king is more patient with Daniel's request for time than he was with the group of wise men's request (cf. v. 8).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:17-23

[17]Then Daniel went to his house and informed his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, about the matter, [18]so that they might request compassion from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. [19]Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven;

[20]Daniel said,

"Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever,
For wisdom and power belong to Him.
[21]It is He who changes the times and the epochs;
He removes kings and establishes kings;
He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.
[22]It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
And the light dwells with Him.
[23]To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise,
For You have given me wisdom and power;
Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You,
For You have made known to us the king's matter."

2:17 Notice that the Hebrew names for these young men are used here (i.e. among themselves), while in v. 49 the new Babylonian names are used at court.

2:18

NASB	**"they might request compassion"**
NKJV	**"they might seek mercies"**
NRSV	**"seek mercy"**
TEV	**"to pray. . .for mercy"**
NJB	**"to beg. . .to show mercy"**

Notice again YHWH is in control! These Hebrew youths have no power apart from Him.

The Aramaic term (BDB 1113) "compassion" is used only here. Its Hebrew parallel also means "compassion" or "mercy." They both come from the term "womb" denoting a mother's care, love, and protection. YHWH's love is often denoted as female (cf. Exod. 19:4; Deut. 32:11; Isa. 31:5; 40:31; 49:15; 66:9-13, also note Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34).

▣ **"the God of heaven"** Some see this as a common title for the high god in both Babylon and Persia. However, it is possible that it was used by the Jews to show the supremacy of YHWH (cf. Gen. 24:7; Ezra 1:2; 6:10; 7:12, 21: Neh. 1:5; 2:4). The exiled Jews often took the common title for the high god of their captors and applied it to YHWH. See Special Topic: The Names for Deity at Dan. 4:2.

▣ **"mystery"** This Aramaic word (BDB 1112) , *raz*, means "to hide," "to keep a secret." It is used several times in Daniel (cf. 2:18,19,27,28,29,30,47; 4:9). It becomes a central theme in apocalyptic

literature and is mentioned often in the Dead Sea Scrolls. God reveals His hidden counsel to His prophets (cf. Gen. 18:17; Jer. 23:18; Dan. 9:22; Amos 3:7).

In the Dead Sea Scroll community God's revelation was mediated through (1) the OT prophets' message (*raz*), but also (2) the interpretation (*pesher*) of "the teacher of righteousness." This two-fold pattern of revelation and interpretation characterizes apocalyptic literature.

2:19 "a night vision" There is a distinction between a "vision" and "dream" (cf. 1:17) in the OT, but not in Daniel. This revelation was at night (cf. 7:2,7,13), but Daniel was conscious and the revelation was visual and auditory. In context Nebuchadnezzar had the dream, but Daniel received the vision needed to interpret it. Both were from God.

This same term (BDB 1092) is often associated with God speaking to the prophets. Its root is "behold" and it became the earliest designation for prophets (i.e. seer, cf. II Sam. 24:11; II Kgs. 17:13; Amos 7:12; Micah 3:7; for a parallel term see I Sam. 9:9; Isa. 30:10).

Again the emphasis in on God's control, God's revelation, God's provision and protection (cf. vv. 20-23).

2:20 "the name of God" This phrase stands for the character of God. Verses 20-23 have been called Daniel's prayer of praise or the Song of Daniel.

2:20-23 Daniel seems to thank God for four major things: (1) God's control of history, (2) God's freely giving wisdom to the Hebrew exiles; (3) God's knowledge compared to the knowledge of Babylonian deities and wise men; and (4) God's consistency in His purpose with the Jews. These are the key theological issues of Daniel, which were so needed by an exiled, defeated, and humiliated covenant people.

It must be remembered that in the ancient world people fought under the protection and power of their god. If one people defeated another it was considered that one god triumphed over another. However, in the Bible it is stated again and again that Israel and Judah's judgment was due to their sin, not YHWH's impotence. Here in this passage Daniel asserts YHWH's power and control of nations and history, as well as His wisdom.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:24

[24]Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:25-30

[25]Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!" [26]The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?" [27]Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians *nor* diviners are able to declare *it* to the king. [28]However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind *while* on your bed. [29]As for you, O king, *while* on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. [30]But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than *in* any *other* living man, but for

the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind."

2:25 "Arioch. . .I have found" As all politicians, Arioch claimed credit for finding Daniel when, in reality, Daniel approached him (cf. 24).

▣ **"among the exiles from Judah"** All of the Babylonian wise men could not help, but a man from God's exiled people could! This is a way of magnifying YHWH. His people know because they know Him. Judah may seem small and insignificant, but its people are God's people. He has revealed Himself to them and now through them to Nebuchadnezzar.

2:27-30 Daniel disclaims any personal merit but gives the God of his fathers the credit for the revelation.

2:28 "He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days" Nebuchadnezzar is used in a symbolic way to represent human government (cf. verses 36-38). This same type of metaphor is found in Rev. 18 in the phrase "the whore of Babylon." Daniel, chapters 1 through 6, describes human governments, while chapters 7 through 12 discuss the coming of the kingdom of God.

Often the prophets spoke about the nations (e.g. Isa. 12-24; 46-47; Jer. 44-51; Ezek. 25-32), but not in the presence of the leaders of the nations (with the possible exception of Amos to the leaders of Israel). In a sense it is Daniel who addresses directly on God's behalf the pagan empires of the ancient Near East. This world order and God's purpose for creation are in opposition. God will judge the nations and fulfill His plan for creation. Daniel has a unique place in YHWH's dealing with pagan rulers and their kingdoms.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"in the latter days"**
NRSV	**"at the end of days"**
TEV	**"in the future"**
NJB	**"in the final days"**

The OT only saw one coming of the Messiah. This climactic event of history was preceded by major events known as the latter days.

However, with further revelation (i.e. NT), we realize that the term "latter days" often refers to the period between the incarnation of the Messiah at Bethlehem and His coming again in power and glory at His Second Coming (cf. Acts 2:17 quoting Joel 2:28-32). This is basically an overlapping of the two Jewish ages.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THIS AGE AND THE AGE TO COME

The OT prophets viewed the future as an extension of the present. For them the future will be a restoration of geographical Israel. However, even they saw it as a new day (cf. Isa. 65:17; 66:22). With the continued willful rejection of YHWH by the descendants of Abraham (even after the exile) a new paradigm developed in Jewish intertestamental apocalyptic literature (i.e. I Enoch, IV Ezra, II Baruch). These writings begin to distinguish between two ages: a current evil age dominated by Satan and a coming age of righteousness dominated by the Spirit and inaugurated by the Messiah (often a dynamic warrior).

In this area of theology (eschatology) there is an obvious development. Theologians call this "progressive revelation." The NT affirms this new cosmic reality of two ages (i.e. a temporal dualism):

Jesus	**Paul**	**Hebrews**
Matthew 12:32	Romans 12:2	1:2
Matthew13:22 & 29	I Cor. 1:20; 2:6,8; 3:18	6:5
Mark 10:30	II Cor. 4:4	11:3
Luke 16:8	Galatians 1:4	
Luke 18:30	Eph. 1:21; 2:1,7; 6:12	
Luke 20:34-35	I Timothy 6:17	
	II Timothy 4:10	
	Titus 2:12	

In NT theology these two Jewish ages have been overlapped because of the unexpected and overlooked predictions of the two comings of the Messiah. The incarnation of Jesus fulfilled the OT prophecies of the inauguration of the new age (Dan. 2:44-45). However, the OT also saw His coming as Judge and Conqueror, yet He came at first as the Suffering Servant (cf. Isa. 53), humble and meek (cf. Zech. 9:9). He will return in power just as the OT predicted (cf. Rev. 19). This two-stage fulfillment caused the Kingdom to be present (inaugurated), but future (not fully consummated). This is the NT tension of the already, but not yet!

2:29 Predictive prophecy is one of the greatest evidences that the Bible really is the only inspired self-revelation of the one true God (cf. vv. 45,47). The Bible is the only world religion holy book that has predictive prophecy.

God is above time. All history is present before Him. He is not limited by past, present, and future time sequence. This foreknowledge does not remove human free will. We are responsible for our choices. The Bible does not teach determinism (Islam), but covenant!

2:30

NASB, NRSV **"the thoughts of your mind"**
NKJV **"the thoughts of your heart"**
TEV **"the thoughts that have come to you"**
NJB **"your inmost thoughts"**

The term "heart" is an OT way of referring to the entire person.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:31-35

[31]"You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. [32]The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, [33]its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. [34]You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. [35]Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

2:31-35 "a statue" This statue of a human male of differing metals represents fallen human world governments. Each one is inferior to the one before it (cf. v. 39).

2:31 The statue is described as:

1. "large" (BDB 1112) - used of the statue (2:31) and of the tree (4:7), even of honor (2:6) and gifts (2:48)
2. "of extraordinary splendor" (BDB 1096) - possibly refers to the brightness of the differing metals.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"awesome"**
NRSV	**"frightening"**
TEV	**"terrifying"**
NJB	**"terrible to see"**

This same term (BDB 1087) describes the fourth beast in Dan. 7:7.

2:33 "clay" This refers to baked clay ("potter's clay" or terra cotta), as do verses 34,35, first use in 41, 42, but verses 41 and 43 seem to mean wet clay ("miry clay").

2:34 "a stone" This is a metaphor for the Messiah. He is often spoken of in prophecy as a rock or stone.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CORNERSTONE

I. OT Usages
   A. The concept of a stone as a hard durable item which made a good foundation was used to describe YHWH (cf. Ps. 18:1).
   B. It then developed into a Messianic title (cf. Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16).
   C. It came to represent a judgment from YHWH by the Messiah (cf. Isa. 8:14; Dan. 2:34-35,44-45).
   D. This developed into a building metaphor:
      1. a foundation stone, the first placed, which was secure and set the angles for the rest of the building, called "the cornerstone"
      2. it could also refer to the final stone put in place, which holds the walls together (cf. Zech. 4:7; Eph. 2:20,21), called "the cap stone" from the Hebrew *rush* (i.e. head)
      3. it could refer to the "key stone," which is in the center of the doorway arch and holds the weight of the entire wall

II. NT Usages
   A. Jesus quoted Ps. 118 several times in reference to Himself (cf. Matt. 21:41-46; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17)
   B. Paul uses Ps. 118 in connection with YHWH's rejection of faithless, rebellious Israel (cf. Rom. 9:33)
   C. Paul uses the concept of a "cap stone" in Eph. 2:20-22 in reference to Christ
   D. Peter uses this concept of Jesus in I Pet. 2:1-10. Jesus is the cornerstone and believers are the living stones (i.e. believers as temples, cf. I Cor. 6:19), built on Him (i.e. Jesus is the new Temple, cf. Mark 14:58; Matt. 12:6; John 2:19-20).

The Jews rejected the very foundation of their hope when they rejected Jesus as Messiah

III. Theological Statements

A. YHWH allowed David/Solomon to build a temple. He told them that if they kept the covenant He would bless them and be with them, but if they did not the temple would be in ruins (cf. I Kgs. 9:1-9)!

B. Rabbinical Judaism focused on form and ritual and neglected the personal aspect of faith (this is not a blanket statement; there were godly rabbis). God seeks a daily, personal, godly relationship with those created in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). Luke 20:17-18 contains frightening words of judgment.

C. Jesus used the concept of a temple to represent His physical body. This continues and expands the concept of personal faith in Jesus as the Messiah as key to a relationship with YHWH.

D. Salvation is meant to restore the image of God in human beings so that fellowship with God is possible. The goal of Christianity is Christlikeness now. Believers are to become living stones (i.e. little temples) built on/patterned after Christ.

E. Jesus is the foundation of our faith and the cap stone of our faith (i.e. the Alpha and Omega). Yet also the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. To miss Him is to miss everything. There can be no middle ground here!

2:35 "were crushed" Although the stone cut out of the mountain without hands strikes only the fourth kingdom, all others are crushed to fine powder (BDB 1089 *Peal* PERFECT, cf. v. 45). This seems to symbolize the ultimate overthrow of human government and the establishment of God's universal reign.

▣ **"became a great mountain and filled the whole earth"** This may be (1) a play on the ancient Babylonian belief that the earth was a mountain or (2) a biblical metaphor for God's kingdom (cf. Isa. 2:2; Mic. 4:1). It surely does show a worldwide kingdom.

The "stone" in v. 34 is obviously a reference to the Messiah, but the use of the term in v. 35 refers to His kingdom (the church of the redeemed, cf. Rom. 9-11; Eph. 2:11-3:13). In Daniel there is often a fluidity between leaders and their kingdoms. The real interpretive issue is whether this relates to (1) the inauguration of the kingdom of God by the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus or (2) the consummation of the kingdom of God at Jesus' Second Coming. This unforeseen two-stage coming complicates OT prophecy.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:36-45

[36]"This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. [37]You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; [38]and wherever the sons of men dwell, *or* the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given *them* into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. [39]After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. [40]Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. [41]In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. [42]*As* the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. [43]And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. [44]In the days of those

kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. [45]Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

2:37 "to whom the God of heaven has given" The VERB (BDB 1095) is a *Peal* PERFECT. Notice the continuing emphasis on God's sovereignty (cf. 1:2,9,17). He allows kings to rise and prosper (i.e. "the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory").

2:38 This description of Nebuchadnezzar's reign seems to mimic Gen. 1:28 (cf. Jer. 27:6; 28:14).

This verse reminds me of God's care for animals (cf. Jonah 4:11; Ps. 36:6c). Animals may be a part of the new creation (cf. Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25 and possibly Rom. 8:18-22).

▣ **"You are the head of gold"** The statue of four succeeding human empires mimics chapter seven. Here the first kingdom is specifically identified (neo-Babylon, 626-539 B.C.). In 8:20-21 the second (Medo-Persian, 539-333 B.C.) and third (Greece, 333-63 B.C.) are specifically identified. This makes the fourth kingdom (cf. v. 40) Rome, which was the Mediterranean government in control of Palestine at the time of the birth of Jesus.

2:39 "after you there will arise another kingdom" Apparently this was to ease Nebuchadnezzar's fear that his kingdom might be taken from him soon.

▣ **"which will rule over all the earth"** This is either a metaphor for the known world or a specific local use of the word "earth" (as it is in Genesis 6-9, cf. Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, pp. 158-169).

2:40 "a fourth kingdom" This kingdom is described in 2:40-43; 7:7-8. It is never named as are the first three. In some ways it refers to Rome, but also to a type of worldwide human government, which is opposed to God. It has a historical reference (Rome) and a future reference (end-time anti-God world empire, cf. 9:25-27; 11:36-45).

This second chapter sets the literary stage for the whole book.

2:41 "it will be a divided kingdom" This refers to the fourth kingdom and seems to imply that these will be successive kingdoms. There has been much discussion about the meaning of it being divided (BDB 1108, *Peal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE): (1) the Roman Empire would divide into the east and west; (2) it refers to the attempted political marriages with Germanic tribes (cf. v. 43 and TEV); or (3) it possibly refers to the distinction between the republic and later the dictatorship.

The toes of iron and clay mentioned in v. 42 may point toward the literary meaning of "divided." This empire will: (1) be strong in human power, but weak in spiritual power or (2) have both strong people (families) and weak people (families). This fundamental flaw will cause its destruction.

2:43

NASB	**"they will combine with one another in the seed of men"**
NKJV	**"they will mingle with the seed of men"**
NRSV	**"as they will mix with one another in marriage"**
TEV	**"the rulers of that empire will try to unite their families by intermarriage"**
NJB	**"the two will be mixed together in human seed"**

This kingdom will attempt to save itself by human means (here probably political marriages, cf. 11:6).

2:44 "in the days of those kings" It is very important to realize that the coming of the Messiah will be during the fourth kingdom. This is why I believe that it refers to the incarnation of Jesus at Bethlehem during Roman occupation of Palestine; therefore, "those kings" would refer to Roman Caesars of the first century and not future kings.

▣ **"set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed"** This phrase is not related to the millennium which is a specific period of time (cf. Rev. 20:1-6). This looks at a far wider scope of history in which the kingdom of God will be established when the Messiah will set up a perpetual, eternal kingdom (cf. II Sam. 7:13,16; Ps. 45:6; 89:36-37; Isa. 9:7; Dan. 4:3; 6:26; 7:14,18; Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:33; II Pet. 1:11; Rev. 11:15).

Notice how this kingdom is characterized.

1. set up by God (BDB 1110)
2. never be destroyed (BDB 1091)
3. not left for another people
4. crush (BDB 1089) and end (BDB 1104) all previous kingdoms
5. endure forever (BDB 1104)

This same powerful imagery describes this kingdom in 7:14,27.

2:45 "a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands" This may be a veiled allusion to the virgin birth of the Messiah (cf. Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14) and the incarnation at Bethlehem. Even the Jewish commentators Rashi and Eben-Ezra see this as a Messianic passage.

▣ **"without hands"** This is a metaphor of God's agency (cf. 8:25; Zech. 4:6). This is another way that God's control apart from human affect or agency is emphasized (cf. Heb. 11:10,16).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:46-49

[46]Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. [47]The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." [48]Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. [49]And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel *was* at the king's court.

2:46 King Nebuchadnezzar pays homage to Daniel as the representative of the God who has revealed this truth. This does not refer to the worship of Daniel or he would not have allowed it.

2:47 These very high-sounding words (cf. 3:28-29; 4:1-3,34-37) do not mean that Nebuchadnezzar II became a believer in YHWH. He was a polytheist who had no problem with adding other gods to his pantheon. He was still a worshiper of Marduk and Nebo. It is astonishing that he would allow YHWH, the national deity of the Hebrews to be characterized as the revealer of mysteries, for this was the function of Nebo in the Babylonian pantheon.

▣ **"God of gods and Lord of kings"** As Daniel had described Nebuchadnezzar as "king of kings" (cf. v. 37), now he realizes that the God of Daniel (Judah) is the supreme Deity!

2:48 "Daniel was promoted" He became a governor of the province of Babylon and the head of the wise men.

▣

NASB, NRSV	**"chief prefect"**
NKJV	**"chief administrator"**
TEV	**"the head"**
NJB	**"head"**

These two Aramaic terms (BDB 1112, 1104) usually denote governmental leadership (cf. 3:2,3,27; 6:8), but here they denote leadership over the guild of wise men.

2:49 "and Daniel made request of the king" Daniel did not forget his prayer partners and they, too, were put in places of authority. This distinction between Daniel's task and the other three Hebrew children sets the stage of Daniel 3 where Daniel apparently is not present.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Was Daniel violating his Jewish heritage by being apart of this group of wise men?
2. What specific things does Daniel praise God for in verses 20-23?
3. Why did God reveal this dream of four successive empires to Nebuchadnezzar?
4. How many kingdoms does Daniel mention and who are they?
5. Why is verse 44 so important in interpreting Daniel?
6. Who or what does the stone symbolize?

DANIEL 3

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Image of Gold	The Three Youth in the Fiery Furnace	Nabuchadnezzar Commands Everyone to Worship a Golden Statue	Nebuchadnezzar Sets a Golden Statue
3:1-7	3:1-7	3:1-7	3:1-7
Daniel's Friends Disobey the King		Daniel's Three Friends Are Accused of Disobedience	The Denunciation and Condemnation of the Jews
3:8-15	3:8-12	3:8-12	3:8-23
	3:13-15	3:13-15	
3:16-18	3:16-18	3:16-18	
Saved in the Fiery Trial		Daniel's Three Friends Are Sentenced to Death	
3:19-23	3:19-23	3:19-23	The King Acknowledges the Miracle
3:24-25	3:24-30	3:24a	3:24-29
		3:24b	
		3:25	
Nebuchadnezzar Praises God		The Three Men Are Released and Promoted	
3:26-30		3:26-27	
		3:28	
		3:29	
		3:30	3:30
			Nebuchadnezzar's Proclamation
			3:31-30 (in other translations, 4:1-3)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This chapter shows that the faith of Daniel is equally shared by his three exiled friends.

B. This chapter is characterized by
   1. lists
   2. the repeating of these lists
      a. names of government officials (cf. vv. 3,24,27)
      b. names of musical instruments (cf. vv. 5,7,10,15)
      c. names of people groups (cf. vv. 4,7; 4:1; 6:25)
      d. the three Hebrew youths (cf. vv. 12,13,14,16,19,20,22,23,26[twice],28,29,,30)

C. The theological issue of God's sovereignty continues. He is God and He rewards those who trust (cf. v. 28) Him.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:1-7

[1]Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, the height of which was sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. [2]Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent *word* to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. [3]Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. [4]Then the herald loudly proclaimed: "To you the command is given, O peoples, nations and *men of every* language, [5]that at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. [6]But whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." [7]Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

3:1 "an image of gold" The image (BDB 1109 - statue, form) may have been similar to the vision of a human person made of four metals from chapter 2. It is either (1) an elongated human form or (2) a tall obelisk of uncertain shape. The Aramaic term can mean "obelisk." The normal physical proportions of the human body is five to one, but the image's height and width would be ten to one. A large platform has been found six miles from the ruins of the ancient city of Babylon, which measures forty-five feet by forty-five feet by eighteen feet. This could have been the base of this image.

▣ **"of gold"** This seems to mean overlaid with gold and we have biblical examples of this, such as (1) Aaron's golden calf (Exod. 32); (2) Isaiah 40:19; 41:7; 44:10; (3) Jeremiah 10:4,14; and also (4) Herodotus 1.183.

▣ **"sixty cubits and its width was six cubits"** This would make the image about ninety feet tall by nine feet wide if we base our measurements on a cubit (BDB 1081) as being eighteen inches, which denotes the distance from the longest finger to the elbow of a normal sized human being of that period. The Colossus of Rhodes was seventy cubits high (i.e. 105 feet), so this was not out of the realm of ancient technology.

▣ **"the plain of Dura"** The term (BDB 1087) seems to come from the "duru" which means "an enclosing wall" or "fortress" (Akkadian). We have found several documents from Babylon which mention the Plain of Dura. However, its exact location is uncertain. With the finding of the large base several miles from Babylon, this is a possibility.

3:2 "the king sent to assemble" We have, from Sargon II's records, examples of this same type of royal assembly.

3:3 The repetitive nature of this chapter, both in the listing of the government officials and the musical instruments, is characteristic of (1) Hebraic writing; and (2) obelistic writing.

▣ **"satraps"** This Aramaic governmental term (BDB 1080) reflects a Median word which means "protector of the land." In the later Persian Empire it referred to the twenty governors (Herodotus) of the provinces (cf. Ezra 8:36; Esther 3:12; 8:9; 9:3), but its exact meaning in the earlier neo-Babylonian Empire is uncertain, possibly "prince" (cf. TEV).

▣ **"prefects"** The meaning of this Aramaic governmental term (BDB 1104) is uncertain, possibly an Akkadian term for those who report directly to the satraps. Daniel was appointed to this position over all the wise men of Babylon in 2:48.

▣ **"governors"** The meaning of this Aramaic governmental term (BDB 1108) is also uncertain. The related Hebrew term denotes "governors" (cf. I Kgs. 10:15; 20:24; II Kgs. 18:24; often in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther; Isa. 36:9; Jer. 51:23,28,57; and several times in the post-exilic prophets).

▣ **"counselors"** This is another Aramaic governmental term (BDB 1078) of uncertain meaning. The typical translation is "counselor," but some scholars think it refers to (1) a military position (BDB 1078) or (2) "treasurers" (cf. Ezra 7:21).

▣ **"magistrates"** This Aramaic governmental term (BDB 1118) is also uncertain. William Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, says it refers to a police official (p. 425) from a Persian loan word.

▣ **"the rulers of the provinces"** This refers to lesser governmental officials (BDB 1097). This event was a gathering of all governmental workers of all levels (cf. vv. 4,7).

3:5,7,10 "at the moment you hear the sound of" This list of musical instruments refers to the Babylonian national orchestra. This may have been the Babylonian national anthem (cf. 10). We have a record from Babylonian documents of a similar party where 150 musicians played. It is obvious that the neo-Babylonians enjoyed music and included it in all of their festive occasions.

3:5

NASB, NKJV,
NRSV, NJB,
JPS, NIV, NEB "horn"

In Daniel 7:7-8,11,20,21,24 this Aramaic word (BDB 1111) refers to an animal horn. Here it refers to a musical instrument, possibly made from an animal horn.

▣

NASB, NKJV,
NIV "flute"
NRSV, NJB,
JPS, NEB "pipe"

The Aramaic term (BDB 1117) refers to some type of wind instrument.

▣

NASB, NRSV,
NJB "lyre"
NKJV "harp"
JPS, NIV, NEB "zither"

This is a Greek loan word (*kitharis*), which denotes a stringed instrument (harp).

▣

NASB, NRSV "trigon"
NJB "zither"
JPS, NIV, NEB "triangle"

This reflects another Greek loan word (*sambukē*), which denotes a stringed instrument with four strings.

▣

NASB, JPS "psaltery"
NRSV, NJB, NIV "harp"
NEB "dulcimer"

This (BDB 1108) denotes a triangular shaped stringed instrument with a sounding board (William Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 418).

▣

NASB, NJB "bagpipe"
NRSV "drum"
NEB "music"

There is confusion in the English translation as to how many musical instruments are listed. The Masoretic Text and the Septuagint have only five in v. 7, but this sixth one is listed in vv. 5 and 10. It may refer to a double pipe similar to a Pan flute.

It is also possible that this last term means "in unison" (cf. NKJV, TEV).

▣ **"Fall down and worship"** Both VERBS are *Peal* IMIPERFECT (BDB 1103 and 1104). This shows the religious and political significance of this object (cf. v. 12). This is the reason that the three Hebrew children refused to participate. It is uncertain if the Neo-Babylonian rulers claimed deity (the image as a representative of Nebuchadnezzar, cf. 2:38), as did the Pharaohs of Egypt and some later Caesars of Rome.

3:6,15 "immediately" Literally this is "same hour" (BDB 1116). This is the first use of the term "hour" in the OT. There is some discussion if the term and concept began with the Babylonians or the Greeks. We must remember that this does not refer to our precise sixty minutes because they were using more crude timing instruments.

▣ **"cast into the midst of the furnace of flaming fire"** Because of the description found in chapter 3 and also because of archaeology discoveries, it seems that this was a large, domed kiln with an opening at the top and an earthen ramp leading up to it. It also had a door on the bottom for putting in charcoal and taking out ashes. This was a common form of capital punishment during this period (cf. Code of Hammurabi 110,157 and Jer. 29:22).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:8-12

[8]For this reason at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and brought charges against the Jews. [9]They responded and said to Nebuchadnezzar the king: "O king, live forever! [10]You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, and bagpipe and all kinds of music, is to fall down and worship the golden image. [11]But whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire. [12]There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, *namely* Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

3:8 "certain Chaldeans" It must be remembered that Chaldeans can be (1) a racial group of the southern Tigris-Euphrates River Valley (cf. 5:30) or (2) a group of wise men and priests (cf. Dan. 2:2).

▣ **"brought charges against the Jews"** This is literally "chewed up the pieces of" (cf. 6:25). This is a very strong phrase (BDB 1080, *Peal* PERFECT and BDB 1111) which shows the vehemence of the charges. From the text it is obvious that there was jealousy involved because these Jewish young men had a place of leadership (cf. v. 12; 6:4). Also, there was a racial prejudice because of the mention of their origin (cf. v. 12).

3:9 "O king, live forever" See note at 2:4.

3:12 "*namely*, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego" It is uncertain where Daniel was at this time. It could be that he was sick or on a governmental assignment. This would be unusual because all the other government officials were present.

For a summary of the possibilities related to Daniel's absence see *The Expositors' Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 55-56.

▣ **"have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up"** Imagine the peer pressure that there must have been on these young men who were so far from home and who were placed in such important places of leadership.

Nebuchadnezzar must have forgotten his praise of YHWH from 2:46-47.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:13-15

[13]Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king. [14]Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? [15]Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of

the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

3:13 "in rage and anger" Nebuchadnezzar was prone to anger (cf. 2:12; 3:19). Oriental kings were not accustomed to people disobeying their orders!

This phrase (BDB 1112 and 1095) is called a hendiadys, which is characteristic of Daniel writing style. See note at 2:12.

3:14 Nebuchadnezzar II tries to give them a second chance (cf. v. 15, they were excellent administrators), but their refusal just proves to intensify his anger. He took their rejection of his gods as a personal rejection.

3:15 "what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands" This is theologically similar to II Kgs. 18:33 and 19:12. YHWH is openly challenged to demonstrate His existence, power, and compassion to those who trust Him (cf. v. 28). YHWH reveals Himself to the nations by showing His sovereignty and love for His covenant people.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:16-18

[16]Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. [17]If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. [18]But *even* if *He does* not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

3:17 "if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire" Nebuchadnezzar II had made this a contest between the gods of Babylon and the God of Judah by asserting that no one could deliver them out of his hand (cf. v. 15). The descriptive title, "the God who is able," is also in v. 29 and in the NT at Rom. 16:5; Eph. 3:20; Jude 24.

The NET Bible translates this phrase as "If our God whom we are serving exists, he is able to rescue us from the furnace of blazing fire." The Anchor Bible, vol. 23, also has a translation that tries to employ the Aramaic word "exist"—"If there is a God able to save us, such as our God, he will save us from the white-hot furnace" (p. 155).

3:18 "but *even* if *He does* not, let it be known to you, O king that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." They believed that God was able, but they were not being presumptuous by demanding a miracle. They had faith in God, not in circumstances.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:19-23

[19]Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. [20]He commanded certain valiant warriors who *were* in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast *them* into the furnace of blazing fire. [21]Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their *other* clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire. [22]For this reason, because the king's command *was* urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew

those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. [23]But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire *still* tied up.

3:19 "seven times more than it was usually heated" This is an obvious use of figurative language (cf. v. 22). It simply means that the brick kiln was heated as hot as it possibly could be heated.

3:20

NASB	**"valiant warriors"**
NKJV	**"mighty men of valor"**
NRSV	**"some of the strongest guards"**
TEV	**"the strongest men"**
NJB	**"certain stalwarts from his army"**

The construct (BDB 1086 and 1093) implies his strongest military guards. Nebuchadnezzar's anger will result in the death of these servants (cf. v. 22).

3:21 "their trousers, their coats, their caps, and their *other* clothes" This was their official attire showing the high governmental level they had attained in the neo-Babylonian empire.

3:22 "the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried them in" This is a graphic detail of the extreme heat into which the three Hebrew boys were thrown. The fall itself should have killed them, much less the temperature.

3:23 After this verse is the place where the Septuagint inserts two Apocryphal writings, "The Song of the Three Youths" and "The Prayer of Assariah." These two Apocryphal writings assert that the dew of heaven brought by the angel of the Lord kept the Hebrew youths from death.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:24-27

[24]Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king." [25]He said, "Look! I see four men loosed *and* walking *about* in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods!" [26]Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire. [27]The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around *and* saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire *even* come upon them.

3:24 Notice that Nebuchadnezzar, talking to his counselors, says, "did not <u>we</u> cast?" He wants to spread the blame.

3:25 "I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire" There has been much discussion about how Nebuchadnezzar could see. It seems that the brick kiln was a domed structure with a place at the bottom for the removal of ashes. Apparently, he looked through the hole in the bottom and saw the young men walking about.

▣ **"the fourth is like a son of the gods"** A considerable amount of speculation has been made about this fourth personage. He is an angel of the LORD (cf. v. 28 also 6:22). It is humorous to note that when Nebuchadnezzar calls the boys out by name, he makes no mention of that fourth person!

3:27 In the presence of all his civil, military, and police officials Nebuchadnezzar is forced to acknowledge the God of Judah (cf. vv. 28-29) for the second time.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:28-30

[28]Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God. [29]Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." [30]Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

3:28-29 This statement is very similar to 2:46-48. It is an outburst of a fearful polytheist in the face of the power of God. It is not Nebuchadnezzar's confession of faith.

3:28 "who put their trust in Him" Not only is the One True God emphasized, but also the need for personal, active trust in Him (cf. Isa. 26:3-4)!

3:29 "shall be torn limb from limb" This was an ancient form of execution, as was being burned (cf. Dan. 2:5: I Sam. 15:33).

▣ **"their houses reduced to a rubbish heap"** This was also an ancient form of punishment and shame (cf. 6:11).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why were the Chaldeans of verse 8 out to get the Hebrew youths?
2. Was the image political or religious?
3. What are the implications of verses 17 and 18 for our lives?
4. Who was the fourth person in the flames?

DANIEL 4

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream	Nebuchadnezzar's Madness	Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream	(verse numbers different) Nebuchadnezzar's Proclamation
			3:31-33
			Nebuchadnezzar Describes His Dream
4:1-3	4:1-3	4:1-3	4:1-5 (4-8)
4:4-12	4:4-12	4:4-9	
			4:6 (9)
			4:7-9 (10-12)
		4:10-12	4:10-14 (13-17)
4:13-18	4:13-18	4:13-15a	
			4:15 (18)
		4:15b-17	Daniel Interprets the Dream
			4:16a (19a)
			4:16b-19 (19b-22)
		4:18	
		Daniel Explains the Dream	
4:19-22	4:19-27	4:19a	
		4:19b-21	
		4:20-23	4:20-22 (23-25)
4:23-25			4:23-24 (26-27)
		4:24-27	The Dream Comes True
			4:25-29 (28-32)
4:26-27			
Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation			
4:28-30	4:28-33	4:28-30	
			4:30 (33)
4:31-33		4:31-32	4:31-32 (34-35)
		4:33	4:33-34 (36-37)
Nebuchadnezzar Praises God		Nebuchadnezzar Praises God	
4:34-35	4:34-37	4:34-35	
4:36-37		4:36	
		4:37	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHT

A. The verse numbers differ from translation to translation because 4:1-3 is 3:31-33 in the original Aramaic text.

B. There are several recurrent themes
   1. praise of YHWH
   2. dream interpretation by YHWH
   3. sovereignty of YHWH

C. There are many differences between the MT (Masoretic Text) and the LXX (Septuagint) in chapters 4-6.

D. This chapter seems to be a very Jewish theological document. It has long been disputed that a pagan polytheist like Nebuchadnezzar II could compose a chapter like this by himself (this chapter is in the first person singular except for the period of Nebuchadnezzar's madness). It is obvious from the book of Esther that King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) allowed both Haman and Mordecai to compose documents of their own in his name. Daniel is the Jewish theological influence behind this chapter.

E. Some of the specific reasons for why Nebuchadnezzar II could not have written this chapter are
   1. theological content, v. 3
   2. the style is in line with the rest of the book of Daniel
   3. Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of in the third person, vv. 25-30
   4. verse 29 seems to be written for non-Babylonian people

F. W.A. Criswell and E. J. Young assert that Nebuchadnezzar II is converted to the worship of YHWH because of this final, great sign of chapter 4. However, because of verse 8, it is obvious

to me that although he was greatly impressed, he was not willing to convert to the monotheism of Israel. All known Babylonian documents of the period refer to him as a worshiper of Marduk.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:1-3

[1]Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! [2]It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me.

[3]How great are His signs
And how mighty are His wonders!
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom
And His dominion is from generation to generation."

4:1 "Nebuchadnezzar" Verses 1-3 are in chapter 3 in the Hebrew Bible, but this context obviously starts a new section. His name means "may Nebo guard the boundary" (cf. v. 8).

▣ **"all the peoples, nations, and men of every language"** We must remember that the kingdom of neo-Babylon included many language groups (cf. 3:4,7,29; 6:25). This chapter seems to be a royal decree issued to praise the God of Judah for Nebuchadnezzar's restoration.

▣ **"in all the earth"** This, of course, refers to the known world of that day and is an example of a non-literal exaggeration (hyperbole).

▣ **"'May your peace abound'"** This is parallel to 6:25 (cf. Ezra 4:17). This was a common idiom for initial greetings, meaning "welfare," "prosperity" (BDB 1116). Nebuchadnezzar is declaring, in a royal decree, the praises of the God of Judah, who he calls "the Most High God." See Special Topic at 4:2.

4:2 "the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me." Nebuchadnezzar II has now been confronted with YHWH in chapters 2, 3, and 4. The accumulating evidence of the existence, sovereignty, and covenant loyalty of the Jewish God is overwhelming.

The book of Daniel is characterized by lists and hendiadys. See the third paragraph of 2:12. The corresponding Hebrew terms for "signs," and "wonders" are often used together (cf. Exod. 7:3; 8:23; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:1,2; 26:8; 28:46; 29:3; 34:11; Neh. 9:10; Ps. 105:27; 135:9; Jer. 32:20). What God did for Israel in the Exodus (cf. Acts 7:36) He now displays to pagan kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius). The revelation continues in the life of Jesus (cf. Acts 2:22) and the gospel proclamation (cf. Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 8:13; 14:3). However, in the NT these two terms are usually associated with false Messiahs (cf. Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22) or the Jewish people demanding evidence of Jesus' Messiahship (cf. Matt. 12:39; 16:1; John 4:48). God wants the world to know Him!

▣ **"Most High God"** See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NAMES FOR DEITY

A. *El* (BDB 42, KB 48)

1. The original meaning of the generic ancient term for deity is uncertain, though many scholars believe it comes from the Akkadian root, "to be strong" or "to be powerful" (cf. Gen. 17:1; Num. 23:19; Deut. 7:21; Ps. 50:1).
2. In the Canaanite pantheon the high god is *El* (Ras Shamra texts)
3. In the Bible *El* is not usually compounded with other terms. These combinations became a way to characterize God.
   a. *El-Elyon* (God Most High, BDB 42 & 751 II), Gen. 14:18-22; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 14:14
   b. *El-Roi* ("God who sees" or "God who reveals Himself," BDB 42 & 909), Gen. 16:13
   c. *El-Shaddai* ("God Almighty" or "God the All Compassion" or "God of the mountain," BDB 42 & 994), Gen. 17:1; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25; Exod. 6:3
   d. *El-Olam* (the Everlasting God, BDB 42 & 761), Gen. 21:33. This term is theologically linked to God's promise to David, II Sam. 7:13,16
   e. *El-Berit* ("God of the Covenant," BDB 42 & 136), Jdgs. 9:46
4. *El* is equated with
   a. YHWH in Ps. 85:8; Isa. 42:5
   b. *Elohim* in Gen. 46:3; Job 5:8, "I am *El*, the *Elohim* of your father
   c. *Shaddai* in Gen. 49:25
   d. "jealousy" in Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15
   e. "mercy" in Deut. 4:31; Neh. 9:31;
   f. "faithful" in Deut. 7:9; 32:4
   g. "great and awesome" in Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4
   h. "knowledge" in I Sam. 2:3
   i. "my strong refuge" in II Sam. 22:33
   j. "my avenger" in II Sam. 22:48
   k. "holy one" in Isa. 5:16
   l. "might" in Isa. 10:21
   m. "my salvation" in Isa. 12:2
   n. "great and powerful" in Jer. 32:18
   o. "retribution" in Jer. 51:56
5. A combination of all the major OT names for God is found in Joshua 22:22 (*El, Elohim, YHWH,* repeated)

B. *Elyon* (BDB 751, KB 832)

1. Its basic meaning is "high," "exalted," or "lifted up" (cf. Gen. 40:17; I Kgs. 9:8; II Kgs. 18:17; Neh. 3:25; Jer. 20:2; 36:10; Ps. 18:13).
2. It is used in a parallel sense to several other names/titles of God.
   a. *Elohim* - Ps. 47:1-2; 73:11; 107:11
   b. *YHWH* - Gen. 14:22; II am. 22:14
   c. *El-Shaddai* - Ps. 91:1,9
   d. *El* - Num. 24:16

e. *Elah* - used often in Daniel 2-6 and Ezra 4-7, linked with *illair* (Aramaic for "High God") in Dan. 3:26; 4:2; 5:18,21

3. It is often used by non-Israelites.
   a. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-22
   b. Balaam, Num. 24:16
   c. Moses, speaking of the nations in Deut. 32:8
   d. Luke's Gospel in the NT, writing to Gentiles, also uses the Greek equivalent *Hupsistos* (cf. 1:32,35,76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17)

C. *Elohim* (PLURAL), *Eloah* (SINGULAR), used primarily in poetry (BDB 43, KB 52)
   1. This term is not found outside the Old Testament.
   2. This word can designate the God of Israel or the gods of the nations (cf. Exod. 12:12; 20:3). Abraham's family were polytheistic (cf. Josh. 24:2).
   3. It can refer to Israeli judges (cf. Exod. 21:6; Ps. 82:6).
   4. The term *elohim* is also used of other spiritual beings (angels, the demonic) as in Deut. 32:8 (LXX); Ps. 8:5; Job 1:6; 38:7. It can refer to human judges (cf. Exod. 21:6; Ps. 82:6).
   5. In the Bible it is the first title/name for Deity (cf. Gen. 1:1). It is used exclusively until Gen. 2:4, where it is combined with YHWH. It basically (theologically) refers to God as creator, sustainer, and provider of all life on this planet (cf. Ps. 104).

      It is synonymous with *El* (cf. Deut. 32:15-19). It can also parallel YHWH as Psalm 14 (*Elohim*) is exactly like Psalm 53 (YHWH), except for the change in divine names.
   6. Although PLURAL and used of other gods, this term often designates the God of Israel, but usually it has the SINGULAR VERB to denote the monotheistic usage.
   7. This term is found in the mouths of non-Israelites as the name for deity.
      a. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-22
      b. Balaam, Num. 24:2
      c. Moses, when speaking of the nations, Deut. 32:8
   8. It is strange that a common name for the monotheistic God of Israel is PLURAL! Although there is no certainty, here are the theories.
      a. Hebrew has many PLURALS, often used for emphasis. Closely related to this is the later Hebrew grammatical feature called "the plural of majesty," where the PLURAL is used to magnify a concept.
      b. This may refer to the angelic council, which God meets with in heaven and that does His biding (cf. I Kgs. 22:19-23; Job 1:6; Ps. 82:1; 89:5,7).
      c. It is even possible this reflects the NT revelation of the one God in three persons. In Gen. 1:1 God creates; Gen. 1:2 the Spirit broods, and from the NT Jesus is God the Father's agent in creation (cf. John 1:3,10; Rom. 11:36; I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:2; 2:10).

D. YHWH (BDB 217, KB 394)
   1. This is the name which reflects deity as the covenant-making God; God as savior, redeemer! Humans break covenants, but God is loyal to His word, promise, covenant (cf. Psalm 103).

      This name is first mentioned in combination with *Elohim* in Gen. 2:4. There are not two creation accounts in Genesis 1-2, but two emphases: (1) God as the creator of the universe (the physical) and (2) God as the special creator of humanity. Genesis 2:4 begins

the special revelation about the privileged position and purpose of mankind, as well as the problem of sin and rebellion associated with the unique position.

2. In Gen. 4:26 it is said "*men* began to call upon the name of the LORD" (YHWH). However, Exod. 6:3 implies that early covenant people (the Patriarchs and their families) knew God only as *El–Shaddai*. The name YHWH is explained only one time in Exod. 3:13-16, esp. v. 14. However, the writings of Moses often interpret words by popular word plays, not etymologies (cf. Gen. 17:5; 27:36; 29:13-35). There have been several theories as to the meaning of this name (taken from IDB, vol. 2, pp. 409-11).
   a. from an Arabic root, "to show fervent love"
   b. from an Arabic root "to blow" (YHWH as storm God)
   c. from a Ugartic (Canaanite) root "to speak"
   d. following a Phoenician inscription, a CAUSATIVE PARTICIPLE meaning "the One who sustains," or "the One who establishes"
   e. from the Hebrew *Qal* form "the One who is," or "the One who is present" (in future sense, "the One who will be")
   f. from the Hebrew *Hiphil* form "the One who causes to be"
   g. from the Hebrew root "to live" (e.g., Gen. 3:20), meaning "the ever-living, only-living One"
   h. from the context of Exod. 3:13-16 a play on the IMPERFECT form used in a PERFECT sense, "I shall continue to be what I used to be" or "I shall continue to be what I have always been" (cf. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Old Testament*, p. 67). The full name YHWH is often expressed in abbreviation or possibly an original form.
      (1) *Yah* (e.g., Hallelu - yah, BDB 219, cf. Exod. 15:2; 17:16; Ps. 89:9; 104:35)
      (2) *Yahu* ("iah" ending of names, e.g., Isaiah)
      (3) *Yo* ("Jo" beginning of names, e.g., Joshua or Joel)
3. In later Judaism this covenant name became so holy (the tetragrammaton) that Jews were afraid to say it lest they break the command of Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11; 6:13. So they substituted the Hebrew term for "owner," "master," "husband," "lord"—*adon* or *adonai* (my lord). When they came to YHWH in their reading of OT texts they pronounced "lord." This is why YHWH is written LORD in English translations.
4. As with *El*, YHWH is often combined with other terms to emphasize certain characteristics of the Covenant God of Israel. While there are many possible combination terms, here are some.
   a. *YHWH - Yireh* (YHWH will provide, BDB 217 & 906), Gen. 22:14
   b. *YHWH - Rophekha* (YHWH is your healer, BDB 217 & 950, *Qal* PARTICIPLE), Exod. 15:26
   c. *YHWH - Nissi* (YHWH is my banner, BDB 217 & 651), Exod. 17:15
   d. *YHWH - Meqaddishkem* (YHWH the One who sanctifies you, BDB 217 & 872, *Piel* PARTICIPLE), Exod. 31:13
   e. *YHWH - Shalom* (YHWH is Peace, BDB 217 & 1022), Jdgs. 6:24
   f. *YHWH - Sabbaoth* (YHWH of hosts, BDB 217 & 878), I Sam. 1:3,11; 4:4; 15:2; often in the Prophets
   g. *YHWH - Ro'I* (YHWH is my shepherd, BDB 217 & 944, *Qal* PARTICIPLE), Ps. 23:1
   h. *YHWH - Sidqenu* (YHWH is our righteousness, BDB 217 & 841), Jer. 23:6
   i. *YHWH - Shammah* (YHWH is there, BDB 217 & 1027), Ezek. 48:35

4:3 "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom" This verse is a poetic/hymnic text extolling God.

1. "His signs. . .and wonders" (cf. 6:27). God is actively involved in the lives of these Near Eastern kings (cf. chapters 2,3,4,5,6) to demonstrate His power and presence.
2. "everlasting kingdom" (cf. v. 34; 2:44; 6:26; 7:14,26). This is in contrast to the changing kingdom represented by the vision of chapter 2. These last two lines of poetry are very similar to the Hebrew of Ps. 145:13; also see Ps. 45:6; Lam. 5:19.
3. "dominion is from generation to generation." God's people are safe and secure in Him in each and every generation, even amidst war and exile. Physical circumstances (destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple) do not affect the peace and presence of God in the lives of His followers. These words and phrases are in a parallel relationship in v. 3. Semitic poetry must be interpreted in light of thought parallels, not rhyme.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HEBREW POETRY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. This type of literature makes up 1/3 of the Old Testament. It is especially common in the "Prophets" (all but Haggai and Malachi contain poetry) and "Writings" sections of the Hebrew canon.

B. It is very different from English poetry. English poetry is developed from Greek and Latin poetry, which is primarily sound-based. Hebrew poetry has much in common with Canaanite poetry. It is basically thought-based in balanced, parallel lines.

C. The archaeological discovery north of Israel at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) has helped scholars understand OT poetry. This poetry from the 15th century B.C. has obvious literary connections with biblical poetry.

II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POETRY

A. It is very compact.

B. It tries to express truth, feelings or experiences in imagery.

C. It is primarily written not oral. It is highly structured. This structure is expressed in:

1. balanced lines (parallelism)
2. word plays
3. sound plays

III. THE STRUCTURE (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp.965-975)

A. Bishop Robert Lowth in his book, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) was the first to characterize biblical poetry as balanced lines of thought. Most modern English translations are formatted to show the lines of poetry.

1. synonymous - the lines express the same thought in different words:
   a. Psalm 3:1; 49:1; 83:14; 103:13
   b. Proverbs 19:5; 20:1
   c. Isaiah 1:3,10
   d. Amos 5:24; 8:10
2. antithetical - the lines express opposite thoughts by means of contrast or stating the positive and the negative:
   a. Psalm 1:6; 90:6

b. Proverbs 1:29; 10:1,12; 15:1; 19:4

3. synthetic - the next two or three lines develop the thought - Ps. 1:1-2; 19:7-9; 29:1-2
4. chiasmic - a pattern of poetry expressing the message in a descending and ascending order. The main point is found in the middle of the pattern.

B. Charles A. Briggs in his book, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (1899) developed the next stage of analysis of Hebrew poetry:
   1. emblematic - one clause literal and the second metaphorical, Ps. 42:1; 103:3
   2. climatic or stair-like - the clauses reveal truth in an ascending fashion, Ps. 19:7-14; 29:1-2; 103:20-22
   3. introverted - a series of clauses, usually at least four are related by the internal structure of line 1 to 4 and 2 to 3 - Ps. 30:8-10a

C. G. B. Gray in his book, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (1915), developed the concept of balanced clauses further by:
   1. complete balance - where every word in line one is repeated or balanced by a word in line two - Psalm 83:14 and Isaiah 1:3
   2. incomplete balance where the clauses are not the same length - Ps. 59:16; 75:6

D. Today there is a growing recognition of literary structural pattern in Hebrew called a chiasm, which usually denotes a number of parallel lines (a.b,b,a; a,b,c,b,a) forming an hour glass shape, often the central line(s) is emphasized.

E. Type of sound patterns found in poetry in general, but not often in eastern poetry
   1. play on alphabet (acrostic, cf. Ps. 9,34,37,119; Prov. 31:10ff; Lam. 1-4)
   2. play on consonants (alliteration, cf. Ps. 6:8; 27:7; 122:6; Isa. 1:18-26)
   3. play on vowels (assonance, cf. Gen. 49:17; Exod. 14:14; Ezek. 27:27)
   4. play on repetition of similar sounding words with different meanings (paronomasia)
   5. play on words which, when pronounced, sound like the thing they name (onomatopoeia)
   6. special opening and close (inclusive)

F. There are several types of poetry in the Old Testament. Some are topic related and some are form related:
   1. dedication song - Num. 21:17-18
   2. work songs - (alluded to but not recorded in Judg. 9:27); Isa. 16:10; Jer. 25:30; 48:33
   3. ballads - Num. 21:27-30; Isa. 23:16
   4. drinking songs - negative, Isa. 5:11-13; Amos 6:4-7 and positive, Isa. 22:13
   5. love poems - Song of Songs, wedding riddle - Judg. 14:10-18, wedding song - Ps. 45
   6. laments/dirge - (alluded to but not recorded in II Sam. 1:17 and II Chr. 35:25) II Sam. 3:33; Ps. 27, 28; Jer. 9:17-22; Lam.; Ezek. 19:1-14; 26:17-18; Nah. 3:15-19)
   7. war songs - Gen. 4:23-24; Exod. 15:1-18,20; Num. 10:35-36; 21:14-15; Josh. 10:13; Judg. 5:1-31; 11:34; I Sam. 18:6; II Sam. 1:18; Isa. 47:1-15; 37:21
   8. special benedictions or blessing of leader - Gen. 49; Num. 6:24-26; Deut. 32; II Sam. 23:1-7
   9. magical texts - Balaam, Num. 24:3-9
   10. sacred poems - Psalms
   11. acrostic poems - Ps. 9,34,37,119; Pro. 31:10ff and Lamentations 1-4
   12. curses - Num. 21:22-30

13. taunt poems - Isa. 14:1-22; 47:1-15; Ezek. 28:1-23
14. a book of war poems (Jashar) - Num. 21:14-15; Josh. 10:12-13; II Sam. 1:18

IV. GUIDELINE TO INTERPRETING HEBREW POETRY

A. Look for the central truth of the stanza or strophe (this is like a paragraph in prose.) The RSV was the first modern translation to identify poetry by stanzas. Compare modern translations for helpful insights.

B. Identify the figurative language and express it in prose. Remember this type of literature is very compact, much is left for the reader to fill in.

C. Be sure to relate the longer issue-oriented poems to their literary context (often the whole book) and historical setting.

D. Judges 4 & 5 are very helpful in seeing how poetry expresses history. Judges 4 is prose and Judges 5 is poetry of the same event (also compare Exod. 14 & 15).

E. Attempt to identify the type of parallelism involved, whether synonymous, antithetical, or synthetic. This is very important.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:4-9

4"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. 5I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and *these* fantasies *as I lay* on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. 6So I gave orders to bring into my presence all the wise men of Babylon, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. 8But finally Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar according to the name of my god, and in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and I related the dream to him, *saying*, 9"O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, since I know that a spirit of the holy gods is in you and no mystery baffles you, tell me the visions of my dream which I have seen, along with its interpretation.'"

4:4

NASB "'was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace'"
NKJV "'was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace'"
NRSV "'was living at ease in my home and prospering in my palace'"
TEV "'was living comfortably in my palace'"
NJB "was living comfortably in my house, prosperously in my palace'"

This is another example of Semitic parallelism (as is v. 5). Nebuchadnezzar was experiencing the kind of prosperity that he had wished his hearers in v. 1.

This seems to be an allusion to the up-coming dream of a glorious tree. This type of human arrogance is prophesied in Isa. 47:7,8. Isaiah 13-14 and 46-47 are oracles of judgment against Babylon, which becomes the biblical symbol of human arrogance and pride.

4:5-7 Again the impotence of Babylon and its wise men is contrasted with the wise power and control of the God of Judah and her people.

4:6 "'So I gave orders'" Nebuchadnezzar can make decrees (cf. 2:9,15; 3:10,29), but he could not produce the desired result (and neither could his wise men). This is in stark contrast to God's will being accomplished.

4:7 For the meaning of these terms see 1:20 or 2:2.

▣ **"they could not make known its interpretation"** It is unusual that they did not attempt an interpretation, given the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had revealed the dream. Possibly they were able to interpret it, but were afraid to.

It is surprising that Nebuchadnezzar calls on the same group of wise men which he previously had no confidence in (cf. 2:4-13), and also that he had forgotten his own decrees (2:4-49; 3:29) relating to YHWH.

4:8 "Daniel" means "God is my judge" (BDB 1088).

▣ **"Belteshazzar"** Daniel's name implies a Babylonian deity, "may _____ protect his life" (BDB 1084). The Babylonian pantheon developed from the Sumerian pantheon. Originally deities were the patrons of specific cities. The god, *Marduk*, was known as "lord." *Bel* was originally the patron god of the city of Nippur, but came to be identified with *Marduk,* the pagan god of the city of Babylon (i.e. *Bel*, cf Isa. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; 51:44). It is uncertain exactly which god is implied by Daniel's name, but *Marduk* became the chief god of Babylon. Although *Bel* looks to be a part of Daniel's Babylonian name, it is not. Verse 8 functions as a parenthesis explaining the name, Belteshazzar (cf. NKJV, NRSV, TEV).

▣

NASB, NRSV "a spirit of the holy gods"
NKJV "the Spirit of the Holy God"
TEV, NJB,
JPS, NEB "the spirit of the holy gods"

If this phrase is from a polytheist (cf. v. 8a; 5:11,14) then surely this is not a reference to YHWH or His Spirit (the textual evidence is that the qualifying adjective "holy" is PLURAL, however, there is a Hebrew PLURAL equivalent in Josh. 24:19). The context (v. 9) implies that Nebuchadnezzar remembered Daniel's previous help of dream interpretation in chapter 2; if so, then this could be translated like the NKJV (cf. vv. 9,18). Remember the consistent theological emphasis is YHWH's power and control versus the Babylonian pantheon and government (cf. 2:20-23). "The spirit" would be understood as YHWH's influence in Daniel's giftedness (cf. 2:27-28,30,47).

This Aramaic phrase is similar to the Hebrew phrase used of Joseph in Gen. 41:38. Both Joseph and Daniel served pagan kings and interpreted their dreams.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HOLY

I. Old Testament Usage
   A. The etymology of the term (*kadosh*) is uncertain, possibly Canaanite. It is possible that part of the root (i.e. *kds*) means "to divide." This is the source of the popular definition "separated (from Canaanite culture, cf. Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19) for God's use."
   B. It relates to cultic things, places, times, and persons. It is common in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.
   C. In the Prophetic literature (esp. Isaiah and Hosea) the personal element previously present, but not emphasized, comes to the fore. It becomes a way of designating the essence of God (cf. Isa. 6:3). God is holy; His name representing His character is Holy; His people who are to reveal His character to a needy world are holy (if they obey the covenant in faith).

D. God's mercy and love are inseparable from the theological concepts of covenants, justice, and essential character. Herein is the tension in God toward an unholy, fallen, rebellious humanity.

There is a very interesting article on the relationship between God as "merciful" and God as "holy" in Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 112-113.

II. The New Testament

A. The writers of the NT are Hebrew thinkers (except Luke), but influenced by Koine Greek (i.e. the Septuagint). It is the Greek translation of the OT that controls their vocabulary, not Classical Greek literature, thought, or religion.

B. Jesus is holy because He is of God and like God (cf. Luke 1:35; 4:34; Acts 3:14; 4:27,30). He is the Holy and Righteous One (cf. Acts 3:14; 22:14). Jesus is holy because He is sinless (cf. John 8:46; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; I Pet. 1:19; 2:22; I John 3:5).

C. Because God is holy, His children are to be holy (cf. Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:16). Because Jesus is holy His followers are to be holy (cf. Rom. 8:28-29; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; I Thess. 3:13; 4:3; I Pet. 1:15). Christians are saved to serve in Christlikeness.

4:9 "the chief of the magicians" Daniel was trained in the language and traditions of the Chaldeans (cf. 1:4). He was made the leader of the Babylonian wise men (cf. 1:20; 2:48). Daniel's abilities were from YHWH, not from Babylonian magic. These Babylonian wise men failed again and again (cf. 2:1-13; 4:7,18). Daniel's position caused later Jewish rabbis to criticize his cooperation with pagan culture and governments.

▣

NASB "tell me the vision"
NKJV "explain to me the vision"
NRSV "hear the dream"
TEV "this is my dream"
NJB "this is the dream"

From these English translations it is obvious there are at least two ways to interpret the Aramaic text: (1) Nebuchadnezzar wanted Daniel to reveal the dream and its interpretation, like chapter 2 (NASB, NKJV) or (2) Nebuchadnezzar told Daniel the dream (as he did the other wise men, cf. v. 7 and NRSV, TEV, NJB) and wanted him to give the interpretation. The second makes sense contextually, but demands a revocalization of the Masoretic Consonantal Text.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:10-12

[10]" Now *these were* the visions in my mind *as I lay* on my bed: I was looking, and behold, *there was* a tree in the midst of the earth and its height *was* great.

[11]The tree grew large and became strong
And its height reached to the sky,
And it *was* visible to the end of the whole earth.

[12]Its foliage *was* beautiful and its fruit abundant,
And in it *was* food for all.
The beasts of the field found shade under it,
And the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches,
And all living creatures fed themselves from it."

4:10 "behold" *A Handbook on the Book of Daniel*, by UBS, pp. 106-107, notes that this Aramaic interjection (BDB 1080) and its Hebrew equivalent (BDB 243) are used often in Daniel, but usually not translated.

1. Aramaic - 2:31; 4:10,13; 7:2,5,7,8(twice),13
2. Hebrew - 8:3,5,15,19; 9:18; 10:5,10,16; 11:2; 12:5

Its literary function is to energize the narrative.

▣ **"a tree"** This was apparently a common symbol of the power and pervasiveness of important men in the ancient Near East (cf. Ezek. 31 and Herodotus 1.108; 7.19).

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"in the midst of the earth"**
NRSV	**"at the center of the earth"**
TEV	**"in the middle of the earth"**
NJB	**"in the middle of the world"**

This is an idiomatic way of showing the extent and power of the neo-Babylon empire (cf. 2:38-39; 4:20-22). As always interpreters must take this figurative (hyperbolic) language in the sense it would have been used by a king in the ancient Near East. Nebuchadnezzar controlled the known world.

4:11 This verse has all PARTICIPLES, showing continuing action. The tree (kingdom) was still expanding.

▣ **"its height reached to the sky"** This phrase is reminiscent of the Tower of Babel in Gen. 11:4, which also denotes human arrogance and pride (cf. Isa. 14:14).

▣ **"it *was* visible to the end of the whole earth"** This is obviously poetic hyperbole.

4:12 The neo-Babylonian empire provided a safe and growing economic climate.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:13-18

[13]"I was looking in the visions in my mind *as I lay* on my bed, and behold, an *angelic* watcher, a holy one, descended from heaven.
[14]He shouted out and spoke as follows:
'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit;
Let the beasts flee from under it
And the birds from its branches.
[15]Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground,
But with a band of iron and bronze *around it*
In the new grass of the field;

And let him be drenched with the dew of heaven,
And let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth.
[16]Let his mind be changed from *that of* a man
And let a beast's mind be given to him,
And let seven periods of time pass over him.
[17]This sentence is by the decree of the *angelic* watchers
And the decision is a command of the holy ones,
In order that the living may know
That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind,
And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men.'
[18]This is the dream *which* I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, tell *me* its interpretation, inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, for a spirit of the holy gods is in you."

4:13 "the angelic watcher" This means "one that stays awake" (BDB 1105, The Hebrew counterpart is used of God in Ps. 121:4). This Aramaic word and concept is used only in this chapter in the entire Bible. It is SINGULAR in v. 13 but PLURAL in verse 17. The Hebrew counterpart is used of angels in the inter-testamental books of *Jubilees* (4:15) and *I Enoch* (1:5) and for fallen angels (cf. *I Enoch* 10-16). It has been found in Cave 1 of the Qumran Text in "the Genesis Apocraphon" and is used for fallen angels. It is also known to be the title for the messenger of the gods in the Canaanite pantheon (Ras Shamra texts from Ugarit). We are uncertain if this is an allusion to Babylonian mythology or simply a unique way to refer to a special type of angel.

▣ **"descended from heaven"** Since the word "heaven" is also used in v. 11b, however in a different sense, this is a good opportunity to emphasize the crucial aspect of context in interpretation. Lexicons and dictionaries do not give meaning, only literary (or verbal) contexts give meaning. In v. 11 the term refers to the sky (cf. v. 15d), but in v. 13 (cf. vv. 26-31) it refers to the dwelling place of God or the gods.

4:14 "He shouted out" Apparently the reader is meant to understand that one of the holy watchers cried out to the other angelic beings (cf. v. 17). Remember, however, this is a highly symbolic and figurative dream, not time-space reality.

4:15 "a band of iron" There has been much discussion about the band. Most commentators assume that it was for the protection of the stump, although some see it as being related to the restraints that bound Nebuchadnezzar during the time that he was deranged.

The tree stands for the kingship of Nebuchadnezzar. God cuts down/brings down his kingdom (cf. Isa. 10:33-34; Ezek. 17:22-24). However, the stump remains and will regenerate. This metaphor is also used of the stump of Jesse (i.e. the Messiah, cf. Isa. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). This is the origin of the Messianic term "Branch" (i.e. *netzer*, cf. Isa. 4:2; Zech. 3:8; 6:12).

SPECIAL TOPIC: JESUS THE NAZARENE

There are several different Greek terms that the NT uses to precisely designate which Jesus is being referenced.

1. NT Terms
   a. Nazareth - the city in Galilee (cf. Luke 1:26; 2:4,39,51; 4:16; Acts 10:38). This city is not mentioned in contemporary sources, but has been found in later inscriptions.

For Jesus to be from Nazareth was not a compliment (cf. John 1:46). The sign over Jesus' cross which included this place name was a sign of Jewish contempt.

b. *Nazarēnos* - seems to also refer to a geographical location (cf. Luke 4:34; 24:19).

c. *Nazōraios* - may refer to a city, but could also be a play on the Hebrew Messianic term "Branch" (*netzer*, cf. Isa. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; in the NT Rev. 22:16). Luke uses this of Jesus in 18:37 and Acts 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8; 24:5; 26:9.

d. Related to #3 *nāzir* means consecrated one by means of a vow.

2. Historical usages outside the NT. This designation has other historical usages.

a. It denoted a Jewish (pre-Christian) heretical group (Aramaic *nāsōrayyā*).

b. It was used in Jewish circles to describe believers in Christ (cf. Acts 24:5,14; 28:22, *nosri*).

c. It became the regular term to denote believers in the Syrian (Aramaic) churches. "Christian" was used in the Greek churches to denote believers.

d. Sometime after the fall of Jerusalem, the Pharisees reorganized at Jamnia and instigated a formal separation between the synagogue and the church. An example of the type of curse formulas against Christians is found in "the Eighteen Benedictions" from *Berakoth* 28b-29a, which calls the believers "Nazarenes."

> "May the Nazarenes and heretics disappear in a moment; they shall be erased from the book of life and not be written with the faithful."

e. It was used by Justin Martyr, *Dial*. 126:1 who used Isaiah's *netzer* of Jesus.

3. Author's opinion

I am surprised by so many spellings of the term, although I know this is not unheard of in the OT as "Joshua" has several different spellings in Hebrew. Yet, because of

a. the close association with the Messianic term "Branch"

b. combined with the negative context

c. little or no contemporary attestation to the city of Nazareth in Galilee

d. it coming from the mouth of a demon in an eschatological sense (i.e. "Have you come to destroy us?"),

I remain uncertain as to its precise meaning.

For a full bibliography of studies of this word group by scholarship see Colin Brown (ed.), *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, p. 346 or Raymond E. Brown, *Birth*, pp. 209-213, 223-225.

▣

NASB "let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth"
NKJV "*let* him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth"
NRSV "let his lot be with the animals of the field in the grass of the earth"
TEV "let him live with the animals and the plants"
NJB "have its lot with the animals, eating grass"

As you can tell by thee English translations, there are two ways to understand this ambiguous phrase.

1. The king will live outdoors on the ground with the domestic animals (NASB, NRSV, TEV).
2. The king will eat grass like the domestic animals (NKJV, NJB).

4:16 "let his mind" This word is literally "heart," which in Hebrew was a metaphor for the mental processes and choices of the person.

▣

NASB **"and let seven periods of time pass over him"**
NKJV, NRSV **"let seven times pass over him"**
TEV **"for seven years"**
NJB **"seven times shall pass over him"**

This phrase becomes theologically significant because

1. the term "seven" is used both literally and figuratively in the Bible. In Hebrew thought it is the perfect number going back to the creation week of Gen. 1.
2. the term "time" is used in several of the prophecies of Daniel. Is it referring to a specific period of time or a full or perfect period of time? These questions must be answered from context, not philology or lexicology.

The LXX has "seven years," but the term implies "seasons," "annual seasons." The time element is divinely set and known but recorded for us in a purposefully ambiguous way.

4:17 "This sentence is by the decree of the *angelic* watchers, And the decision is a command of the holy ones" This seems to imply that the angels made the decision on their own, but verse 24 shows the ultimate source of this decision was God. Again, it is important to realize that the Jews were uncertain at this time about their covenant relationship with God because the temple and Jerusalem (cf. Deut. 12:10) had been destroyed and the Davidic king taken into exile (cf. II Sam. 7). They needed Him to show them that He was in control of all of world history.

The concluding part of this verse is very similar in theological emphasis to 2:20. The entire book of Daniel makes this assertion again and again. To the ancient Near East the historical situation looked as if YHWH had been defeated by the Babylonian gods, but in reality YHWH was using the empires of the Fertile Crescent (Assyria, Babylon, Persia) to execute His will related to His people (cf. Isa. 10:5; Jer. 51:20). God's people were reaping the consequences of idolatry and rebellion (cf. Deut. 27-29). God needed to reassure His people and inform the pagan empires (v. 25) of the source of their current political and military prowess.

4:18 "inasmuch as none of the wise men of my kingdom is able" This is a recurrent theme (cf. 1:20; 2:4-13; 4:7; 5:7-8).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:19-27

[19]Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar replied, "My lord, *if only* the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries! [20]The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth [21]and whose foliage *was* beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which *was* food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged —[22]it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth. [23]In that the king saw an *angelic* watcher, a holy one, descending from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze *around it* in the new grass of the field, and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts of the field until seven periods of time pass over him', [24]this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: [25]that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler

over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. [26]And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that *it is* Heaven *that* rules. [27]Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by *doing* righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.'‘

4:19 "Daniel. . .was appalled for a while" Daniel was apparently very loyal to Nebuchadnezzar II and regretted having to reveal this judgment. Several times in the book of Daniel, Daniel is spiritually and physically affected by the revelations he receives (cf. 7:15,28; 8:27; 10:16,17).

It seems that "appalled" and "alarmed" are parallel grammatical structures so characteristic of the book of Daniel.

▣ **"do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you"** Nebuchadnezzar had himself been alarmed by this dream (cf. v. 5).

▣ **"those who hate you. . .to your enemies"** This is another of many parallel phrases. This literary style characterizes the entire book (cf. vv. 21c,d, and e,f; 22a,b; 23c,d).

4:21 "He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding" In this context it refers to the four Jewish youth, especially Daniel (cf. v. 23) and not at all to the guild of Babylonian wise men.

4:22 "it is you, O king" The king himself as the representative of his empire is the focus of the dream, as in chapter 2 (v. 38b, "you are the head of gold").

4:25 "until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes" See full note at 4:17. This is the central and recurrent theme of Daniel (cf. Ps. 83:18; 97:9; Jer. 27:5; Rom. 9-11).

The LXX adds a temporal note at the beginning of this chapter and chapter 3 ("in the eighteenth year"). This would designate the year that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar needed to recognize YHWH's permission for his apparent victory.

4:26

NASB	**"it is Heaven *that* rules"**
NKJV	**"Heaven rules"**
NRSV	**"Heaven is sovereign"**
TEV	**"God rules all the world"**
NJB	**"the Most High rules over human sovereignty"**

This is a circumlocution, a way of referring to deity without using a title/name (cf. Matt. 3:2, "kingdom of heaven"; and Luke 15:18,21, "sinned against heaven").

4:27 Daniel's advice to Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the biblical world-view (OT) that there is a holy God who requires righteousness. These words to a proud eastern monarch shows the basic ethical nature of reality. This reflects the covenant of Deut. 27-29. Sin and rebellion are the problem, but God is a God of mercy (cf. Isa. 55:6-7; Ezek. 18:21-22). These words to Nebuchadnezzar show Daniel's understanding that pagans are loved by God and can respond to Him by faith and life.

The parallelism of "sins" and "iniquities" is obvious, but also "righteousness" and "mercy to the poor" are parallel. This reflects the Jewish understanding of almsgiving (in the LXX translation as well as usage in the Targums and Talmud, cf. Ps. 112:3,9; Isa. 33:15; Matt. 6:1; II Cor. 9:6-11) as an expression of "righteousness" (i.e. God's character, cf. Isa. 58:6-11).

SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Righteousness" is such a crucial topic that a Bible student must make a personal extensive study of the concept.

In the OT God's character is described as "just" or "righteous." The Mesopotamian term itself comes from a river reed which was used as a construction tool to judge the horizontal straightness of walls and fences. God chose the term to be used metaphorically of His own nature. He is the straight edge (ruler) by which all things are evaluated. This concept asserts God's righteousness as well as His right to judge.

Man was created in the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1,3; 9:6). Mankind was created for fellowship with God. All of creation is a stage or backdrop for God and mankind's interaction. God wanted His highest creation, mankind, to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and be like Him! Mankind's loyalty was tested (cf. Gen. 3) and the original couple failed the test. This resulted in a disruption of the relationship between God and humanity (cf. Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12-21).

God promised to repair and restore the fellowship (cf. Gen. 3:15). He does this through His own will and His own Son. Humans were incapable of restoring the breach (cf. Rom. 1:18-3:20).

After the Fall, God's first step toward restoration was the concept of covenant based on His invitation and mankind's repentant, faithful, obedient response. Because of the Fall, humans were incapable of appropriate action (cf. Rom. 3:21-31; Gal. 3). God Himself had to take the initiative to restore covenant-breaking humans. He did this by

1. declaring mankind righteous through the work of Christ (i.e. forensic righteousness).
2. freely giving mankind righteousness through the work of Christ (i.e. imputed righteousness).
3. providing the indwelling Spirit who produces righteousness (i.e. Christlikeness, the restoration of the image of God) in mankind.

However, God requires a covenantal response. God decrees (i.e. freely gives) and provides, but humans must respond and continue to respond in

1. repentance
2. faith
3. lifestyle obedience
4. perseverance

Righteousness, therefore, is a covenantal, reciprocal action between God and His highest creation. It is based on the character of God, the work of Christ, and the enabling of the Spirit, to which each individual must personally and continually respond appropriately. The concept is called "justification by faith." The concept is revealed in the Gospels, but not in these terms. It is primarily defined by Paul, who uses the Greek term "righteousness" in its various forms over 100 times.

Paul, being a trained rabbi, uses the term *dikaiosunē* in its Hebrew sense of the term *SDQ* used in the Septuagint, not from Greek literature. In Greek writings the term is connected to someone who conformed to the expectations of deity and society. In the Hebrew sense it is always structured in covenantal terms. YHWH is a just, ethical, moral God. He wants His people to reflect His character. Redeemed mankind becomes a new creature. This newness results in a new lifestyle of godliness (Roman Catholic focus of justification). Since Israel was a theocracy there was not clear delineation between the secular (society's norms) and the sacred (God's will). This distinction is expressed in the Hebrew and Greek terms being translated into English as "justice" (relating to society) and "righteousness" (relating to religion).

The gospel (good news) of Jesus is that fallen mankind has been restored to fellowship with God. This has been accomplished through the Father's love, mercy, and grace; the Son's life, death, and resurrection; and the Spirit's wooing and drawing to the gospel. Justification is a free act of God, but it must issue in godliness (Augustine's position, which reflects both the Reformation emphasis on the

freeness of the gospel and the Roman Catholic emphasis on a changed life of love and faithfulness). For Reformers the term "the righteousness of God" is an OBJECTIVE GENITIVE (i.e. the act of making sinful mankind acceptable to God [positional sanctification], which for the Catholic it is a SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE, which is the process of becoming more like God [experiential progressive sanctification]. In reality it is surely both!!)

In my view all of the Bible from Gen. 4 - Rev. 20 is a record of God's restoring the fellowship of Eden. The Bible starts with God and mankind in fellowship in an earthly setting (cf. Gen. 1-2) and the Bible ends with the same setting (cf. Rev. 21-22). God's image and purpose will be restored!

To document the above discussions note the following selected NT passages illustrating the Greek word group.

1. God is righteous (often connected to God as Judge)
    a. Romans 3:26
    b. II Thessalonians 1:5-6
    c. II Timothy 4:8
    d. Revelation 16:5
2. Jesus is righteous
    a. Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14 (title of Messiah)
    b. Matthew 27:19
    c. I John 2:1,29; 3:7
3. God's will for His creation is righteousness
    a. Leviticus 19:2
    b. Matthew 5:48 (cf. 5:17-20)
4. God's means of providing and producing righteousness
    a. Romans 3:21-31
    b. Romans 4
    c. Romans 5:6-11
    d. Galatians 3:6-14
    e. Given by God
        1) Romans 3:24; 6:23
        2) I Corinthians 1:30
        3) Ephesians 2:8-9
    f. Received by faith
        1) Romans 1:17; 3:22,26; 4:3,5,13; 9:30; 10:4,6,10
        2) I Corinthians 5:21
    g. Through acts of the Son
        1) Romans 5:21-31
        2) II Corinthians 5:21
        3) Philippians 2:6-11
5. God's will is that His followers be righteous
    a. Matthew 5:3-48; 7:24-27
    b. Romans 2:13; 5:1-5; 6:1-23
    c. I Timothy 6:11
    d. II Timothy 2:22; 3:16

e. I John 3:7
f. I Peter 2:24

6. God will judge the world by righteousness
   a. Acts 17:31
   b. II Timothy 4:8

Righteousness is a characteristic of God, freely given to sinful mankind through Christ. It is

1. a decree of God
2. a gift of God
3. an act of Christ

But it is also a process of becoming righteous that must be vigorously and steadfastly pursued, which will one day be consummated at the Second Coming. Fellowship with God is restored at salvation, but progresses throughout life to become a face-to-face encounter at death or the Parousia!

Here is a good quote to conclude this discussion. It is taken from *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* published by IVP

"Calvin, more so than Luther, emphasizes the relational aspect of the righteousness of God. Luther's view of the righteousness of God seems to contain the aspect of acquittal. Calvin emphasizes the marvelous nature of the communication or imparting of God's righteousness to us" (p. 834).

For me the believer's relationship to God has three aspects:

1. the gospel is a person (emphasis of the Eastern Church and Calvin)
2. the gospel is truth (emphasis of Augustine and Luther**)**
3. the gospel is a changed life (emphasis of the Roman Catholic church)

They are all true and must be held together for a healthy, sound, biblical Christianity. If any one is over emphasized or depreciated, problems occur.

We must welcome Jesus!

We must believe the gospel!

We must pursue Christlikeness!

SPECIAL TOPIC: ALMSGIVING

I. The term itself
   A. This term developed within Judaism (i.e. the Septuagint period).
   B. It refers to giving to the poor and/or needy.
   C. The English word "almsgiving" comes from a contraction of the Greek term *eleēmosunē*.

II. Old Testament concept
   A. The concept of helping the poor was expressed early in the Torah (writings of Moses, Genesis-Deuteronomy).

1. typical context, Deut. 15:7-11
2. "gleaning," leaving part of the harvest for the poor, Lev. 19:9; 23:22; Deut. 24:20
3. "sabbath year," allowing the poor to eat the produce of the seventh, fallow year, Exod. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:2-7.

B. The concept was developed in Wisdom Literature (selected examples)
1. Job 5:8-16; 29:12-17 (the wicked described in 24:1-12)
2. the Psalms 11:7
3. Proverbs 11:4; 14:21,31; 16:6; 21:3,13

III. Development in Judaism
A. The first division of the Mishnah deals with how to treat the poor, needy, and local Levites.
B. Selected quotes
1. "as water extinguishes a blazing fire, so almsgiving atones for sin" (Ecclesiasticus [also known as the Wisdom of Ben Sirach] 3:30, NRSV)
2. "store up almsgiving in your treasury and it will rescue you from every disaster" (Ecclesiasticus 29:12, NRSV)
3. "for those who act in accordance with truth will prosper in all their activities. To all those who practice righteousness [7]give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. [8]If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. [9]So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. [10]For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the Darkness. [11]Indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High." (Tobit 4:6-11, NRSV)
4. "[8]Prayer and fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than wealth with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. [9]For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life." (Tobit 12:8-9, NRSV)

C. The last quote from Tobit 12:8-9 shows the problem developing. Human actions/human merits were seen as the mechanism for both forgiveness and abundance.

This concept developed further in the Septuagint, where the Greek term for almsgiving (*eleēmosunē*) became a synonym for righteousness (*dikaiosunē*). They could be substituted each other in translating the Hebrew terms *hesed* (God's covenant love and loyalty, cf. Deut. 6:25; 24:13; Isa. 1:27; 28:17; 59:16; Dan. 4:27).

D. Human acts of compassion became a goal in themselves to achieve one's personal abundance here and salvation at death. The act itself, instead of the motive behind the act, became theologically preeminent. God looks at the heart, then judges the work of the hand. This was the teaching of the rabbis, but it somehow got lost in the pursuit of individual self righteousness (cf. Micah 6:8).

IV. New Testament reaction
A. The term is found in
1. Matt. 6:1-4

2. Luke 11:41; 12:33
3. Acts 3:2-3,10; 10:2,4,31; 24:17

B. Jesus addresses the traditional Jewish understanding of righteousness (cf. II Clement 16:4) in His Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matt. 5-7) as referring to
1. almsgiving
2. fasting
3. prayer

Some Jews were trusting in their actions. These actions were meant to flow out of a love for God, His word, and covenant brothers and sisters, not self-interest or self-righteousness! Humility is a guideline for proper action. The heart is crucial. The heart is desperately wicked. God must change the heart. The new heart emulates God!

▣

NASB "break away"
NKJV "break off"
NRSV "atone for"
TEV -----
NJB "break with"
LXX "redeem"

This is literally "tear off" or "break off" (BDB 1108, *Peal* IMPERATIVE, cf. Gen. 27:40). Humans have been given a free will. They must exercise it for righteousness, not self. There are pivotal moments of appropriate choices and accompanying actions. Seize the moral moment! Current choices determine future conditions.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:28-33

[28]All *this* happened to Nebuchadnezzar the king. [29]Twelve months later he was walking on the *roof of* the royal palace of Babylon. [30]The king reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" [31]While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, *saying*, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, [32]and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place *will be* with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes." [33]Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*.

4:28 This summary verse is placed first, similar to vv. 1-3. This verse asserts a great biblical truth—what God says comes to be (cf. Num. 23:19c; Isa. 40:8; 45:23; 55:11). When all is said and done humanity's only hope is in the unchanging merciful character of God (cf. Mal. 3:6). His promises are an extension of His character.

4:29 "he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon" The ancients used the roof in the summertime as a cool place to rest and sleep.

4:30 "the king reflected and said" Pride has always been the major problem of fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3; Isa. 14; Ezek. 28). This king had much to be proud of, as he is known from the Babylonian Archives as a great builder. Babylon's Hanging Gardens were one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The city itself had huge double walls. The inner wall of the city was 21 feet thick, 50 cubits high with towers every 60 feet. The outer wall was 11 feet thick, 42 miles in circumference, and 6 feet beyond the outer wall was a man-made moat, which channeled the waters of the Euphrates around the city for protection.

▣ **"by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty"** Several of these words are used in 2:37, where Nebuchadnezzar's possession of these is directly attributed to the God of Judah. All he has is a gift from God, but he thinks it is all from himself (cf. vv. 26,31,32; 2:37,44).

4:31 "a voice came from heaven" The rabbis assumed that this is the *Bath-kol* of the inter-biblical period, God's way of confirming His will during that time when there were no prophets in Israel. But, in context, it seems to refer to the decree of the angelic watchers (cf. vv. 12,23).

4:32-33 "Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled" His malady is called lycantrophy or boanthrophy (cf. R. K. Harrison's *Introduction to the OT*, page 1115-1117).

There is even some historical documentation supporting Nebuchadnezzar's period of madness.

1. Berossus (priest of *Bel* who wrote three history books about Babylon in Greek in the fourth and third centuries B.C.). This tradition is recorded by Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.19-20).
2. Eusebius, *Praep. Evang*. IX.41, preserves the testimony of Abydenus (second century B.C.) that Nebuchadnezzar, in his last days, was possessed by some god or other (cf. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 1115).

▣ **"his body was drenched with the dew of heaven"** The temperature range in this part of the earth is 120 degrees in summer to below freezing in winter. One can imagine the physical changes which occurred in this man's body as he lived outdoors the year round.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:34-37

34"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever;

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,

And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation.

35All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,

But He does according to His will in the host of heaven

And *among* the inhabitants of earth;

And no one can ward off His hand

Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

36At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

4:34 "at the end of that period" This refers to the specific time mentioned in 4:16, "seven periods of time." Most commentators think it refers to years, but this is speculation. However, the specificity confirms that God is in control of Nebuchadnezzar's condition and healing.

▣ **"'I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven'"** This is a symbolic way of referring to his acknowledging God (cf. v. 36) and His sovereignty (cf. vv. 34-35).

▣ **"the Most High"** See Special Topic at 4:2.

▣ **"Him who lives forever"** This seems to be a play on the name "YHWH" from the Hebrew verb "to be" (cf. Exod. 3: 14). This theological affirmation is made several times in Daniel (cf. 4:34; 6:26; 12:7).

▣ **"His dominion"** This poetic theological affirmation is parallel to v. 3, as well as 2:44; 6:26-27.

4:35 This chapter has several poetic hymnic affirmations (cf. vv. 3,34-35,37).

▣ **"all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing"** This is not asserting that God does not love humanity, but that no human individual or nation can compare with God's power and authority (cf. Isa. 40:17; Jer. 10:10).

▣ **"the host of heaven"** This phrase can have two orientations (1) in texts relating to faithful Israel it refers to YHWH, the commander of the heavenly army of angels (cf. Josh. 5:14-15; I Kgs. 22:19; Ps. 103:20-21), but (2) in texts which relate to Mesopotamian empires, particularly Babylon, who advocate and use astrology or to idolatrous Israel, then it refers to YHWH as creator and controller of the heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars, etc., e.g. Deut. 4:19; 17:3; II Kgs. 17:16; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 34:4; 40:26; Jer. 8:2-3; 19:13).

▣ **"and no one can ward off His hand"** This word refers to child training or discipline. It is a strong emphasis on God's sovereignty over all humans and nations (cf. Isa. 43:13).

▣ **"or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done'"** This is another possible allusion to Isaiah (cf. 10:15; 45:9-13). The phrase is a metaphor often related to making pottery (cf. Isa. 29:16; Jer. 18; Rom. 9:19-22). God's total sovereignty is a recurrent theme (cf. II Chr. 20:6; Job 9:12).

4:37 "praise, exalt and honor" As is characteristic of Daniel several synonymous terms are used to make a strong emphasis.

▣ **"the King of heaven"** This is a title related to the concept of YHWH as king (cf. Jdgs. 8:23; I Sam. 8:7; Ps. 5:2; 29:10; 44:4; 47:6-8; 48:2; 68:24; 74:12; 84:3; 95:3; 97:1; 99:4; 146:10; Isa. 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7).

▣ **"all His works are true and His ways just"** Truth and justice are twin characteristics of YHWH (cf. Deut. 32:4; Ps. 33:4-5). The one true God reveals knowledge and acts fairly. He wants His people to emulate His character.

▣ **"to humble those who walk in pride"** This first refers to Nebuchadnezzar (and Belshazzar, cf. 5:20), but also to all Gentile empires represented by the image of four metals in chapter 2 (cf. Exod. 18:11). This is another common biblical theme (cf. Job 40:11-12; James 4:6,10;l I Pet. 5:5-6).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Who wrote this decree? The king or Daniel or both?
2. Why didn't Nebuchadnezzar call Daniel first to interpret his dream?
3. What or who was the tree a symbol of?
4. What or who are the watchers?
5. What is the purpose of the band around the tree (vs. 15)?
6. How long are the seven periods of time?
7. Does this prophecy have any significance outside the life of Nebuchadnezzar?
8. What was Nebuchadnezzar's disease and is it an uncommon medical problem?
9. How would you entitle this chapter?
10. Was Nebuchadnezzar converted?

DANIEL 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Belshazzar's Feast	Belshazzar's Festival	Belshazzar's Banquet	Belshazzar's Feast
5:1-4	5:1	5:1-4	5:1-12
	5:2-4		
5:5-9	5:5-9	5:5-9	
5:10-12	5:10-12	5:10-12	
The Writing on the Wall Explained		Daniel Explains the Writing	
5:13-16	5:13-16	5:13-16	5:13-16
5:17-24	5:17-23	5:17	5:17-28
		5:18-21	
		5:22-24	
	5:24-28		
5:25-29		5:25-28	
	5:29	5:29-31	5:29
Belshazzar's Fall			
5:30-31	5:30-31		5:30-6:

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

TEXTUAL INSIGHT

A. There seems to be an extended period of time (over 25 years) between chapters 4 and 5. In this period there were several Babylonian kings who reigned for a short time (see list of Babylonian kings in Appendix Three).

B. Belshazzar has been the source of great controversy because his name does not appear in many of the cuneiform lists of Babylonian kings. However, new archaeological finds have found him listed as the son of Nabonidus, the last Babylonian King (from Nabonidus' cylinder, see J. B. Pritchard, ANET, pp. 315-316). Apparently Nabonidus became devotedly involved in the worship of the moon god, *Sin* (Sumerian *Nanna*). His mother (*Adadguppi*) was involved in the worship of the moon god at Haran, while his daughter was high priestess at Ur. He spent most of his time in Tema in northern Arabia and was absent from the city of Babylon for an extended period (i.e. about ten years). The cities of Ur, Haran, and Tema were centers for the worship of the moon. Some historians assert that his absence was due to his commanding the army which was in an extended battle with Cyrus II's army.

C. This chapter is included as another example of the arrogance of world rulers and their confrontation with YHWH who is the controller of history.

D. Belshazzar had confidence the fortifications of the city of Babylon could not be overcome. For a good discussion of the city see La Moine F. DeVries, *Cities of the Biblical World*, Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, pp. 13-21.

For a good brief discussion of neo-Babylon see Jack Finegan, *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East*, Westview Press, 1979, pp. 123-133.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1-4

[1]Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. [2]When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. [3]Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. [4]They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

5:1 "Belshazzar" In Babylonian *Bel-shar-usur* means "Bel, protect the king" (BDB 1084). *Bel* means lord" and is another name for *Marduk.*

▣ **"the king"** Although his name was not found initially on any of the cuneiform lists of Babylonian kings, further archaeological studies have found him on cuneiform lists which call him the "son of the king" (i.e. Nabonidus' cylinder, see J. B. Pritchard, ANET, pp. 315-316)). Because he is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar in vv. 2,11,18,22, there has been much discussion about his true ancestry. Some possible theories are: (1) he was the adopted son of Nabonidus; (2) family terms have a wide latitude of meanings, as is common in Semitic languages; (3) Nabonidus may have married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar II (Nitocris) in order to legitimatize his reign because he may not have been of the royal line (cf. R. P.

Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 63-80); or (4) some even assert that he married Nebuchadnezzar's queen.

▣ **"held a feast"** Possibly it was a state or religious holiday. In the face of the approaching Medo-Persian army it may have been a way of taking their minds off of the impending battle.

▣ **"a thousand of his nobles"** History gives many examples of large festivals given by eastern monarchs (cf. Dan. 3 [neo-Babylonian]; Esther 1 [Persian]).

5:2 "When Belshazzar tasted the wine" This either refers to (1) his beginning the traditional drinking period after the dinner or (2) the fact that he was already intoxicated.

▣ **"he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels"** Nebuchadnezzar II carried off the vessels from the house of YHWH in Jerusalem (cf. II Kings 24:13; 25:15), as he did from all national temples. Why Belshazzar would choose to specifically desecrate YHWH's sacred temple vessels is uncertain. Possibly, since there were hundreds of guests present plus his wives and concubines (cf. v. 3), all of the vessels from all of the conquered peoples' temples were procured for the drinking, but more probably because Jerusalem is mentioned specifically in verses 2 and 3. Belshazzar knew how YHWH had humbled Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Dan. 4), and he was simply acting out of spite (cf. v. 22).

▣ **"his father"** This could be literal (cf. Gen. 31:42), but probably it is used in the sense of "ancestor," "descendant" (cf. Ezra 5:12), or "previous royal leader" (BDB 1078, also the black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III calls Jehu "son of Omri"). Some examples show the term being used as grandfather (cf. Gen. 28:13; 32:9) and great grandfather (cf. I Kgs. 15:11).

▣ **"the temple"** The Jewish temple in Jerusalem was built by Solomon and is described in I Kgs. 6-8. It reflects the ancient portable tabernacle described in Exod. 25-27, 35-38.

▣ **"his wives, and his concubines might drink from them"** The Medes and the Persians did not allow women at state banquets (cf. Esther 1), but apparently the Babylonians did, at least on this occasion (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 5.2.28). To the Jewish mind of later scholars the presence of wives, and particularly concubines, would have been an aditional offense to YHWH. Most always men and women were segregated in the ancient Near East. This was a wild and extravagant party (cf. James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 203).

In the Hebrew Bible the distinction between 'wives" and "concubines" has to do with the inheritance rights of the children. Both are legally married to the king and live in the harem. The children of "wives" have full inheritance rights, while the children of "concubines" have only limited inheritance rights.

This is the Aramaic section of Daniel and the term "concubines" (BDB 1099) is from an Arabic root for "time," "note," or "song," therefore, the NJB translates it as "and the women who sang for him."

5:4 "praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone" These are the same metals involved in the statue of chapter 2. From v. 23 we realize that these were idols (cf. Exod. 20:23; Deut. 4:28; 28:36,64; 29:17; Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa. 40:18-20; 44:9-20; 46:1-7). This phrase may imply that this banquet had religious or ritual connotations.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:5-9

[5]Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the

writing. [6]Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together. [7]The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and *have* a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third *ruler* in the kingdom." [8]Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the inscription or make known its interpretation to the king. [9]Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew *even* paler, and his nobles were perplexed.

5:5 "the lampstand" Bible readers are familiar with the lampstands of both the tabernacle (seven branched, cf. Exod. 25:31-40) and Solomon's temple (ten branched, cf. II Chr. 4:19-22). It is uncertain if this lamp from YHWH's temple (cf. Jer. 52:19) was brought to the party room along with the bowls or if this refers to one of the lamps, which normally lit the room. If it is YHWH's lampstand then the supernatural hand of revelation from heaven wrote its riddle right above this special holy item. Whichever is true the writing was placed in a conspicuous place where it was easily seen!

▣ **"plaster of the wall of the king's palace"** This is also the Aramaic word for "lime," "quicklime," or "plaster" (BDB 1086 and 162). From current archaeology we have learned that the main throne room in Babylon had white plaster on two walls.

▣ **"the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing"** Whether everyone saw the hand or just the king is uncertain. The word "hand" (BDB 1094) can mean "arm," "palm," or "finger." It was a human hand with an arm, possibly to the elbow (cf. Peter-Contesse, Ellington, *A Handbook On The Book of Daniel*, p. 134) or just to the wrist (cf. The Anchor Bible, vol. 23, p. 184).

5:6 This is an eyewitness account of the physical deterioration of the king in light of his drunkenness and the supernatural appearance of the hand (cf. v. 9). This also occurred to Daniel in 7:28.

▣ **"his hip joints went slack"** This is a metaphorical phrase describing fear (cf. Nahum 2:10; Ps. 69:23; Isa. 21:3), as is "knees began knocking together" (cf. Ezek. 7:17; 21:7; Nahum 2:10).

5:7 bring in the conjurers; the Chaldeans and the diviners" Again the impotence of Babylon's wise men is emphasized (cf. vv. 8,15). Apparently Daniel had retired from active service (cf. v. 11).

▣ **"purple"** The King James Version has "scarlet" and we must remember that the names of ancient colors varied greatly. Purple was the color of royalty (cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1:5,8). Scarlet was very expensive cloth worn only by the very wealthy.

▣ **"necklace of gold"** Necklaces were symbols of rank and authority in the ancient Near East (cf. Gen. 41:42; Song of Songs 4:9; Ezek. 16:11). However, the Aramaic phrase (BDB 1090 and 1087) might refer to a solid gold collar, designating rank, not a necklace at all.

▣ **"third *ruler* of the kingdom"** This word (BDB 1118) is very ambiguous. It can mean (1) simply a high official; (2) an army official; or (3) it may fit in with Belshazzar's co-reign with Nabonidus. He could only give third place to someone.

5:8 "they could not read the inscription" It is uncertain if the writing was in Aramaic or Hebrew. It seems that they should have been able to read the words, but possibly did not understand their meaning.

The words may have been written in consonants only or, as the rabbis say, not horizontally, but vertically. It is obvious that Daniel was needed to interpret the words.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:10-12

[10]The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen spoke and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. [11]There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans *and* diviners. [12]*This was* because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of enigmas and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation."

5:10 "the queen" The Septuagint adds a phrase that says that Belshazzar called the queen. This is because it was highly unusual for anyone to enter the king's presence without being summoned (cf. Esther 4:11). However, the queen-mother had a unique position in the royal court and could probably come and go at will. There has been much debate as to her identity: (1) Nebuchadnezzar's queen, (2) Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, or (3) one of Nabonidus' wives. Options #1 or 2 seem most likely because she knew of Daniel and his gifts.

5:11 "There is a man in your kingdom" Verse 7 is an example again of the failure of the Babylonian wise men to accurately know the heart and mind of the one true God. God did, however, provide a source of revelation, even to these Babylonian monarchs. That source was Daniel, one of the captives of Judah (cf. v. 13).

▣ **"a spirit of the holy gods"** See note at 4:8.

▣

NASB	**"illumination, insight, and wisdom"**
NKJV	**"light and understanding and wisdom"**
NRSV	**"enlightenment, understanding and wisdom"**
TEV	**"good sense, knowledge, and wisdom"**
NJB	**"perception, intelligence and wisdom"**

These three characterizations are meant to reflect Daniel's supernatural abilities to know and interpret visions, dreams, etc. (cf. v. 14). The next phrase, "the wisdom of the gods" accentuates Daniel's God-given gifts (cf. v. 12; 1:17,20).

▣ **"appointed him chief of the magicians, conjurers, Chaldeans and diviners"** See note at 1:20; 2:48, and 4:9.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:13-16

[13]Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? [14]Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you. [15]Just now the wise men *and* the conjurers were brought in before me that they might read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not declare the interpretation of the message. [16]But I personally have heard about

you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and *wear* a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom."

5:13 "'Are you that Daniel who is one of the exiles from Judah'" Notice that the king addresses him by his Hebrew name, not his Babylonian name. Also notice that it is mentioned that he is from Judah, the location of the very God that Belshazzar had offended (cf. verse 22).

▣ **"'one of the exiles from Judah'"** This phrase functions in two ways: (1) Belshazzar is asserting that Daniel is a captive Jewish person or (2) Daniel is a member and representative of YHWH's people; the YHWH who controls history and the destiny of kings (cf. 2:20-23; 4:17,32)!

▣ **"'I personally have heard'"** This refers to vv. 10-12.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:17-24

[17]Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Keep your gifts for yourself or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him. [18]O king, the Most High God granted sovereignty, grandeur, glory and majesty to Nebuchadnezzar your father. [19]Because of the grandeur which He bestowed on him, all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language feared and trembled before him; whomever he wished he killed and whomever he wished he spared alive; and whomever he wished he elevated and whomever he wished he humbled. [20]But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit became so proud that he behaved arrogantly, he was deposed from his royal throne and *his* glory was taken away from him. [21]He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like *that of* beasts, and his dwelling place *was* with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and *that* He sets over it whomever He wishes. [22]Yet you, his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, [23]but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways, you have not glorified. [24]Then the hand was sent from Him and this inscription was written out."

5:17-21 This is a summary of God's sovereign dealings with Nebuchadnezzar II recorded in chapter 4.

5:17 Daniel forcibly (JUSSIVE and IMPERATIVE), but politely, rejects the king's offer of gifts, rewards, and position. Daniel can read the prophetic words. He knows the Babylonian kingdom is at an end! Daniel knew Belshazzar would be giving everything to Cyrus' army very soon.

5:18 "'Nebuchadnezzar your father'" The term "father" can refer to descendants in Hebrew (Semitic) usage. See note at 5:2.

5:19 "'all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language'" This is a hyperbole used to show the extent of the neo-Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar II (cf. 3:4,7; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25).

Nebuchadnezzar exercised total control over a large part of the ancient Near East. He thought he was in a position of authority until the God of Judah stepped in (cf. vv. 20-21)!

5:20 This verse describes not only Nebuchadnezzar, but all of the Near Eastern potentates whom David served and prophesied about (cf. 2:7,8; 9:24-27; 11:12), including Belshazzar (cf. vv. 22-23).

5:21 "the Most High God" See Special Topic at 4:2.

5:22-23 The NIV Study Bible (p. 1308) notes that Belshazzar is condemned for three things.

1. He acted irreverently toward YHWH, not out of ignorance, but spite (v. 22).
2 He desecrated YHWH's name by using the holy vessels from the temple in Jerusalem for a drunken party.
3. He praised man-made idols instead of YHWH (v. 23b).

5:23 "but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven" As Nebuchadnezzar was humbled by YHWH (cf. Dan. 4) so too, his descendant, Belshazzar, who had purposely violated the sanctity of YHWH's temple vessels.

▣ **"you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand"** This contrasts the only living, ever-living God with the dead, dumb, and nonexistent idols (see note at 5:4).

▣ **"the God in whose hand are your life-breath and your ways"** The only source for life is YHWH (from the Hebrew VERB "to be," cf. Exod. 3:14). He is the controller of events, kings, and nations. This truth is mentioned in the Prophets (e.g. Jer. 10:23), but most often in Wisdom Literature (cf. Job 31:4; Ps. 139; Prov. 20:24).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:25-28

[25]Now this is the inscription that was written out: MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN. [26]"This is the interpretation of the message: 'MENE'—God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. [27]'TEKE'—you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. [28]'PERES'—your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians."

5:25 "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" These NOUNS were apparently the names for ancient weights and measures. Daniel turns them into VERBS to interpret their meaning. The term MENE (BDB 1101) is a word which means "to number." Literally, it is a particular weight called a "mina," (cf. I Kings 10: 17; Ezra 2:69; Neh. 7:71, 72).

The second term, TEKEL (BDB 1118), is the Hebrew "shaqal" which means "to weigh" and is apparently the Aramaic form of the Hebrew weight "shekel."

The word UPHARSIN (BDB 1108) means "to break or divide." The "U" is simply the connective "and." We have found from archaeological discovery that the basic root word "peres" means a half-weight. Therefore, these terms are of descending weights. However, Daniel interprets them as VERBS, vv. 26-28. This last one may be a play on the word "Persian," (i.e. *paras*, cf. verse 28).

Scholarship of the past century thought that the title Darius the Mede (cf. 5:31) demanded a separate Median Empire and that the order of the four kingdoms in Daniel should be Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece (e.g. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp. 418-426). However, the term "divided" (cf. v. 28) could refer to the third empire as being a combination of Medo-Persia with Persia being the dominant group (cf. 8:20). This would then make Rome the fourth empire with the coming of the Messiah to set up a kingdom occurring during this period. This scenario fits history and Scripture much better.

5:28 "the Medes and the Persians" This shows the historicity of the book of Daniel. Once Cyrus II became the monarch of the Fertile Crescent, the order was changed to the Persians and the Medes instead

of the Medes and Persians (cf. J. C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, p. 127). This phrase also shows that these two empires are seen as one entity in Daniel.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:29

[29]Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he *now* had authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom.

5:29 "he *now* had authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom" These three (triumvir) would be: Nabonidus (absent), Belshazzar (co-regent), and Daniel.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:30-31

[30]That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. [31]So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

5:30 "That same night" From the histories of both Herodotus (1.190-191) and Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* 7.5) we know the date was October 12, 539 B.C.

▣ **"the Chaldean king"** The term "Chaldean" is used in an ethnic sense (cf. 9:1 and Herodotus) in this text, but as a class of wise men or astrologers in 2:2,4,5,10 (twice); 3:8; 4:7; 5:7,11. The Babylonians themselves never used the term in an ethnic sense in their own documents, but the Assyrians did.

5:31 "Darius the Mede" This person is unknown to extra-biblical history. There have been two predominant theories.

1. Darius means "royal one" (in the *Avesta "dar,"* which may be a throne name like Hadad for Syria, Pharaoh for Egypt, and Abimelech for Philistia) and is another name for Cyrus II (the Great), who was also about sixty years of age. For the first year of their reign eastern monarchs often used a throne name (i.e. Tiglath Pileser III was known as *Pul* and Shalmaneser V was known as *Ululai*, cf. Joyce G. Baldwin, Daniel, *The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries,* p. 127, footnote #5). Cyrus was half Median by race and took the title "king of the Medes" at his defeat of Astyages (Cyrus' father-in-law), king of Media, in 549 B.C. (D. J. Wiseman, Darius" in *The New Bible Dictionary*, p. 293 and *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, pp. 12ff). The Septuagint in 11:1 substitutes "Cyrus" for "Darius the Mede."
2. The Nabonidus Chronicle mentions two Medo-Persian military leaders active in the fall of the city of Babylon—Ugbaru and Gubaru (cf. J. C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede*, pp. 5ff). Ugabru was a military leader of Cyrus' forces who captured the city of Babylon (539 B.C.), but in the campaign he was wounded and died several weeks later. Another person with a similar name, Gubaru, was also a military leader. It was he, not Ugbaru, who was appointed by Cyrus as governor of the city (maybe province) of Babylon, an office he held for many years (*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 17 and R. K Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 341-347).

▣ **"received the kingdom"** It is uncertain if this means that he received (BDB 1110, *Pael* PERFECT) the kingdom from God or from Cyrus II (cf. 9:1).

▣ **"the age of sixty-two"** It is quite obvious that Daniel is attempting to identify Darius, both with his racial lineage and his age. We know more about Darius than we do about many other persons mentioned in the Book of Daniel. Obviously, he was an historical person.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is there such a historical problem with the name Belshazzar?
2. How is Belshazzar related to Nebuchadnezzar II?
3. Why did Belshazzar choose YHWH to make sport of?
4. Who is the queen mentioned in verse 10?
5. Why could not the wise men of Babylon read the handwriting on the wall?
6. Explain the meaning of the words written on the wall in verse 25.
7. Who is Darius the Mede?

DANIEL 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Plot Against Daniel	Daniel in the Lions' Den	Daniel in the Pit of Lions	The Satraps Resent Daniel's Promotion
6:1-9	6:1-5	6:1-5	
			6:2-10 (1-9)
Daniel in the Lions' Den	6:6-9	6:6-10	
6:10-17	6:10-13		Daniel Continues to Pray
		6:11-12a	6:11-16 (10-15)
		6:12b	
		6:13	
	6:14-15	6:14-15	
	6:16-18	6:16-18	Daniel is Thrown to the Lions
Daniel Saved from the Lions			6:17-25 (16-24)
6:18-23			
	6:19-24	6:19-20	
		6:21-22	
Darius Honors Daniel		6:23-24	
6:24			
6:25-27	6:25-28	6:25a	
		6:25b-27	The King's Profession of Faith
			6:26-28 (25-27)
6:28		6:28	
			6:29 (28)

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1-5

[1]It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, [2]and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. [3]Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. [4]Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or *evidence of* corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption *was to be* found in him. [5]Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him with regard to the law of his God."

6:1 "one hundred and twenty satraps over the kingdom" When compared with later Persian documents the number of these satraps is inappropriately large. In Persia there were usually only 20 to 30, but in the book of Esther there is also a large number (compare 1:1 with 8:9) of governmental officials.

We know so little about the different types or levels of governmental officials at this time that any kind of dogmatism is unwise and inappropriate.

▣ **"Darius"** See note at 5:31.

▣ **"satraps"** This word (BDB 1080) is used often in later Persian documents and many commentaries have used it to support a later date for the writing of Daniel (i.e. the Maccabean period). However, the word is an old Persian term, *kshathrapan*, which becomes *satarpanu* in some cuneiform texts (cf. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 2, p. 18). Therefore, its usage cannot be used as evidence for a late date.

▣ **"over the whole kingdom"** If Darius (cf. 5:31) refers to Cyrus, then "the whole kingdom" refers to the entire Medo-Persian Empire and 120 satraps is not unusual. But if it refers to Gubaru (a Median general in Cyrus' army which captured the city of Babylon), then the kingdom would refer to the province of Babylon; also, "satrap" would refer to lesser governmental officials, not the word's later usage in Persian documents.

6:2

NASB	**"three commissioners"**
NKJV	**"three governors"**
NRSV, NJB	**"three presidents"**
TEV	**---------**

Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon (BDB 1104) says the origin of the term is dubious, but that it refers to "overseer" or "chief" (from a Persian word for "head").

The term "three" may be related contextually to 5:7,16,29. At this point these three chief overseers are unknown to secular history.

▣ **"and that the king"** This could refer to (1) Cyrus or (2) Gubaru whom Cyrus appointed governor of Babylon. However, the title "king" fits Cyrus much better (cf. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel* IVP, p. 127, note #5). The main problem of this identification is that Cyrus was not son of Ahasuerus, but of Cambyses, king of Anshan. On this issue scholars must await more archaeological evidence.

▣ **"might not suffer loss"** This is the use of the Aramaic word for "injury," used metaphorically for political interest (cf. Ezra 4:22; Esther 7:4).

6:3 "this Daniel began to distinguish himself" This phrase begins with the DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN "this" (cf. vv. 5,28), which is typical of Persian style, but also is a way to accentuate Daniel's giftedness (cf. 1:17,20; 2:21,23). He was probably between eighty and ninety years of age at this point.

▣ **"the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom"** This parallels what Pharaoh did to Joseph in Gen. 41:40. There are many similarities between Joseph and Daniel.

This imminent promotion of a Hebrew exile over Median and Persian administrators will cause the actions of v. 4.

6:4 "trying to find grounds of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs" The same motives that led the Chaldean officials to accuse the three Hebrew youths in Daniel 3 are apparently the same motives that caused these officials to try and find accusations against Daniel (cf. v. 13).

6:5 "unless we find it against him in regard to the law of his God" These administrators were wise enough to realize that the only area in which Daniel could be accused was in his loyalty to the Hebrew faith.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:6-9

[6]Then these commissioners and satraps came by agreement to the king and spoke to him as follows: "King Darius, live forever! [7]All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. [8]Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." [9]Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction.

6:6 "came by agreement to the king" The VERB (*Haphel* PERFECT) is rare both in Aramaic and Hebrew. It can mean (1) "in harmony"; (2) "thronged" (NKJV, JPSOA, BDB 1112); or (3) in the Psalms (cf. 2:1; 55:15) the Hebrew counterpart is used for a treacherous conspiracy, which seems to be the implication here.

▣ **"live forever"** This is a standard hyperbole addressing the king (cf. 2:4; 3:9; 5:10; 6:6,21). In 4:34; 6:26; and 12:7 the phrase is used in a theological sense of YHWH, the "I Am" (cf. Exod. 3:14 from the Hebrew VERB "to be"). He is the ever-living, only-living One (cf. v 20)!

6:7 These government officials appealed to the egotism and pride of the king. Quite often leaders are susceptible to this trickery.

▣ **"that anyone who makes petition to any god or man besides you, O king"** This was highly unusual for a Persian monarch to assume the status of deity because the Persian religion (Zoroastrians) believed in two deities, an eternal dualism existed between good and evil, between the Ahura Mazda and the Angra

Mainyu. So how this king could possibly usurp divine attributes is historically uncertain. The plotters may have used the first ascension year of Cyrus as an opportunity to impose a loyalty-type oath (hyperbole).

▣ **"the lions' den"** See note at 6:17.

6:8 "the law of the Medes and Persians" This same binding legal status of the decrees of the Medo-Persian kings as being unchangeable is found in vv. 12,15,17; Esther 1:19; 8:8; and Diodorus Siculus 17:30.

The Medes are mentioned first here as in 8:20. Persia was the dominant partner and very soon after Cyrus' defeat of Babylon he began to be called King of Persia. The order of these terms shows the historicity of Daniel. The order is reversed in Esther 1:19.

The prophets also combined Media and Persia as one entity as the parallelism of Isa. 21:2 (Elam and Media) clearly shows. Some scholars refer to Isa. 13:17 and Jer. 51:11,28 as an attempt to show that the prophets falsely saw Media as a separate empire (cf. NAB p. 1096), an error which they assert that Daniel followed.

Also note that Darius the Mede is subject to the laws of the Medes and Persians, which would not be true if Media was a separate, independent empire.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:10-13

[10]Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. [11]Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and supplication before his God. [12]Then they approached and spoke before the king about the king's injunction, "Did you not sign an injunction that any man who makes a petition to any god or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, is to be cast into the lions' den?" The king replied, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked." [13]Then they answered and spoke before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day."

6:10 "Now when Daniel knew the document was signed" Daniel was not taken off guard, but he was more loyal to his lifestyle faith (cf. vv. 15,20) than to the comings and goings of these jealous political leaders and their schemes.

▣ **"(now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem)"** These roof chambers were used as summer sleeping quarters (cf. James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, pp. 171-172). Apparently for Daniel it was a place of where he prayed three times a day facing the ancient, destroyed city of Jerusalem (cf. I Kgs. 8:44,48; II Chr. 6:34,38; Ps. 28:2; 138:2).

▣ **"he continued kneeling on his knees"** The normal position of Jewish prayer is standing with the hands and head lifted to heaven with the eyes open (in dialog with God). Sometimes kneeling was done for urgency (cf. I Kgs. 8:54; II Chr. 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 95:6: Isa. 45:23).

▣ **"three times a day**" This phrase reflects the daily times of prayer in the temple in Jerusalem. Traditionally Jews prayed at the time of the morning (Ps. 5) and evening (cf. 9:21; Ps. 4) sacrifice (called the Continual, Exod. 29:39; Num. 28:1-8,10,15,23-24), as well as at noon (cf. Ps. 55:17). Daniel commemorated the ritual moments of the destroyed temple's schedule in his private prayer.

6:11 "came by agreement" This is the same Aramaic word used in vv. 6 and 15 for their coming before the King.

6:13 "who is one of the exiles from Judah" Racial and religious prejudices are used to attack Daniel.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:14-15

[14]Then, as soon as the king heard this statement, he was deeply distressed and set *his* mind on delivering Daniel; and even until sunset he kept exerting himself to rescue him. [15]Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Recognize, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

6:14 The King realizes that he has been used in a scheme to destroy Daniel (cf. v. 24), but is powerless (cf. vv. 16,18,19) in the legal circumstances to forestall his own royal edict (cf. vv. 12,15).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:16-18

[16]Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." [17]A stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing would be changed in regard to Daniel. [18]Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

6:16

NASB, NKJV	**"Your God. . .will Himself"**
NRSV, NASB margin, NAB	**"May your God. . .deliver you"**
TEV	**"May your God. . .rescue you"**
NJB	**"Your God. . .will have to save you"**

Aramaic grammar determines that this phrase is INDICATIVE, not JUSSIVE (NRSV, NAB), with an emphasis on "your God" (cf. Anchor Bible, vol. 23, p. 195). Again, the impotence of earthly monarchs is contrasted with the power and authority of the God of Judah (cf. 3:17,28).

6:17 "the stone was brought and laid over the mouth of the den" Lions were kept for the hunting pleasure of near Eastern royalty. Death by being thrown to wild animals was a common method of execution by the royal courts of the ancient Near East and East. Apparently the den was an underground pit with two entrances, one from the top (cf. v. 23) and one from the bottom. Again, the fall should have killed him (cf. 3:20), much less the hungry lions.

6:18 "the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting" This was not necessarily religious fasting, but simply the anxious worrying of a man who knew he had been tricked into doing evil to an innocent (cf. v. 22) faithful (and a very effective) servant.

▣ **"no entertainment was brought before him"** There has been much discussion about this Aramaic word (BDB 1087). There are several theories: (1) Eben-Ezra, John Calvin, and NKJV believe it means "play music" from the root "to strike"; (2) the Hebrew counterpart means "to thrust," therefore, possibly "dancers"' (3) the Peshitta has the word "food" (from dining table); (4) Martin Luther and the RSV have "diversions "or "pleasure"; and (5) the NJB, from a possible Arabic root, has "sexual pleasure" or "concubines."

▣ **"his sleep fled from him"** This is an Aramaic idiom (cf. Esther 6:1).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:19-24

[19]Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. [20]When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?" [21]Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! [22]My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." [23]Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. [24]The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

6:19 This verse shows the King's anxiety!

6:20 "'servant of the living God'" This is a play on the root word "YHWH," which is the CAUSATIVE form of the Hebrew VERB "to be," which implies the "ever-living, only-living God" (cf. Exod. 3: 14). See note at 6:6.

▣ **"been able to deliver you from the lions"** Here is that wonderful play on the title for God "the God who is able" (cf. Dan. 3:17,29; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:20; Jude 24). Nothing is too difficult for YHWH (cf. Jer. 32:17). This whole book is about God's sovereignty and willingness to respond to those who trust Him (e.g. 3:28). Chapters 3 and 6 are lexically and theologically parallel.

6:22 "'my God sent His angel'" The Bible seems to teach the existence of guardian angels (national, cf. Num. 20:16; Isa. 63:9; and individual, cf. Gen. 48:16; Dan. 3:28; 6:22; Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:15; Heb. 1:14), as well as the indwelling Holy Spirit (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; John 14:23; Rom. 8:9,11; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; II Cor. 6:16; II Tim. 1:14).

▣ **"shut the mouth of the lions"** This is both literal (cf. Heb. 11:33 and I Maccabees 2:59-60), but also metaphorical (cf. Ps. 22:21; II Tim. 4:17).

▣ **"'inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him'"** Daniel acknowledges the OT concept of "merit" (cf. Deut. 27-29). Daniel was faithful; God was faithful. Yet Judah and Israel had long experienced God as faithful even when they were not. However, God's longsuffering came to an end in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. Yet YHWH would restore them to the Promised Land (Cyrus' edict of 538 B.C.). The New Covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38) acknowledges humanity's inability to keep the covenant. The New Covenant will be based, not on human innocence or merit, but on YHWH's gracious character and His Messiah's innocence and merit!

6:23 "no injury whatever was found on him" This is parallel to Dan. 3:27.

▣ **"because he had trusted in his God"** It was not Daniel's innocence (cf. v. 22) that brought about his deliverance, but his faith ("trusted" BDB 1081, *Haphel* PERFECT) in YHWH (cf. Dan. 3:28). This same truth is recurrent throughout the OT (cf. I Chr. 5:20; II Chr. 20:20; Ps. 9:10; Isa. 26:3). This great truth becomes the key to Paul's emphasis on justification by faith in Rom. 4:3 and Gal. 3:6, which he anchors in Gen. 15:6.

6:24 "and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den" This type of family-wide punishment is known in Persia from Herodotus 3.119. This is the Hebrew concept of corporality: (1) Adam and Eve's sin affects all humans (cf. Gen. 3); (2) Korah's rebellion in Num. 16:25-33; (3) Achan's sin in Josh. 7 affected the whole Israeli army and the death of his family and cattle. This same idea of corporality can be seen in Esther 9:10-14. The NT counterpart is Rom. 5:12-21.

6:24 "the lions overpowered them" Daniel's deliverance was not attributable to lions that were not hungry!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:25-27

[25]Then Darius the king wrote to all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language who were living in all the land: "May your peace abound! [26]I make a decree that in all the dominion of my kingdom men are to fear and tremble before the God of Daniel;

For He is the living God and enduring forever,
And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed,
And His dominion *will be* forever.
[27]He delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has also delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

6:25-27 This is very similar to Nebuchadnezzar's words in chapter 2:46-48; 3:28,29 and 4:3,34-35. All of these texts were probably penned by one of the four Jewish exiles. It does not imply personal faith on the part of Darius, but the overwhelming sense of the power of God which these poly-theists experienced!

6:25 "all the peoples, nations, and *men of every* language" This is parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's edicts in 3:29; 4:1 and Daniel's comment in 5:19 and his vision in 7:14.

It is interesting that the unchangeable edict of the Medo-Persian ruler is obviously modified in honor of YHWH's sovereignty.

6:28 "in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" The footnote reading in the NIV Study Bible, "of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus," clearly shows that the Aramaic text (as well as the explicative *waw* usage in an epexegetical way) is capable of seeing these two kings as one in the same person (cf. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel*, IVP, p. 132 and D. Winton Thomas, ed. *Documents From Old Testament Times*, p. 83).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Was Darius a believer?
2. What lessons do we learn for our lives from this chapter?
3. Discuss the issue of guardian angels.
4. Discuss the concept of corporality.
5. Explain the theological significance of v. 26.

DANIEL 7

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Visions of the Four Beasts	The Vision of the Four Beasts	Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts	The Vision of the Beasts, the One Most Venerable and the Son of Man
7:1-8	7:1-14	7:1-2a	7:1-7
		7:2b-4	
		7:5	
		7:6	
		7:7-8	
Vision of the Ancient of Days		The Vision of the One Who Has Been Living Forever	7:8-10
7:9-12		7:9-10	
		7:11-12	7:11-14
7:13-14		7:13-14	
Daniel's Vision Interpreted		The Visions are Explained	The Interpretation of the Vision
7:15-22	7:15-18	7:15-18	7:15-28a
	7:19-22	7:19-20	
		7:21-22	
7:23-25	7:23-27	7:23-27	
7:26-28			
	7:28	7:28	
			7:28b

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

TEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Chapters 2, 7 and 8 are related as they reveal a sequence of four coming Gentile kingdoms and a fifth eternal divine kingdom. See Contextual Insights at chapter 8.

B.	Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8
1.	gold, v. 32	winged lion, v. 4	
2.	silver, v. 32	bear, v. 5	ram, vv. 3-4
3.	bronze, v. 32	winged leopard, v. 6	goat, vv. 5-8
4.	iron/clay, v. 33	fierce beast, v. 7	
5.	stone (Messianic), v. 34	Son of Man (Messianic), v. 13	

C. The kingdoms seem to be:
1. neo-Babylonian (1:38)
2. Medo-Persia (8:20)
3. Greece (8:20)
4. Rome (implication)
5. the Eternal Kingdom of God (2:45)

D. These Gentile kingdoms became progressively anti-God. It is surprising that these kingdoms, which seem to be in chronological order (cf. v. 17, are crushed simultaneously (cf. 2:35,45). This crushing represents God's ultimate and complete victory (cf. 2:44; 7:14,18,27), not that all these empires have to be in power or in existence at the same time (cf. vv. 11-12).

God's complete control and sovereignty of all historical events, both individual and national is the theological theme of the book of Daniel.

E. This chapter continues the Aramaic section, which unites the two obvious literary divisions (chapters 1-6 and 7-12) of Daniel. Chapters 2-7 are addressed to Gentile rulers and deal with Gentile nations so they are addressed in Aramaic. The remaining chapters are addressed specifically to God's people and are in Hebrew.

F. This begins the visions of Daniel which overlap the events of Daniel 1-6. These visions have an affinity in genre to both Hebrew prophecy and apocalyptic literature (which began in Isaiah, but is fully developed in Dan. 7-12 and Zechariah).

G. The poetic sections of this chapter (vv. 9-10; 13-14) are the theological heart of the book. They capsule God's eternal purpose and plan for human redemption—the Messiah! They speak of victory through suffering for the saints of the Highest One (cf. vv. 21-22,25,27).

This text (especially vv. 13-14) is the origin of Jesus' use of the phrase "Son of Man," which reveals His true humanity and divinity (cf. John 1:1-14; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-18; Heb. 1:1-3; I John 4:1-3).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:1-8

[1]In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind *as he lay* on his bed; then he wrote the dream down *and* related the following summary of it. [2]Daniel said, "I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. [3]And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. [4]The

first *was* like a lion and had *the* wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. [5]And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs *were* in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' [6]After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. [7]After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. [8]While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts*."

7:1 "in the first year of Belshazzar" This shows that the book is not written in chronological order (cf. chapter 5, which is the fall of the city of Babylon in Oct. of 539 B.C.). The date mentioned in the text would be about 552-551 B.C., which is fourteen years after chapter 5. The Aramaic section of Daniel goes from 2:4 through 7:28, which marks it as a literary unit. Therefore, we must relate chapter 7 with what goes before, as well as with what follows.

▣ **"Daniel saw"** It is interesting that chapters 1-6 are written in the third person, as is 7:1, but the first person predominates chapters 7-12 (e.g. 7:2,6,7,8,9,11[twice],13,15,16,19,21,28).

▣ **"a dream and visions"** In chapters 1-6 the dreams were given to Gentile rulers, which is rare in the OT (cf. Pharaoh and Joseph), but in chapters 7-12 the revelations from YHWH come to Daniel.

The apparent distinction between dreams and visions is not the level of inspiration, but whether one is asleep or awake, unconscious or conscious. In this context Daniel is obviously in bed, but it is unspecified if he was asleep. In this context the two terms are synonyms of God's special revelations to Daniel about how these Gentile empires will affect the people of God.

▣

NASB	**"the summary"**
NKJV	**"the main facts"**
NRSV	**-------**
TEV	**"a record of"**
NJB	**-------**
NIV	**"substance"**

This is an idiom from the Aramaic word for "head" (BDB 1112) used twice in this verse, once literally and once idiomatically. The footnote of NKJV has "literally 'head' (or chief) of the words." This Aramaic term is used in several senses in the OT.

1. head of
   a. head of man, Dan. 3:27
   b. head of image, Dan. 2:32,38
   c. head of beast, Dan. 7:6,20
2. seat of visions, Dan. 2:28; 4:2,7,10; 7:1,15
3. chief, Ezra 5:10
4. summary, Dan. 7:1 (BDB 1112)
5. *The Anchor Bible Commentary*, vol. 23, p. 205, speculates that this may mean "beginning" since v. 28 uses an idiom for the conclusion (cf. E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 141, who says this is possible, but not likely).

From Daniel's style of writing the two phrases in v. 1b ("wrote" and "related") are parallel with no distinction. Notice the next verse, "answered and said," typifies the repetitive style of Daniel.

7:2 "the four winds of heaven" Four is the biblical symbolic number for the world (i.e. the four corners of the earth, cf. Dan. 8:8; 11:4; Zech. 2:6; 6:5). This has been interpreted as (1) universal divine knowledge (cf. Zech. 1:8-11; 6:1-8); (2) a gathering of angels (cf. Isa. 11:12; Matt. 13:41; 24:31; Mark 13:27); or (3) destroying angels (cf. Jer. 49:36; Zech. 2:6; Rev. 7:1; 9:14-15). This and similar phrases are a metaphor for God's activity in the world (where "four" is combined with "winds," "corners," "angels"). God knows and allows/controls all activity on planet earth (apocalyptic theology).

▣ **"were stirring up"** God was active in sending the "four winds of heaven" to disrupt earthly activities. This chapter is yet another emphasis on God's control of history and nations.

▣ **"the great sea. . .the sea"** There have been several theories of the meaning of this phrase: (1) it refers literally to the Mediterranean Ocean (cf. Num. 34:6, 7; Joshua 9:1) (2) it refers metaphorically to the nations of the earth (cf. v. 17; Ps. 65:7; Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20; Rev. 17:15); or (3) it refers to the initial watery chaos which was part of creation (cf. Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 49:25; Ps. 36:6; Isa. 51:10; Amos 7:4). As always context determines meaning. Here it refers to the known world of the ancient Near East, that part of the world which affects the people of God and the Promised Land.

7:3 "and four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another" This seems to imply simultaneous kingdoms (cf. v. 12 and 2:44), but the extended contexts of chapters 2 and 8 demand sequential kingdoms.

There are several aspects to this description that would have intensified a negative Jewish reaction to this vision.

1. The great surging ocean would have been fearful to those accustomed to the semi-arid life of Palestine. Jews never were extensively involved in ocean trade. Even Solomon's fleet was manned by foreigners (Phoenicians).
2. Predatory, Levitically unclean animals were attacking humanity.
3. Animals of composite types would violate the "after their kind" of Gen. 1.
4. The inhumanity of these pagan empires (especially the fourth empire, cf. vv. 7,23)
5. The blasphemy of the little horn against God (cf. v. 8,11,20,25)

7:4 "the first was like a lion" Notice the word "like" used here is from an Aramaic PREPOSITION. This same idea is repeated in v. 5, but with the Aramaic word *demah* (cf. 3:25). In v. 6 the PREPOSITION is used again. The whole point is that what Daniel saw was not real earthly animals, but similar to known animals with different physical attributes (i.e. winged lion, winged leopard). These are apocalyptic symbols of rulers and empires.

SPECIAL TOPIC: LIONS IN THE OT

Often an individual's or nation's power is described as being like a lion, the king of the predators.

1. Judah, Gen. 49:9; Micah 5:8
2. YHWH on Israel's behalf, Num. 24:9; Isa. 31:4; 35:9; Hos. 11:10
3. Israel as a defeated lion, Ezek. 19
4. tribe of Dan, Deut. 33:22
5. David's power over lions, I Sam. 17:34-37
6. Saul and Jonathan, II Sam. 1:23

7. symbolic protectors of the throne of Solomon, I Kgs. 10:19-20
8. God uses lions as punishment, I Kgs. 13,20; II Kgs. 17:25-26; Isa. 15:9; metaphor in Job 4:10 and Jer. 2:30; 49:19,44; Lam. 3:10; Amos 3:4,8,12; 5:19; Hos. 5:14; 13:7-8; Nah. 2:11-12
9. describe David's enemies from whom God will deliver him, Ps. 7:2; 10:9; 17:12; 22:13,21
10. a metaphor for unknown evil, Prov. 22:13; 26:13; 28:15
11. used to describe Babylon's military, Jer. 4:7; 49:19-22; 51:38
12. the military of the nations against God's people, Jer. 5:6; 25:32-38; 50:17; Joel 1:6
13. how God's people treat Him, Jer. 12:8
14. how God's leaders treat the people, Ezek. 22:25; Zeph. 3:3
15. metaphor for king's anger, Prov. 19:12; 20:2
16. metaphor for the godly, Prov. 28:1;
17. metaphor for the Messiah, Gen. 49:9; Rev. 5:5

In light of usage #11 and 12 in Jeremiah, Daniel's metaphor of the Babylonian military as a fast moving lion is obvious. Empires of the Fertile Crescent often used lions to symbolize the nation (e.g. the winged lions on the Isthar Gate of the city of Babylon).

▣ **"which had wings like an eagle"** The Babylonian army is described as a swooping eagle (cf. Jer. 49:22: Ezek. 17:3: Hab. 1:8). This was a metaphor to describe the speed of their advance.

▣ **"its wings were plucked"** This is a metaphor of military defeat. These powerful, national armies seemed invincible, but in reality they were still just human armies.

Notice how often in this verse divine action is directed toward the Gentile empire: "wings were plucked" (BDB 1101, *Piel* PERFECT); "it was lifted up" (BDB 1102, *Piel* PERFECT); "made to stand" (BDB 1110, *Hoph* PERFECT); and "human mind also was given to it" (*Piel* PRESENT) [this is true of "was raised up on one side," cf. v. 5]. God is in complete control (cf. 2:20). Some commentators believe that these actions reflect Nebuchadnezzar's madness in chapter 4. Although this is possible, again interpreters must be careful of trying to find a historical referent to all the details of Daniel's visions.

▣ **"made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it"** Some commentators think this refers to (1) Nebuchadnezzar's madness and restoration of chapter 4 or (2) the barbaric Chaldeans becoming more civilized and cultured after their initial conquest (i.e. affected by Sumerian culture).

However, the phrase is very ambiguous and may simply be an apocalyptic detail which was never meant to have a historical fulfillment. This powerful empire existed and was destroyed, making room for the next empire from the ancient Near East.

7:5 "a bear" This is another powerful predator of the Near East, which is used often in the OT paralleled with lion (cf. I Sam. 17:34,36,37; Prov. 28:15; Amos 5:19; Rev. 13:2). Several Scriptures describe the fierceness of a bear with cubs (cf. II Sam. 17:8; Prov. 17:12; Hos. 13:8).

This refers to the Medo-Persian Empire (cf. 8:21). Possibly the "raised on one side" may refer to (1) the supremacy of Persia (see note at 5:28) or (2) preparing to attack again, even though it was still eating the last victim (a metaphor of unsatiated power and military destruction).

▣ **"three ribs"** The NRSV and NAB translate this Aramaic term as "tusks" (Hebrew BDB 854, Aramaic form BDB 1106). This probably comes from the basic meaning of the Hebrew counterpart, taken frm the

Arabic "curved." But also other usages of the Hebrew root are a play on the word "side" (i.e. rib of a hill, side chambers, rib of a tree or plank, BDB 854).

The controversy over the etymology of this term is related to its use in Gen. 2:21-22. *The New International Dictionary of OT Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, p. 811, gives an alternate possibility of the term "rib," as being confused with the Sumerian term for "life." How this would affect this verse in Daniel is uncertain.

This is a parallel to the ram of 8:4, where the ribs may relate to the three directions or areas of conquest: Babylon to the West, Lydia to the North, and Egypt to the South. Ben Ezra thinks they refer to three cities which were conquered. We know from historical records that Medo-Persia did not have many conquests to the East until the reign of Darius I Hystapes.

▣

NASB, NKJV "thus they said to it"
NRSV "and was told"
TEV "a voice said to it"
NJB "came the command"

This must refer to the personified "four winds of heaven" from v. 2 which symbolize God's omniscient presence throughout the earth (cf. Zech. 1,6).

▣ **"'Arise, devour much meat'"** The first VERB (BDB 1110) is a *Peal* IMPERATIVE. The second VERB (BDB 1080) is also a *Peal* IMPERATIVE. Continuing with the predator metaphor, God allows (cf. v. 6, "dominion was given to it") this second kingdom to conquer and spread its influence throughout the known world of the ancient Fertile Crescent.

7:6 "a leopard which had on its back four wings of a bird" This refers to the speed of the military conquest of Alexander the Great. Greece then is the third predatory Gentile Empire (cf. 8:21). The symbolic number "four" may refer to its conquest of the whole known world (cf. v. 2).

▣ **"also had four heads"** This specific detail about the number of Alexander's generals who succeed him, has caused many modern scholars to reject the predictive nature of Daniel. Yet, the affirmation of a supernatural God revealing to a faithful servant for the purpose of affirming His sovereignty to later generations seems perfectly adequate to explain this detailed description of history.

All of these details are not prophetic. Commentators must look to history to help interpret ambiguous apocalyptic passages. The four heads may refer to (1) extensive conquests in all directions or (2) the four regional generals of Alexander the Great. Alexander died from a fever at the young age of 32 while in Babylon (or some say Egypt). His kingdom was initially divided among five generals, but four of them became dominant: (1) Ptolemy in Egypt; (2) Cassender in Macedonia and Greece; (3) Seleucus in Syria and Babylon, and (4) Lysimichus in Thrace. Antigonus ruled part of Asia Minor for a brief period, but was killed in 301 B.C. and was only of minor influence and importance.

7:7 "a fourth beast" By the sequencing of chapters 2, 7, and 8 (see Textual Insights A., B., and C.) this refers to the Roman Empire. This would correlate with the iron and clay legs and feet of 2:33,41-43.

The fourth empire is characterized in several ways.

1. dreadful, vv. 7,19
2. terrifying, v. 7
3. extremely strong, v. 7
4. iron teeth, vv. 7,19 (DUAL in Hebrew, possibly two large teeth or two rows of teeth)
5. devoured, vv. 7,19
6. crushed, vv. 7,19
7. trampled down the remainder with its feet, vv. 7,19

8. ten horns, vv. 7,20
9. a boastful little horn, vv. 7,20
10. claws of bronze, v. 19

Several of these terms are used in different senses in the book, which shows how context determines meaning.

1. "dreadful" is used of
   a. the image in 2:31 and translated "awesome"
   b. Daniel's fears in 4:2 and the people's fear in 5:19
2. "devour" is used
   a. literally in 4:33; 7:5,7,19
   b. metaphorically of slander in 3:8; 6:25
3. "crushed" ("broke in pieces") is used literally in vv. 7,19,23
   a. also literally of the Messiah breaking the image in 2:35,45
   b. also literally of the lions crushing those who attacked Daniel in 6:24

▣ **"ten horns"** This may speak of ten simultaneous kings (cf. 2:44). Because three of them are ripped out at the same time (cf. v. 8,24), they must be simultaneous. However, I believe them to be symbols of completeness or of power (cf. Zech. 1:18-21; Rev. 13:1), not literal kings which commentators try to fit into known history.

The term "horns" (BDB 1111) often stands for "kings" (Dan. 7 & 8) or "power" (OT metaphor, i.e. the horns of the sacrificial altar).

7:8 "another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by its roots before it" The little horn of Dan. 7 may be the Anti-Christ of the end-time because it comes from the fourth kingdom (cf. H. C. Leopold, *Exposition of Daniel*, pp. 322-323 and E. J Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 150). This is somewhat confusing because the little horn of 8:9-14 seems to refer to the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) who comes from the third kingdom during the Maccabean Period. He is a type of anti-christ which is always among us (cf. I John 2:18).

These "little horns" are both arrogant and boastful. They reject the worship of YHWH and try to destroy His people. They are both allowed by God to prosper and both will be destroyed by God. They come to epitomize rebellious, egocentric, fallen humanity.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:9-12

9"I kept looking
Until thrones were set up,
And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat;
His vesture *was* like white snow
And the hair of His head like pure wool.
His throne *was* ablaze with flames,
Its wheels *were* a burning fire.
10A river of fire was flowing
And coming out from before Him;
Thousands upon thousands were attending Him,
And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him;
The court sat,
And the books were opened.

[11]Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. [12]As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time."

7:9 Verses 9-10 and 13-14 are set in poetic form (i.e. poetic lines) in NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NJB. This means that the verses must be interpreted in light of Semitic poetic parallelism.
Synonymous parallelism in verses :

9b and c
9d and e
9f and g
10 a and b
10c and d
14e and f and gh

Beginning in v. 9 the evil, suffering and chaos of the fallen earth is contrasted with the peace, calm, and purposeful actions of God in heaven. This section of chapter 7 is parallel to the crushing divine stone of chapter 2 that initiates the eternal kingdom! God's judicial acts result in redemption, reconciliation, and lasting fellowship between the Triune God, faithful angels, and faithful humans! The purpose of original creation is restored through God's merciful character and redemptive intervention.

Verses 13 and 14 are one of the greatest Messianic texts in the OT. One like a Son of Man is coming, riding on the clouds of heaven and the Ancient of Days gives Him the eternal kingdom (cf. 2:44; 4:3,34; 6:26; 7:14,27), but this involves a period of suffering and persecution of God's people. There is no victory without suffering (cf. Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22; Isa. 53; Zech. 12-14; Rom. 8:17,18-25; Phil. 3:10; II Tim. 2:11-13; I Pet. 4:13). Evil brings pain and suffering, but God transforms it into the path of growth and maturity (cf. Heb. 5:8).

▣ **"thrones were set up"** The King James Version has "cast down," but the NKJV corrects this mistranslation by "the thrones were put in place" (i.e. arranged, BDB 1113, *Peil* PERFECT). There have been three major theories concerning who sits on these thrones: (1) angels (cf. Ps. 89:7, 8); (2) saints (cf. LXX v. 22; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 20:4); (3) some type of judges, identity unknown. Whomever these thrones represent, it is obvious that this is a court scene in heaven (cf. Rev. 4-5; 20:11-15; Matt. 25:31-46).

Option number one is best because of the OT recurrent mentioning of the concept of a heavenly angelic council (cf. I Kgs. 22:19; Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 82:1). The plural term *Elohim*, translated God (cf. Gen. 1:1) may relate to God and the angelic council. This concept was developed in rabbinical Judaism as the seven angels of the presence.

▣ **"the Ancient of Days took *His* seat"** There is no definite ARTICLE with this unique Aramaic title "ancient of days" here, so it may emphasize the quality of timelessness ("one that was ancient of days"). The ARTICLE is present in vv. 13 and 22. This title is related to the characterization of God as "living" in 4:34; 6:26; 12:7. The covenant name, YHWH, is from the CAUSATIVE form of the Hebrew VERB "to be" (cf. Exod. 3:14), the Ever Living One!

▣ **"His vesture *was* like white snow"** This refers to the garments of heavenly beings.

1. God (here)
2. Jesus (cf. Matt. 17:2; Mark. 9:3; Luke 9:29)
3. angels
   (a) OT (cf. Dan. 10:5-6)
   (b) NT (cf. Matt. 28:3; Luke 24:4; John 20:12; Acts 1:10; Rev. 15:6)

4. saints (cf. Rev. 3:4-5,18; 7:13; 19:8)

▣ **"the hair of His head like pure wool"** This refers to the wisdom of the aged (of Jesus in Rev. 1:14). The "white" and "bright" of these two lines of poetry speak of both wisdom and holiness (cf. the Judgment scene of Isa. 1:18-20), which gives God the right and authority to judge (i.e. white throne judgment of Rev. 20:11; Jesus on a white horse as Judge in Rev. 19:11,14).

The following poetic lines speak of fire, which is another metaphor of holiness, cleansing, and judgment.

▣ **"its wheels were burning fire"** This is probably the portable throne-chariot of God, which Ezekiel saw in Babylon in Ezek. 1 and 10. If this is truly a reference to the Ezekiel texts then Daniel must have known of Ezekiel's writings because this description of YHWH's chariot occurs only here and in Ezekiel 1 and 10. Daniel was in the palace in the city of Babylon; Ezekiel was in a concentration camp by the canal Chebar, while Jeremiah was in the city of Jerusalem (but forced to go to Egypt by renegade Jews). They must have known of each other's ministries, words or writings.

7:10 "a river of fire was flowing" The terms "flowing" and "coming out of" are parallel, possibly hendiadys. This is typical of Daniel's literary style. The metaphor of fire coming from God is a biblical idiom of God coming to His creation for judgment (cf. Ps. 18:7-8; 50:3-6; 97:3; Isa. 30:27-28) as the phrases in v. 10e , "the court sat" (cf. vv. 22,26) and 10f, "the books were opened" (cf. 12:1) imply.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRE

Fire has both positive and negative connotations in Scripture.

A. Positive
   1. warms (cf. Isa. 44:15; John 18:18)
   2. lights (cf. Isa. 50:11; Matt. 25:1-13)
   3. cooks (cf. Exod. 12:8; Isa. 44:15-16; John 21:9)
   4. purifies (cf. Num. 31:22-23; Prov. 17:3; Isa. 1:25; 6:6-8; Jer. 6:29; Mal. 3:2-3)
   5. holiness (cf. Gen. 15:17; Exod. 3:2; 19:18; Ezek. 1:27; Heb. 12:29)
   6. God's leadership (cf. Exod. 12:21; Num. 14:14; I Kgs. 18:24)
   7. God's empowering (cf. Acts 2:3)

B. Negative
   1. burns (cf. Josh. 6:24; 8:8; 11:11; Matt. 22:7)
   2. destroys (cf. Gen. 19:24; Lev. 10:1-2)
   3. anger (cf. Num. 21:28; Isa. 10:16; Zech. 12:6)
   4. punishment (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Josh. 7:15)
   5. false eschatological sign (cf. Rev. 13:13)

C. God's anger against sin is expressed in fire metaphors
   1. His anger burns (cf. Hos. 8:5; Zeph. 3:8)
   2. He pours out fire (cf. Nah. 1:6)
   3. eternal fire (cf. Jer. 15:14; 17:4)
   4. eschatological judgment (cf. Matt. 3:10; 13:40; John 15:6; II Thess. 1:7; II Pet. 3:7-10; Rev. 8:7; 13:13; 16:8)

D. Like so many metaphors in the Bible (i.e. leaven, lion) fire can be a blessing or a curse, depending on the context.

▣ **"thousands upon thousands were attending Him"** If verse 10, c and d, are parallel (i.e. "10,000 x 10,000), some have assumed that these were angels who serve God (cf. v. 10c) because of v. 16 and Deut. 33:2 (cf. Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). Others have assumed that they are humans awaiting judgment (cf. v. 10d) or perhaps saints because of vv. 18, 22, and 27. This phrase is alluded to in Jude v. 14.

▣ **"the books were opened"** There is no definite ARTICLE. Here and in Revelation 20:11-15 there are two heavenly metaphorical books mentioned: (1) the Book of Life which records the names of God's people (i.e. saints/believers, cf. Exod. 32:32-33; Ps. 3; 69:28; Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27) and (2) the Book of Remembrances (or deeds) which records the deeds of humanity, both positive and negative (cf. Ps. 56:8; 139:16; Isa. 65:6; Mal. 3:16; Rev. 20:12-13).

These are metaphorical for the memory of a holy God. They form the documented basis for judgment and rewards.

SPECIAL TOPIC: DEGREES OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT

A. Appropriate and inappropriate response to God is based on knowledge. The less knowledge one has the less responsible one is. The opposite is also true.
B. Knowledge of God comes in two basic ways.
   1. creation (cf. Ps. 19; Rom. 1-2)
   2. Scripture (cf. Ps. 19, 119; the gospel)
C. OT evidence
   1. rewards
      a. Gen. 15:1 (usually associated with earthly reward, land and sons)
      b. Deut. 27-28 (covenant obedience brings blessing)
   2. punishment
      a. Deut. 27-28 (covenant disobedience brings cursing)
   3. The OT pattern of reward for personal, covenantal righteousness is modified because of human sin. This modification is seen in Job and Ps. 73. The NT changes the focus from this world to the next (cf. the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5-7).
D. NT evidence
   1. rewards (beyond salvation)
      a. Mark 9:41
      b. Matt. 5:12,46; 6:1-4,5-6,6-18; 10:41-42; 16:27; 25:14-23
      c. Luke 6:23,35; 19:11-19,25-26
   2. punishment
      a. Mark 12:38-40
      b. Luke 10:12; 12:47-48; 19:20-24; 20:47
      c. Matthew 5:22,29,30; 7:19; 10:15,28; 11:22-24; 13:49-50; 18:6; 25:14-30
      d. James 3:1
E. For me the only analogy that makes sense is from the opera. I do not attend opera presentations so I do not understand them. If I knew of the difficulty and intricateness of the plot, music, and dance I would appreciate the performance much more. I believe heaven will fill our cups, but I think our earthly service determines the size of the cup.

Therefore, knowledge and a response to that knowledge results in rewards and punishments (cf. Matt. 16:7; I Cor. 3:8,14; 9:17,18; Gal. 6:7; II Tim. 4:14). There is a spiritual principle—we reap what we sow! Some sow more and reap more (cf. Matt. 13:8,23).

F. "The crown of righteousness" is ours in the finished work of Jesus Christ (cf. II Tim. 4:8), but notice, "the crown of life" is connected to perseverance under trial (cf. James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; 3:10-11). The "crown of glory" for Christian leaders is connected to their lifestyle (cf. I Pet. 5:1-4). Paul knows he has an imperishable crown, but he exercises extreme self-control (cf. I Cor. 9:24-27).

The mystery of the Christian life is that the gospel is absolutely free in the finished work of Christ, but as we must respond to God's offer in Christ, we must also respond to God's empowerment for Christian living. The Christian life is as supernatural as is salvation, yet we must receive it and hold on to it. The free-and-cost-everything paradox is the mystery of rewards and sowing/reaping.

We are not saved by good works, but for good works (cf. Eph. 2:8-10). Good works are the evidence that we have met Him (cf. Matt. 7). Human merit in the area of salvation leads to destruction, but godly living which results from salvation is rewarded.

▣ **"were opened"** The United Bible Societies' *A Handbook on the Book of Daniel*, p. 188, mentions the interesting translation option of translating "the court sat" and "the books were opened" (both PASSIVE) as if they refer to the judges who sat on the thrones of v. 9b, "the judges sat down" ("to begin their work and opened the books").

7:11 "the sound of boastful words" This refers to the "little horn" of the fourth kingdom (cf. vv. 7-8). Arrogance was Nebuchadnezzar's problem in 4:28-31; 5:20 and also Belshazzar's in 5:22-23. This arrogant attitude characterizes unbelieving Gentile powers (i.e. the little horn of the third kingdom of 8:11 and here the little horn of the fourth kingdom, cf. v. 8).

Paul discusses this very issue of human pride. See Special Topic below.

SPECIAL TOPIC: BOASTING

These Greek terms *kauchaomai, kauchēma,* and *kauchēsis* are used about thirty-five times by Paul and only twice in the rest of the NT (both in James). Its predominate use is in I and II Corinthians.

There are two main truths connected to boasting.

1. no flesh shall glory/boast before God (cf. I Cor. 1:29; Eph. 2:9)
2. believers should glory in the Lord (cf. I Cor. 1:31; II Cor. 10:17, which is an allusion to Jer. 9:23-24)

Therefore, there is appropriate and inappropriate boasting/glorying (i.e. pride).

1. appropriate
   a. in the hope of glory (cf. Rom. 4:2)
   b. in God through the Lord Jesus (cf. Rom. 5:11)
   c. in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e. Paul's main theme, cf. I Cor. 1:17-18; Gal. 6:14)
   d. Paul boasts in
      (1) his ministry without compensation (cf. I Cor. 9:15,16; II Cor. 10:12)
      (2) his authority from Christ (cf. II Cor. 10:8,12)
      (3) his not boasting in other men's labor (as some at Corinth were, cf. II Cor. 10:15)

(4) his racial heritage (as others were doing at Corinth, cf. II Cor. 11:17; 12:1,5,6)
(5) his churches
(a) Corinth (II Cor. 7:4,14; 8:24; 9:2; 11:10)
(b) Thessalonica (cf. II Cor. 1:4)
(6) his confidence in God's comfort and deliverance (cf. II Cor. 1:12)

2. inappropriate
a. in relation to Jewish heritage (cf. Rom. 2:17,23; 3:27; Gal. 6:13)
b. some in the Corinthian church were boasting
(1) in men (cf. I Cor. 3:21)
(2) in wisdom (cf. I Cor. 4:7)
(3) in freedom (cf. I Cor. 5:6)
c. false teachers tried to boast in the church at Corinth (cf. II Cor. 11:12)

▣ **"the beast was slain"** Again God is in complete control of history (cf. 2:21)! This boastful ruler is judged and destroyed, but apparently the kingdoms represented by the other beasts (cf. vv. 3-6) continue in existence but without their previous power and glory (cf. v. 12, "their dominion was taken away").

This is a good place to admit that an interpreter is never sure when the details are to be taken as historical details or just part of the apocalyptic picture (much like the details of Jesus' parables). The issue is not one of truth, but one of literary presentation. Authorial intent, not literalness, is the interpretive key to figurative eastern language and literature!

7:12 "as for the rest of the beasts. . .extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time" The phrases in Aramaic "for a season" and "and a time" are other examples of hendiadys. They mean the same thing. The nations continued to exist, but without their previous power and world influence. Their influence is limited and will be removed (cf. 2:21 and 7:18,22,27). This would therefore, refer to Iraq (Babylon), Iran (Persia), Greece, and Italy (Rome). Notice the theme of God's sovereignty over the nations continues ("for an appointed period of time"). The Bible is teleological, not cyclical. History is moving toward a consummation!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:13-14

13"I kept looking in the night visions,
And behold, with the clouds of heaven
One like a Son of Man was coming,
And He came up to the Ancient of Days
And was presented before Him.
14And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom,
That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language
Might serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
Which will not pass away;
And His kingdom is one
Which will not be destroyed."

7:13 "behold with the clouds of heaven" The Septuagint has the PREPOSITION "on," but the Aramaic has the preposition "with." Does this affect the theological aspect of this "one like a son of man" (human-like) being described with divine qualities (i.e. riding <u>on</u> the clouds of heaven)? Let us remember

1. in a judgment scene (cf. vv. 9-10) he is unjudged, even rewarded
2. he is given the eternal kingdom
3. all peoples serve (i.e. worship) him
4. parallel phrases are used in conjunction with the High One in v. 27
5. NT authors used this text repeatedly for Jesus, who they believed was the promised Messiah

The phrase "The clouds of heaven" is used in several ways in the OT.

1. God's physical, personal presence with His people by means of the *Shekinah* cloud of glory during the wilderness wandering period (cf. Exod. 13:21; 16:10; Num. 11:25)
2. a way to hide God's visible presence lest sinful humans see His holiness and glory and die (cf. Exod. 33:20; I Kgs. 8:10-11,12; Isa. 6:5)
3. a metaphorical way of expressing God's physical movements (cf. Isa. 19:1; Jer. 4:13; Dan. 7:13). This unique Messianic usage in v. 13 is alluded to over thirty times in the NT.
   a. the Messiah comes before God to receive the kingdom with clouds (Dan. 7:13)
   b. He leaves the earth on clouds (cf. Acts 1:9)
   c. He returns on clouds (cf. Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; I Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7).

▣ **"one like"** This Aramaic prefixed PREPOSITION meaning "like" has caused some commentators to reject this imagery as individual and Messianic. Theologically the "like" is parallel to Phil. 2:6-8, where even Paul is cautious about a complete and total identification of Incarnate Deity with fallen humanity. He is surely one with us and has faced the temptations of the flesh (cf. Heb. 2:18), but He was not affected by human rebellion and its pervasive consequences (cf. Heb. 4:15).

▣ **"a son of man was coming"** The Aramaic phrase ("ben *enosh*," construct BDB 1085 and 1081) "son of man" is different from the similar Hebrew phrase ("ben *adam*") found in Psalms and Ezekiel. Both phrases are used in parallel in Job 25:6; Ps. 8:4; 90:3; 144:3; Isa. 13:12. This obviously refers to the Messiah and it links his humanity (cf. 8:17; Job 25:6; Ps. 8:4; Ezek. 2:1), which is the meaning of the Aramaic and Hebrew phrases, "son of man" with his deity because the clouds are the transportation of deity (cf. Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Rev. 1:7; 14:14).

Jesus uses the phrase to refer to Himself in the NT. It was not used of the Messiah in rabbinical Judaism. It had no exclusivistic, nationalistic, militaristic connotations. It uniquely describes the Messiah as fully human and fully God (cf. I John 4:1-3). Daniel's usage is the first which focuses on its divine aspect!

Jesus used the phrase for Himself in three senses.

1. His suffering and death (e.g. Mark 8:31; 10:45; 14:21; Luke 9:22,44)
2. His coming as Judge (e.g. Matt. 16:27; 25:31; John 5:27)
3. His coming in glory to set up His kingdom (e.g. Matt. 16:28; 19:28; Mark 13:26-27; 14:62)

From *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1657 (also see George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 136-139), the later Jewish tradition about this text are listed.

1. This context is Messianic (cf. I Enoch 46:1; 48:10; 4 Ezra [2 Esdras] chapter 13; b. Sanh. 98a)
2. All predictions in this context are already fulfilled (cf. b. Sanh. 97b)
3. This context does not refer to the end-time (cf. Gen. Rab. 98:2)
4. This context represents Israel (cf. Ibn Ezra and Rashi)

SPECIAL TOPIC: OT TITLES OF THE SPECIAL COMING ONE

I. Prophet - Deut. 18:15,18
II. King
  A. from the tribe of Judah, Gen. 49:10; Ps. 60:7; 108:8
  B. from the family of David, II Sam. 7 (from Jesse, Isa. 11:1)
  C. from other texts, I Sam. 2:10; Ps. 89:3-4; Isa. 9,11; Jer. 30:8-9; Ezek. 37:21-22; Zech. 9:9-10
III. King/Priest
  A. Ps. 110 (king, vv. 1-3; priest, v. 4)
  B. Zech. 4:14 (the two olive trees, the two anointed ones, Zerubbabel [line of David] and Joshua [line of Aaron])
IV. Anointed One (Messiah)
  A. God's King, Ps. 2:2; 45:7
  B. Spirit's presence, Isa. 11:2; 61:1
  C. Coming One, Dan. 9:26
  D. three OT leaders were anointed as a sign of God's call and empowering: kings (cf. Jdgs. 9:8,15; I Sam. 2:10; 9:16; 24:10; II Sam. 19:21; 23:1; Ps. 18:50), priests (cf. Exod. 28:41; Lev. 4:3; 6:22) and prophets (cf. I Kgs. 19:16)
V. King's Son
  A. Ps. 2:7,12
  B. Israel's king as a symbol of God's reign (cf. I Sam. 8)
VI. Son of Man (Dan. 7:13)
  A. human, Ps. 8:4; Ezek. 2:1
  B. divine, Dan. 7:13
VII. Special Redemptive Titles
  A. Suffering Servant, Isa. 52:13-53:12
  B. Suffering Shepherd, Zech. 12-14
  C. Cornerstone, Ps. 118: Isa. 8:14-15; 28:16
  D. Special Child, Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; Micah 5:2
  E. Branch, Isa. 4:2; 11:5; 53:2; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12

The NT takes these scattered references about God's special redemptive agent and clarifies and develops them into an understanding of Jesus as God's Promised Coming One (e.g. Matt. 16:13-20; John 11:25-27). The two comings of the Messiah are the means by which these diverse functions and titles are united.

For a good discussion of the distinction in the Gospels between Son of Man as authority figure versus Suffering Servant, see George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 149-158.

▣ **"was presented before Him"** As the Messiah ("one like a son of man") is presented (BDB 1111, *Haphel* PERFECT) before the covenant-making YHWH, so Jesus introduces believers into the presence of God the Father (cf. Col. 1:22,28; II Cor. 4:14). Remember the Messiah receives the eternal kingdom, but in the same context it is the "saints" (holy ones) who receive the eternal kingdom (cf. vv. 13-14 versus vv. 18,22,27).

7:14 All things that Gentile rulers sought in power, glory, and extent of their kingdom, the God of Judah has freely given to the Messiah. This contrast magnifies God's sovereignty, as well as His merciful character and eternal purpose in redemption through the Messiah.

1. The Covenant-making God, YHWH, gives the eternal kingdom to the Son of Man (v. 14; Isa. 9:6; 11:1-5; Micah 5:4-5a)
2. The Son of Man gives the eternal kingdom to the saints of the Highest One, which comes from all peoples (vv. 18,22,27)
3. It is possible that the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19-20 is parallel in imagery to this text.

▣ **"serve Him"** Verse 27 adds "and obey Him" (both "serve" and "obey" are *Peal* IMPERFECTS)! The OT uses the king and kingdom metaphor to describe the appropriate relationship between God and humanity (cf. Zech. 6:15), but the NT picks up on the rare family metaphors of Father (or parent) and children. The goal is an interpersonal and dependent relationship between the Creator and those made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:15-18

[15]"As for me, Daniel, my spirit was distressed within me, and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. [16]I approached one of those who were standing by and began asking him the exact meaning of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: [17] 'These great beasts, which are four *in number*, are four kings *who* will arise from the earth. [18]But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.'"

7:15-28 This is the angelic interpretation of Daniel's vision. The same literary pattern is in the vision of 8:1-14 and the interpretation in 8:15-27.

7:15 These powerful visions of God's power and human evil distressed Daniel (cf. 4:19; 7:28; 8:27).

▣ **"within me"** The marginal note of NASB, "in the midst of its sheath" (BDB 1102) is a Semitic idiom that later translators did not understand. Daniel had both "a spirit of the holy gods" (cf. 4:8,9,18; 5:11,14), as well as an anxious human spirit.

7:16 One characteristic of apocalyptic literature is interpreting angels (e.g. 8:16,17; 9:22; Zech. 1:9,19; 2:2,3; 4:4,5,13; 6:4; Rev. 5:5; 7:13). This is another way to show God's sovereignty. No human can know the true interpretation without heaven's help! These visions and dreams are given to communicate inspired truths from God, but they are still under God's control. Only some understand (cf. Isa. 6:9-10; 43:8; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2; Matt. 11:15; 13:9,43; Mark 4:9,23; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Acts 7:51; 28:27; Rev. 2:7,11,29; 3:6,13,22; 13:9). This is revelation for God's people!

7:17 "these great beasts, which are four *in number*, are four kings *who* will rise upon the earth" This is the angel's interpretation of the successive nature of the kingdoms mentioned in the vision. The first had already come (i.e. Nebuchadnezzar).

7:18 "but the saints of the Highest One receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever for all ages to come" This shows the fluidity of this chapter as well as apocalyptic literature between the Highest One (cf. v. 27), the Messiah (cf. v. 13) and His people (cf. vv. 18,22,27). Notice again the emphasis on the eternal nature of the kingdom (cf. v. 27; Dan. 12:2-3). This cannot refer to a millennial kingdom unless it, itself, is a metaphor of the eternal kingdom!

The identification of the Aramaic phrase "saints" or "the holy ones" (BDB 1110) has been disputed.

1. angels
   a. the Hebrew counterpart phrase almost always refers to angels (cf. 4:13,17,23; 8:13; Job 5:1; Ps. 89:5,7)
   b. the term "people" in v. 27 can mean "hosts of," which would remind one of the common OT angelic description "the hosts of YHWH"
2. believers
   a. in the OT they are rarely called "saints" or "holy ones" (cf. 8:24; Ps. 16:3; 34:9). The designation probably comes from Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 14:21; 26:19.
   b. they receive the eternal kingdom (cf. vv. 18,22,27)
   c. they suffer persecution and defeat (cf. vv. 21,25)
3. the real problem is the GENITIVE phrase used with "people" in v. 27, "to the people of the saints of the Highest One." This looks like "people" and "saints" are distinct groups.

Also notice the Aramaic ADJECTIVE "Most High" is PLURAL in vv. 18,22,25,27, while the SINGULAR is in 3:26,32; 4:21,22,29,31; 5:18,21. Notice in v. 25 both forms occur as a title for God. This same fluctuation is found with the Hebrew ADJECTIVE. This does not relate to polytheism, but probably to the Semitic grammatical feature called the PLURAL OF MAJESTY.

▣

NASB "forever, for all ages to come"
TEV "forever and ever"

This phrase is the threefold use of *olam* (BDB 1106) with the PREPOSITION "until" (twice) used of time (BDB 1105, cf. 2:20; 6:15,27; 7:18,26). It is an Aramaic superlative! The concept of "eternal future" is expressed often in Daniel using *olam* (and in other ways also, cf. 6:26) in its various forms and phrases (cf. R. B. Girldestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 316-317).

1. "everlasting kingdom," 4:3; 7:27
2. "forever, for all the ages to come," 7:18
3. "forever and ever," 2:20
4. "live forever" (Nebuchadnezzar), 2:4; 3:9 (Belshazzar), 5:10; (Darius), 6:6,21, "lives forever" (YHWH), 4:34
5. "which will never be destroyed," 2:44a; 7:18
6. "endure forever," 2:44c; 6:26
7. "everlasting dominion," 4:34; 7:14

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:19-22

[19] "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, *and which* devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, [20]and *the meaning* of the ten horns that *were* on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of *them* fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great *boasts* and which was larger in appearance than its associates. [21]I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them [22]until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom."

7:19
NASB "the exact meaning"
NKJV, NRSV "the truth about"
TEV "more about"
NJB "about"

This PREPOSITION and *Pael* INFINITIVE (BDB 1096) are used several times in Daniel in two senses.

1. certain or sure, 2:8,45; 3:24
2. true, 6:12; 7:16,19

Daniel wanted to know truthfully and with certainty the identity of the fourth beast and also the ten horns as well as the boastful little horn (cf. v. 20).

7:20

NASB	**"which was larger in appearance than its associates"**
NKJV	**"whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows"**
NRSV	**"that seemed greater than the others"**
TEV	**"It was more terrifying than any of the others"**
NJB	**"it looked more impressive than its fellows"**

This little horn suddenly looked larger: (1) its boasting arrogance (cf. vv. 8,11); (2) its overthrow of three other horns (cf. v. 8); (3) it grew as Daniel watched from a little horn to the largest horn, showing its extended kingdom; or (4) the fact that it attacked and overcame the saints of the Highest One (cf. v. 21).

7:21-22 "and I kept looking" It seems that vv. 21-22 are part of Daniel's vision (cf. 7:2) and not part of the angels' explanation. If so then Daniel's questions in vv. 19-20 are not answered until v. 23.

The new information about the suffering of the saints ("holy ones") is addressed in vv. 25,27.

7:21 "and the horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them" This shows the historical setting of the time of the little horn of the fourth empire will be the severe persecution of God's people. God allows this to happen for His ultimate purposes (cf. Rev. 13:7).

7:22 "until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One" We must remember that this chapter had a word for those in exile in Babylon as well as for believers of every age who suffer persecution for their faith in YHWH and His Messiah and do not always understand why! God is in control even amidst suffering and persecution (the book of Revelation).

Notice that the titles "the Ancient of Days" (cf. 7:9,13) and "the Highest One" (cf. 7:18,25,27) are synonymous. This is also true of "the Most High" and "the Highest One" of v. 25.

Daniel's titles for deity are much more Jewish in chapter 9, where he prays for himself and his nation's sins (*adon, YHWH, Elohim*).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:23-27

[23]Thus he said: "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the *other* kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. [24]As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. [25]He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. [26]But the court will sit *for judgment*, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. [27]Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him."

7:23 The NKJV, NRSV, and NJB print verses 23-27 as poetry, but the NASB and TEV treat it as prose. This same problem is also found in vv. 9-10, 13-14. It is difficult to know if these verses are poetic or elevated prose.

▣ **"he said"** This refers to the interpreting angel of v. 16.

▣ **"which will be different from the previous ones"** Notice the fourth kingdom is different by its ferocity (cf. v. 19) and extent (cf. v. 23), but the little horn is different by being more arrogant than its predecessors (cf. vv. 8,11) and larger in extent (cf. vv. 20,24), but most of all in its persecution of God's people (cf. vv. 21,25).

▣ **"will devour the whole earth"** The VERB (BDB 1080) is a *Peal* IMPERFECT. See 4:1 for the use of this same hyperbole, which refers to the known world.

7:24 The specificity of this verse has caused problems for commentators who try to take it literally. Apocalyptic literature is notoriously ambiguous and uses a form of hyperbolic stylized language (see D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, IVP, 2002).

It is quite possible that "ten" is used symbolically for a complete number. Notice the time sequence and progression.

1. ten kings of the fourth kingdom
2. then the eleventh comes, who is different from the others
3. the three kings are
   a. not part of the ten kings (i.e. horns, cf. v. 8)
   b. "pulled out" of v. 8 and "subdue" of v. 24 refer to the influence, policies, or remembrances of these three kings are being removed. The interpretive issue is, are the ten horns (1) sequential kings of the fourth empire (cf. v. 24); (2) somehow simultaneous kings of different parts or regions of the fourth empire (cf. v. 8); or (3) apocalyptic details not meant to be historically specific?
4. the eleventh king (the little horn) is allowed to persecute the people of God (cf. vv, 21,25)
5. God passes judgment and the little horn is destroyed (cf. v. 26)
6. sovereignty and the eternal kingdom is given to the people of God (cf. vv, 18,27)

7:25 Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel*, p. 146, points out the four characteristics of the fourth kingdom

1. blasphemy
2. persecution
3. alteration of annual religious holidays
4. an altered morality

But all four deal with the anti-God bias of this kingdom and its leaders. Like Belshazzar they despise YHWH and His covenant people because they demand complete personal freedom and independence from all religious mores.

▣

NASB	**"wear down"**
NKJV	**"persecute"**
NRSV	**"wear out"**
TEV	**"oppress"**
NJB	**"torment"**

Brown, Driver, Briggs (1084, *Pael* IMPERFECT) has "figurative for *harass continually*." The Hebrew counterpart is used similarly in I Chr. 17:9. It is normally used for wearing out clothing. The same surprising divine permission to persecute and overcome the saints ("holy ones") is found in Rev. 11:7 (the two witnesses are a symbol for the whole people of God) and 13:7! God allows evil to fully reveal itself and its intentions so that its judgment, punishment, and removal/isolation is understood as fair and just.

▣ **"to make alterations in times and in laws"** These two terms may be a hendiadys (refer to one thing, not two). This phrase is not limited to religious laws, but the context seems to demand this. This ruler will try to overcome the worship of YHWH by changing the religious calendar (cf. Lev. 23).

This text is the reason why many modern commentators speculate that the fourth kingdom refers to Greece and that this phrase specifically reflects Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C., cf. I Maccabees 1:41-53; II Maccabees 6:2,6,7) trying to force the Jews of Palestine to become more Hellenistic by drastically changing and modifying their religious traditions and worship practices.

Personally I think, because of 2:38 and 8:20-21, that the third sequenced empire is Greece. What Antiochus did has a multiple significance as does the phrase "the abomination of desolation."

▣

NASB "a time, times, and a half time"
NKJV "a time and times and a half time"
NRSV, NJB "a time, two times, and a half a time"
TEV "three and a half years"

This same phrase is used in Dan. 12:7 and Rev. 12:4. Its exact meaning is uncertain. Many assume "time" refers to years, however; this is not spelled out in the text. But because of related time phrases (1) Dan. 8:14, "2300 evenings and mornings"; (2) Dan. 12:11, "1290 days"; (3) Dan. 12:12, "1335 days"; and (4) Rev. 11:2, 13:5, "42 months" or "1260 days," the understanding of "years" seems to be the best interpretation.

Another way to look at this enigmatic phrase is to see it as a sequence: one, two, but not a third; therefore, a divinely limited amount of time under which Gentile kingdoms persecute God's people. God, in the book of Daniel, is in complete control (cf. vv. 4,6,11,12,18,22,25,26,27)!

7:26
NASB "But"
NRSV, TEV, NJB "then"

This shows the contrast. Gentile empires and their arrogant rulers are under God's control and guidance (cf. 2:21). As there was a stark contrast between Daniel's vision of the four beasts and their destructive power (cf. 7:1-8) with the calmness and dignity of the heavenly court (cf. 7:9-14), the same chaos/calm is found here.

▣ **"the court"** This is the court described in vv. 9-12,13-14,18,22,27.

▣ **"his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever"** The first VERB (BDB 1105) is a *Haphel* IMPERFECT and the next two (BDB 1116 and 1078) are *Haphel* INFINITIVES. This deals with the ultimate judgment and complete destruction of all powers that are opposed to God! There is both temporal judgment and eschatological judgment. Verses like this are what causes some to assert the annihilation of the wicked (cf. Edward Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment*), but Dan. 12:2 specifically mentions two eternal destinies (cf. Matt. 25:46).

7:27 "*all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven" This sounds very much like Rev. 11:15b.

▣

NASB "will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One"
NKJV "shall be given to the people,
"the saints of the Most High"

The VERB (BDB 1095) is a *Piel* PERFECT.

This shows the two ways this phrase is understood (cf. a similar Hebrew phrase in 8:24). The NKJV and TEV translations make "people" and "saints" parallel (appositional). If the NASB is followed then angels seem to be the referent of "holy ones" or "saints" in this verse, which would relate it to the national angels of Deut. 32:8, in this case, to Michael and Gabriel and other angels (cf. Dan. 10) that serve God and His people. Some commentators even see "Son of Man" in v. 13 as referring to these same angels. Daniel, as all apocalyptic literature, pictures angels as intimately involved with God's dealings with humanity.

▣ **"His kingdom"** Notice the continuing fluidity between the kingdom as belonging to:

1. God, vv. 9-10, 27
2. His Messiah, "Son of Man," v. 13
3. His people, vv. 18,22,27
4. some would see v. 27 as referring to faithful angels (i.e. Michael, Gabriel, angel of chapter 10, etc.)

▣ **"and all the dominions will serve and obey Him"** This term "dominion," "have power," or "sovereignty" (BDB 1115) is used in Daniel for (1) God (cf. 4:3,34; 6:26) or (2) the Gentile kingdoms (cf. 4:22; 6:26; 7:6,12,26). It is used of the "Son of Man" in 7:14, which may reflect Gen. 1:26,28-30, where Adam (and thereby mankind) is given authority or dominion over this planet. One wonders if the phrase "all the dominions" refers to (1) the PLURAL "kingdoms" in v. 27; (2) the believers of the OT and NT (cf. Isa. 45:20-25); or (3) possibly angelic realms (cf. Heb. 1:13-14; Dan. 7:10). This concept of complete cosmic allegiance may be expressed in Phil. 2:10-11 and Col. 1:16-20 or even I Cor. 15:24-25!

The first VERB (BDB 1105) is a *Pael* IMPERFECT and the second (BDB 1116) is a *Hithpael* IMPERFECT.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:28

[28]"At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

7:28 "'at this point the revelation ended'" Chapter 7 is a literary unit. It is linked to chapter 6, but the vision is complete in itself and covers the entire history of mankind from Daniel's day to the eschaton.

▣ **"'my thoughts were greatly alarming me and my face grew pale'"** See note at 4:19 (also 7:15,28; 8:27; 10:16-17).

▣ **"'I kept the matter to myself'"** How would he communicate these visions and to whom? This is when and how apocalyptic literature becomes so helpful!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How are chapters 2, 7 and 8 related?
2. Why is there such a problem in identifying these four nations?
3. Who is the Ancient of Days? the Son of Man? the little horn?
4. What does verse 25 say about the time element of this occurrence?

DANIEL 8

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of a Ram and a Goat	The Vision of the Ram and the Male Goat	Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat	Daniel's Vision: the Ram and the Goat
8:1-8	8:1-4	8:1-4	8:1-4
	8:5-8	8:5-7	8:5-8
		8:8-12	
8:9-12	8:9-14		8:9-12
8:13-14		8:13	8:13-14
		8:14	
Gabriel Interprets the Vision		The Angel Gabriel Explains the Vision	The Angel Gabriel Interprets the Vision
8:15-22	8:15-17	8:15-17a	8:15-26
		8:17b-19	
	8:18-26		
		8:20-22	
8:23-26		8:23-26	
8:27	8:27	8:27	8:27

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Chapters 2, 7 and 8 are related as they reveal a sequence of four coming kingdoms and a fifth eternal divine kingdom.

Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 11
1. gold	winged lion	-----	-----	-----
2. silver	bear	ram	-----	-----
3. bronze	winged leopard	goat (little horn)	9:24-27 Maccabean (?)	11:1-35,40-45 Seleucids & Ptolemies
4. iron/clay	fierce beast (little horn)		9:24-27 (end-time antichrist) (?)	11:36-39 (end-time antichrist)
5. stone (Messianic)	Son of Man (Messianic)	-----	-----	-----

B. Several of the kingdoms are specifically identified
   1. Neo-Babylonian, 2:38
   2. Medo-Persia, 8:20
   3. Greece, 8:21
   4. Rome, 2:44,45
   5. The Eternal Kingdom of God, 2:35,44-45; 7:9-10,13-14,18,22,27

C. As in his first vision Daniel was compelled to focus on the fourth kingdom; two years later (compare 7:1 with 8:1) God revealed information about the second and third kingdoms in another vision.

   The little horn of the third kingdom is focused on because it (he) will impact the lives and worship of Israel more than any other previous one. The little horn of the fourth kingdom will also impact God's people (i.e. end-time Antichrist, cf. II Thess. 2).

D. The language has switched back to Hebrew because chapters 8-12 are messages for God's people. This vision is primarily about the future suffering and domination caused by the little horn against Israel. For them the vision is about a limited time of suffering and desecration followed by a divine intervention. The twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings (cf. v. 14) were a sure promise of the deliverance and restoration of the temple/Jerusalem.

E. The book by D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, has been very helpful and I recommend it to all who attempt to understand Daniel 7-12.

   The other book that has been so helpful in understanding the different genres of the Bible is *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart.

   As interpreters our worst enemies are:
   1. western culture and evangelical Christianity's over-emphasis on literalism
   2. a systematic eschatology (usually personally unexamined), which has been given to us by sincere, godly, well-meaning parents, pastors, denominations, and authors.

F. Satan does not know God's plans; therefore, he must have an anti-God leader prepared and active in every age (cf. I John 2:18) to carry out his bidding. Antiochus is one example of a selfish, self-centered, atheistic individual who wants, not only political and military power, but also adoration, even worship, and there have been many others throughout human history like him. Fallen humanity regularly produces this type of individual. Yet, God is still sovereign and He even uses these kinds of persons to accomplish His will, as He does Satan.

G. As is typical of Hebrew literature, a general account (chapter 7) is followed by a more detailed description of one particular aspect (e.g. Gen. 1:1-2:3 vs. 2:4-25).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:1-4

[1]"In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously. [2]I looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal. [3]Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns *were* long, but one *was* longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. [4]I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no *other* beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified *himself*."

8:1 "in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar" This shows that the vision of chapter 8 came after a time span of two years from the vision of chapter 7. We do not know when or how long Belshazzar served as co-regent under his father, Nabonidus, before the fall of the Neo-Babylon Empire by the army of Cyrus II, Cyrus the Great (cf. Dan. 5). Chapter 8 restarts the Hebrew section of the Book of Daniel (i.e. 1:1-2:3; 8:1-12:13).

▣

NASB	**"previously"**
NKJV	**"the first time"**
NRSV	**"at first"**
TEV	**"I saw a second vision"**
NJB	**"originally"**

This is literally "at the first" (BDB 321, e.g. 9:21; Gen. 13:3; II Sam. 21:9,10; II Kgs. 17:25; Neh. 11:17), which is idiomatic for the vision Daniel received earlier in Belshazzar's reign (i.e. chapter 7).

8:2 "I was in the citadel of Susa" Susa later became the capitol of the kingdom of Persia (cf. Neh. 1:1); but at this time it was simply a large, fortified city in the province of Elam (i.e. east of the Tigris River, cf. Isa. 21:6; Jer. 49:34-39). It would later be called Shushan (cf. Neh. 1:1; Esther 1:2,5). The Greek name was Susa.

Was Daniel physically in Susa, or was this part of the vision? He could have been in Susa on governmental business (cf. v. 27). There seems to be no integral part of the vision linked to this locality.

Several visions in the Bible involve some type of mental or physical transport.

1. Ezekiel, from Babylon, to the temple in Jerusalem, Ezek. 8 (cf. 3:14; 11:1; 43:5)
2. Philip, in Gaza, taken to Azotus, Acts 8:39-40
3. John, on Patmos, taken to heaven, Rev. 4:2 (cf. 17:3; 21:10)

▣ **"I looked in the vision, and I myself was"** Daniel sees himself in his vision for the first time.

▣ **"Ulai Canal"** This was a 900 foot wide irrigation canal north of the city (BDB 19 I), which connected two rivers. The ancient versions in Greek, Aramaic, and Latin translate this rare Hebrew word "canal" or "river" (BDB 385) as "Ulai gate," which would affect the translation of v. 16.

8:3 "a ram which had two horns" This seems to refer to Medo-Persia (cf. 8:20) and is analogous to the bear with one side lifted of Daniel 7 and the breast and arms of silver in chapter 2.

The horns are described by several features.

1. two horns
2. one longer than the other
3. the longer one came up after the other was in place

They probably represent the historical fact that Cyrus (1/2 Median) first conquered Media and then later became the king of Persia after the fall of Babylon. The two horns may also be parallel to the bear of chapter 7, raised on one side (showing the dominant kingdom of Persia in the Medo-Persian Empire (cf. 8:20).

8:4 "I saw the ram butting westward, northward and southward " Many use this as parallel to the three ribs in the bear's mouth, Dan. 7:5, to describe the three directions of Medo-Persian conquest.

▣ **"nor was there anyone to rescue from his power; but he did as he pleased and magnified *himself*"** There are several aspects to this phrase that characterize the arrogance of these Gentile kings and kingdoms (cf. vv. 8,11,25).

1. They thought no nation, army or god could thwart their desires (cf. 2:21).
2. The essence of human rebellion is "I did it my way" ("he did as he pleased," v. 4).
3. The king magnified himself (like the little horns of chapters 7 and 8), which attracts God's notice and judgment (this phrase could be understood as relating to the power and size of his kingdom as in v. 9, but this Hebrew word (BDB 152) has a negative connotation in this chapter).
4. He did as he pleased, which is a recurrent theme (cf. 5:19; 11:3,16,36-37).

This prediction is a good place to remind all interpreters of the fuzzy nature of apocalyptic literature. The details are often for effect, not literal fulfillment (cf. D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares & Pruning Hooks*: *Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, pp. 117-128). In fact, Greece did repel Persia's advance several times (490 B.C. and 480 B.C.). Apocalyptic literature cannot be interpreted or evaluated by the details. Often, which of the details have significance can only be known after the fulfillment in history!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:5-8

[5]"While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a conspicuous horn between his eyes. [6]He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. [7]I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. [8]Then the male goat magnified *himself* exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous *horns* toward the four winds of heaven."

8:5 "a male goat was coming from the west over the whole surface of the earth without touching the ground" This refers to Greece (cf. 8:21; 11:3). Notice the speed of the victory (334-331 B.C.) and direction from which Alexander II, known as Alexander the Great, came. This parallels the leopard with four wings of 7:6.

▣ **"the surface of the whole earth"** This is a hyperbolic statement which refers to the known world of the day.

▣ **"a conspicuous horn between his eyes"** This refers to Alexander II, known as Alexander the Great, who conquered the whole known world and died at the age of 32 (cf. vv. 8,21-22; 11:4).

The term "conspicuous" (BDB 303) is very similar to the term "vision" (BDB 302) in v. 1. In Isaiah it is used for a vision or oracle several times (cf. 21:2; 29:11). It means "conspicuous" only in this context (vv. 5,8).

8:6-7 "rushed at him in mighty wrath. . .and he was enraged at him" We know that Persia, under Darius III, attacked Greece several times over the Hellespont (490 and 480 B.C.). This made Greece so angry that when Alexander finally crossed this narrow gap of water in 334 B.C. with thirty thousand soldiers and five thousand cavalry, he engaged the Persian army with over 600,000 soldiers and soundly defeated them several different times. Alexander would not make a peace treaty with Persia!

If one reads Dan. 8 alone, he would expect one decisive battle, but in fact, there were three major decisive battles. The prediction is true, but fuzzy (as are all apocalyptic details, see note at v. 4).

8:8 "the male goat magnified himself greatly" See note at vv. 4,5.

▣ **"the large horn was broken and in its place came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven"** This refers to the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) in Babylon at the age of 32 or 33 caused by swamp fever. The unexpected, sudden death of Alexander caused great and prolonged conflict throughout his kingdom. The governors or generals who were dominant as separate regional satraps throughout his kingdom continued to maintain their control.

1. Antigonus in Asia
2. Demetrius in Greece
3. Ptolemy in Egypt
4. Cassander in Macedonia
5. Lysimachus in Thrace
6. Zipoetes in Bithynia
7. Mithradates in Pontus
8. Seleucus in Syria/Babylon

Of these eight power centers, numbers 1, 3, and 8 became dominant.

I agree with E. J. Young that the "four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven" may be an idiom of universal rule not relating specifically to any four generals. Apocalyptic literature is designed to give an emotional general impression, not detailed facts of history.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:9-14

[9]"Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful *Land.* [10]It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. [11]It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. [12]And on account of transgression the host will be given over *to the horn* along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform *its will* and prosper. [13]Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision *about* the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?' [14]He said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings *and* mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.'"

8:9 "a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east and toward the Beautiful land" This refers to the fourth Seleucid ruler known as Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.). We learn from history that he gained, through craftiness (cf. v. 24), a rather extensive kingdom and was especially a problem to the Jewish people of Palestine (i.e. "the beautiful land," cf. 11:16,41).

The Hebrew term *gdl* (BDB 152, *Qal* IMPERFECT) appears in vv. 8, 9, 10-11. In 8:8 it means "magnified himself"; in 8:9 it means "grew exceedingly great," as it does metaphorically in 8:10, "it grew great." It is obvious that at least two senses are possible.

1. arrogance, vv. 8,10,11
2. size, extent, vv. 9.10

It is hard to know which is the intent of the original author.

8:10 "to the host of heaven" The PREPOSITION "to" is translated in poetry as "as far as," "even to," or "up to" (cf. v. 11).

The term "host" often applies to YHWH"s angelic army (TEV, cf. Josh. 5:14,15; I Sam. 1:3; Neh. 9:6), but in this context (cf. 8:12) it refers to (1) the people of God ("saints," cf. 7:18,22,27) or (2) a metaphor for the little horn's ambition to rival God (e.g. Isa. 14:13, the kings of Babylon), in which case the stars would refer to angels or heaven.

It is problematic that in the span of four verses this term (BDB 838) is used in several senses.

1. "the host of heaven," v. 10 (faithful believers or angels)
2. "the commander of the host," v. 11 (angels)
3. "the host," v. 12 (believers)
4. "the host," v. 13 (believers or temple worshipers and temple servants)

Here is where context is crucial. Hebrew, being such an ancient language, uses terms in several ways (semantic field). Our problem as modern interpreters is that we demand specific historically verifiable details and consistent, lexical usage. The genre and our distance in time from the actual events make these demands impossible. This is a faith document, not a history book!

▣ **"and some of the stars to fall to the earth"** Usually in Jewish extra-biblical apocalyptic literature falling stars refer to angels coming to earth, but in this context "stars" is a parallel to "hosts" (the people of God, cf. v. 24a; 12:3); therefore, this idiom is referring to the earlier promises of God that Israel will be like the stars of heaven (in number, cf. Gen. 15:5; Jer. 33:22; in glory, cf. Dan. 12:3).

This verse refers to the little horn of the third kingdom attacking God's people, as did the little horn of the fourth kingdom in 7:21,25. There is an anti-God force loose in creation. It can be identified by its attack on God's Messiah and God's people!

8:11 "It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host" One characteristic of these Gentile kings has been their arrogance. The influence of the fall (cf. Gen. 3) continues!

The phrase "to be equal" is the same PREPOSITION as "up to the hosts" in v. 10.

"The Commander" is the Hebrew word (BDB 978) for "chief," "ruler," "official," "captain," or "prince." This could refer to:

1. YHWH, v. 25
2. Son of Man, possibly v. 25; 7:13-14
3. a powerful angel, v. 13; 10:1-9; or Michael, Israel's national angel, 10:13,31; 12:1

The next few phrases seem to imply either #1 or #2.

▣ **"it removed the regular sacrifice from Him and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down"** This seems to refer to something involving the daily morning and evening sacrifices in the temple ritual called "the continual" (cf. Exod. 29:38-42; Num. 28:1-8). This daily ritual was stopped ("removed," BDB 926, KB 1202, *Hophal* PERFECT; the second VERB BDB 1020, KB 1527, may refer to the same event)

by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and he further defiled the temple by regularly offering a swine on the altar and placing an image of Zeus in the Holy Place (cf. 11:31; 12:11). Antiochus tried to Hellenize the Jews (cf. I Macc. 1.54-61; II Macc. 4.11-6.11) by forcing them to eat the flesh of swine. This caused the rebellion of the priest of Moden, whose son, Judas Maccabees, through an extended guerilla warfare, finally succeeded in defeating the Seleucid army and, in 165 B.C., cleansed and restored the temple. In modern times, this is known as the Festival of Lights (Hanukkah) , and is celebrated in December (the date changes each year because the Jews use a lunar calendar).

8:12 "on account of transgression" Some see this as: (1) the sins of the Jewish people (cf. 9:24) which God allowed to be punished by a foreign leader (cf. Isa. 10:5; Jer. 51:20); (2) the sins of Jewish leadership which helped Antiochus; or more probably in this context (3) Antiochus IV Epiphanes' sin (cf. vv. 13,23).

▣ **"the host"** This seems to refer to the people of God. See note at v. 10.

▣ **"the regular sacrifice"** See note at v. 11.

▣ **"it will fling truth to the ground"** The same VERB (BDB 1020, KB 1527, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) appears in v. 11 and in Ezek. 19:12, but the concept is expressed in Isa. 59:14. In general it refers to the worship of God or the word of God.

▣ **"perform *its will* and prosper"** This refers to fallen humanity's independent attitude, which is a recurrent theme in Daniel (cf. 5:19; 8:4; 11:3,16,36).

8:13 "I heard a holy one" This is translated "saint" in 7:18,21,22,25 and refers to faithful believers. Here it must refer to the conversation between two angels (cf. possibly 7:27) for Daniel's benefit. Other OT titles for angels are (1) "sons of God" (cf. Gen. 6:2; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 29:1; 89:6-7); (2) "holy ones" (cf. Dan. 4:13; Ps. 89:5, 7; Zech. 14:5); (3) "watchers" (cf. Dan. 4:13, 17, 23); (4) sometimes "man" or "men" (cf. 8:15,16; 9:20; 10:5,16,18; 12:6-7; Zech. 1:8,10,19; 2:1,3).

▣ **"How long"** This does not refer to Jeremiah's prophecy about a seventy year exile (cf. 9:2; Jer. 25:11,12; 29:10; Zech. 7:5). It is connected to the "little horn" of the third empire (i.e. Greece, cf. 8:21), which is being discussed in vv. 9-14. Therefore, this time frame is related to the atrocities of Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.), who desecrated the temple and attempted to force individual, faithful Jews to become Hellenists.

The TEV translates this so that the three aspects of the question stand out.

1. How long will these things that were seen in the vision continue?
2. How long will an awful sin replace the daily sacrifices?
3. How long will the army of heaven and the Temple be trampled on?

H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, p. 352, says that the Hebrew text has four items in apposition to "vision."

1. the regular daily offerings
2. the crime-causing horror
3. the sanctuary to be trodden under foot
4. the host to be trodden under foot

▣

NASB	**"while the transgression causes horror"**
NKJV	**"the transgression of desolation"**
NRSV	**"the transgression that makes desolate"**
TEV	**"the awful sin"**

NJB "of horrifying iniquity"

This probably refers to the idol of Zeus Olympius, that Antiochus placed in the temple (II Maccabees 6:2). This VERB, "makes desolate" (BDB 1030, KB 1563, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) may be a word play from the Canaanite deity, *Ba'al Shamem* ("Lord of Heaven"), because "heaven" has the same consonants as "makes desolate." Zeus was the Greek counterpart of *Ba'al*.

This same phrase appears in 9:27; 11:31; and 12:11. It refers to different atrocities, but all are connected by rebellion against God and His people. In the Bible it can refer to (1) Antiochus IV; (2) Titus' destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; and (3) the end-time antiChrist (the book of Revelation). It is obviously a multiple fulfillment prophecy.

8:14 "for 2,300 hundred evenings and mornings" This phrase has been interpreted in two ways: (1) 2300 full days (E. J. Young, pp. 173-175) or (2) a number equivalent to three and a half years that seems to follow the usage in Gen. 1 ("evenings and mornings") and the phrase related to persecution in Dan. 7:25. Context favors #2 because of the use of a similar period of time in Daniel and Revelation. See note at 7:25.

Differing commentators choose one or the other. I like #2, but H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, p. 355, quotes a German commentator, Meinhold (1889), ". . .an entirely satisfactory computation has neither been found here nor for the kindred periods in chapters nine and twelve." The problem is that we forget that this is apocalyptic/prophetic literature, not history.

▣

NASB "the Holy Place will be properly restored"
NKJV "the sanctuary shall be cleansed"
NRSV "the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state"
TEV "the Temple will be restored"
NJB "the sanctuary will have its rights restored"

This VERB, *Niphal* PASSIVE (BDB 842) is used in this form only here in the OT. The basic meaning is "to be made just or righteous," so here it would imply, "shall be put in right or properly pure condition." December 12, 165 B.C. was the date of the cleansing and restoration of the temple in Jerusalem by Judas Maccabeus. See note at v. 11.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:15-17

15 "When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. 16And I heard the voice of a man between *the banks of* Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this *man* an understanding of the vision.' 17So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, 'Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.'"

8:15 "'I sought to understand'" As the Gentile kings needed Daniel's God-given gift to understand their dreams, so Daniel needs heavenly beings to help him. Angelic mediation and interpretation is one of the characteristics of apocalyptic literature. Humans cannot discover truth. It must be revealed!

▣ **"it looked like a man"** This is the Hebrew word *gbr*, (BDB 149) which makes up Gabriel's name. This has nothing to do with 7:13. Angels often appear in human form (cf. Zech. 1:8,10; 2:1,4). This does not describe their true essence, simply how they appear to us. See note at v. 13.

8:16 "Gabriel" Only two angels are named in the Bible, Gabriel and Michael. Michael is called the Archangel of Israel (cf. 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude v. 9), while Gabriel seems to be God's messenger angel (cf. 9:21; Luke 1:19,26). His name means "man of God" or "strong man of God" (BDB 150).

8:17 "'I was frightened and fell on my face'" Humans are shocked at the presence and awesomeness of the spiritual realm.

1. God, Gen. 17:3; Job 13:11,21; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 44:4
2. angels, Dan. 8:17; 10:9,10,12,15,19; Rev. 1:17
3. visions, Job 7:14 (4:13-14); Dan. 7:28; 8:27

▣ **"Son of man"** Here "man" simply refers to Daniel as a human being (*Adam*, cf. v. 16), as in Ezek. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:2; 7:2; 12:2,8; and Ps. 8:4. The angel Gabriel is addressing Daniel.

▣ **"understand"** This is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (BDB 106, KB 122), as it is in v. 16 (cf. John Joseph Owens, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, vol. 4, p. 737). Gabriel is commanded by the man above the Ulai (i.e. an angel) to help Daniel understand the conversation (cf. v. 15), spoken in the dialogue between the two holy ones (i.e. angels) in vv. 13-14.

▣ **"the vision pertains to the time of the end"** This vision seems to refer not to the far future, but the relatively near future (i.e. Empires of Persia and Greece). This should give modern interpreters a warning about trying to define the phrase "the time of the end" (cf. v. 19) as always eschatological. In 11:40 "the end time" is used of the period of Greek rule involving the kingdoms of the Ptolomies and Seleucids (323-165 B.C.).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:18-26

[18]"Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. [19]He said, 'Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for *it* pertains to the appointed time of the end. [20]The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. [21]The shaggy goat *represents* the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. [22]The broken *horn* and the four *horns that* arose in its place *represent* four kingdoms *which* will arise from *his* nation, although not with his power.

[23]In the latter period of their rule,
When the transgressors have run *their course*,
A king will arise,
Insolent and skilled in intrigue.
[24]His power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power,
And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree
And prosper and perform *his will*;
He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.
[25]And through his shrewdness
He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;
And he will magnify *himself* in his heart, And he will destroy many while *they are* at ease.
He will even oppose the Prince of princes,
But he will be broken without human agency.
[26]The vision of the evenings and mornings
Which has been told is true;
But keep the vision secret,
For it pertains to many days *in the future*.'"

8:18 "I sank into a deep sleep" The presence of the spiritual realm causes humans to be frightened and pass out (BDB 922, KB 1191, cf. Gen. 15:12; Job 4:13; Dan. 10:9). In Rev. 1:17 John looked as if he had died!

▣ **"he touched me"** The angel's touch was a great comfort (cf. 10:10,16,18; I Kgs. 19:7; Rev. 1:17).

8:19 "the final period of the indignation" This term (BDB 276) is used often in Isaiah of YHWH's indignation against His people for their covenant faithlessness; therefore, He punishes them by means of foreign nations (cf. Isa. 10:5-6,25; 13:2-16 [esp. v. 5]). However, His indignation will pass (cf. Isa. 26:20; 30:27; 66:7-24 [esp. v. 14]). This theme is continued in Ezekiel (cf. 21:31; 22:24,31). It is foreshadowed in Deut. 28:49-57.

In the context of the book of Daniel this indignation (BDB 276) has to do with the independence and arrogance of the Gentile nations who God used to judge His people. Their arrogance is projected into the distant future (i.e. Greece for 8:19 and end-time Antichrist for 11:36 [cf. 7:8,20-22,23-26; II Thess. 2; Rev. 12-13]). Now He will judge these Gentile nations (cf. 11:36).

▣ **"for *it* pertains to the appointed time of the end"** This phrase (BDB 417) is found here and in 11:27,29,35, which all refer to events relating to Greece, especially Antiochus IV, who aggressively attacks God's people.

The confusion so common in interpreting Daniel is the failure to:

1. recognize its genre and to try to identify all details historically
2. recognize its near future symbols and its far future symbols
   a. the little horns of chapter 7 vs. 8
   b. 9:1-23 vs. 9:24-27
   c. 11:1-35,40-45 vs. 11:31-39
3. recognize its merging of anti-God kingdoms. The fourth kingdom is Rome, but more, it is all Gentile world-dominating powers.

8:20 "the ram. . .Medo-Persia" The ram was the sign of Persia (Aries, the Zodiac sign), but the ram was also the guardian spirit of Persia and the king wore the ram's emblem to battle.

8:21 "the shaggy goat. . .Greece" In 8:5 there is a Hebrew construct for male goat (BDB 862 and 777). In 8:21 there are two words which the *Handbook on the Book of Daniel*, from the Untied Bible Societies, says is made up of the Hebrew word for male goat (BDB 972 II) and the Aramaic word for he-goat (BDB 862), which are in opposition, p. 222. The ADJECTIVE form of this term means "hairy," therefore, the additional word "shaggy" in 8:21. This additional term usually refers to the goats offered as a sin-sacrifice (cf. Lev. 4:23,24; 9:15; 16:5,7-8; Num. 7:16).

The goat was the Zodiac sign of Greece, Capricorn, and it was the national symbol of the Macedonian coat of arms. These two verses are very historically specific in the identification of the second and third Gentile kingdoms of Daniel's vision.

▣ **"the first king"** This is obviously Alexander the Great.

8:22 "although not with his power" None of the rival Greek generals (satraps) ever equaled the power and extent of Alexander's kingdom!

8:23-26 These verses are in poetic form in the NASB, NRSV, NJB, and REB translations.

8:23 "a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue" This seems to describe Antiochus IV Epiphanes' rise to power.

▣

NASB	**"insolent and skilled in intrigue"**
NKJV	**"who understands sinister schemes"**
NRSV	**"skilled in intrigue"**
TEV	**"stubborn, vicious and deceitful"**
NJB	**"ingenious-minded man"**

This is literally "strong of face" (Construct BDB 738 and 815) and "one who understands riddles" (Construct BDB 106 and 295).

8:24 "'his power will be mighty, but not by his own power'" Here again, is the recurrent theme of God's control and direction of human history (cf. v. 25f; 2:20-23). God used Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and will use whomever He chooses to accomplish His will (cf. Rom. 9)! Often humans, even redeemed humans, do not understand (cf. Isa. 55:8-11).

▣

NASB	**"he will destroy to an extraordinary degree"**
NKJV	**"he shall destroy fearfully"**
NRSV	**"shall cause fearful destruction"**
TEV	**"will cause terrible destruction"**
NJB	**"will plot incredible schemes"**

The first VERBAL (BDB 810, KB 927) is a *Niphal* PARTICIPLE and the second VERB (BDB 852 II, KB 1026) is a *Hiphil* IMPERFECT. This word is often used for the wonders and marvelous works of God (cf. Exod. 15:11; Isa. 25:1; 29:14; Dan. 12:6). Here, however, it speaks of the terribly destructive acts of this king of the third empire (cf. 8:11-13).

▣ **"and prosper and perform *his will*"** See note at 8:12.

▣

NASB	**"will destroy mighty men"**
NKJV	**"shall destroy the mighty"**
NRSV, NJB	**"shall destroy the powerful"**
TEV	**"will bring destruction on powerful men"**

The VERB means "corrupt" (BDB 1007, KB 1469, *Hiphil* PERFECT, cf. Gen. 6:12; Deut. 4:16; 31:29; Ezek. 16:47), "ruin" (cf. Mal. 3:11), or "destroy" (cf. v. 25; Isa. 36:10; Jer. 51:20).

The ADJECTIVE "mighty" usually means numerous (BDB 783, cf. "many" of v. 25d). Because of Daniel's literary style it is surely possible that "the mighty men" and "the holy people" are parallel. The other option would be to see "mighty men" as the army of national or political rivals. The full phrase denotes the king's (small horns) complete success.

This phrase "the holy people" is literally "the people of the holy ones," which is very similar to 7:27. Many scholars believe that the phrase in 7:27 is parallel to "holy ones" of 7:18,22, and 25. In context 8:24 cannot refer to angels.

8:25 This fits what we know of Antiochus IV. See also I Maccabees 1:29-41,44-50; 4:38-39.

▣ **"he will magnify *himself* in his heart"** The VERB (BDB 152, KB 178) is a *Hiphil* IMPERFECT. This has been the recurrent problem of fallen humanity and especially of tyrannical dictators and potentates. This activity always attracts God's attention (cf. Isa. 9:9; 10:12; Dan. 5:20; 8:11; 11:36-37).

▣

NASB **"while *they are* at ease"**
NKJV **"in their prosperity"**
NRSV, TEV **"without warning"**
NJB **"taking them unawares"**

The term "at ease" (BDB 1017) means quietness in the sense of security, but without warning at such a time and in such a place (probably "the Beautiful Land," i.e. Palestine, cf. 8:9,11,16,41), they will be attacked (cf. 11:21,24).

The attacker will be the king of v. 23 and those attacked will be "the mighty men and the holy people" of v. 24.

▣ **"he will even oppose the Prince of princes"** The VERB (BDB 763, KB 840) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT. This same word, "prince" (BDB 978, cf. 8:11,25; 10:13,21; 12:1) is translated "commander" in v. 11 and seems in context to refer to YHWH (cf. Josh. 5:12-15). The Hebrew word does not imply a crown prince, co-regent, or ruler in waiting as it does in English, but the chief leader. It is used of the Messiah in Isa. 9:6,7; of Michael the Archangel (cf. Jude 9); and of Israel in 10:13,21; 12:1.

The redundant "Prince of princes" is a Hebrew superlative, "the greatest of all rulers" (i.e. King of Kings, cf. 2:37,47; Ezek. 26:7; or [God of gods]; Ezra 7:12).

▣ **"But he will be broken without human agency"** The VERB (BDB 990, KB 1402) is a *Niphil* IMPERFECT. This is the recurrent theme of God's sovereignty and control (cf. 2:20-23).

8:26 "evenings and mornings" This refers to the offering of a lamb in the temple each morning and evening (cf. vv. 11-14,19).

The Jewish culture starts the new day at evening, following the order of Gen. 1:5,8,13,19,23,31.

The vision and prophecy of chapter 8 is future to Daniel, but past to us. This gives us a great opportunity to evaluate prophetic/apocalyptic language in a known event (cf. D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, pp. 103-128). We can read I Maccabees, Josephus, and secular histories to compare how the event was recorded in the Bible and outside the Bible. The differences show us (1) the stylized language of Hebrew prophecy and (2) the over-the-top emotional hyperboles of apocalyptic symbolism.

▣ **"which has been told"** See verses 15-25.

▣ **"is true"** This (BDB 54) should possibly be understood as certain to happen just the way it was revealed in vv. 15-25. For a good discussion of meaning and truth in Scripture see Kevin. J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*

▣ **"but keep the vision secret"** This secrecy is seen in 7:28 and 12:4,9. This is literally, "stop us" or "shut up" (BDB 711, KB 771, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. II Kgs. 3:19; II Chr. 32:4,30; the PASSIVE in Dan. 12:9). This means that the phrase may mean to conserve the vision, not keep it secret!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:27

[27]"Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up *again* and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain *it.*"

8:27
NASB **"I was exhausted and sick for days"**
NKJV **"fainted and was sick for days"**

NRSV **"was overcome and lay sick for some days"**
TEV **"I was depressed and ill for several days"**
NJB **"lost consciousness; I was ill for several days"**

The vision of both 7:28 and 8:27 made Daniel physically ill.

▣ **"there was none to explain *it*"** This phrase is surprising in light of vv. 15-19!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What two kings are mentioned in chapter 8?
2. Should we identify the little horn of chapter 7 with the little horn of chapter 8? Why or why not? Who are these little horns?
3. Who are the transgressors in vv. 12, 23?
4. To whom does the prophesy relate: to Daniel's time; to the Maccabean period, to Jesus' time, or to the end time? Why?

DANIEL 9

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Daniel's Prayer for the People	The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks	Daniel Prays for His People	Daniel's Prayer
9:1-15	9:1-2	9:1-4a	9:1-4a
	9:3-4a		
	9:4b-6	9:4b	9:4b-19
		9:5-14	
	9:7-10		
	9:11-14		
	9:15-19	9:15-19	
9:16-19			
The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy		Gabriel Explains the Prophecy	The Angel Gabriel Explains the Prophecy
9:20-23	9:20-23	9:20-23	9:20-27
9:24-27	9:24-27	9:24-27	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. It is interesting to speculate how many of the earlier writings of the Hebrew prophets Daniel had read. It seems for sure he had read Ezekiel because he describes YHWH's throne in a similar way (i.e. "wheels," cf. Ezek. 10:2,6,13 and Dan. 7:9). Many of the words and phrases Daniel

uses are found in Isaiah. In this chapter we are told specifically that Daniel was familiar with the prophecy of Jeremiah (cf. 25:9-13; 29:10).

This "seventy years" (9:2) can be calculated (1) from the destruction of the temple (586 B.C.) to the rebuilding of the temple (516 B.C.) or (2) from the exile of Jehoiakim (605 B.C., cf. Dan. 1:1) to the decree of Cyrus for all the exiled peoples to be allowed to return home and rebuild their national temples (538 B.C., cf. Ezra 1:1-4; Isa. 44:28-45:7).

B. The other chapters of Daniel have emphasized the arrogant unbelief of the Gentile rulers of the ancient Near East. The Babylonian exile is mentioned in 1:1-2, but not the reason for it (e.g. Ezra 5:12). In this chapter Daniel acknowledges his personal sins and the sins of his people in a fashion reminiscent of the corporate confessions of Moses (cf. Exod. 32:30-32) and Isaiah (cf. Isa. 6:5).

C. It is my understanding at this point in my study that 9:24-27 refers to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and that it uses symbolic numbers (7 x 10 sevens) to reveal some future historical, redemptive events related to the first and second comings of Christ.

As it is an error in hermeneutical methodology to interpret all of the details of parables, so too, the details of apocalyptic literature, for they both use imagery and symbols to communicate a central truth. Western literalism has mistakenly sought a historical reference in every detail instead of the overall truth or meaning.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:1-6

[1]"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—[2]in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years. [3]So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. [4]I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, 'Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, [5]we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. [6]Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.'"

9:1 "in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of Median descent who was king over the Chaldeans" See full note at 5:31.

The real problem in this verse versus 5:31 is the addition of the father's name, *Ahasuerus*. This name appears in the OT in Ezra 4:6 and Esther 1:1 as Esther's Persian husband, known by his Greek name, *Xerxes*. The name, like Darius, might be an honorific title (i.e. "mighty man" or "mighty eye," cf. BDB 31). As of this point in time scholarship knows nothing of this Chaldean ruler of Median descent. As has happened so often already, archaeology has shed light on other perceived historical difficulties (i.e. Belshazzar). So, let us keep searching!

▣ **"of Median descent"** If Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, is Cyrus, he was qualified to claim both Median and Persian lineage.

▣ **"who was made king"** This is similar to 5:31. Was he made king by God or by human authority? Obviously by both (cf. Isa. 44:28-45:7). Remember Dan. 2:20-23!

9:2 "observed in the books the number of years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet" This refers to Jer. 25:9-13 or 29:10, although another prophecy is made in II Chr. 36:21, where the years of captivity are prophesied as seventy in number because of the Jews' failure to keep the sabbatical years mentioned in Lev. 26:33-35. This time sequence (70 years) is important because it will be picked up on by the angel in verse 24 to describe a new period of 70 units which the people of God must endure.

It is possible that the 70 years refers to a complete life span. As God judged Israel with a forty year wilderness wandering period for their unbelief (the age of those who could have been soldiers at the time of the rebellion), He now judges His people with a judgment that covers the life span of an entire generation of faithless Jews.

This construct, "according to the word of YHWH" (BDB 182 and 217), is used often in the OT for God's prophetic communication. YHWH desires and initiates a relationship with humans made in His image for the purpose of fellowship.

▣ **"'for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem'"** Jeremiah and Daniel use two different Hebrew words for "desolation" (BDB 352 and 1031). The one used here in Daniel (BDB 352) is also used in connection with Jeremiah's prophecy about the exile of Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 25:9,11,18). These two terms are both used in this chapter for the destroyed and profaned temple in Jerusalem (cf. 9:2 vs. 9:17,18).

9:3

NASB	**"I gave my attention"**
NKJV	**"I set my face toward"**
NRSV	**"I turned to"**
TEV	**"I prayed earnestly to"**
NJB	**"I turned my face to"**

This is literally "I turned my face to the Lord." This idiom shows (1) the personal intimacy of prayer. Prayer is not a monologue, but an intimate dialogue or (2) Daniel faced the ruined temple in Jerusalem when he prayed as if God's presence remained there (cf. 6:10-11).

This is the first vision which was initiated by Daniel's questioning (cf. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel*, p. 162).

▣ **"Lord"** The NASB (1970) has "LORD," following some Hebrew manuscripts. Here in v. 3 it is the Hebrew term *Adon*, which denotes "owner," "master," "husband" and is usually translated "Lord." The covenant name YHWH (LORD) does occur in v. 4. It occurs seven times in this chapter and nowhere else in Daniel. The NASB (1995 Update) appropriately has "Lord" here in v. 3.

▣ **"God"** See Special Topic: The Names for Deity at 4:2.

▣ **"supplication"** This Hebrew word (BDB 337) is used several times in chapter 9 (cf. vv. 3,17,18,23). This term characterizes Daniel's prayer for the mercy of YHWH.

▣ **"with fasting, sackcloth and ashes"** These are all Jewish signs of mourning (e.g. Isa. 58:5; Jonah 3:5-6; Esther 4:1-3).

1. Fast - Although not mentioned specifically in the writings of Moses, it was understood that on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) that sorrow for sin would be symbolized by a day of fasting by the whole nation. Throughout Jewish history national tragedies were commemorated by an annual fast.
2. Sackcloth - This was a rough, plain cloth worn as a symbol of mourning.

3. Ashes - This seems to have started as a sign of mourning in Josh. 7:6 and developed into a tradition (cf. I Sam. 4:12; II Sam. 1:2; 13:19).

9:4
NASB, TEV "confessed"
NKJV, NRSV,
NJB "made confession"

This is the Hebrew word for "to throw" (BDB 392, KB 389), used in the *Hithpael* as an idiom for "confess" (cf. Lev. 16:21; 26:40; Num. 5:7; Ezra 10:1; Neh. 9:3; Dan. 9:3,20). Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance*, p. 196, says it means "to throw out the hand" when the term refers to "confessing YHWH's name" (cf. I Kgs. 8:33,35; II Chr. 6:24,26). Whether there was a physical gesture denoting the confession of sin is uncertain, but probable.

▣ **"Oh Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His Covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments"** This is a wonderful description of the covenant God.

1. The great - This is *El* (God, BDB 42) with the ADJECTIVE "great" (BDB 152).
2. The awesome - This term's basic meaning is fear (BDB 431), but it is used here in the *Niphal* for godly fear, respect or awe (e.g. Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 4:8; 9:22).
3. Who keeps covenant - YHWH is faithful to His promises (cf. Num. 23:19; Mal. 3:6).
4. Lovingkindness - This is the special covenant NOUN *hesed* (BDB 338), used so often of YHWH's covenant loyalty (e.g. Deut. 7:9).
5. For those who love Him and keep His commandment - This is the essence of the Mosaic covenant (cf. Deut. 7:10; 27-29). Covenant love and loyalty on God's part is meant to reproduce itself in His covenant people. The NT accentuates God's faithfulness (cf. II Tim. 3:13) amidst human faithlessness.

9:5 "we have sinned" Notice the recurrent theme, vv. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17. Daniel identifies himself with his people and makes confession, as did Moses (e.g. Exod. 32:32; Num. 11:2; 21:7) and Isaiah (e.g. 6:5).

What a list of willful covenant disobedience! Israel had violated the covenant over and over again. The Assyrian and Babylonian exiles and the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple were the consequences.

1. "Sinned" (BDB 306, KB 305) - the basic meaning is missing the mark.
2. "Committed iniquity" (BDB 731, KB 796) - the basic meaning is guilty acts ("to be bent" or "to make crooked").
3. "Acted wickedly" (BDB 957, KB 1294) - the basic meaning is to be loose or disjointed (cf. v. 15).
4. "Rebelled" (BDB 597, KB 632) - the basic meaning is bold in acts of known disobedience (cf. v. 9).
5. "turning aside" (BDB 693, KB 747) - the basic meaning is to knowingly depart from a clear path (cf. v. 11).

This phrase and v. 11 both use an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of "turning aside" (BDB 693, KB 747) to describe Israel's rebellion and transgression.

▣ **"from Your commandments and ordinances"** Psalm 19:7-9 lists several names for God's covenant stipulations.

1. "law of the LORD," v. 7
2. "testimony of the LORD," v. 7
3. "precepts of the LORD," v. 8
4. "commandments of the LORD," v. 8

5. "fear of the LORD," v. 9
6. "judgments of the LORD," v. 9

Psalm 119 also praises the law of the Lord in acrostic form.

9:6 "we have not listened to Thy servants the prophets" The Jews (kings, princes, ancestors, and all the common people) were not ignorant or uninformed about God's covenant will. They had the writings of Moses, the miracles of the Exodus, the victories of the conquest and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise of land, but they would not be faithful (cf. II Kgs. 17:13-15; Jer. 44:4,5,21; Hosea 11:2).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:7-14

[7]"Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day — to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. [8]Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. [9]To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; [10]nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. [11]Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. [12]Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done *anything* like what was done to Jerusalem. [13]As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. [14]Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice."

9:7 "righteousness belongs to Thee" The term "righteousness" (cf. vv. 14,16) is the Hebrew word (BDB 841-842) for a "measuring reed," "ruler," or "standard." God Himself is the standard of judgment.

Fallen humanity's only hope of meeting God's standard is the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (cf. Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; II Cor. 5:21). That is why the OT is simply a school-master to lead us to Christ (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38; Gal. 3:19-26). See Special Topic: Righteousness at 4:27.

▣

NASB, NRSV	**"open shame"**
NKJV	**"shame of face"**
TEV	**"disgrace on ourselves"**
NJB	**"the look of shame"**

As covenant loyalty (v. 4) and righteousness belong to the faithful God, so covenant disloyalty and open shame belong to His faithless people.

This Hebrew construct (BDB 102 plus 815) is translated "confusion of face" or "shame of face" (cf. v. 8). The same construction is found in II Chr. 32:21. This phrase refers to the exiles of Israel being taken from the Promised Land. This damaged God's reputation among the nations. He wanted to bless Israel and use her as a light to bring the world to Himself (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6), but their continual covenant infidelity resulted in judgment for them and a misunderstanding of YHWH by the world (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38).

▣

NASB	**"as it is to this day"**
NKJV	**"as *it is* this day"**
NRSV	**"as at this day"**
TEV	**-------**
NJB	**"we wear today"**

The best parallel to help understand the theology of this phrase is Ezek. 36:22-38, which is really a description of "the New Covenant" of Jer. 31:31-34.

▣ **"to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel"** This is referring to "the desolations" in v. 2. God allowed Assyria (cf. Isa. 10:5) and Babylon (cf. Jer. 51:20) to exile His own people.

▣ **"those who are near by and those who are far away in all the countries to which Thou has driven them"** God's covenant people, the descendants of Abraham to whom God promised a land (cf. Gen. 12:1-3, etc.), were taken out of the promised land and scattered among the nations because of their idolatry and violations of the covenant (cf. I Kgs. 8:46).

9:9 "to the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness" The term "compassion" (BDB 933) may be a metaphor from the word "womb," thereby speaking of family love. God often describes His ways with humanity by means of familial images (father, kinsman redeemer, parents, family, etc.).

There are only a few places in the OT where the character of God is delineated with such clarity (cf. Exod. 34:6-7; Ps. 103:8-14; Joel 2:13; Neh. 9:17-21). Sinful mankind's only hope is the unchanging (cf. Mal. 3:6), merciful character of God (cf. 9:18; Mal. 3:6)!

The term "forgiveness" used here is a rare form (PLURAL, ABSTRACT, INTENSIVE, "abundantly forgive") of the word (BDB 699); it is also used in Neh. 9:17. The unemphasized form is found in v. 19.

9:10 "through His servants the prophets" When we see the English word "prophets," we think of Isaiah—Malachi, but Judaism believed that prophets wrote Scripture, so

1. Moses is a prophet (cf. Deut. 18)
2. the history books of the OT (Joshua - Kings) are written by prophets and are called "the Former Prophets" by the rabbis

This phrase includes all the Old Testament up to Daniel's day (cf. II Kgs. 17:13-15; 18:12).

9:11 "transgressed" The word appears here and in 8:23. Its basic meaning is to go beyond a known boundary (BDB 716, KB 778, *Qal* PEFRECT).

Notice the series of expressions used in vv. 11 to show Israel's covenant breaking.

1. transgressed
2. turned aside
3. not obeying (cf. v. 14)
4. we have sinned (cf. vv. 5,15)

Also notice in v. 11 what they sinned against.

1. "Thy law"
2. "Thy voice"
3. "against Him" (cf. vv. 8,9)

All sin is ultimately against a personal God. We have not just broken rules, we have broken our relationship with the One in whose image we were fashioned (cf. Gen. 1:26-27)! Sin destroys the essence of our created purpose—fellowship with God.

▣ **"the curse"** The term "curse" (BDB 46) can also be translated "oath" (cf. Neh. 10:29). This covenantal terminology goes back to the covenant "curses and blessings" of Deut. 27-29, where Israel promises to obey God's word (cf. Deut. 29:11-13). However, if they rebel and disobey, God's oath becomes a curse (cf. Deut. 29:18,19,20; 30:7; II Chr. 334:24; Jer. 29:18-19).

9:12 "He has confirmed His word which He has spoken" God's promises and His judgments all come true (cf. Isa. 40:8; 45:23; 46:10-11; 55:11). The trustworthiness of God's character rests on the trustworthiness of His word!

9:14

NASB	**"the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us"**
NKJV	**"the LORD has kept the disaster in mind"**
NRSV	**"the LORD kept watch over this calamity until he brought it upon us"**
TEV	**"You, O LORD our God, were prepared to punish us"**
NJB	**"Yahweh has watched for the right moment to bring disaster on us"**

This implies that the covenant God waited for the right moment to judge His disobedient covenant people. God performed His word of judgment on Israel (cf. Jer. 1:9-19; 31:28a; 44:27). Judgment was as much an act of love as was the initial covenant. God deals with His people as a loving parent.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:15-19

[15]"And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked. [16]O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people *have become* a reproach to all those around us. [17]So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. [18]O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. [19]O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

9:15 "who brought Thy people out of the land of Egypt" The Exodus fulfilled God's promise of Gen. 15:12-21. The symbolism from Gen. 15 conveys the concept that God and God alone can accomplish this act of deliverance and promise. In point of fact the OT is as much an account of YHWH's grace and mercy as is the NT. The character of God has not changed (cf. Mal.3:6), but the covenant requirements have been modified because of mankind's (even redeemed) inability to keep the covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38). The covenant is still conditional, but structured so that the Messiah's performance replaces human performance as the means and basis of redemption (cf. Isa. 53; II Cor. 5:21).

▣ **"has made a name for Himself"** God wanted to use the family of Abraham to reach all the world in reconciliation (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6). The Exodus was for the ultimate purpose of world evangelism (cf. Exod. 9:16; Neh. 9:10) as much as national promise!

9:16 "in accordance with all Thy righteous acts" In v. 7 Daniel attributes righteousness to God; in v. 14 Daniel elicits the covenant claim, "the Lord our God is righteous"; and now in v. 16 Daniel appeals to the character of God (cf. vv. 17,19), not the disobedience of His people (cf. v. 18), as the reason to restore Israel (cf. v. 20), so as to complete their calling of being a light to the nations!

▣ **"thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain"** God was connected with His people and His temple on Mt. Moriah (cf. v. 20). The ancients linked deities to national groups. Daniel asked God to act for His own Names' sake (cf. vv. 17,18,19; Ezek. 36:22-38). God's desire and design is still world evangelization (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

9:17 "for Thy sake, O Lord" This is repeated in v. 19. Daniel supplicates YHWH to act so as to accomplish His purposes of world-wide witness and redemption through Israel.

▣ **"let Thy face shine on"** This reflects the blessing formula of Num. 6:24,26, which is also reflected in Ps. 80:3,7,19.

The next verse also uses human physical terms to address God (anthropomorphism). Daniel asks the eternal, spiritual One to:

1. shine His face on, v. 17
2. incline His ear, v. 18
3. open His eyes, v. 18
4. O, Lord, hear, v. 19

9:18 "not. . .on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Thy great compassion" Daniel is praying much like Moses, in that he appeals to God's character (cf. vv. 17,19) for forgiveness and unmerited deliverance to Jerusalem, the temple, and the people as a whole (cf. v. 19), not any deserved or attained righteousness on Israel's part. This is the OT incipient concept of justification by grace through faith (cf. Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6).

9:19 Even in an English translation one can feel the intensity (a series of IMPERATIVES) of Daniel's prayer!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:20-23

[20]"Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, [21]while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in *my* extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. [22]He gave *me* instruction and talked with me and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. [23]At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.'"

9:20 Notice all the PARTICIPLES, which basically refer to the same act.

1. speaking (*Piel*)
2. praying (*Hithpael*)
3. confessing (*Hithpael*)
4. presenting (*Hiphil*)
5. speaking (*Piel*, v. 21)

▣ **"the holy mountain of my God"** This refers to Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem (Jerusalem was built on seven hills), on which Solomon's temple was built (cf. II Chr. 3:1). This was the same mountain on which Abraham offered Isaac (cf. Gen. 22:2) and this same mountain was later a place where David offered a sacrifice to stop the judgment of God (cf. II Sam. 24:18-25; I Chr. 21:18-27).

9:21 "then the man Gabriel" This is a messenger angel. His name means "man of God" (BDB 150, cf. 8:16). He is only one of two angels whose names are mentioned in the Bible, Gabriel and Michael.

▣ **"in my extreme weariness"** Some commentators link this to the angel Gabriel who was wearied by his swift flight (Aramaism, BDB 419) and some see it as referring to Daniel's weariness (cf. 7:28; 8:27; 10:8-9,16-17). Since I do not think angels get tired, it probably refers to Daniel.

▣ **"about the time of the evening offering"** Remember, the temple was destroyed. There were no offerings. The evening offering would have been about 3:00 p.m. Daniel kept the temple ritual alive by continuing his habit of prayer (cf. 6:10)!

9:22 "to give you insight and understanding" The Hebrew word "insight" (BDB 968) is used in several senses.

1. positively of wisdom of Daniel in 1:4,17; 9:25
2. negatively of the craftiness of the little horn in 8:25
3. negatively of unfaithful Israel in 9:13
4. positively of restored Israel in 11:33,35
5. positively of believers of the end-time period in 12:3,10

The Hebrew term "understanding" (BDB 108) is used in 1:20; 8:15; 9:22; 10:1. Daniel was gifted by God and enabled by angelic interpreters to grasp the meaning of the symbolic visions. This particular explanation deals with the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy from v. 2.

The question I continue to ask in connection with the genre of both Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation is, "Did these authors receive a message from God and then structure it as apocalyptic literature or did they receive it as structured symbols?" Could both be true? Does God suddenly change the form of revelation from prophetic models to apocalyptic models? I suppose I believe that these inspired human authors structured their messages in symbolic, dramatic, imaginative, figurative ways. The message is from God, but its presentation comes through inspired humans using different literary genres.

9:23 "the command was issued" This is literally, "a word went out" (BDB 422, KB 425, *Qal* PERFECT). It may have come from the powerful angel as in 8:16 or from God (cf. Isa. 45:23; 55:11). Even before Daniel finished praying heaven had responded!

▣

NASB	**"for you are highly esteemed"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"for you are greatly beloved"**
TEV	**"He loves you"**
NJB	**"You are a man specially chosen"**

The implied agent is God. This phrase is also used of Daniel in 10:11,19. The Hebrew term (BDB 326) means "a precious treasure" (cf. 11:38,43).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:24-27

[24]"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place.* [25]So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. [26]Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. [27]And he

will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

9:24-27 This passage has a parallel or poetic aspect (series of INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTS) and is translated into poetic lines by NJB (vv. 24-27) and NAB (vv. 22-26) translations, but not by most English versions.

This is one of the most specific, yet debated, passages in the OT. Have we switched genres from apocalyptic, fuzzy, symbolic, imaginative literature (chaps. 7 & 8) to a very specific, historical prophecy (9:24-27 & chap. 11)? Are the details meant to be seen as foreshadowing future history?

Does this vision have any connection (1) to the vision of chapter 8 and 11:1-35 or (2) is it an extension going back to and extending the little horn of the fourth kingdom (end-time Antichrist) of chapter 7 and 11:36-45? What is the literary context; to which historical setting?

A third option is to see it as referring to the time of Jesus (His Incarnation and earthly life), which would limit it to the fifth kingdom of 2:35, 44-45; 7:9-10, 13-14, 18, 22, 27. This is the option I feel most comfortable with at this point in my study. Passages like this must remain tentative!

This paragraph functions theologically in several ways.

1. God has punished His own people. Sin is an ongoing problem.
2. God will forgive and restore His people. Salvation is always possible.
3. More problems remain for His people (believing Jews and Gentiles).
4. Messiah is coming, but He will be a suffering servant (cf. Isa. 53), a wounded shepherd (cf. Zech. 12-13)
5. God will judge those who attack His people.

One of my concerns with this context is that it is presented in the OT prophetic terms of the "land" promises to Abraham (Gen. 12,15,16), but the NT expands this into a universal perspective! See Special Topic: The Tension Between Old Covenant Prophetic Models and New Covenant Apostolic Models at Zech. 6:12. Daniel is familiar with the Gentile kings to whom YHWH has revealed Himself and they have praised Him. God's people are wider than racial Jews (cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6; Gal. 3:7-9,29; 6:16; I Pet. 2:5,9; 3:6; Rev. 1:6).

At this point please turn to Contextual Insights for chapter 11 and read F, which deals with the nature of apocalyptic literature taken from *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* by D. Brent Sandy, pp. 156-158.

9:24 "seventy weeks" The Hebrew phrase (BDB 988) is literally "seventy units of seven" (or weeks). Numerals were usually FEMININE PLURAL, but here they are MASCULINE PLURAL and this is unusual, possibly to denote its symbolic nature. This "seventy units of seven" relates to the seventy units of Jeremiah's prophecy noted in v. 2. Daniel is being told that there would be a another longer period in Israel's history when the temple would be destroyed again (similar to Ezek. 38-39), but he was to remember that God was in control of all human history and that He would bring creation to its divine purpose.

▣ **"have been decreed"** This Hebrew term "decree" (BDB 367, KB 364) is found only here in the OT (there are three Aramaic terms translated "decree" in 2:4-7:28, but none relate to this Hebrew form). It is related to an Aramaic term which meant "to cut," "cut off," or "decide." This is a *Niphal* PASSIVE form.

The "decree" of v. 24 is parallel to the "decree" (literally "word," BDB 182) of v. 25! Both deal with the restoration of the center of Jewish worship (cf. v. 25). Connected to this restoration is God's eternal redemptive plan (cf. v. 24), which involved the Messiah's being "cut off" (cf. v. 26; Zech. 9-14) and Jerusalem destroyed again (cf. v. 26; Ezek. 38-39).

If one takes the historical period from the permission of Artaxerxes for Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls of the city in 445 B.C.; and if one assumes that "seventy weeks" refers to 490 years; and if one calculates the end of the 69th week as 483 years, then one comes very close to the date of the beginning of Jesus' (1) ministry (i.e. baptism) or (2) crucifixion (the cutting off of the Messiah).

There have been three major theories about this decree related to Persian monarchs: (1) Cyrus II, known as Cyrus the Great, allowed all captive people to return to their homes in 538 B.C. (cf. Isa. 44:26-28; Ezra 1); (2) Artaxerxes to Ezra in 458 B.C. allowed more priests and Levites to return to Jerusalem with Ezra (cf. in Aramaic, Ezra 7:11-26); and (3) Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, 445 B.C. allowed Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls (cf. Neh. 1:3; 2:3-8).

▣ **"for your people and your holy city"** This decree refers to Jerusalem, but which time-frame?

1. Ezra-Nehemiah in the Persian period
2. Maccabees in the Greek period
3. Jesus in the Roman period
4. end-time
5. or is this a recurrent pattern through human history
    a. Covenant disobedience on the part of God's people
    b. the anger of unbelieving humanity against God and His people

▣

NASB, NKJV,
NRSV "to finish the transgression"
TEV "for freeing. . .from sin"
NJB "putting an end to transgression"

The first part of this Hebrew construct means "to finish," "to complete" (BDB 477-8, KB 476, from an Aramaic root "to cease" or "to perish," cf. II Chr. 31:3; Ezra 9:1).

H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, pp. 411-412, says this is the only occurrence of a different Hebrew VERB (BDB 480, KB 476) in the *Piel* form and should be translated "to restrain completely." Both the NASB and NIV note this possibility in a footnote, but use the first option in the translation.

The term "transgression" (BDB 833, "rebel," "revolt," "transgress") is used in Dan. 8 and 9 of several different people and sins.

1. sins of the Jewish people (cf. 8:12-13,23, a different word in 9:11)
2. sins of Jewish leadership that helped Antiochus (cf. 8:12-13,23)
3. sins of Antiochus IV (cf. 8:12-13,23).

Verse 24 is not referring to one particular time or kind of sinning or rebellion, but to the problem of sin, which will ultimately be dealt with, not by Israel, but by the Messiah (cf. Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3; Hebrews).

There are six things mentioned that are part of God's redemptive purpose in issuing the decrees about the seventy units of seven. There are three negative and three positive:

1. the negative:
    a. "finish the transgression"
    b. "make an end of sin"
    c. "make atonement for iniquity"
2. the positive:
    a. "bring in everlasting righteousness"
    b. "seal up the vision of the prophecy"
    c. "anoint the Most Holy" (this refers either to a place [temple] or a person [High Priest])

These seem to have been accomplished by Jesus' incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, but will not be fully consummated until His Second Coming.

▣

NASB "to make an end of sin"
NKJV "to make an end of sins"
NRSV "to put an end to sin"
TEV "sin will be forgiven"
NJB "for placing the seal on sin"

This Hebrew word's basic meaning is (1) "seal up" (BDB 367, KB 364, cf. v. 24f; 12:4) or (2) from a different Hebrew word (BDB 478) "to make an end" (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NIV). The free reign of sin is to be brought to an end.

The term "sin" (BDB 308-309, cf. 9:20) is the general term for missing the mark, goal, or way.

▣

NASB "to make atonement for iniquity"
NKJV "to make reconciliation for iniquity"
NRSV "to atone for iniquity"
TEV "freeing. . .from. . .evil"
NJB "for expiating crime"

The Hebrew phrase "to make atonement" (BDB 497), basically means "to cover," or "to blot out." The possible Aramaic counterpart would be "to wash away" or "to rub off."

There is an obvious parallel in these phrases in v. 24.

1. transgression, 8:12,13; 9:24
2. sin, 9:20,24
3. iniquity, 9:13,16,24

There is a continuing rebellion among fallen humankind. God desires a final closure to the problem (cf. 9:24).

▣

NASB, NKJV,
NRSV "to bring in everlasting righteousness"
TEV "eternal justice established"
NJB "for introducing everlasting uprightness"

The Hebrew word *olam* (i.e. "everlasting," BDB 841) must be interpreted in light of its context. See note on *olam* at 7:18. This context is future culmination or consummation (cf. Isa. 51:6,8; Jer. 23:5-6). Righteousness (BDB 761) is the character (standard) of God. See Special Topic: Righteousness at 4:27. Creation was meant to reflect God's character (cf. I Thess. 4:7; 5:23; II Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:14). See note at 9:7. The goal of salvation is to be like God (cf. Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48). Believers are not only called to heaven at death, but to Christlikeness now. God desires a people who reflect His holiness (cf. Rom. 8:29-30; II Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 2:10; I Thess. 3:13; 4:3; I Pet. 1:15).

▣

NASB, NKJV "to seal up vision and prophecy"
NRSV "to seal both vision and prophet"
TEV "so that the vision and the prophecy will come true"
NJB "for setting the seal on vision and on prophecy"

This Hebrew construct (BDB 367, KB 34, *Qal* INFINITIVE) implies a cessation of revelation either (1) because of the certainty of the events or (2) the culmination of God's redemptive plans for history. Some see this as "fulfill the ministry of the prophets." In this verse "vision" and "prophecy" are hendiadys. He Himself will be among them, no need for others to speak for Him.

▣

NASB	**"to anoint the most holy *place"***
NKJV	**"to anoint the Most Holy"**
NRSV	**"to anoint a most holy place"**
TEV	**"the holy Temple will be rededicated"**
NJB	**"for anointing the holy of holies"**

The Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon (BDB 871) says "the most holy place" refers to Jerusalem and its hills and lists vv. 16 and 20; Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:23; Ezek. 20:40 as some parallels. The NOUN construct is usually used of a place, in this case the restored temple, but the contextual ambiguity allows the phrase to refer to a person (used of a person, Aaron, in I Chr. 23:13). Therefore, I think it refers to the coming Messiah because it is the concluding phrase in a series of culminating phrases. The end has come, victory has been won through God's character and God's provision of (1) the holiness of holinesses (E. J. Young); (2) the Son of Man (7:13); or (3) the Suffering Servant (Isa. 53). The anointed One is anointed in the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21) or the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8-9). Jesus Himself is the new temple (cf. John 2:13-22 [esp. v. 19]; Matt. 26:61; 27:40; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Acts 6:14). He is the new focus of worship (cf. Heb. 9:11-28).

9:25 "from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" If this is to be understood historically then it relates to

1. Cyrus' decree for all the exiled nations under the domination of Assyria and Babylon to return home and restore their national temples (538 B.C., cf Ezra 1:3; 6:3)
2. Artaxerxes' decrees to Ezra (458 B.C.) and especially to Nehemiah (445 B.C.) related to the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem.

It is just possible that the decree refers to God's sovereign redemptive plan referred to as a decree (cf. Jer. 25:9-13). E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary*, p. 201, asserts that it is God who issues the decree which shows the parallel with v. 23 (both use the same Hebrew term, "word," [BDB 182], cf. Jer. 25:13). God's plans are worked out on earth through the decrees of pagan kings (cf. Luke 2:1).

▣ **"Messiah, the Prince"** This may be "an anointed, a prince." Many scholars and commentators have understood "anointed one" to refer to Cyrus II (cf. Isa. 41:2,25; 44:28-45:7; 46:11; 48:15) whom YHWH used to restore His people to the Promised Land. These interpreters then relate vv. 26-27 to the time and activities of Antiochus IV.

The reason that some scholars deny that this phrase refers to the Messiah (cf. NET Bible, Second Beta Ed., p. 1551, footnote 23) is because there is an accent mark (*athnach*) in the Hebrew Masoretic Text, which denotes a disjunction. However, in the first place, the accent marks of the MT are not inspired, but are Jewish rabbinical traditions, and second, this mark does not always denote a complete stop, but here possibly accents the distinction between the time period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (cf. *Christology of the Old Testament*, by E. W. Hengstenberg, pp.415-417; H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel*, pp. 417-426; and *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 318-320).

For me this refers to Jesus the Messiah (cf. 7:13). In verse 26 this title is split into two different persons. The first phrase, "the anointed one" refers to Jesus, while the second phrase, "the people of the Prince," apparently refers" to Titus, the Roman general who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

If this apocalyptic language has a multiple fulfillment aspect then surely an end-time context is possible. The nature of evil and rebellion in both humans and angels remains constant, but the historical details do not. This is not a specific prophecy, but an apocalyptic interpretation of Daniel's prayer request (cf. 9:3). Interpreters' historical and theological biases and presuppositions drive their understanding of these ambiguous texts!

▣ **"*there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. . .one week"** The seventy units of seven will be broken into three time periods: one unit of seven sevens (v. 25); one unit of sixty- two sevens (v. 25); and one unit of one seven (v. 27). The crux for commentators has been how these relate to each other: (1) are they sequential or (2) are there time segments between these three time units? For me this issue is the symbolic nature of the number (i.e. 70) and its previous use in 9:2 (the quote from Jeremiah). This number is used of God's sovereign plan for Israel's punishment (cf. Jer. 25:9-13; 29:10) and restoration (cf. Jer. 30:18-22; 31:38-40). Numerical precision is not the focus, but divine sovereignty over time, history, and redemption!

For a good, brief discussion of the symbolic use of numbers see (1) *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 12, pp. 1256-1259; (2) *Biblical Numerology, A Basic Study of the Use of Numbers in the Bible*, by John J. Davis; or (3) *Biblical Hermeneutics*, by Milton S. Terry, pp. 380-390.

▣ **"it will be built again"** Obviously Daniel was concerned with the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple. To his shock, he learned that there would be subsequent attacks and destructions (cf. Ps. 2; Ezek. 38-39; Matt. 24 [and parallels]; II Thess. 2; Rev. 12-14).

▣

NASB "with the plaza and moat"
NKJV "the street shall be built again, and the wall"
NRSV "with streets and moat"
TEV "streets and strong defenses"
NJB "with squares and ramparts"

John Joseph Owens, *The Analytical Key to the Old Testament*, vol. 4, p. 743, translates these two Hebrew words as "squares" (BDB 932 I, "wide" or "broad") and "moat" (BDB 358 III, "to cut a trench"), but there is no evidence that Jerusalem ever had a defense moat; therefore, possibly "a cut" in the ridge on which a defensive wall was built. This then refers t the city and not the temple.

▣

NASB "even in times of distress"
NKJV "even in troublesome times"
NRSV "in a troubled time"
TEV "but this will be a time of troubles"
NJB "but in a time of trouble"

Rotherham's Emphasized Bible, p. 856, has "even in the end of times," which, it notes, follows the Septuagint and Syriac translations and requires a textual emendation. The MT construct (BDB 848 and 773) has "but in a troubled time." How one interprets vv. 24-27 will set the time-frame as past (Jesus and Titus) or future end-time (Jesus' Second Coming and Antichrist).

9:26
NASB "the Messiah"
NKJV "Messiah"
NRSV "an anointed one"
TEV "God's chosen leader"
NJB "An Anointed One"

The difficulty in interpreting this verse is because of the possible meanings associated with the term Messiah or anointed one (BDB 603):

1. used of Jewish kings (e.g. I Sam. 2:10; 12:3)
2. used of Jewish priests (e.g. Lev. 4:3,5)
3. used of Cyrus (cf. Isa. 45:1)
4. #1 and #2 are combined in Ps. 110 and Zech. 4

5. used of God's special coming, Davidic King to bring in the new age of righteousness
   a. line of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10)
   b. house of Jesse (cf. II Sam. 7)
   c. universal reign (cf. Ps. 2; Isa. 9:6; 11:1-5; Mic. 5:1-4f)

I personally am attracted to the identification of "an anointed one" with Jesus of Nazareth because:

1. the introduction of an eternal Kingdom in chapter 2 during the fourth empire
2. the introduction of "a son of man" in 7:13 being given an eternal kingdom
3. the redemptive clauses of 9:24 which point toward a culmination of fallen world history
4. Jesus' use of the book of Daniel in the NT (cf. Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14)

▣

NASB "will be cut off"
NKJV, NRSV "shall be cut off"
TEV "will be killed"
NJB "put to death"

The Hebrew term (BDB 503, KB 500, *Niphahl* IMPERFECT) literally means "to cut off" or "to cut down." As an example, it is used literally and metaphorically in Jeremiah.

1. literally of trees, Jer. 6:10; 10:3; 22:7; 46:23
2. metaphorically of the death of persons, Jer. 11:19; 50:16

Another covenant usage is its relationship to *berith* ("to cut a covenant"), where an animal was cut in half and the covenant partners walked through the dead animal to signal the consequences of a covenant violation—death (cf. Gen. 15:17; Jer. 11:10; 31:31,32,33; 34:18-19).

The VERB form (here is *Niphal*) is used for the cutting off (death) of people (e.g. Gen. 9:11; 41:36; Isa. 11:13; 29:20; Dan. 9:26). Therefore, this VERB form combined a sacrificial aspect with a covenant aspect—death with a redemptive purpose (i.e. "the suffering servant" of Isa. 52:13-53:12; and "the wounded shepherd" of Zech. 12-13, also note these NT texts: Mark. 10:45; II Cor. 5:21)!

▣

NASB "and have nothing"
NKJV "but not for Himself"
NRSV "and shall have nothing"
TEV "unjustly"
NJB "without his"

This Hebrew term (BDB 34 II) means "to have nothing." It is used in a variety of senses, but all of them are connected to the idea of "nothing." William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 13, says it implies "no successor," but E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 207, says

> "these words are exceedingly difficult, but they seem to indicate that all which should properly belong to the Messiah, He does not have when He dies. This is a very forceful way of setting forth His utter rejection, both by God and man. (e.g. 'We have no king but Caesar,' cried the Jews. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' were Jesus' words from the cross. In that hour of blackness He had nothing, nothing but the guilt of sin of all those for whom He died')."

In these ambiguous symbolic phrases it is so easy to interject one's own theological systems! The ambiguity is purposeful. It is part of the fluidity of apocalyptic genre. We must not turn the original inspired author's purposeful genre ambiguity into our theological or historical specificity! We must read and interpret these Old Covenant texts through the words of Jesus and the New Covenant/New Testament authors (cf. Gal. 3; and the book of Hebrews) and not vice versa! History, further revelation, and progressive revelation help us clarify these ambiguous, apocalyptic biblical passages.

▣ **"the people of the Prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary"** Here the term "prince" (BDB 617) means "leader" (cf. TEV). This same term was used in v. 25 as a description of Messiah; here it means just the opposite, His oppressor (e.g. Lion of Judah of Rev. 5:5 vs. roaring lion of I Pet. 5:8; white horse of Rev. 6 vs. white horse of Rev. 19). This leader brings destruction on Jerusalem and the temple; as did Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV, so too, will Titus and possibly an end-time Antichrist (cf. Matt. 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:43-44). Multiple fulfillment prophecy can be seen in

1. the virgin birth, Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23 (historical birth in Isaiah's day, cf. 7:15-16, as well as the virgin birth of Jesus, cf. LXX quote in Matt. 1:23)
2. the abomination of destruction (Antiochus, Titus and end-time Antichrist, cf. Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:19; Luke 21:20)

If Jesus is the anointed, the Prince of v. 25, then this Prince of v. 26 must be Titus (Calvin) who destroys Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. The temple has never been rebuilt!

▣

NASB, NRSV "its end *will come* with a flood"
NKJV "the end of it *shall be* with a flood"
TEV "the end will come like a flood"
NJB "the end of that prince will be catastrophe"

The question is who or what does "its" refer to.

1. the immediate antecedent, "the people of the Prince"
2. the Prince himself (cf. v. 26)
3. the Messiah (cf. vv. 25, 26)
4. Jerusalem and the temple ("Jerusalem" of v. 25 and "the sanctuary" of v. 26)

It is this kind of ambiguity that characterizes apocalyptic literature. Often the modern interpreters' biases remove the ambiguity and become determinative and dogmatic. Theological systems not inspired texts become the focus!

▣

NASB, NKJV "desolations are determined"
NRSV "desolations are decreed"
TEV "destruction which God has prepared"
NJB "all the devastation decreed"

This *Niphal* PARTICIPLE (BDB 358, KB 356) is different from the term "decreed" in 9:24 (BDB 367, KB 364, "seal"), but they both reflect divine sovereignty so characteristic of apocalyptic literature. God is in control of history, punishment, restoration, and the ultimate restoration of creation!

The crucial question remains, does "the end" in this verse refer to (1) Antiochus; (2) Titus; or (3) the end-time?

9:27
NASB "And he will make a firm covenant"
NKJV "then he will confirm a covenant"
NRSV "he shall make a strong covenant"
TEV "that ruler will have a firm agreement"
NJB "he will strike a firm alliance"

Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon (BDB 149, KB 175) gives the *Niphil* translation "confirm a covenant." The word's basic meaning is "to be strong," or "to be mighty." The Aramaic counterpart implies "to compel or force" with the connotation of being overbearing. This is not the usual Hebrew idiom (BDB 136, "to cut a covenant") used to denote the ratification of a covenant. This phrase's meaning must remain ambiguous.

Is this meant to be a literal historical detail of the end-time or is this another apocalyptic symbol of believers' poor judgment in making any agreement with the rulers of this world/age?

The ambiguity of this phrase is confirmed by the fact that some scholars relate this to Jesus (E. J. Young), while others relate it to an end-time Antichrist (H. C. Leupold). What fluidity!

▣

NASB "with the many"
NKJV, NRSV "with many"
TEV, NJB "with many people"

This Hebrew term (BDB 912 I) has the DEFINITE ARTICLE "the many." This group is identified by one's interpretation of the time-frame.

CHART OF THE THEORIES RELATED TO VERSES 24-27

	In Third Kingdom Antiochus IV (cf. 8:9)	In Fourth Kingdom Incarnation of Jesus (2:34,35)	In a Future Rome-Like Kingdom 2nd Coming of Jesus
Who issues the Decree of v. 25	Jeremiah, Dan. 9:2; Jer. 25:9-13	Cyrus (538 B.C.) Isa. 44:20-28; Isa. 45:1 Ezra 1:24; 6:3-5	Artaxerxes (444 B.C., cf. Neh. 2:1-8) Ezra 7:11-26
Who is an anointed One cut off in v. 26	Jewish High Priest Onias III or Joshua	Jesus at Calvary	Jesus at Calvary
Who are the people of the Prince who destroy Jerusalem in v. 26	Antiochus IV in 168 B.C.	Titus in A.D. 70	The Antichrist at the eschaton
Who makes the Covenant in v. 27	Antiochus IV in 165 B.C.	Messiah Heb. 7-11	The Antichrist 70th week
What or who is the abomination in v. 27	Antiochus IV offers pig on the altar of the Temple in 168 B.C.	Messiah's death ended Jewish sacrificial system Heb. 7-11	Antichrist breaks the Covenant with the Jews during the Tribulation Period (dispensationalism)

▣

NASB, NKJV, NRSV "for one week"
TEV "for seven years"
NJB "for the space of a week"

This is the last of three divisions of the 70 weeks of v. 24.

▣ **"in the middle of the week"** Literally this means "in the midst of the seven."

▣ **"he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering"** This is very similar to what Antiochus IV did to the temple sacrifices. Does this demand an end-time temple or does this show that fallen humanity wants control over religion?

Some try to take Daniel literally and then interpret Revelation literally. But this is not the way to show respect for Scripture! If the inspired writer chose apocalyptic language as the literary genre to reveal his message, moderns have no right in the name of conservatism to ignore the genre and force the ancient author into a modern systematic theological grid! Genre is a literary contract with the reader on how to interpret the message. It seems better to let the NT revelation interpret ambiguous OT

prophetic/apocalyptic texts. Christ is the fulfillment of the OT, not a restored Israel! The goal of redemptive history is Jesus and a world-wide gospel, not a Palestinian nationalism!

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"on the wing of abominations"**
NRSV	**"an abomination that desolates"**
TEV	**"the Awful Horror will be placed on the highest point of the Temple"**
NJB	**"on the wing of the Temple will be the appalling abomination"**

This construct is literally "the extremity of abomination" (BDB 489 and 1055). The "extremity" (BDB 489) can refer to the wing of the temple or to the ultimacy of the abomination (BDB 1055, e.g. Antiochus having a pig sacrificed on the altar and an idol to Zeus set up in the Holy Place of the temple). In the OT, abominations referred to idol worship (e.g. I Kgs. 11:7; II Kgs. 23:13; II Chr. 15:8). Jesus used this phrase to speak of the coming of the Roman army and the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:20, 21).

▣ **"one who makes desolate. . .the one who makes desolate"** In Hebrew "one who" may be impersonal, which would refer to the ruins of the temple or if personal, to God's antagonist.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Jeremiah's prophecy relate to Daniel 9?
2. Why is the interpretation of verses 24-27 so important and so difficult?
3. How long is seventy units of seven?
4. What decree is verse 25 speaking of?
5. Who is the "Anointed One, a prince that is cut off" in verse 26?
6. When does the seventieth week begin and end?
7. Does this prophecy have anything to do with believing Gentiles?
8. Does Jesus ever reaffirm the OT hope of a restored Israel with a functioning temple as the goal of history?

DANIEL 10:1-11:1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of the Glorious Man	Vision of the Last Days	Daniel's Vision by the Tigris River	The Vision of the Man Dressed in Linen
10:1-3	10:1	10:1	10:1
	10:2-9	10:2-3	10:2-6
10:4-9		10:4-6	
		10:7-10	10:7-8
			The Apparition of the Angel
Prophecies Concerning Persia and Greece			10:9-14
10:10-14	10:10-14		
		10:11	
		10:12-14	
10:15-17	10:15-17	10:15-17	10:15-17
10:18-11:4	10:18-11:4	10:18-19a	
		10:19b	The Prelude to the Prophecy
		10:20-11:2a	10:20-11:2a

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Chapter 10 is an introduction to the message of chapters 11-12. Chapters 10-12 are a literary unit.

B. This literary unit is the only place in the biblical record that discusses this angelic dimension as it relates to human events and history. However, remember this is apocalyptic imagery. It is dubious that doctrine can be built on this text. However, it should also function as a warning to us not to assume we understand all the elements of spiritual warfare!

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:1

[1]In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and *one of* great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.

10:1 "third year of Cyrus" This seems to contradict 1: 21, but it means that Daniel lived during the entire exilic period and into the Persian period. Old Testament dates are not as precise as our modern dating systems.

▣ **"king of Persia"** Cyrus was of half Median descent (his mother) and half Persian descent (his father).

In v. 13 "an angelic prince of Persia" is identified with "the kings of Persia." This is a corporate understanding of a national entity or a guardian advocate of an angelic realm. It is so hard to know in Daniel what is literal and historical and what is apocalyptic and just supplied for impact! Since this is the only place (except Deut. 32:8 in the LXX) where national angels are mentioned I think it best to yield to the genre and maintain its symbolic nature.

▣ **"the message was true"** The term "message" in NASB is literally "word" (BDB 182, cf. 9:2,12,23,25; 10:1,6,9,11,12,15). It is translated as "matter," "word," "message," or "revelation." This word is used five times in chapter 9 and eleven times in chapter 10. It is the term used in 12:4,9 as to what Daniel is to "seal up."

The term "truth" (BDB 54) is the OT counterpart to *pistis* in Koine Greek. Its basic meaning is to be firm and, thereby, faithful and true. Here it is often used of the truthfulness of what is spoken (cf. Deut. 22:20; I Kgs. 10:6; II Chr. 9:5).

The angel's message is "true," but it is also revealed in apocalyptic imagery. Truth is not relating to the symbols or details, but to the overall message, which is found in chapters 11-12. Genre identification and characteristics have become the crucial hermeneutical tool in modern interpretation. Two helpful books in this area are

1. Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart, *How To Read the Bible For All Its Worth*
2. D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*: *Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*

▣

NASB "one of great conflict"
NKJV "the appointed time *was* long"
NRSV "it concerned a great conflict"
TEV "but extremely hard to understand"
NJB "of a great conflict"

Daniel was reminded that the Jews' relationship to the world powers would be one of continuing conflict (cf. Ps. 2; Ezek. 38-39). It is also possible this refers to the surprising angelic conflict of vv. 10-21. The TEV takes it as referring to the angel's message itself, which was hard to grasp (cf. Job 14:14).

▣ **"had an understanding of the vision"** This was Daniel's gift (cf. 7:15, 28; 8:27), but even so he still needed an angelic interpreter.

It is uncertain to what particular vision this refers.

1. the angelic conflict of 10:12-21
2. the literary unit of chapters 10-12, which would make the vision the content of chapters 11-12.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:2-9

[2]"In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. [3]I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed. [4]On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, [5]I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a *belt of pure* gold of Uphaz. [6]His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult. [7]Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. [8]So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. [9]But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground."

10:2 "mourning" This refers to fasting (v. 3) and prayer. The exact reason is not stated: (1) for the sinning of God's people as in 9:1-19; (2) for God's mercy on His people both now and in the tension-filled future (v. 1); (3) for God's destruction of Israel's enemies and God's redemptive plan for all the world through Israel; or (4) for greater understanding relating to this vision.

▣ **"for three entire weeks"** This is the same period as the angelic conflict of v. 13. Again, in Daniel, time is often expressed in weeks. For a good discussion of "week" see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, pp. 186-188.

10:3 "did not eat" This was not a total fast.

▣ **"any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth"** The implication of these words is that Daniel normally ate and drank these items, obviously he had come to some arrangement about his food (cf. 1:8-13, for the same concept).

10:4 "on the twenty-fourth day of the first month" This date reveals that Daniel fasted through the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. Exod. 12; Hag. 1:15; 2:10, 18, 20; Zech. 1:7).

▣ **"I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris"** Apparently he was on a governmental assignment, as in 8:27.

10:5 "a certain man dressed in linen" It is interesting that the angels in Daniel look like human males.

1. *Adam*, 8:16; 10:16,18
2. *Ish*, 9:21; 10:5; 12:6,7
3. *Gebar*, 3:25; 8:15

All angels in the Bible are masculine except in Zech. 5:9.

This bright white linen (BDB 94 I) is often associated with angelic appearances (cf. Gen. 18:2; Jdgs. 13:3,6; Ezek. 9:2,3,11; 10:2,6,7; Dan. 8:16; 9:21; 12:6,7; Luke 24:4 and Acts 1:10). This angel is described in ways that often depict God and the resurrected Christ in Rev. 1. This angel is associated with YHWH's throne.

▣ **"gold of Uphaz"** This could refer to a place of origin (cf. Jer. 10:9, possibly the same as Ophir of I Kgs. 9:28; I Chr. 29:4; Job 22:24; 28:16; Isa. 13:12) or a grade of smelted ore (cf. I Kgs. 10:18), but this would require a textual emendation (cf. TEV, NJB, NIV).

The exalted Christ is also described this same way in Rev. 1:13 and the seven angels with seven plagues are described this way in Rev. 15:6. This dress denotes a heavenly origin, near the throne of God.

10:6 "His body" This description is similar to the exalted Christ of Rev. 1:13-16 (E. J. Young thinks it is the pre-incarnate Christ); however, vv. 11ff show that he is an angel sent to inform Daniel. Could the pre-incarnate Christ be thwarted for three weeks by a national angel? I think not!

▣ **"beryl"** This (BDB 1076 I) was a type of jewel (cf. Ezek. 28:13) either yellow jasper (cf. Exod. 28:20; 39:13) or golden in color (cf. Ezek. 1:16; 10:9), associated with (1) one of the stones on the High Priest's vest (cf. Exod. 28:20; (2) part of Ezekiel's vision of God's throne chariot (cf. Ezek. 1:16; 10:9); (3) one of the precious stones of the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel's vision of 28:13; and (4) part of the new Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 21:20).

▣ **"his face had the appearance of lightning"** This brightness of face matches the brightness of the linen. The term "appearance" (BDB 909) is used of Daniel's "visions" in 8:16,26,27; 9:23 and 10:1.

▣ **"his eyes were like flaming torches"** This is used of the Exalted Christ in Rev. 1:14; 2:18; 19:12, where it refers to His knowledge and insight.

▣ **"his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze"** This is used of the cherubim's feet in Ezek. 1:7 and of the exalted Christ in Rev. 1:15; 2:15. All of these descriptions emphasize the brightness or radiance of the angel. He was dressed as those who are close to God.

▣

NASB "a tumult"
NKJV, NRSV,
NJB "a multitude"
TEV "a great crowd"

This Hebrew term (BDB 242) is translated "murmur," "roar," "crowd," or "multitude." In Ezekiel this word and "the sound of many waters" are parallel (cf. Ezek. 1:24; 43:2). It is used of the exalted Christ in Rev. 1:15. In Rev. 14:2; 19:6, it is used of the sound of the authoritative voice of one from God.

10:7 "while the men who were with me did not see the vision" Daniel, along with other Persian officials, was on a government mission (cf. 8:27). This sounds very much like Paul's description of Jesus' appearances to him in Acts, chapters 9, 22, 26. This vision was for only one!

▣ **"dread fell on them"** They sensed a supernatural presence.

10:8 "natural color turned to a deathly pallor" The Hebrew phrase is very intense. This vision scared Daniel badly (cf. vv. 16-17; 7:28; 8:27).

10:9 "sound of his word" Twice in verse 9 Daniel heard this voice, but passed out before he could receive the message (cf. 8:18; Jer. 31:26; Zech. 4:1; Rev. 1:17).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:10-14

[10]Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. [11]He said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. [12]Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. [13]But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. [14]Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet *future*."

10:10 "a hand touched me" Angels did this (*Qal* PERFECT) to encourage and strengthen those to whom they appeared (cf. vv. 16, 18; I Kgs 19:5-7; as did Jesus. Rev.1:17).

▣ **"set me trembling. . .on my hands and knees"** This (BDB 631, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is an idiom for physical strengthening. Daniel arose from being prostrate on the ground to kneeling on his hands and knees.

10:11, 19

NASB	**"man of high esteem"**
NKJV	**"man greatly beloved"**
NRSV	**"greatly beloved"**
TEV	**"Daniel, God loves you"**
NJB	**"you are a man specially chosen"**

See note at 9:23, where this same expression is used of Daniel by an angel.

▣ **"understand the words"** Not only was Daniel gifted by God for the understanding and interpreting of dreams and visions (cf. 1:17), but several times the angel announced that a special understanding was provided Daniel (cf. 8:16,17). Daniel must cooperate in this process and remain alert.

▣ **"stand upright"** This is similar to Ezek. 2:1. Daniel was first on his face, then on his hands and knees, and now he must stand up and hear the message.

10:12 "Do not be afraid" This is apparently a *Qal* JUSSIVE in meaning but not form, as is v. 19. This is YHWH's recurrent message (sometimes through angels) to His people (e.g. Gen. 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; 35:17; 43:23; Deut. 3:22; 7:18; 20:1; 31:6,8; Isa. 7:4; 35:4; 40:9; 41:10,13,14; 43:5; 44:2; 54:4; Jer. 30:10; 46:27-28). God is for us and with us (cf. Josh. 1:5-7; Isa. 43:2,5).

▣ **"from the first day. . .your words were heard"** God heard Daniel's prayer and sent an angel to bring the response.

▣ **"humbling yourself before God"** This term's basic meaning is "to be bowed down" (BDB 776 III). In the *Hithpael* form it is also found in Ezra 8:21, where it is used of prayer and fasting (cf. 9:3,20; 10:2-3; also note Ps. 35:13).

This same Hebrew word is used in the Psalms to assert that God cares for and hears the humble (cf. Ps. 10:16-17; 69:32) and the afflicted (cf. Ps. 9:11-16; 10:12-15). The NT continues this theme about

God's special care and rescue of the humble-minded in Matt. 18:4; 23:12; Luke 18:14; James 4:10; I Pet. 5:6.

10:13, 20 "prince of the kingdom of Persia" This is a different Hebrew word than "prince" of 9:25-26 (BDB 617). This is the Hebrew term (BDB 978) which is translated "chieftain," "ruler," "official," "captain," or "prince" and usually in the Bible refers to different kinds of leaders. It is often used in late Hebrew for angels (cf. v. 21; 12:1; Josh. 5:14,15).

This seems to refer to the national angel of Persia (cf. Deut. 29:26; 32:8 in the Septuagint and Isa. 24:21).

10:13 "withstanding me" This term (BDB 617) means "to place or stand in front of." It is related to the term for "prince" ("the one in front") in 9:25,26. In this context it is used both positively (cf. v. 16) and negatively (here).

▣ **"for twenty-one days"** This is another use of the symbolic number seven (7x3). It seems that three or three and one half are symbolic in Daniel of an incomplete or divinely shortened time and was not meant to be understood literally!

This chapter is unique in the Bible in its presentation of the spiritual realm. It records a spiritual struggle between angelic powers. Is this meant to doctrinally inform us about spiritual conflict or is this another example of apocalyptic details? I just do not believe we should base doctrine on these kinds of passages, just as I believe we should not base doctrine on parables or poetry. Doctrines should be based on clear teaching passages and other genres serve as illustrations. Since this chapter is unique we must not develop an elaborate angeology, as did the rabbis who were theologically affected by Iranian (Zoroastrian) dualism. Can the will of the one true God be thwarted or even delayed by rebellious angels?

▣ **"Michael"** His name means "Who is like God?" (BDB 567) He is the national angel of Israel. He is one of two angels named in the Bible (cf. v. 21; 12:1; Jude 9 and Rev. 12:7). He is not the pre-incarnate Christ.

▣ **"one of the chief princes"** This ADJECTIVE (BDB 911) is used in the sense of "first in rank." Michael is called "the archangel" in Jude 9, while in Rev. 12:7-9, he leads an angelic army against the dragon (Satan) and his angels. The only other place this terminology is used is in the rapture passage of I Thess. 4:16.

From the Bible itself we know of angelic levels.

1. Cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Exod. 25:18,22; Ezek. 10)
2. Seraphim (Isa. 6)
3. messenger angels (Daniel, often)
4. guardian angels (Matt. 18)
5. archangels (Dan. 10:13; 12:1; Jude 9)
6. national angels (Dan. 10:13,20; LXX of Deut. 29:26; 32:8; also Deut. 32:8 has now been found in a Hebrew fragment in the Dead Sea Scrolls).

Exactly how these relate to the demonic (e.g. Rom. 8:38-39; Eph. 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:15) levels of Paul's writing is uncertain.

In apocalyptic Jewish literature there are:

1. the seven angels of the Presence (cf. I Enoch 20:1-8; 81:5; 90:21-22; II Esd. 4:1; 5:20)
2. archangels (I Enoch 40; 87:2-3; 88:1; 90:31)
3. guardian angels (I Enoch 20:5 and DSS texts)

For a good discussion see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., pp. 457-475.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANGELS AND THE DEMONIC

A. Ancient peoples were animists. They attributed personality to forces of nature, animals, natural objects, and traits of human personality. Life is explained through the interaction of these spiritual entities with mankind.

B. This personification became polytheism (many gods). Usually the demonic (*genii*) were lesser gods or demigods (good or evil) that impacted individual human lives.

1. Mesopotamia, chaos and conflict
2. Egypt, order and function
3. Canaan, see W. F. Albright's *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, Fifth Edition, pp. 67-92

C. The OT does not dwell on or develop the subject of lesser gods, angels, or the demonic, probably because of its strict monotheism (cf. Exod. 8:10; 9:14; 15:11; Deut. 4:35,39; 6:4; 33:26; Ps. 35:10; 71:19; 86:6; Isa. 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7; Mic. 7:18). It does mention the false gods of the pagan nations (*Shedim*, cf. Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37) and it does name some of them.

1. *Se'im* (satyrs or hair demons, cf. Lev. 17:7; II Chr. 11:15)
2. *Lilith* (female, a seducing demon, cf. Isa. 34:14)
3. *Mavet* (Hebrew term for death used for Canaanite god of the underworld, *Mot*, cf. Isa. 28:15,18; Jer. 9:21; and possibly Deut. 28:22)
4. *Resheph* (plague, cf. Deut. 33:29; Ps. 78:48; Hab. 3:5)
5. *Dever* (pestilence, cf. Ps. 91:5-6; Hab. 3:5)
6. *Az'azel* (name uncertain, but possibly a desert demon or place name, cf. Lev. 16:8,10,26)

(These examples are taken from *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 5, p. 1523.)

However, there is no dualism or angelic independence from YHWH in the OT. Satan is a servant of YHWH (cf. Job 1-3; Zech. 3), not an enemy (cf. A. B. Davidson, *A Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 300-306).

D. Judaism developed during the Babylonian exile (586-538 B.C.). It was theologically influenced by the Persian personified dualism of Zoroastrianism, a good high god called *Mazda* or *Ormazd* and an evil opponent called *Ahriman*. This allowed within post-exilic Judaism the personified dualism between YHWH and His angels and Satan and his angels or demons.

Judaism's theology of personified evil is explained and documented well in Alfred Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, appendix XIII (pp. 749-863) and XVI (pp. 770-776). Judaism personified evil in three ways.

1. Satan or Sammael
2. the evil intent (*yetzer hara*) within mankind
3. the Death Angel

Edersheim characterizes these as (1) the Accuser; (2) the Tempter; and (3) the Punisher (vol. 2, p. 756). There is a marked theological difference between post-exilic Judaism and the NT presentation and explanation of evil.

E. The NT, especially the Gospels, asserts the existence and opposition of evil spiritual beings to humanity and to YHWH (in Judaism Satan was an enemy to mankind, but not to God). They oppose God's will, rule, and kingdom.

Jesus confronted and expelled these demonic beings, also called (1) unclean spirits (cf. Luke 4:36; 6:18) or (2) evil spirits (cf. Luke 7:21; 8:2). Jesus clearly made a distinction between illness (physical and mental) and the demonic. He demonstrated His power and spiritual insight by recognizing and exorcizing these evil spirits. They often recognized Him and attempted to

address Him, but Jesus rejected their testimony, demanded their silence, and expelled them. Exorcisms are a sign of the defeat of Satan's kingdom.

There is a surprising lack of information in the NT Apostolic letters on this subject. Exorcism is never listed as a spiritual gift nor is a methodology or procedure for its use given for future generations of ministers or believers.

F. Evil is real; evil is personal; evil is present. Neither its origin nor purpose is revealed. The Bible asserts its reality and aggressively opposes its influence. There is no ultimate dualism in reality. God is in total control; evil is defeated and judged and will be removed from creation.

G. God's people must resist evil (cf. James 4:7). They cannot be controlled by it (cf. I John 5:18), but they can be tempted and their witness and influence damaged (cf. Eph. 6:10-18). Evil is a revealed part of the Christian's world-view. Modern Christians have no right to redefine evil (the demythologizing of Rudolf Bultmann); depersonalize evil (the social structures of Paul Tillich), nor attempt to explain it completely in psychological terms (Sigmund Freud). Its influence is pervasive, but defeated. Believers need to walk in the victory of Christ!

10:14 "latter days" This Hebrew term (BDB 31) basically means "end." It is used in a variety of ways, but in this context, it refers to the last part of human history. Brown, Driver, Briggs Lexicon define it as "a prophetic phrase denoting the final period of the history so far as the speaker's perspective reaches, the sense thus varies with the context, but it often equals the ideal or Messianic future" (p. 31).

1. Gen. 49:1 - Israel's possession of Canaan
2. Num. 24:14; Deut. 4:30 - Israel's return from exile
3. Deut. 31:29; Jer. 23:30; 30:24 - Israel's continuing rebellion
4. Isa. 2:2; Ezek. 38:8; Hos. 3:5 - Israel restored and exalted
5. Ezek. 38:16 - another attack on Israel after the return to the Promised Land
6. Jer. 48:47; 49:39 - God restoring the nations to peace and prosperity

The real question about this phrase is the time-frame. For those who believe that all OT prophecies must be literally fulfilled to national Israel (dispensationalism), some (if not most) of these "latter days" texts have not been fulfilled and, therefore, must be future. Since these speak specifically of national Israel and not the church, then a future secret rapture to remove the church from history must be proposed. Then the book of Revelation becomes a strictly Jewish message with the millennium functioning as the fulfillment.

Neither Jesus nor any NT writer reaffirms these national prophecies. The OT prophets saw a new day in terms of their OT faith, but God's fulfillment was richer, wider, deeper, and inclusive. The gospel is for all. Jerusalem is not a city in Palestine, but a metaphor for heaven in Rev. 21. These inspired prophets saw as far as God chose to allow, but what they saw was partial (cf. Heb. 1:1-3).

▣ **"for the vision pertains to the days yet *future*"** A similar phrase is used in 8:26 to refer to Antiochus IV's reign, while in 2:28; 12:4,9 similar words seem to refer to the end of time. The future is often determined by the understanding or historical perspective of the human writer! The really hard interpretive issue in Daniel's visions is to what future time period they refer. Most of Daniel's visions relate to the second (Medo-Persian) and third (Greece) kingdoms. However, certain texts could relate to the end-time antichrist (cf. 7:7-8,11,23-28; 9:24-27; 11:36-45). These very passages could refer to Jesus' first coming or Jesus' second coming, which are telescoped together in the OT. Modern interpreters must not push the ambiguous details of this genre into a systematic eschatology which dominates NT prophecies. Neither Jesus nor other NT writers reaffirm OT nationalistic exclusivistic prophecies relating to Israel. We dare not allow the OT to interpret the NT (cf. Matt. 5:17-19; Gal. 3; Hebrews). The Messiah

comes for all (cf. Gen. 3:15), not just Israel. Israel is the parenthesis and is not the focus of the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:15-17

15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, "O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me."

10:15-17 A paraphrase of Daniel's words in verses 16-17 is, "I know I am blessed to have this vision, but I am so drained physically that I can't comprehend it."

10:16

NASB "one who resembled a human being"
NKJV "*one* having the likeness of the sons of men"
NRSV "one in human form"
TEV "the angel who looked like a human being"
NJB "someone looking like a man"

This is literally "one in the likeness of the sons of men" this concept has been used for

1. the Messiah, 7:13
2. Daniel, 8:17
3. an angel, 10:16

Angels are identified as male humans.

1. MASCULINE, SINGULAR PRONOUN, 7:16
2. Gabriel called "man" (*geber*) in 8:15 and *ish* in 9:21
3. several powerful angels
   a. *Adam*, 8:16
   b. *Adam*, 10:16,18
   c. *ish*, 10:5
   d. *ish*, 12:6,7

▣ **"touching my lips"** This is a symbolic gesture of empowering to speak. It is used in the sense of a prophetic call in Isa. 6:7 and Jer. 1:9. In this context Daniel was still physically and emotionally unable to interact with the angelic messenger (cf. vv. 16-17) so the angel had to touch him again (there is even a third touch in v. 18).

▣ **"as a result of the vision"** These supernatural revelations were overwhelming (cf. 4:19; 7:15,28; 8:17,27; 10:8,9). See note at 4:19.

▣

NASB, NJB "anguish"
NKJV "sorrows"
NRSV "such pains"
TEV "makes me so weak"

This Hebrew term (BDB 852 IV) originally referred literally to the pain of childbirth (cf. I Sam. 4:19). It came to be used as a metaphor of terrible circumstances (cf. Isa. 13:8; 21:3). This same metaphorical

usage of the birth pains of the new age is found in Mark 13:8. Daniel's vision of the "latter days" and its interpretation use this word play about "pain" and the end-time events about to unfold to him.

10:17 This is obviously symbolic language describing Daniel's awe at the vision he has seen and the majesty of the angelic visitor. This figurative hyperbolic language is characteristic of apocalyptic literature.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:18-11:1

[18] Then *this* one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. [19]He said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!" Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, "May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me." [20]Then he said, "Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. [21]However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. (Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these *forces* except Michael your prince. [11:1]In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.")

10:19 "O man of high esteem" See note at 10:11.

▣ **"do not be afraid"** See note at 10:12.

▣ **"Peace be with you"** This is the only occurrence of this NOUN (or VERB) in Daniel. It means (BDB 1022) "completeness," "soundness," "welfare," "peace." It is used often in Isaiah and Jeremiah. This same concept is expressed by Jesus (only in John) to His disciples (cf. 14:27; 16:33; 20:19,21,26).

▣ **"take courage and be courageous"** This is YHWH's message to Joshua after Moses' death (cf. Josh. 1:6,7,9). Humans need these words of encouragement. The spiritual realm is overwhelming!

▣ **"But I shall now return to fight"** This is a difficult verse to interpret. This angelic being has been attacked, rescued and now goes back into the spiritual fray. The spiritual conflict continues. The conflict involves world powers, historical empires, but also spiritual beings. God's will is sure, but not without opposition. Daniel's prayer for understanding interrupts the conflict, but does not alter it! God's sovereignty controls history (cf. v. 21), but there is still tension in this period of fallenness, both in the physical and spiritual realms.

10:20 "the prince of Persia" In 8:20 it combines the racial entities of Media and Persia into the third empire of Daniel's visions (i.e. chapters 2, 7, and 8). Here it just mentions the dominant one of the two. If this literally refers to national angels, how could there be just one angel? The same is true for Greece, which will divide into several regional empires after the death of Alexander the Great.

▣ **"the prince of Greece"** This is another national angel (see note at v. 13). God's people will be affected by both of these nations. They may be corporate, national metaphors.

10:21

NASB	**"stands firmly. . .encouragement"**
NKJV	**"upholds. . .to confirm"**
NRSV	**"contends against. . .to support"**
TEV	**"help. . .helping"**
NJB	**"to lend me support. . .give support"**

This is the same Hebrew term (BDB 304, KB 302) which basically means "to be firm," "to grow firm," or "to be strong." In 10:21 it is in the *Hithpael* form and in 11:1 it is in the *Hiphil* form. Angels serve rulers and nations (cf. 10:13,20,21). As Michael served, protected, and encouraged Israel, this angel did the same for Darius the Mede, so as to fulfill God's will in history and in redemption.

▣ **"inscribed in the writing of truth"** The term "inscribed" (BDB 957, KB 1293) is an Aramaic loan-word found only here in the OT. Daniel has mentally reversed back to Aramaic.

This is metaphorical and either refers to (1) God's accurate records (like "the books," 7:10; 12:1) or (2) God's plan for history and mankind is sure (cf. Ps. 139:16). The contents of this book are the revelation of chapters 11-12. God is in complete control of future historical events, especially as they relate to His eternal redemptive plan.

10:21-11:1 Notice that NASB and NKJV have a parenthesis, which begins in 10:21 and continues through 11:1. The person speaking is the angel who touched Daniel three times (cf. 10:10-21). The context implies that it is the same majestic angel described in 10:5-9. It is this angel who provided protection to Dairus the Mede (see full note at 5:31) which, I believe, is a first-year throne name for Cyrus (cf. Isa. 44:28-45:1).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is there a problem between Daniel 1:21 and 10:1?
2. Why was Daniel mourning (fasting)?
3. What does Daniel's physical condition after his encounter with the angelic world say to us?
4. What do verses 13 and 20 say about the relation between history and the unseen world?
5. How can angelic conflict and opposition effect God's will?

DANIEL 11

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
	Interpretation of the Vision of History Unfolding	The Kingdoms of Egypt and Syria	Early Struggles Between the Seleucids and Ptolemies
	11:2-4	11:2b	11:2b-4
Warring Kings of North and South		11:3-4	
11:5-10	11:5-6a	11:5-9	11:5-18
	11:6b-9		
	11:10-13	11:10-12	
11:11-13			
		11:13-16	
11:14-28	11:14-19		
		11:17-19	
			11:19-20
	11:20-28	11:20	
		The Evil King of Syria	Antiochus Epiphanes
		11:21-24	11:21-24
		11:25-28	11:25-26
The Northern King Blasphemes			11:27-30
11:29-35	11:29-35	11:29-30a	
		11:30b-35	
			11:31-35
11:36-39	11:36-39	11:36-39	11:36-39
The Northern King's Conquests			The End of the Persecution
11:40-45	11:40-45	11:40-45	11:40-41
			11:42-12:1

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This chapter is the central revelation of the angel to Daniel, which began in chapter 10 and concludes in chapter 12.

B. It was surprising to Daniel because it revealed to him that God's people would suffer continuing hardships, not because of their sin (as they did in the Exile), but because they are the people of God. This chapter continues the theme of the entire book, which is that human fallen governments are opposed to God. Each empire has become more and more anti-God. This culminates in the fourth empire of Rome which is a type of end-time anti-God human government (cf. Rev. 16-17).

C. Verses 2-20 describe in detail the history of the struggle between two of the dynasties of Alexander's generals who fought over Palestine. They are the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria/Babylon. These verses relate to the historical period of 323 B.C.-165 B.C. Good sources for a historical perspective are
   1. F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations*
   2. *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 8
   3. a Jewish perspective in I and II Maccabees and Josephus' *Antiquities*

D. Verses 21-35, although less specific, relate to the eighth Seleucid ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

E. Verses 36-45 relate to either (1) Antiochus IV or (2) the Antichrist at the end-time. There has been much disagreement among commentators about verses 21-45. See note at v. 36.

F. This chapter is so very detailed. Were these historical details (i.e. vv. 2-35) the major intent of the inspired author? The genre he chose says "No!" Let me quote several sentences from a new and exciting book on prophetic and apocalyptic literature by D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*.
   1. From chapter 2, "What Makes Prophecy Problematic?"
      a. "the question is whether emotional language is necessarily exact language," p. 41
      b. "hyperboles, in effect, stretch the truth in order to increase the impact of the words," p. 41
      c. "a prophet's intent may be to express emotion more than exactness," p. 41
      d. "at what level are readers supposed to understand the prophetic visions—every detail? The overall picture?" p. 48
   2. From chapter 3, "How Does the Language of Prophecy Work?"
      a. "if we fail to grasp the inherent metaphorical nature of language, we fail to understand prophecy," p. 59

3. From chapter 5, "How Does the Language of Apocalyptic Work?"
    a. Are the details in the vision allusive and symbolic or precise and explicit? Generally, the images lack precision," p. 117
    b. "anticipating the details of political events of the fourth through the second centuries raises the issue whether the point of the vision is the details or the overall impact," p. 119
    c. "but we must not begin with the specific lest we fail to grasp the global!" p. 122
    d. "it is also expected with the nature of apocalyptic language that some details may simply be for effect; stated another way, some details may be make-believe," p. 124
    e. "details may have no particular significance other than to give the account more emotive power," p. 126
    f. "there is a certain amount of futility; therefore, in trying to determine the significance of all the details of apocalyptic visions," p. 126
    g. "to read the Apocalypse with a microscope, even striving to decipher the significance of the most minute detail, defrauds the genre of it intended function," p. 127
    h. "understanding the orality of the Apocalypse underscores the point that correct interpretation pays more attention to the overall impression of the visions than to the individual details," p. 127
    i. "from the vision in Daniel 8 we learn that while apocalyptic may seem on the surface to describe the future in detail, in point of fact, it does not. Some details may in the end match up with a precise event, but it would have been impossible to see that in advance," p. 128
4. From chapter 6, "How Have Prophecies Been Fulfilled?"
    a. "the already fulfilled prophecies demonstrate a pattern of translucence rather than transparency. The intent was apparently not to give specific information about the future," p. 146
    b. "figures of speech abound in the poetry of prophecy. That should suggest that correct understanding of prophetic poetry is often not possible until after the fulfillment," p. 150
    c. "if we grasp the intent of prophecy as primarily prosecution and persuasion, we will not expect it to reveal details of the future," p. 154
5. Chapter 7, "How Will Prophecies Be Fulfilled?"
    a. "because prophecy is poetic, it is inherently ambiguous and in some ways less precise," p. 158
    b. "given the nature of prophecy, we should probably deduce that it offers panorama, not close-up details," p. 163
    c. "prophecy and apocalyptic: it is a stained-glass window, not a crystal ball," p. 184
    d. "the function of the prophets' language was to draw attention to basic ideas about the future, not to reveal precisely what will happen and when it will happen," p. 184
6. Conclusion
    a. "the fundamental question is, does the language of prophecy intend to give us details from which we can preconstruct how the future will unfold?" p. 206
    b. "biblical prophecies were generally not understood before they were fulfilled," p. 199

This perspective has helped me as I struggled with 9:24-27. It is less helpful with chapter 11 because there are so many corroborated historical details from v. 2 to v. 35. Verses 36-45 parallel 7:7-8,11,24-25 and 9:24-27. These seem to fit into Jesus' words in Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Paul's words in I and II Thess.; and John's words in the Revelation. However, as the NT authors saw fulfilled OT prophecy only after Jesus' life, these end-time events are not all literal, historical predictions. Only time will tell. But for those last generation of hurting and dying believers,

many (but not all) of them may be very literal to encourage them to faith and hope (which is the purpose of all apocalyptic literature).

G. The major truth of this chapter relates to the coming suffering of God's people. Although they look defeated by fallen, organized humanity, they are victorious through their God who is in control of all history (cf. 11:1, 12, 27, 29, 35, 36, 45).

PERSONS SEEMINGLY ALLUDED TO IN VERSES 2-20

A. "three more kings" (v. 2) Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis (522 B.C.) and Darius I (522-486 B.C.)

B. "a fourth" (v. 2) Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.), also known as "Ahasuerus" of Esther

C. "a mighty king will arise" (v. 3) Alexander II called the Great (336-323 B.C.)

D. "the four points of the compass" (v. 4) Most believe this relates to Alexander's major generals:
   1. Cassender -Macedonia and Greece
   2. Lysimicus -Thrace
   3. Seleucus I -Syria and Babylon
   4. Ptolemy I -Egypt and Palestine

E. "not his own descendants" (v. 4), Alexander had two sons:
   1. Hercules by Barsine which was Darius I's daughter
   2. Alexander III by Roxana
   3. both were assassinated

F. "the king of the South" (v. 5), Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 B.C.)

G. "one of his princes" (v. 5), Seleucus I Nicator was forced out of Babylon by Antigonus in 316 B.C. but, with the help of Ptolemy I, he became ruler of the Seleucid dynasty (312-280 B.C.)

H. "the daughter of the king of the South" (v. 6), this was Bernice, the daughter of Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.)

I. "the king of the North" (v. 6), Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.)

J. "the descendants of her 1ine" (vv. 7, 9), this refers to the brother of Bernice who was Ptolemy III (246-221 B.C.)

K. "the king of the North" (vv. 7, 8, 9, 10,11, 15-18), Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.)

L. "he" (v . 7), Ptolemy III kills Laodice who had Bernice killed

M. "one of them" (v. 10), this refers to Antiochus III, the Great (223-187 B.C.)

N. "his. . .the king of the South. . .the former" (vv. 10-11, 14), Ptolemy IV (221-207 B.C.), this king defeated the Seleucids badly but did not follow up on his victory

O. "his heart will be lifted up" (v . 12), Ptolemy IV (221-207 B.C.)

P. "the forces of the South" (v. 15), Ptolemy V (203-181 B.C.) was a child when he became ruler. This verse refers to the defeat of his best general, Scopas, at Sidon where he lost 100,000 chosen troops.

Q. "the daughter of women" (v. 17), this refers to Antiochus III the Great's daughter, Cleopatra, who was given in marriage to Ptolemy V; however, the consummation of the marriage had to wait for five years because of the age of Ptolemy V. She, however, sided with her husband against her father!

R. "a commander" (v. l8a), this refers to a Roman general who confronted Antiochus III at Magnesia, west of Sardis. Antiochus was forced to retreat. On his way back home he took out his anger on Jerusalem.

S. "one will arise…he…" (v. 20), Seleucus IV (198-175 B.C.)

T. "An oppressor" (v. 20), this refers to Seleucus IV's tax collector, Heliodorus (cf. II Mac. 3:7-40).

U. "a despicable person will arise" (v. 21), this refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.). This is the Seleucid ruler who tried to force the Jews to become Hellenists.

THEORIES CONCERNING THE PERSON REFERRED TO IN VERSES 36-45 (taken from E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, pp. 246-247 and adapted):

A. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Ephraim of Syria, and most modern interpreters)

B. Titus and Vespasian (many rabbis)

C. Constantine (Rabbi Ibn Ezra, Jacchiades, and Isaac Abarbanel)

D. Roman Empire (R. Solomon, Rashi and John Calvin)

E. Herod the Great (Mauro)

F. the Papal system (Martin Luther)

G. The Antichrist (evangelical scholars)
   1. Jerome says a double reference to Antiochus IV and the end-time antichrist starts in vv. 21-45
   2. Hippolytus and Theodotion say it starts in v. 36
   3. Chrysostom says it starts in verse 1

FOR A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE POWERS OF MESOPOTAMIA see Appendix Three.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:2-4

[2]"And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all *of them;* as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole *empire* against the realm of Greece. [3]And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. [4]But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his *own* descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and *given* to others besides them."

11:2 For "A Brief Historical Survey of the Powers of Mesopotamia" see Appendix Three.

▣ **"And now I will tell you the truth"** This is an idiom which means that the message is trustworthy and accurate (cf. 8:26; 10:1,21). See fuller note at 10:1.

▣ **"three more kings"** This may refer to the last three before Xerxes I, Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis (522- 521 B.C.) and Darius I (521-486 B.C.). We learn from history that there were nine kings in the series, but v. 2 summarizes 200 years (538-331 B.C.) of Persian history (cf. *A Handbook on the Book of Daniel*, UBS, p. 280).

▣ **"then a fourth"** Jerome was the first to assert that this refers to Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.), which is the Greek name for Esther's husband, Ahasuerus. He planned a campaign into Greece for over 4 years. When he finally attacked Greece with a much superior force, he was defeated by the well-organized Greek army. Heroditus says that he invaded with over one million men. That Persia could be defeated would have surprised everyone who lived in the Persian Empire.

▣ **"will gain far more riches than all *of them*; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches"** This apparently refers to Xerxes I (his Greek name), who planned and attacked Greece with all his resources.

▣

NASB **"he will arouse the whole *empire*"**
NKJV, NRSV **"he shall stir up all"**
TEV **-----**
NJB **"he will make war"**

The NKJV and NRSV are closest to the Hebrew text, which leaves ambiguous who the "all" refers to.

1. the Greek empire (NAB, Moffatt translation)
2. the Persian empire (NASB)
3. everyone against Greece (NIV)

11:3
NASB, NKJV,
NJB **"and a mighty king will arise"**
NRSV **"a warrior king shall arise"**
TEV **"a heroic king will appear"**

The Hebrew ADJECTIVE (BDB 150) is often used of God (cf. Deut. 10:17; Neh. 9:23; Isa. 10:21; Jer. 32:18). It described Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, as a mighty hunter (cf. Gen. 10:9). It described the Messiah in Isa. 9:5. Its cognate root in Arabic has the connotation of "one who magnifies himself" or

"a tyrant," which fits Alexander II. The next VERB and OBJECT are the same word (BDB 605-606, KB 647) "rule and great rule," which describes the amazing exploits of Alexander.

There is a time gap between v. 2, the closing of the Persian Empire (the second kingdom of chapters 2 and 7, cf. 8:20) and v. 3, the coming of the Greek Empire (the third kingdom of chapters 2 and 7, cf. 8:21).

▣

NASB	**"he will rule with great authority"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"who shall rule with great dominion"**
TEV	**"he will rule over a great empire"**
NJB	**"govern a vast empire"**

This idiom is repeated in v. 5, where it refers to the extent of the reign. Brown, Driver, Briggs see II Kgs. 20:13 and Isa. 39:2 as parallel (BDB 606).

▣

NASB	**"do as he pleases"**
NKJV	**"do according to his will"**
NRSV	**"take action as he pleases"**
TEV	**"do whatever he wants"**
NJB	**"do whatever he pleases"**

This is the essence of fallen humanity, which characterizes all the kingdoms of Daniel (see full note at 8:4). The book of Daniel accentuates the supposed sovereignty of these worldly leaders with the true sovereignty of YHWH, as v. 4 demonstrates (three *Niphal* VERBS).

11:4 "as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out" Alexander the Great conquered the known world of his day and died of a fever at the age of 32 in Babylon (323 B.C.).

▣ **"the four points of the compass"** Literally this is "the four winds of heaven" which is a metaphor for the world (cf. 7:2; 8:8). Alexander's generals (i.e. the twelve satraps of his kingdom) divided his domain. However, four of them became dominant powers: (1) Cassander - Macedonia and Greece; (2) Lysimicus - Thrace; (3) Seleucus I - Syria and Babylon; (4) Ptolemy I - Egypt and Palestine and (5) Antigonus - part of Asia Minor. However, Antigonus was killed very early in this power struggle.

▣ **"not his own descendants"** Alexander the Great had two sons, Hercules by Barsine, the daughter of Darius I, and Alexander III by Roxana (daughter of the Scythian king). Both of them were assassinated.

▣ **"and given to others besides them"** The "others" could refer to (1) his descendants; (2) smaller kings and kingdoms in his empire; or (3) the four major generals.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:5-9

[5]"Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with *one* of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain *will be* a great dominion *indeed.* [6]After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who sired her as well as he who supported her in *those* times. [7]But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against *their* army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display *great* strength. [8]Also their gods with their metal images *and* their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his

part will refrain from *attacking* the king of the North for *some* years. [9]Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his own land."

11:5 This begins the series of intrigues between the Ptolemies of Egypt (kings of the south) and the Seleucids of Syria (kings of the north). The Jews were caught in the middle of the struggles of these two empires. The rest of verses 5-20 are a summary of the historical conflict, at least up until 175 B.C.

▣ **"the king of the South"** This refers to Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 B.C.), who was the very effective military general of Alexander who founded the Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt.

▣ **"along with one of his princes"** This apparently refers to Seleucus I Nicator (321-281 B.C.**)**, another of Alexander's military leaders who served Ptolemy I for a time after he was forced to flee Babylon by Antigonus in 316 B.C. He later (312 B.C.) took an army and re-conquered Babylon thus becoming the first ruler of the Seleucid dynasty, which controlled Syria-Babylon.

11:6 "and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North" This was an attempt to stop the tension between these two dynasties by marriage (252 B.C.). However, the king of the North, Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.), was already married to a lady named Laodice and they had two sons, Seleucus II Callinicus and Antiochus III. This lady was divorced and the daughter of Ptolemy II, Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.), was made the bride of Antiochus II. Her name was Bernice. However, when her father, Ptolemy II, died, Bernice was rejected for Laodice. Laodice, fearful of her position, poisoned her husband, Antiochus II, and had her son (Seleucus II Callinicus) put on the throne. She also killed Bernice and her child and her servants.

11:7 In verse 7 we see that Bernice's brother ("branch of her roots"), Ptolemy III ("one of the descendants of her line"), angry over the death of his sister, invaded the north (246 B.C.). He was very successful militarily against the Seleucid Empire, but did not push his advantage. He took a large amount of the spoils from Antioch and returned to Egypt. We learn of this in verses 8 and 9.

11:8 "and also their gods" Ptolemy III, when he invaded Syria and Babylon, recovered the Egyptian's idols that had been taken by Cambyses II in 524 B.C. By restoring these Egyptian idols, he became a very popular Egyptian ruler.

11:9 There is a time gap of two years between verse 8 and 9. There is no historical record of this incident.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:10-13

[10]"His sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his *very* fortress. [11]The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but *that* multitude will be given into the hand of the *former*. [12]When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. [13]For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment."

11:10 "and his sons" This refers to the sons of Antiochus II (the king of the North): (1) Seleucus II Callinicus (240-227 B.C.) and (2) Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.), later known as "the Great." The phrase in verse 10, "one of them," refers to Antiochus III.

▣ **"his very fortress"** This refers to a fortress of Ptolemy IV Philapater (cf. v. 11), possibly located at Gaza.

11:11 This fight occurred at the city of Raphai, south of Gaza (217 B.C.). At this battle the Egyptians were initially routed. The larger Seleucid force pursued the Egyptians, but the Egyptians reorganized and attacked and finally won the day. We learn from this battle that Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.) lost 10,000 infantry men, 300 cavalry, and 5 elephants. Also, 4,000 prisoners were taken (cf. Polybius 5:86).

Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 135, interprets vv. 11-12 in light of Ptolemy IV's (221-203 B.C.) embarrassment at not being allowed into the temple in Jerusalem and, therefore, taking his anger out on the Jews in Egypt, particularly those in Alexandria.

So, the interpretive question is to who does "his heart was lifted up" (v. 12) refer?

1. Ptolemy IV
2. Antiochus III

If #1 the "tens of thousands to fall" refers to Jews in Egypt or if #2, then to Seleucid soldiers killed during the military campaign.

11:11-12 "that multitude will be given. . .yet he will not prevail" This is the recurrent theme that God, not worldly leaders, is in control of history (cf. vv. 27, 29, 35, 36, 45)!

11:13 "after an interval of some years" This seems to refer to a thirteen year historical gap. Antiochus III attacked Egypt again in 205 B.C.).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:14-19

[14]"Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down. [15]Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand *their ground*, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. [16]But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will *be able* to withstand him; he will also stay *for a time* in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand. [17]He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand *for him* or be on his side. [18]Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. [19]So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more."

11:14 "now in those times many will rise up against the kings of the South" This refers to the reign of Ptolemy IV. He experienced many rebellions in his empire, including one by the Jews, who supported Antiochus III, but none of them succeeded. They were defeated by General Scopas in 200 B.C.

11:15 Ptolemy V was only 4 years old when his father died. Therefore, one of his best generals, Scopas, was in charge and he attacked the north. However, he was defeated in the field and retreated to the city of Sidon where he lost his entire army of 100,000 elite soldiers (198 B.C.).

11:16 "he. . .will do as he pleases" See theological note at 8:4.

▣ **"he will stay *for a time* in the Beautiful Land"** This refers to Antiochus III the Great who was welcomed into Jerusalem as a liberator from the Egyptian domination in 198 B.C. "The Beautiful Land" refers to the Promised Land (cf. 8:9).

▣

NASB "with destruction in his hand"
NKJV "with destruction in his power"
NRSV "and all of it shall be in his power"
TEV "and have it completely in his power"
NJB "destruction in his hands"

The Hebrew VERB *kalah* (BDB 477I, *Qal* PERFECT) can mean "be complete," "at an end," "finished," "accomplished." It can mean "complete destruction" or "annihilation," depending on how it is pointed (vowel marks added under the consonants by later scribes). The MT points it as "complete destruction."

11:17 "he will also give the daughter of women to ruin it" Here is another attempt at political marriage, but this time it is an attempt to overthrow Egypt, not reconcile with the Ptolemies. "The daughter" refers to Cleopatra I, the daughter of Antiochus III. She was married in 195 B.C. to Ptolemy V. Because of his young age, the marriage was not consummated for five years. Cleopatra's father was hoping to control Egypt through his daughter, but she truly loved the young Egyptian monarch and sided with him.

11:18 "Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many" This refers to Antiochus III's attempted domination of the coastlands and the islands of the eastern Mediterranean. This attempt was stopped in 190 B.C. by a united force from the Greek city states and the Roman army (General Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus). The truce was signed at the city of Magnesia, west of Sardis. The Roman victors put extremely hard surrender terms on Antiochus III.

1. a large payment of money over several years
2. Seleucid's claims to Europe and Asia Minor had to be dropped
3. the Seleucids withdrew to the Tarsus mountains
4. the surrender of all of Antiochus III's elephants
5. the surrender of all of his navy
6. twenty hostages were to be sent to Rome as a guarantee of the treaty.

These hostages included his son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and was supposed to include Hannibal, the exiled Carthaginian general who had moved into the Seleucid court, but he fled and was not captured.

11:19 This verse may refer to Antiochus III's attempt to gain revenue from the temple treasuries ("fortresses," a Hebrew term which denotes a place of safety) in order to pay his requested tribute to Rome. His own citizens were enraged and assassinated him in 187 B.C. as he tried to rob the temple at Elymais.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:20-28

[20]"Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of *his* kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle. [21]In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. [22]The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant. [23]After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small *force of* people. [24]In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest *parts* of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but *only* for a time. [25]He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. [26]Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow,

but many will fall down slain. [27]As for both kings, their hearts will be *intent* on evil, and they will speak lies *to each other* at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still *to come* at the appointed time. [28]Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be *set* against the holy covenant, and he will take action and *then* return to his *own* land."

11:20 This refers to the reign of Selecus IV Philopator (187-175 B.C.), who, in order to raise money to pay the Romans, assigned a very heavy tax on his own realm (esp. the temple in Jerusalem). His tax collector (NASB, "an oppressor"; NKJV, "one who imposes taxes"; the Hebrew word [BDB 620] means "exactor of tribute") was named Heliodorus (cf. II Macc. 3). Many believe that he poisoned Selecus IV in order to gain control, but he himself was overthrown by Antiochus IV (cf. II Mac. 3:7-40).

11:21 "a despicable person will arise" This Hebrew VERB's (BDB 102, KB 117) basic meaning is "despised with contempt." In the *Niphal* form it is used in Ps. 15:4; 119:141; Isa. 53:3; Jer. 22:28; Mal. 1:7. The Arabic cognate means "to raise the head loftily or disdainfully." This refers to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.).

▣ **"on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred"** The rightful heir of Seleucus IV was his son, Demetrius I. However, Demetrius I had been traded as a hostage to the Romans for Antiochus IV's freedom. Antiochus IV was the brother of Seleucus IV. When Antiochus IV heard that his brother had died he claimed to be guardian of the kingship, but through flattery and intrigue, conferred it upon himself. It is fortunate for Demetrius II that he was a prisoner in Rome for he would have surely been killed by his uncle.

▣ **"intrigue"** History shows Antiochus IV to be a man of great skill in political compromise, bribery, threats and lies (cf. 8:23-25).

11:22-35 These verses and possibly 22-45, describe the continuing warfare between the rulers of the Seleucid Empire (king of the north) and the rulers of the Ptolemaic Empire (king of the south).

▣ **"the prince of the covenant"** This is a difficult phrase in light of Daniel's previous use of these two theologically loaded words in 9:26. There have been many possibilities suggested for this reference: (1) some see it as referring to Ptolemy VI Philometor, but better, (2) others believe that it refers to Onias III (198-175 B.C.), the Jewish High Priest (cf. TEV) who opposed Antiochus IV and his Jewish conspirators (Onias' brother Jason), who attempted to Hellenize their fellow Jews. He was removed in 175 B.C. and killed in 171 B.C.

11:22-24 This ambiguous passage has several similarities to 9:24-27. Be careful that your systematic eschatological grid does not remove the apocalyptic features. There is no easily discernable reference to these words in the life of Antiochus IV. This is why some explain the possible reference to the end-time antichrist of vv. 36-45 to include 21-45.

11:24 "he will enter the richest parts of the realm" Some commentators say that this refers to Egypt while others say it refers to the taxation of his own land as his predecessor, Seleucus IV, had done before (cf. v. 20).

11:25-26 This may reflect the tension and conflict between Antiochus IV and his nephew, Ptolemy VI (181-146 B.C.), who was the son of his sister, Cleopatra (v. 17). During this conflict the Egyptian monarch was betrayed by several of his own generals (*A Handbook on the Book of Daniel*, UBS, p. 305).

The Hebrew term "schemes" (BDB 364) is used in both v. 24 and v. 25 for Antiochus' schemes and helpers. This reflects the fallen, human heart always planning evil for the purpose of more and more for me! When this is reflected in a ruler the whole society is in jeopardy!

11:26 "those who eat his choice food will destroy him" This seems to refer to the political intrigue occurring in the Egyptian court (cf. vv. 25-27).

11:27 "'As for both kings, their hearts will be *intent* on evil'" This is the divine understanding of the fallen human heart/mind (cf. Gen. 6:5,11-12,13; 8:21; Ps. 14:1-3; Rom. 3:9-18,23).

The "evil" in this context is the desire for more power and control. This is the essence of sin, "more and more for me at any cost"!

11:28 This possibly refers to a successful, but limited, military operation (cf. v. 13) or a failed negotiation ("at the same table"). Verse 28 seems to demand a Seleucid victory of some type at the expense of the Ptolemaic empire.

▣ **"but his heart will be *set* against the holy covenant"** Even with much possessions Antiochus IV had an agenda against the Jews. Whether it was his devotion to Roman or better Hellenistic culture or his animosity toward Jewish exclusivism (monotheism, "the God of gods," v. 36), he hated and acted against God's people (cf. vv. 30-33).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:29-35

[29]"At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. [30]For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. [31]Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. [32]By smooth *words* he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. [33]Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for *many* days. [34]Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. [35]Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because *it is* still *to come* at the appointed time."

11:29 "at the appointed time" This is the recurrent theological theme of the book of Daniel, that God is in total control of time and history (cf. vv. 27,29,35,36,45; 8:19).

▣ **"he will return and come into the South"** This refers to a second campaign by Antiochus IV against Ptolemy VI, which is recorded in I Maccabees 1:29 and Polybius 29:1.

11:30 "for the ships of Kittim will come against him" There has been much discussion of the meaning of "Kittim" (BDB 508). In the OT it seems to refer to Cypress (cf. Gen. 10:4; Isa. 23:1). However, it came to be used for the Romans (cf. the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Septuagint and Jerome).

If this does refer to Rome then it may relate to the Roman consul Gaius Popilius Laenas' confrontation in 172 B.C. of Antiochus IV as he besieged Alexandria, Egypt. The account of this confrontation is found in Cicero, *Philippus* 8.8; Livy, *Ab Lrbe Condita* 45.10,15; and *Polybius* 29:1.

11:31 "desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice" This phrase refers to the temple in Jerusalem and its sacrificial system (cf. 8:11; 9:27; 12:11). Many see this as referring to the

attempt by Jason, the brother of Onias III, to become High Priest. Jason, through intrigue in the Seleucid court, became High Priest, but in three years he was replaced with another Seleucid sympathizer, Menelaus. Onias III was finally killed in 171 B.C. because he objected to Menelaus' attempt to Hellenize the Jews.

▣ **"the abomination of desolation"** In this context it seems to refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes' orders to offer a pig on the altar in the Temple in Jerusalem and set up a shrine to Zeus Olympus in the Holy Place (Dec. 168 B.C., cf. I Macc. 1:54, 59). This started the Maccabean revolution. Jesus uses this same phrase to describe the coming of the Roman armies against Jerusalem in Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14 and Luke 21:20. Obviously this phrase is used in several ways to describe the horrors that the people of God would face throughout history. There is an obvious allusion to end-time events, but as to specific details, they will remain ambiguous until that day comes.

11:32-33 "they will fall to the sword" There is a clear cleavage within national Israel. There are compromising Jews and there are faithful Jews who would not accept Hellenization (i.e. false worship). This refers to the *Hasidim* or Maccabean army who opposed Antiochus IV (cf. I Macc. 1:62; 2:42; 7:13).

11:34 "Now when they fall they will be granted a little help" This seems to be the only biblical reference to the revolt of Judas Macabbeas, the son of the priest Mattathias of Modim. He rededicated the temple in Dec. 165 B.C., which is the source of the modern Jewish celebration known as Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights, which remembers the cleansing of the temple. Notice "they" could not do it without supernatural, divine aid!

11:35 This shows that the purpose of the trials and problems that God's people face is not a direct result of sin, as the Exile was, but is a direct connection because they follow the God of heaven. The entire book of Daniel is a series of conflicts between God and His people and organized human government controlled by the evil one and his angels (cf. Ps. 2; Ezek. 38-39).

In context "those who have insight" is linked with v. 33, which refers to the Maccabean revolt against the Hellenistic policies of Antiochus IV. However, because vv. 36-45 do not fit Antiochus' day, this phrase may refer to persecuted ("will fall") believers in the end-time ("until the end time"). If this is so the text itself gives us a temporal marker (see also "at the end time" in v. 40).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:36-39

[36]"Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. [37]He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any *other* god; for he will magnify himself above *them* all. [38]But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor *him* with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. [39]He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with *the help of* a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge *him* and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price."

11:36-45 Modern scholars assume that the book of Daniel was written during the Maccabean period because

1. of the detailed, historical information of 11:2-35, which is so unusual for predictive prophecy or apocalyptic literature
2. at v. 36 this detailed information does not match secular sources, so they assert that the author wrote close to this time and simply made up a future prophecy that turned out to be inaccurate

3. it is not obvious from the text itself that vv. 36-45 change subjects. To assert that since the details do not conform to current secular history, then the subject must be future (an end-time Antiochus, like Antichrist), seems to relate to one's systematic theology, not exegesis.

A Response

1. This would not be an unusual way even for apocalyptic literature to introduce another major person and period.
2. It is surely true that OT prophecy/apocalyptic literature telescopes history into what looks like sequential chronological events, but in reality have a large, temporal gap between them (cf. Isa. 7; Matt. 24).
3. If Daniel is read through the eyes of the NT a biblical pattern, theme, and plan is revealed. We must do our historical and grammatical exegesis, but it does not always give us the big picture (cf. 9:24-27; 11:36-45). Here the genre and *Solo Scriptura* show the way to a unified perspective.
   a. Fallen humans want to control their own lives and fallen governments want to control everything.
   b. Mankind is becoming progressively anti-monotheistic.
   c. Monotheism has an added addendum. There is a divine Messiah who through suffering and death will bring in the age of the Spirit.
   d. This new age will involve suffering, pain, and persecution on behalf of the true believers.
   e. The end is sure. God reigns! His people will be victorious!
4. Antiochus is, in a sense, the OT type of an anti-God world leader. This type of person is common to every age and region. Satan does not know the time of Christ's return, so he must always have someone ready to step onto the stage of history. The NT describes the end-time person (cf. Matt. 24; I Thess. 4; II Thess. 2; Revelation). This same person has already been touched on in Dan. 7:7-8,11,24-25; 9:24-27 and again in 11:36-45.

11:36 "the king" In context "the king" seems to refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but because (1) it does not fit into our current understanding of history; (2) "the end-time" is mentioned in v. 40; and (3) it is so similar to the description of the Antichrist in II Thess. 2:4, vv. 36-45 could describe the Antichrist of the end-time, as does the little horn of Dan. 7 and 9:24-27.

▣ **"will do as he pleases"** See full note at 8:4.

▣ **"he will exalt and magnify himself"** These two VERBS (BDB 926, KB 1202 and BDB 152, KB 178) are synonymous. This action reflects the little horn of 8:11,25. It reflects the same attitude as Nebuchadnezzar in 4:30-31 and 5:20 (cf. Isa. 14:13-15).

▣ **"will speak monstrous things"** This Hebrew term's (BDB 810, KB 927) basic meaning is "surpassing" or "extraordinary." It can be used in several senses in *Niphal*.

1. mysterious, wonderful, Deut. 17:8; Prov. 30:18
2. wonderful actions by God, Exod. 3:20; Josh. 3:5
3. difficult, Gen. 18:14; Deut. 30:11; Jer. 32:17,27
4. arrogant words, Dan. 11:36 (cf. 7:8,11; Rev. 13:5-6)

▣ **"against the God of gods"** The term "gods" is *elim* (BDB 42), which is not used of the Hebrew God, except here. Usually it refers to the gods of the nations (cf. Exod. 15:11). Theologically it is parallel to Dan. 2:47 where, in the Aramaic section of the book, *Elohim* is used (cf. Deut. 10:17).

The point is, does this refer to the king as abusing religion in general or YHWH in particular? Verses 40-45 do not fit Antiochus IV at all, but vv. 36-39 partially fit him. There is purposeful ambiguity (i.e. apocalyptic literature) so that it can refer to one and all who epitomize human rebellion and arrogance.

11:37 "And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god" This is difficult to understand because Antiochus IV did not reject the gods of his fathers. He worshiped Zeus.

The phrase "the desire of women" has been referred to by some to mean that he neglected human love, but in context, it seems to possibly relate to Tammuz, the love goddess of Babylon (cf. Ezek. 8:14).

▣ **"he will magnify himself above them all"** This seems to show that he will claim deity for himself (Epiphanes means "manifested god"). It is obvious from the coins of this period that the Seleucid rulers believed themselves to be divine. This was especially true of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

11:38 "But instead he will honor a god of fortresses" There seems to be a contradiction between v. 37, where he will reject "gods," and v. 38, where he will follow "a god of fortresses." Many commentators believe that the phrase "a god of fortresses" is simply a way of talking about warfare. The concluding part of v. 38, which seems to speak of military booty, seems to reinforce this theory.

Another theory (BDB 732, same word used in v. 1) is that this phrase refers to the Roman god who protects fortresses (Jupiter Capitolinus), which was parallel to the Greek god Zeus. Antiochus IV offered sacrifices to Zeus on the altar in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He also built an elaborate temple to Zeus in Antioch.

This god of fortresses will supposedly protect Antiochus IV's cities, but will help destroy other people's forts and towns (cf. v. 39).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:40-45

[40]"At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow *them* and pass through. [41]He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many *countries* will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. [42]Then he will stretch out his hand against *other* countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. [43]But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians *will follow* at his heels. [44]But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. [45]He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

11:40 "at the end time" See note at 8:19.

▣ **"the king of the South. . .the king of the North"** These references imply that all of chapter 11 relates to the jealousy and rivalry between the Seleucid empire (Syria/Babylon) and the Ptolemaic empire (Egypt/Palestine). These phrases are a major problem in seeing vv. 36-45 or 40-45 as exclusively future. There is no hint of two geographical Mediterranean kings being involved in end-time warfare over Israel!

If we understand the genre then all the details become symbolic for an end-time conflict between believers and unbelievers, not Jews and their enemies!

11:41 "Edom, Moab. . .Ammon" These involve the enemies of Israel which surrounded them in a more ancient time. Even in the Macabbean period Moab had passed from the scene forever. This shows that verse 41 must be taken symbolically to refer to local enemies of God's people.

11:43 "Libyans and Ethiopians" These were allies with Egypt.

11:44 "the rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him" Those interpreters who see this context as referring to Antiochus IV Epiphanes believe that this refers to the invasion of the Parthians or a rebellion somewhere in his realm.

▣ **"annihilate"** This is from the Hebrew word *herem* (BDB 355 I). This is the term associated with that which is given to God (like Jericho in Josh. 6) and thereby must be destroyed lest it be corrupted by human use (cf. Josh. 6:21).

However, the word often simply means "destroy," which it probably means here (cf. Isa. 37:11; Jer. 50:21,26; 51:3).

11:45 "the seas" This is plural and seems to refer to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

▣ **"the beautiful Holy Mountain"** This must refer to the city of Jerusalem and particularly to the mountain on which the temple is build, Mount Moriah.

▣ **"yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him"** Polybius 31.9 asserts that Antiochus IV traveled to Elymais in Elam to rob the temple of Artemis, but that the local worshipers resisted and he left. While on the way home he became ill at Tabae in Persia and died (163 B.C.). Some attributed the illness to a divine madness as a result of his sacrilege.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the major purpose of the vision of Chapter 11?
2. Why do the historical events begin in 323 B.C. and end in 165 B.C.?
3. Historically, who were the two main protagonists in this section?
4. Why is such detail given into a history of empires that surround the Jewish people?
5. Why is Antiochus IV Epiphanes a good example of the Antichrist spirit current in the world (cf. I John 2:18)?
6. Who is referred to in verses 36-45?

DANIEL 12

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Prophecy of the End-Time	The Final Consummation	The Time of the End	
12:1-4	12:1-4	12:1-3	Resurrection and Retribution
			12:2-3
		12:2-3	12:4
			The Sealed Prophecy
12:5-13	12:5-13	12:5-6	12:5-13
		12:7	
		12:8	
		12:9-10	
		12:11-12	
		12:13	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

BACKGROUND

A. Chapter 12 concludes the literary unit of chapters 10-12, which has one unified message.

B. Interestingly, vv. 1-3 are written in poetic lines in the NAB translation. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 459, says, "12:1-3, magnificent poetic conclusion of the revelation given in chapters 10-11" (as well as New English Bible and its revision, The Revised English Bible, as well as the new NET Bible). This poetic form it is not followed in other English versions.

C. The interpretations vary as to which historical context the interpreter assumes is addressed.
   1. Many see it as Antiochus IV.
   2. Others see it as Titus in A.D. 70.
   3. Others project it into the end time.

   Possibly the text is ambiguous enough to refer to all three and possibly more. This is a good example of "multi-fulfillment prophecy" (i.e. "abomination of desolation," 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:1-4

[1]"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. [2]Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt. [3]Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. [4]But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

12:1 "Now at that time" The Septuagint begins this chapter with "unto that place." It is obvious that 12:1-4 are connected with the message of chapter 11. The time of 12:1 links up with the events of 11:40-45. The real issue is the time frame. The use of "the king of the South" (11:40) and "the king of the North" (11:40) implies that it refers to the second century B.C. However, the use of "at the end-time" (11:40) could imply a future period (cf. 12:4,9), but not necessarily because a similar phrase is used in vv. 27 and 35. The only reason that a second century context is questioned is because of the accuracy of 11:2-35 and the possible accuracy of 11:36-39 and the total inaccuracy (based on known secular history) of 11:40-45.

▣ **"Michael"** His name means "who is like God" (BDB 567). There are only two angels mentioned by name in the Bible: Gabriel, apparently a messenger angel, and Michael, apparently the guardian angel of the nation of Israel or the people of God. This angel is mentioned in Dan. 10:13, 21 and in the book of Jude, v. 9, where he is called the archangel. John Calvin thought that Michael was the pre-existent Christ.

▣ **"the great prince"** This same term (BDB 978) is used in several senses in Daniel.
1. Babylonian official in charge of the four Jewish youths, 1:7,8,9,10,11,18
2. Jewish political (royal) leaders, 9:6,8
3. God Himself, 8:11,25
4. powerful national angels
   a. Persian, 10:13,20

b. Greek, 10:20
c. Jewish, 10:13,21; 12:1

Another term (BDB 617) translated "prince" is used in

1. 9:25 for the Messiah
2. 9:26 for the leader of the opposition against the Messiah
3. 11:22 possibly for the priest, Onias III, who was betrayed and killed in Antiochus IV's attempt to take over the Jewish priesthood.

▣ **"who stands guard over the sons of your people"** Many believe that this refers only to the Jews because of the context of chapter 11. However, the quote in Matt. 24:21, 22 seems to imply that Jesus was referring to "the elect." From Rom. 2:28,29; 4:16; Gal. 6:16 we know that this promise refers to all who have the faith of Abraham.

▣

NASB, NRSV,
NJB "will arise"
NKJV "shall stand up"
TEV "will appear"

This word's basic meaning (BDB 763, KB 840) is "stand" or "take a stand." It is used often in Daniel

1. present oneself, 1:4
2. come on the scene, 8:22,23; 11:7; 12:1
3. stand against, 8:25; 10:13; 11:14
4. stand for, 10:21; 11:1
5. stand up, 8:18; 10:11
6. rise from the dead, 12:13

BDB asserts option #3 best fits this context, but *A Handbook on the Book of Daniel* by Peter Contesse and John Ellington, UBS, p. 323, thinks option #4 fits best (cf. Esther 8:11; 9:16). Remember, context determines meaning, not lexicons or dictionaries.

▣ **"and there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time"** The OT prophets (cf. Jer. 2:27-28; 14:8; 30:7; Joel 1:5-18; Zeph. 1:14-18) reveal that because of Israel's and Judah's idolatry that the end-time would be a time of divine judgment. God tried to use the covenant blessings and cursings of Deut. 27-29 to attempt to bring His people back, but they would not; then He allowed foreign nations to exile them (e.g. Isa. 10:5; Jer. 51:20), but still they did not turn to Him and keep His covenant. However, even amidst judgment there is hope in the merciful character of God (cf. Hosea 11; 13:14).

This seems to refer to the Messianic woes referred to by Jesus in Matt. 24:21, 22 (cf. Mark 13:19-20). The Septuagint has "nations written in the book." In Matt. 24:21 Jesus changes the word "nations" to "world," which is the NT universal understanding of the extension of covenant love to all humans through the gospel.

▣ **"everyone who is found"** There has been much discussion among commentators because of this universal element implied by "everyone" but contrasted with the word "many," found in vv. 2 and 10 (cf. 11:33,39). Verse 10 helps to interpret the "many" of verse 2. They both refer to the redeemed, the faithful, the followers of Messiah.

This will seem confusing, but (1) the Hebrew term (BDB 912 I) for "many" means "all" in Deut. 7:1; Isa. 52:14,15; (2) Isa. 53:11,12 compare with 53:6 as well as the parallelism of Rom. 5:18-19; (3) this same concept of "many" being used for "all" can be found in Matt. 20:28; and 26:28; (4) Jesus seems to allude to Dan. 12:2 and changes "many" to "all" in John 5:28-29. The Hebrew term for "all" is parallel to "many" in Isa. 2:2. This same confusion of "all" versus "many" has sometimes degenerated into

denominational conflict between Calvinists and Armenians. There is enough fluidity in the Scriptures that we cannot be dogmatic in this area. Compare Rom. 5:15, 16 with 5:12.

It is sad to acknowledge that not everyone of the lineage (Hebrew idiom, "sons of your people") of Abraham had his faith. As one reads the OT it becomes obvious that most Jews were not faithful followers of YHWH; many were idolaters. It is only the faithful remnant who will be saved. Being the covenant people involves more than who your mother was; it involves personal faith and a faithful life.

▣ **"written in the book"** This same metaphorical book of 1ife is referred to in Dan. 7:10. There are two books mentioned in the Bible (cf. Rev. 10:12-15), one is the "Book of Remembrances" where the deeds of both the godly and ungodly are recorded, Ps. 56:8; 139:16; Isa. 65:6; Mal. 3:16. The other is the "Book of Life" where only the names of the redeemed are mentioned, Exod. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Isa. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23: Rev. 3:5: 13:8: 17:8: 20:15: 21:27.

▣

NASB	**"will be rescued"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"shall be delivered"**
TEV	**"will be saved"**
NJB	**"will be spared"**

This Hebrew term (BDB 572, KB 589, *Niphil* IMPERFECT) is also used in 11:41. It denotes physical deliverance (cf. 11:41), but like its NT counterpart, it has the connotation in some contexts of spiritual salvation (cf. 12:1).

In Daniel, as in all of history, many faithful believers are killed, but they will be ultimately rescued and restored (cf. 12:2-3).

12:2 "those who sleep" There are several terms in Hebrew for sleep.

1. *yashen* (BDB 445), which is normally used of natural sleep, but in Dan. 12:2, of death
1. *shenah* (BDB 446), also used of natural sleep, Dan. 2:1; 6:18
3. *shakab* (BDB 446), which is used in the books of II Samuel, I & II Kings, and II Chronicles for death (II Sam. 11:9) and normal sleep (II Sam. 7:12)

The concept of death as sleep is also found in the NT (e.g. Matt. 27:52 [note resurrection]; John 11:11 [note resurrection in 11:25-26; 13:36; Acts 7:60; I Thess. 4:13 [note resurrection in 4:14-17]; 5:10).

▣ **"in the dust of the ground"** This Hebrew idiom is a play on the word "ground," *adanah* (BDB 9) and dust (BDB 779) from Gen. 2:7 and 3:19 (cf. Ps. 90:3; 104:29). The dust of the ground is metaphorically the holding place of the dead (i.e. *Sheol,* e.g. I Sam. 2:6; Job 14:13; Ps. 30:3; 49:14-15; 139:8; Isa. 38:10; Hos. 13:14; Amos 9:2).

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

I. Old Testament
   A. All humans go to *She'ol* (etymology uncertain), which is a way of referring to death or the grave, mostly in Wisdom Literature and Isaiah. In the OT it was a shadowy, conscious, but joyless existence (cf. Job 10:21-22; 38:17; Ps. 107:10,14).
   B. *She'ol* characterized
      1. associated with God's judgment (fire), Deut. 32:22
      2. associated with punishment even before Judgment Day, Ps. 18:4-5
      3. associated with *Abaddon* (destruction), but also open to God, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2
      4. associated with "the Pit" (grave), Ps.16:10; Isa 14:15; Ezek. 31:15-17

5. wicked descend alive into *She'ol*, Num. 16:30,33; Ps. 55:15
6. personified often as an animal with a large mouth, Num. 16:30; Isa. 5:14; 14:9; Hab. 2:5
7. people there are called *Shades*, Isa. 14:9-11

II. New Testament

A. The Hebrew *She'ol* is translated by the Greek *Hades* (the unseen world)

B. *Hades* characterized

1. refers to death, Matt. 16:18
2. linked to death, Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14
3. often analogous to the place of permanent punishment (*Gehenna*), Matt. 11:23 (OT quote); Luke 10:15; 16:23-24
4. often analogous to the grave, Luke 16:23

C. Possibly divided (rabbis)

1. righteous part called paradise (really another name for heaven, cf. II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7), Luke 23:43
2. wicked part called *Tartarus*, II Pet. 2:4, where it is a holding place for evil angels (cf. Gen. 6; I Enoch)

D. *Gehenna*

1. Reflects the OT phrase, "the valley of the sons of Hinnom," (south of Jerusalem). It was the place where the Phoenician fire god, *Molech* was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. II Kgs. 16:3; 21:6; II Chr. 28:3; 33:6), which was forbidden in Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5
2. Jeremiah changed it from a place of pagan worship into a site of YHWH's judgment (cf. Jer. 7:32; 19:6-7). It became the place of fiery, eternal judgment in I Enoch 90:26-27 and Sib. 1:103.
3. The Jews of Jesus' day were so appalled by their ancestors' participation in pagan worship by child sacrifice, that they turned this area into the garbage dump for Jerusalem. Many of Jesus' metaphors for eternal judgment came from this landfill (fire, smoke, worms, stench, cf. Mark 9:44,46). The term *Gehenna* is used only by Jesus (except in James 3:6).
4. Jesus' usage of *Gehenna*
   a. fire, Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43
   b. permanent, Mark 9:48 (Matt. 25:46)
   c. place of destruction (both soul and body), Matt. 10:28
   d. paralleled to *She'ol*, Matt. 5:29-30; 18:9
   e. characterizes the wicked as "son of hell," Matt. 23:15
   f. result of judicial sentence, Matt. 23:33; Luke 12:5
   g. the concept of *Gehenna* is parallel to the second death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14) or the lake of fire (cf. Matt. 13:42,50; Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8). It is possible the lake of fire becomes the permanent dwelling place of humans (from *She'ol*) and evil angels (from *Tartarus*, II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6 or the abyss, cf. Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-10; 20:1,3).
   h. it was not designed for humans, but for Satan and his angels, Matt. 25:41

E. It is possible, because of the overlap of *She'ol*, *Hades*, and *Gehenna* that

1. originally all humans went to *She'ol/Hades*
2. their experience there (good or bad) is exacerbated after Judgment Day, but the place of the wicked remains the same (this is why the KJV translated *hades* (grave) as *gehenna* (hell).

3. only NT text to mention torment before Judgment is the parable of Luke 16:19-31 (Lazarus and the Rich Man). *She'ol* is also described as a place of punishment now (cf. Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:1-5). However, one cannot establish doctrine on a parable.

III. Intermediate state between death and resurrection
   A. The NT does not teach the "immortality of the soul," which is one of several ancient views of the afterlife.
      1. human souls exist before their physical life
      2. human souls are eternal before and after physical death
      3. often the physical body is seen as a prison and death as release back to a pre-existent state
   B. The NT hints at a disembodied state between death and resurrection
      1. Jesus speaks of a division between body and soul, Matt. 10:28
      2. Abraham may have a body now, Mark 12:26-27; Luke 16:23
      3. Moses and Elijah have a physical body at the transfiguration, Matt. 17
      4. Paul asserts that at the Second Coming the souls with Christ will get their new bodies first, II Thess. 4:13-18
      5. Paul asserts that believers get their new spiritual bodies on Resurrection Day, I Cor. 15:23,52
      6. Paul asserts that believers do not go to *Hades*, but at death are with Jesus, II Cor. 5:6,8; Phil. 1:23. Jesus overcame death and took the righteous to heaven with Him, I Pet. 3:18-22.

IV. Heaven
   A. This term is used in three senses in the Bible.
      1. the atmosphere above the earth, Gen. 1:1,8; Isa. 42:5; 45:18
      2. the starry heavens, Gen. 1:14; Deut. 10:14; Ps. 148:4; Heb. 4:14; 7:26
      3. the place of God's throne, Deut. 10:14; I Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 148:4; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 9:24 (third heaven, II Cor. 12:2)
   B. The Bible does not reveal much about the afterlife; probably because fallen humans have no way or capacity to understand (cf. I Cor. 2:9).
   C. Heaven is both a place (cf. John 14:2-3) and a person (cf. II Cor. 5:6,8). Heaven may be a restored Garden of Eden (Gen. 1-2; Rev. 21-22). The earth will be cleansed and restored (cf. Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:21; II Pet. 3:10). The image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) is restored in Christ. Now the intimate fellowship of the Garden of Eden is possible again.

      However, this may be metaphorical (heaven as a huge, cubed city of Rev. 21:9-27) and not literal. I Corinthians 15 describes the difference between the physical body and the spiritual body as the seed to the mature plant. Again I Cor. 2:9 (a quote from Isa. 64:4 and 65:17) is a great promise and hope! I know that when we see Him we will be like Him (cf. I John 3:2).

V. Helpful resources
   A. William Hendriksen, *The Bible On the Life Hereafter*
   B. Maurice Rawlings, *Beyond Death's Door*

▣ **"will awake"** This VERB (BDB 884, KB 1098) is a *Hiphael* IMPERFECT. This is another Hebrew idiom of life from death (cf. II Kgs. 4:31; Jer. 51:39,57; Job 14:12). In Isa. 26:19 and here it denotes resurrection. This is exactly the implication of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (cf. Ezek. 37), but in an

individual sense. Some will awake to everlasting joy (cf. Isa. 66:22-23) and others to everlasting contempt (cf. Isa. 66:24). For a good discussion see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2 ed., pp. 1200-1210 or *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, IVP, pp. 673-688 or *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, pp. 70-75.

▣ **"these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt"** This refers to a general resurrection (cf. John 5:28,29; Matt. 25:46; and Acts 24:15-16). This is one of the earliest Scriptures which discusses the developing understanding of the need for an afterlife in order for God to set straight the evil which has been done in this world (cf. Job 14:7-12,13-14; 19:25-26; Ps. 16:10; 49:15; 73:24; Isa. 25:8; 26:19). Apparently the rabbinical understanding of a divided *Sheol*/*Hades* into "paradise" and "Tartarus" developed from these early texts related to resurrection.

▣ **"everlasting. . .everlasting"** This is the Hebrew word *olam* (BDB 761), which must be interpreted in light of the intent and perspective of this permanent division in Matt. 25:46 (i.e. heaven - hell). There has been a recent book on annihilationism that brings up some interesting points. See Edward Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment*, but also note Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., pp. 1244-1247.

▣ **"contempt"** This Hebrew term (BDB 201) is used only here and in Isa. 66:24. Jesus used this Isaiah text to describe *Gehenna* (cf. Matt. 3:12).

12:3 "and those who have insight" This is a recurrent theme. This same phrase (BDB 968) is used in 11:33,35 (the faithful during the reign of Antiochus IV). Daniel 12:10 shows that this does not refer to degrees of intelligence, but the distinction between the saved and the lost. "Those who have insight" is used in 9:13,25 to note those who understand and act on the truth revealed by God. In 11:33 the insight is meant to be passed on to others, but they will be killed for their actions.

▣ **"will shine brightly"** There is a word play between "shine" (BDB 263) and "those who lead the many to righteousness" (cf. Isa. 53:11), based on the parallel of the actions of those in 11:33. The concept of illumination (i.e. light and teaching) links "shine" and "giving understanding." Those who know God share Him with others!

The verse is quoted by Jesus in Matt. 13:43, which is in the context of eschatological judgment.

It is possible that this verse denotes degrees of rewards. See Special Topic: Degrees of Rewards and Punishment at Dan. 7:10.

▣ **"like the brightness of the expanse of heaven"** These are parallel metaphors. The first one may refer to (1) the height of God's portable throne (cf. Ezek. 1:22) or (2) the Hebrew word (BDB 956) means "an extended surface." It is used to describe the vault of the sky in Gen. 1:6,7,8 and in v. 14 to the great lights (sun, moon, stars, comets, etc.).

▣ **"righteousness"** See Special Topic: Righteousness at 9:17.

▣ **"forever and ever"** This Hebrew phrase combines the word for "long duration" (BDB 761) with the word for "perpetuity" (BDB 723 I), which means "longevity" (cf. Isa. 30:8; 45:17). God's promises and judgments are sure and everlasting.

For a good discussion of *olam* and other words for duration see Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 312-319.

12:4 "Conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time" The TEV and NJB translations make this verse a separate paragraph. This concept of "seal up the words" is found in 8:26 and 12:9. The

"sealing" seems to refer to (1) protection (cf. Jer. 32:11-14); (2) spiritual understanding (cf. Isa. 29:9-12); or (3) secrecy (cf. Isa. 8:16). It helps me to know that these words were not easily understandable to Daniel, nor his contemporaries. I think that the last generation of suffering and dying believers will understand some texts that the preceding generations have never fully understood.

To what period of time was Daniel's message (1) sealed from and (2) revealed to? Was it for the sixth century B.C.; the second century B.C.; for Jesus' day, or the end-time? Is the main purpose the detailed prediction or the revelation of the sovereign God fully in control of history and redemption?

▣

NASB	**"many will go back and forth"**
NKJV	**"many shall run to and fro"**
NRSV	**"many shall be running back and forth"**
TEV	**"many people will waste their efforts"**
NJB	**"many will roam about, this way and that"**

This Hebrew term (BDB 1001, KB 1439) means moving about quickly. It is used of God's knowledge of the events on earth (cf. Zech. 4:10). It is also used of a person's frantic search (cf. Jer. 5:1). In Jer. 49:3 it is used for the confusion and fear caused by a siege. It is obvious that it denotes a frantic activity, but exactly how that relates to Dan. 12:4 is uncertain.

1. it refers to the activity of the lost (emended MT)
2. it refers to the activity of the redeemed (cf. Amos 8:12)
3. it refers to the general state of all humanity

The term "the many" can refer to (1) faithful Jews (cf. 11:33,39); (2) the rebellious Jews who supported the Seleucid dynasty (cf. 11:14); or (3) all humans (cf. 12:2).

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"and knowledge will increase"**
NRSV	**"and evil shall increase"**
TEV	**"trying to understand what is happening"**
NJB	**"and wickedness will continue to increase"**
NIV	**"to increase knowledge"**

Many commentators see this as secular knowledge (the modern world), but others see it as knowledge of God's actions in history related in v. 3a ("those who have insight").

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:5-13

[5]"Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. [6]And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, 'How long *will it be* until the end of *these* wonders?' [7]I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half *a time*; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these *events* will be completed. [8]As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, 'My lord, what *will be* the outcome of *these events*?' [9]He said, 'Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. [10]Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. [11]From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there will be* 1, 290 days. [12]How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1, 335 days! [13]But as for you, go *your way* to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise *again* for your allotted portion at the end of the age.'"

12:5 "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing" This chapter is a continuation of the literary context which began in chapter 10. In 10:4 two angelic beings were seen standing by the Tigris River. However, the term "river" in 10:4 (BDB 625) is the Tigris and the one here in v. 5 (BDB 384) is a different Hebrew word. The one here is most often used for the Nile River. However, there is an exception to this in Isa. 33:21, where it is used of canals.

12:6 "and one said to the man" The Masoretic text has "and he said," while the Septuagint and the Vulgate have "I said." In 8:13,14,16 Daniel hears two angels discussing the vision Daniel had just seen, so too, here. Angels are often referred to as "man." See note at 8:16.

▣ **"How long will it be until the end of these wonders"** This is exactly the same question the angelic being asked in 8:13. The word "wonders" (BDB 810) could have a negative connotation here (cf. v. 7) and a positive one later (cf. vv. 1-3).

12:7 "as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven" This is an OT oath gesture (cf. Deut. 32:40; Isa. 62:8; Ezek. 20:5 and in the NT, Rev. 10:5, 6). Both hands being raised must denote intensity or solemnity.

▣ **"and swore by Him who 1ives forever"** This is another use of the term *olam* (BDB 761), which must be interpreted in light of its context. Notice its usage in David.

1. everlasting righteousness, 9:24
2. everlasting life, 12:2
3. everlasting contempt, 12:2
4. those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever, 12:3
5. Him who lives forever, 12:7

▣ **"a time, times, and half *a time*"** There has been much discussion over this phrase. This exact phrase is used in Dan. 7:25 (and Rev. 12:14). It seems to be an apocalyptic idiom for a time of persecution (half of seven, cf. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 445). There are several other phrases in Daniel and the Book of the Revelation that use this basic time frame: (1) Dan. 8:14,26 — 2300 evenings and mornings. This has been interpreted as either (a) 1150 days or (b) 6 years, 110 days; (2) Dan. 9:27 — reference to half of seven; (3) Dan. 12:11 — 1290 days; (4) Dan. 12:12 — 1335 days; (5) Rev. 11:2-13:5 42 months or 1260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6). This seems to refer to about three and one-half years in the lunar calendar. These numbers are more symbolic than literal because of their similarity, yet their difference.

▣ **"they finished shattering the power of the holy people"** Does this refer to (1) some kind of persecution of the Jewish people (cf. 7:21,25; 8:23-26; 9:24-27; 11:36-45) or (2) of the Christian church (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; II Thess; Revelation)? There is a third option that goes back to 11:14, 34, which may refer to Daniel's opposition to the Jewish opposition to Antiochus IV because he believes God will accomplish the victory in His own time, in His own way, and for His purposes (the book of Daniel's emphasis on God' sovereignty, which is such a common element in apocalyptic literature).

There has been much discussion about this period of time, but it is obvious that it refers to a historical occurrence when the evil one seems to be gaining an advantage (cf. Dan. 8:23-26; Luke 21:24). The Septuagint totally changes the thought of this verse and must be ruled out as a realistic option. "The end of time" setting (cf. v. 4) will see things getting worse and worse for the people of God (cf. v. 1).

Apocalyptic literature is pessimistic about the possibility of historical process accomplishing anything positive or righteous. Therefore, the power of humans, even redeemed humans, must be shown to be inadequate. Only a powerful, climatic coming of God into fallen history can restore and accomplish the plans and purposes of God.

12:8 "But as for me, I heard but could not understand" Daniel had been given special gifts of wisdom and dream (vision) interpretation (cf. 1:17). In 8:16 the powerful angel orders Gabriel to give Daniel understanding (cf. 9:22; 10:21). However, this does not mean to imply that Daniel understood everything about these visions. His understanding was still limited by his sixth century B.C. context. Some of these visions were not for OT people of God. The New Covenant and the two comings of Christ alter Daniel's Mosaic orientation.

▣ **"My lord, what will be the outcome of these events"** Although the godly man, Daniel, asked, his curiosity would not be answered. These events are for the last generation (cf. v. 9). The term "lord" here is not a title for deity, but the general term for respect, "*adomi*" (cf. 10:16).

12:10 "Many" See note at v. 1 ("everyone").

A. ▣ **"will be purged, purified and refined"** Some will respond to God's messengers and it will radically change their lives! Persecution is a means of purging (BDB 140, KB 162, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT, "to separate from dross" [i.e. evil])and sanctification (BDB 864, kb 1057, *Niphal* IMPERFECT, "to separate from dross" [i.e. "to God"] cf. 11:35; Mal. 3:2-3).

▣ **"but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand"** There will be a huge division among humans. Those who do not know God will be completely surprised by events of the end-time. Evil will be shown for what it is!

▣ **"those who have insight will understand"** If this refers to the end-time, and if the New Testament is true, then these must be believing Jews and Gentiles because in Christ there are no more racial, sexual, or social distinctions in salvation (cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11; 3:13; Col. 3:11).

12:11 "from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished" This obviously refers to a historical event. The "regular sacrifice" (BDB 556) refers to the daily sacrifice of a lamb, every morning and evening in the temple ("the continual"). There has been a diversity of opinions based on the time frame in which the passage is viewed:

1. Antiochus IV (cf. 8:11-13)
2. the Roman general, Titus, in A.D. 70 (cf. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:15)
3. the end-time Antichrist (cf. Dan. 7; 11:36f-40; Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; II Thess. 2; and the book of Revelation).

▣ **"the abomination of desolation is set up"** Some see this phrase (BDB 1055, 1030) as referring to Antiochus IV setting up an altar to Zeus in the temple during the Macabbean period (cf. Dan. 8:11-13). Others see it as referring to the anti-God world ruler of the end-time (cf. 7:21,25; 8:23-26; 9:25-27; 11:36-45). The phrase is ambiguous enough to fulfill several historical situations.

▣ **"1290 days"** See note at v. 7.

12:12 "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days" This seems to be longer than most of the prophetic dates (cf. v. 7). Those who remain faithful to God even in the midst of an extended persecution will be rewarded and blessed. Perseverance is crucial.

12:13 "go *your way*. . .enter into rest" Daniel is told to quit wrestling with this, to leave it alone, and to live out his normal life until his death (cf. v. 9). But the great hope of v. 13 is the assumption that he (and all who believe) will rise again unto an end-time reward. Hallelujah!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the historical reference of the literary unit Daniel 10-12?
2. Why are there so many diverse interpretations of this passage of scripture?
3. Is this the only place in the OT where a resurrection is mentioned?
4. What is the central truth of Daniel 12:5-13?
5. Explain the concept of multiple fulfillment prophecy.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH

I. UNIQUENESS

A. This book is pivotal in our understanding of both apocalyptic literature and eschatology.

B. Surprisingly chapters 1-8 are alluded to extensively in the book of the Revelation, while chapters 9-14 are alluded to often in the Gospels.

C. Zechariah quotes extensively from the major eighth century prophets (in the North, Amos and Hosea; in the South, Isaiah and Micah) as well as the seventh century prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. He brings their insights to bear on his day and the last days. This shows that the prophets of Israel and Judah had access to each other's books.

D. This book is a good example of apocalyptic language. This is a literary genre which tries to document end-time events by means of figurative, imaginative symbols. It was often used in tension-filled times to express the hope of God's people that He was/is in control. See Opening Article on page i.

E. This book is also very Messianic. He is God's agent of permanent change in human history. Zechariah, like Isaiah (cf. 52:13-53:12), reveals a suffering Messiah (cf. Gen. 3:15).

F. Jerome called Zechariah the most obscure book in the Old Testament.

II. AUTHOR

A. Zechariah means "YHWH remembers" or "One remembered by YHWH." This prophet's name gives hope to the exiled Jews who wondered if their Covenant God remembered them. Haggai and Zechariah's call to rebuild the temple is physical evidence that the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenant promises are restored to the post-exilic community.

B. Zechariah was a very common Hebrew name. It was spelled two ways in the English Bibles: Zechariah or Zachariah because of the Hebrew name's translation into Greek. There are twenty-seven people in the English OT who spell it with an "e" and two who spell it with an "a."

C. Zechariah 1:1 tells us that he was a priest (cf. Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh. 12:4,16). Why his ancestor, Berechiah, is omitted from the list is uncertain. This would make him a post-exilic prophet, like Haggai, Malachi, and possibly Obadiah and Joel.

D. Many modern scholars deny unity to the book of Zechariah. This is because chapters 1-8 are so different from chapters 9-14. In chapters 1-8 the prophet is named and dates are given. The setting is obviously post-exilic. This section is alluded to extensively by John in his book of the Revelation. However, chapters 9-14 are undated. There is no prophet named. There is no obvious historical setting. This section is alluded to most often in the Gospels. However, this structure is common in several OT prophets (e.g. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel).

In Matt. 27:9 Jesus attributes a quote to Jeremiah which is from Zech. 11:12-13. This was the beginning of the trend toward denying authorship of chapters 9-14 to Zechariah. However, even the Dead Sea Scrolls have Zechariah as a unity.

There are several internal grammatical and lexical items which point to a unity.

1. the use of the number "two" (4:3; 5:9; 6:1; 11:7; 13:8)
2. the use of the VOCATIVE (2:7,10; 3:2,8; 4:7; 9:9,13; 11:1-2; 13:7)
3. the use of the phrase, "go to and fro," which is unique to Zechariah (7:14; 9:8)
4. the repeated use of "saith the Lord" (used sixteen times)
5. the *Qal* form of "to dwell" or "to inhabit" (BDB 442, 2:8; 7:7; 12:6; 14:10)

(These are taken from R. K. Harrison's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 954). For further discussion of the unity of the book see E. J. Young's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 280).

SPECIAL TOPIC: MATTHEW 27:9

"spoken through Jeremiah the prophet" This is a direct quote from Zech. 11:12-13. Jeremiah 18:1ff; 19:1ff and 32:7-9 also speak of a potter and Jer. 32:7-9 of buying a field. This has caused commentators great problems:

1. Augustine, Beza, Luther, and Keil said Matthew quoted the name Jeremiah in error
2. The Peshitta, a 5th century A.D. Syriac translation and the Diatessaron simply removed the prophet's name from the text
3. Origen and Eusebius said a copyist caused the problem
4. Jerome and Ewald said it is a quote from an apocryphal writing ascribed to Jeremiah
5. Mede said Jeremiah wrote Zechariah, chapters 9-11
6. Lightfoot and Scofield said Jeremiah was listed first in the Hebrew division of the canon known as "the prophets" and, therefore, his name stands for that section of the canon
7. Hengstenberg said that Zechariah quoted Jeremiah
8. Calvin said an error has crept into the text
9. F. F. Bruce and a JB footnote said it was a composite quote from Zechariah and Jeremiah

III. DATE

A. From 1:1 we learn that the prophet began his ministry in the second year of Darius. Most scholars assert that this is Darius I Hystapes (522-486 B.C.), who took over the kingdom after Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.), Cyrus II's son, committed suicide. See A Brief Historical Survey of the Powers of Mesopotamia, Appendix Two.

B. This would make the date 520-519 B.C. He preached about two years (cf. 1:7; 7:1).

C. Haggai and Zechariah are dated more precisely than any other OT books.

IV. PURPOSE

A. The major purpose of the book is to encourage the returning Jews to rebuild the temple (cf. Ezra 5). This was started by Sheshbazzar (cf. Ezra 1:8; 5:16), but had not been continued under Zerubbabel (cf. Ezra 2:1-2). The temple had been neglected for eighteen years. Haggai asserts that this is because of the apathy of the people (cf. Hag. 1:1-11), while Ezra implies that it was the political maneuvers of the surrounding provinces, especially Samaria.

B. Both Haggai and Zechariah address the issue of rebuilding the temple (cf. Zech. 1-8), but Zechariah also covers many more issues (cf. Zech. 9-14).

V. BRIEF SAMPLE OUTLINE (taken from *Introduction to the Old Testament*, by R. K. Harrison, p. 950)

A. Dated prophecies, chapters 1-8
   1. Introduction and call to repentance, 1:1-6
   2. Eight visions, 1:7-6:8
      a. four horsemen; the promise of divine restoration, 1:7-17
      b. four destroying horns and four smiths, 1:18-21 (Heb. 2:1-4)
      c. the immeasurable greatness of Jerusalem, 2:1-13 (Heb. 2:5-17)
      d. the cleansing of Joshua; an oracle to him, 3:1-10
      e. the seven-branched lampstand, 4:1-14
      f. the large, flying scroll, 5:1-4
      g. the woman in an ephah removed to Babylon, 5:5-11
      h. four horse-drawn chariots traversing the earth, 6:9-15
   3. Historical section: Joshua symbolic of the Messiah, 6:9-15 (I think this is a ninth vision)
   4. An inquiry of Zechariah concerning fasting, 7:1-8:23

B. Undated prophecies, chapters 9-14
   1. Judgment of national enemies; the coming of the peaceful prince, 9:1-17
   2. Gathering in of the chosen flock by the divine leader, 10:1-12
   3. Good and foolish shepherds; the suffering of the flock, 11:1-17
   4. Eschatological oracles, 12:1-13:6
   5. The purifying judgment of Israel and the blessings of the divine kingdom, 13:7-14:21

VI. THE MEANING OF THE EIGHT VISIONS

A. The angels on colored horses (cf. 1:7-17) — God knows what is happening on earth, especially as it relates to His plan of universal redemption through a Jewish Messiah. The Jews must be reestablished in Jerusalem for God's plan to manifest in history.

B. The four horns and the four craftsmen (cf. 1:18-21) — God allowed pagan nations to judge His idolatrous people (cf. v. 15), but now He will judge them for their excess and pride. World empires are directed by God for His redemptive purposes.

C. The measuring of Jerusalem (cf. 2:1-13) — God will restore His people to the Promised Land and renew and expand the covenant. YHWH Himself will be with them and protect them as in the Exodus experience.

D. Joshua forgiven and restored (cf. 3:1-10) — Joshua as High Priest stands for the Jewish nation. He is forgiven and restored, which shows in very clear symbols that the sacrificial system and, thereby, the covenant is fully restored and functioning. The Messianic element shows the priestly aspect of the Messiah's work (cf. Ps.110; Isa. 53).

E. The lampstand (cf. 4:1-14) — God's power, not human power, will reestablish the covenant (i.e. rebuilt temple as a symbol/sign). God will use Spirit-empowered human instrumentality (i.e. Joshua and Zerubbabel).

F. The flying scroll (cf. 5:1-4) — Symbol of God's judgment on covenant breaking among His people, which will result in the destruction of the violators.

G. Wickedness in a basket (cf. 5:5-11) — Rebellion (idolatry) against God will be caged in a basket and removed to the place of human arrogance and idolatry (i.e. Shinar = Babylon).

H. The four chariots pulled by colored horses (cf. 6:1-8) — This is parallel to the first vision. God is present and sovereign in all the world.

VII. Please read the quotes from D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*, found in Contextual Insights to chapter 11, F. These insights into the nature of apocalyptic literature will be very helpful as we study and attempt to interpret the book of Zechariah.

ZECHARIAH 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
A Call to Repentance	Introduction: A Call to Repentance	The Lord Calls His People to Return to Him	A Summons to Conversion
1:1-6	1:1-6	1:1-6	1:1-6a
			1:6b
Visions of the Horses	The Word of the Lord to Zechariah in a Series of Eight "Visions" (1:7-6:15)	The Prophet's Vision of the Horses	First Vision: The Horsemen
1:7-11	The First Vision: Divine Horsemen Patrolling the Earth	1:7-9a	1:7-17
	1:8-17		
		1:9b-10	
The Lord Will Comfort Zion		1:11	
1:12-17		1:12	
		1:13-16	
		1:17	
Vision of the Horns	The Second Vision: Four Horns and Four Smiths	The Vision of the Horns	
1:18-21	1:18-21	1:18-19a	
		1:19b	
		1:20-21a	
		1:21b	(NJB Renumbers) Second Vision: The Horns and the Smiths
			2:1-4

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

---

*Although not inspired, paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Each modern translation has divided and summarized the paragraph divisions as they understand them. Every paragraph has one central topic, truth or thought. Each version encapsulates that topic in its own way. As you read the text, which translation fits your understanding of the subject and verse divisions?

In every chapter you must read the Bible first and try to identify its subjects (paragraphs). Then compare your understanding with the modern versions. Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation at the paragraph level, can one truly understand the Bible. Only the original author was inspired—readers have no right to change or modify the message. Bible readers do have the responsibility to apply the inspired truth to their day and lives.

Note that all technical terms and abbreviations are explained fully in Appendices One, Two and Three.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. The first six verses are an introduction to the whole book. They emphasize the requirement of a covenant relationship (faith and obedience) and specify the need for ongoing repentance.

God's word is sure and permanent (cf. Isa. 45:23, 55:11; Matt. 5:17-20). How each generation responds to Him (personal) and it (doctrinal and lifestyle) determines their blessing or cursing (cf. Deut. 27-29).

B. Beginning in 1:7 and continuing through 6:15 is a series of eight visions and their interpretations (angelic mediators).
There are apocalyptic elements in these visions.
1. angels
2. colors
3. animals
4. numbers

C. There seems to be a similar opening (1:7-17) and closing (6:1-5).
1. four colored horses patrol the earth at YHWH's behest
2. four chariots of colored horses patrol the earth at YHWH's behest

The apocalyptic themes of God's knowledge and sovereignty control and interpret history. All eight visions must be taken together as one emphasis and related to chapters 9-14. See D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic,* pp. 47-50.

D. Much modern scholarship is recognizing a particular type of two-way stair step parallelism called chiasmus in both 1:7-6:15 and 9-14 (cf. Joyce Baldwin, *Tyndale OT Commentary*, pp. 74-81). If this is true, then the fourth and fifth visions take an emphasized structural position.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:1-6

[1]In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying, [2]"The LORD was very angry with your fathers. [3]Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return to Me," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I may return to you," says the LORD of hosts. [4]Do not be like your fathers, to whom

the former prophets proclaimed, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds."' But they did not listen or give heed to Me," declares the LORD. [5]Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? [6]But did not My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, overtake your fathers? Then they repented and said, 'As the LORD of hosts purposed to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, so He has dealt with us.'"

1:1 "**In the eighth month of the second year**" This refers to October or November of either 520 or 519 B.C., depending on whether one uses the Syrian or Babylonian calendar. The Jews had been back in Palestine for eighteen years at this point. The temple rebuilding, which had begun under Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:16), had not been finished under Zerubbabel.

▣ **"Darius"** This refers to Darius I, son of Hystapes, also called "the great." He reigned from 522 to 486 B.C. over the Persian Empire; therefore, his second year would be 520 B.C. He was the successor of Cyrus II's son, Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.), who committed suicide because of Egyptian military victories. Darius was not part of the royal line, but he married a royal daughter in order to legitimize his reign. He searched the Persian records and when he discovered the Edict of Cyrus (cf. Ezra 5-6) he overthrew the legal case of the Samaritans and even helped provide money for the rebuilding of the temple.

▣ **"the word of the LORD came"** God's mercy and patience is demonstrated by the fact that as He sent His word in the past, and it was originally rejected (cf. v. 6), He now sends it again. God wants a personal, ethical, obedient relationship with people of faith!

This introductory prophetic phrase is characteristic of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but not in this exact form in Isaiah.

These visions (1:7-6:15) were not exclusively from the imagination of Zechariah, but were from YHWH. The genre questions have always been:

1. Did YHWH communicate His message in apocalyptic visions? or
2. Did Zechariah structure YHWH's message in a series of visions?

These same questions relate to poetry, fables, parables, and textual design. Is the Bible dictated by the Spirit or does the human author participate? The variety of Scriptural genres and structures implies a creative element on the part of the human author. Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, p. 74, says, "One of the important contributions of modern scholarship to our understanding of the Bible is the realization that its truth is expressed in literary forms and structures as well as in words." R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 950, says, "probably the only legitimate question that can be raised in this regard, however, is whether the visions were real experiences or merely a literary form, as in later apocalyptic writings." These forms and structures were contemporary with the inspired authors, not radically new or different (see Hinckley G. Mitchell, ICC, p. 117).

This does not affect the complete inspiration of the Bible, but does reveal how God cooperates with His human creatures. Our "in His image" is an awesome, mysterious, and pervasive concept!

▣ **"Zechariah"** The name means "YHWH remembers." This is a very common Hebrew name, which is used twenty-nine times in the OT. Its meaning seems especially significant in light of the returning exiles' view that God had reestablished His covenant with them. He was a contemporary of Haggai. When one compares the dates (i.e. Hag. 1:1 with Zech. 1:1) Zechariah began preaching about two months later than Haggai.

▣ **"the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo saying"** When one compares Ezra 5:1; 6:14 with Zech. 1:1,7, he sees that the father of Zechariah is omitted. There have been several theories about the

omission: (1) Hebrew genealogies often skip generations; (2) the early church fathers said that this refers, not to physical lineage, but to spiritual lineage (i.e. Jerome), Iddo being a tribal family group of Levites who returned to Jerusalem (cf. Neh. 12:4,16); (3) others say that for some reason Berechiah did not live up to his priestly lineage; (4) Zechariah's father had died and he was raised by his grandfather, Iddo; or (5) it refers to the faithful witness mentioned in Isa. 8:2 whose father was Je-berechiah ("YHWH" blesses). It is obvious that Zechariah was a prophet and a priest (cf. Jer. 1:1; Ezek. 1:1).

1:2 "The LORD was very angry with your fathers" The word "anger" (BDB 893) appears twice in v. 2 and has an intensified connotation, "was very angry" (cf. vv. 14-15). This is an anthropomorphic phrase putting human emotions on God, and yet, human vocabulary is the only means we have to understand and communicate thoughts about God. For the term "Lord" see Special Topic at Dan. 4:2.

The expression "very angry" (BDB 893) is used several times in Zechariah (cf. 1:2 [twice]; 1:15 [twice]; 7:12; and 8:14). YHWH was angry with His people because of their sin (cf. 7:12; 8:14) and also at the nations He used to judge His people (cf. 1:15).

The phrase "your fathers" refers primarily to the previous history of Jewish rebellion (cf. v. 4) and, by implication, to Haggai and Zechariah's generation, who had been neglectful in rebuilding the temple.

This opening paragraph has several levels of direct quotes. It is hard to identify the antecedents of the pronouns. The term "them" of v. 3 refers to the current generation of Jews living in Jerusalem and the surrounding area (cf. vv. 3-6).

1:3 "says the LORD of hosts" This is a direct quote from God (cf. Isa. 31:6; Mal 3:7). This phrase is found in the Hebrew text three times in v. 3, once in v. 4, and again in v. 6 (also note vv. 12 and 16). The title "Lord of hosts" occurs at least fifty times in Zechariah.

▣ **"'Return'"** This is the Hebrew word *shub* (BDB 996, KB 1427) in a *Qal* IMPERATIVE FORM (as in v. 4). Verses 3 and 6 are the key to this opening paragraph. It signified a turning from idols and returning to YHWH (cf. Isa. 31:6-7). It is used extensively by Jeremiah for spiritual conversion (e.g. 15:19; 18:8,11). God always takes the initiative in human repentance (cf. Jer. 31:18; Lam. 5:21; Prov. 8:3,7,19; John 6:44,65; Acts 5:31; 8:22; II Tim. 2:25). However, God has structured His Covenant in such a way that humans must respond in repentance and faith to Him (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38,41; 3:16,19; 20:21). Because these were already covenant people it is uncertain whether this text is referring to initial personal salvation (cf. Isa. 55:6-7) or what we would call today a rededication experience (cf. vv. 4,6; Rev. 2:5,16,21,22; 3:3,19,20). In the OT descendants of Abraham were part of the people of God, but it is obvious from the OT itself that all of them did not have a personal faith relationship with God that impacted their daily lives. Religion, ritual, and self-righteous legalism are always barriers and blinders.

It is theologically significant that Zechariah calls for a repentant response on the part of the people of God. The visions of 1:8-6:15 then proclaim God's sovereign acts on behalf of His people. Notice the balance–God's sovereign initiative demands a human response.

SPECIAL TOPIC: PREDESTINATION (CALVINISM) VERSUS HUMAN FREE WILL (ARMINIANISM)

I thought it might be theologically helpful to provide my commentary notes from Rom. 8:29 and 9, as well as Eph. 1.

I. Romans 8:29 - Paul uses "foreknew" (*proginōskō*, "to know before") twice, here and 11:2. In 11:2 it refers to God's covenant love for Israel before time began. Remember that the term "know" in Hebrew related to intimate, personal relationship, not to facts about someone (cf. Gen. 4:1; Jer. 1:5). Here it was included in a chain of eternal events (cf. Rom. 8:29-30). This term was linked

with predestination. However, it must be stated that God's foreknowledge is not the basis of election because if that were so, then election would be based on fallen humanity's future response, which would be human performance. This term is also found in Acts 26:5; I Pet. 1:2,20 and II Pet. 3:17.

A. "foreknew" (*proginōskō*, "to know before")

The terms "foreknow" or "predestine" are both compounds with the preposition "before" and therefore, should be translated "to know before," "to set bounds before," or "mark off before." The definitive passages on predestination in the NT are Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:13-14; and Rom. 9. These texts obviously stress that God is sovereign. He is in total control of all things. There is a preset divine plan being worked out in time. However, this plan is not arbitrary or selective. It is based not only on God's sovereignty and foreknowledge, but on His unchanging character of love, mercy, and undeserved grace.

We must be careful of our western (American) individualism or our evangelical zeal coloring this wonderful truth. We must also guard against being polarized into the historical, theological conflicts between Augustine versus Pelagius or Calvinism versus Arminianism.

B. "predestined" (*proorizō*, "to set the bounds before")

Predestination is not a doctrine meant to limit God's love, grace, and mercy nor to exclude some from the gospel. It is meant to strengthen believers by molding their world-view. God is <u>for</u> all mankind (cf. I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9). God is in control of all things. Who or what can separate us from Him (cf. Rom. 8:31-39)? God views all history as present. Humans are time bound. Our perspective and mental abilities are limited. There is no contradiction between God's sovereignty and mankind's free will. It is a covenantal structure. This is another example of truth being given in dialectical tension. Biblical doctrines are presented from different perspectives. They often appear paradoxical. The truth is a balance between the seemingly opposite pairs. We must not remove the tension by picking one of the truths. We must not isolate any biblical truth into a compartment by itself.

It is also important to add that the goal of election is not only heaven when we die, but Christlikeness now (cf. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4; 2:10). We were chosen to be "holy and blameless." God chooses to change us so that others may see the change and respond by faith to God in Christ. Predestination is not a personal privilege, but a covenantal responsibility. This is the major truth of the passage. This is the goal of Christianity. Holiness is God's will for every believer. God's election is to Christlikeness (cf. Eph. 1:4), not a special standing. The image of God, which was given to man in creation (cf. Gen. 1:26; 5:1,3; 9:6), is to be restored.

C. "conformed to the image of His Son"—God's ultimate goal is the restoration of the image lost in the Fall. Believers are foreordained to Christlikeness (cf. Eph. 1:4).

II. Romans 9

A. Chapter 9 is one of the strongest NT passages on God's sovereignty (the other is Eph.1:3-14), while Rom. 10 states humans' free will clearly and repeatedly (cf. "everyone" v. 4; "whosoever" vv. 11,13; "all" v. 12 [twice]). Paul never tries to reconcile this theological tension. They are both true! Most Bible doctrines are presented in paradoxical or dialectical pairs. Most systems of theology are logical half-truths. Augustinianism and Calvinism versus semi-Pelegianism and Arminianism have elements of truth and error. Biblical tension between doctrines is preferable to a proof-texted, dogmatic, rational, theological system that forces the Bible onto a preconceived interpretive grid.

B. This same truth (found in Rom. 9:23) is stated in Rom. 8:29-30 and Eph. 1:4,11. This chapter is the strongest expression of God's sovereignty in the NT. There can be no dispute that God is in total charge of creation and redemption. This great truth should never be softened or diminished.

However, it must be balanced with God's choice of covenant as a means of relating to human creation, made in His image. It is surely true that some Old Testament covenants, like Genesis 15, are unconditional and do not relate at all to human response, but other covenants are conditioned on human response (e.g. Eden, Noah, Moses, David). God has a plan of redemption for His creation; no human can affect this plan. God has chosen to allow individuals to participate in His plans. This opportunity for participation is a theological tension between sovereignty (Rom. 9) and human free will (Rom. 10).

It is not appropriate to select one biblical emphasis and ignore another. There is tension between doctrines because eastern people present truth in dialectical or tension-filled pairs. Doctrines must be held in relationship to other doctrines. Truth is a mosaic of truths.

III. Ephesians 1

A. Election is a wonderful doctrine. However, it is not a call to favoritism, but a call to be a channel, a tool or means of others' redemption! In the OT the term was used primarily for service; in the NT it is used primarily for salvation, which issues in service. The Bible never reconciles the seeming contradiction between God's sovereignty and mankind's free will, but affirms them both! A good example of the biblical tension would be Romans 9 on God's sovereign choice and Romans 10 on mankind's necessary response (cf. 10:11,13).

The key to this theological tension may be found in 1:4. Jesus is God's elect man and all are potentially elect in Him (Karl Barth). Jesus is God's "yes" to fallen mankind's need (Karl Barth). Ephesians 1:4 also helps clarify the issue by asserting that the goal of predestination is not heaven only, but holiness (Christlikeness). We are often attracted to the benefits of the gospel and ignore the responsibilities! God's call (election) is for time as well as eternity!

Doctrines come in relation to other truths, not as single, unrelated truths. A good analogy would be a constellation versus a single star. God presents truth in eastern, not western, genres. We must not remove the tension caused by dialectical (paradoxical) pairs of doctrinal truths (God as transcendent versus God as immanent; security vs. perseverance; Jesus as equal with the Father vs. Jesus as subservient to the Father; Christian freedom vs. Christian responsibility to a covenant partner, etc.).

The theological concept of "covenant" unites the sovereignty of God (who always takes the initiative and sets the agenda) with a mandatory initial and continuing repentant, faith response from man. Be careful of proof-texting one side of the paradox and depreciating the other! Be careful of asserting only your favorite doctrine or system of theology.

B. "He chose us" in Eph. 1:4 is an AORIST MIDDLE INDICATIVE, which emphasizes the subject. This focuses on the Father's choice before time. God's choice must not be understood in the Islamic sense of determinism, nor in the ultra-Calvinistic sense as some versus others, but in the covenantal sense. God promised to redeem fallen mankind (cf. Gen. 3:15). God called and chose Abraham to choose all humans (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6). God Himself elected all persons who would exercise faith in Christ. God always takes the initiative in salvation (cf. John 6:44,65). This text and Rom. 9 are the biblical basis for the doctrine of predestination emphasized by Augustine and Calvin.

God chose believers not only to salvation (justification), but also to sanctification (cf. Co1:12). This could relate to (1) our position in Christ (cf. II Cor. 5:21) or (2) God's desire to reproduce His character in His children (cf. 2:10; Rom. 8:28-29; Gal. 4:19). God's will for His children is both heaven one day and Christlikeness now!

"In Him" is a key concept of Eph. 1:4. The Father's blessings, grace, and salvation flow through Christ (cf. John 14:6). Notice the repetition of this grammatical form (LOCATIVE of

SPHERE) in v. 3, "in Christ"; v. 4, "in Him"; v. 7, "in Him"; v. 9, "in Him"; v. 10, "in Christ," "in Him"; v. 12, "in Christ" and v. 13, "in Him" (twice). Jesus is God's "yes" to fallen mankind (Karl Barth). Jesus is the elect man and all are potentially elect in Him. All of God the Father's blessings flow through Christ.

The phrase "before the foundation of the world" is also used in Matt. 25:34; John 17:24; I Pet. 1:19-20 and Rev. 13:8. It shows the Triune God's redemptive activity even before Gen. 1:1. Humans are limited by their sense of time; everything to us is past, present, and future, but not to God.

The goal of predestination is holiness, not privilege. God's call is not to a selected few of Adam's children, but to all! It is a call to be what God intended mankind to be, like Himself (cf. I Thess. 5:23; II Thess. 2:13); in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). To turn predestination into a theological tenet instead of a holy life is a tragedy. Often our theologies speak louder than the biblical text.

The term "blameless" (*amō mos*) or "free from blemish" is used of (1) Jesus (cf. Heb. 9:14; I Pet. 1:19); (2) Zachariah and Elizabeth (cf. Luke 1:6); (3) Paul (cf. Phil. 3:6); and (4) all true Christians (cf. Phil. 2:15; I Thess. 3:13; 5:23). God's unalterable will for every Christian is not only heaven later, but Christlikeness now (cf. Rom. 8:29-30; Gal. 4:19; I Pet. 1:2). Believers are to reflect God's characteristics to a lost world for the purpose of evangelism.

Grammatically the phrase "in love" in this verse could go with either v. 4 or v. 5. However, when this phrase is used in other places in Ephesians it always refers to human love for God (cf. 3:17; 4:2,15,16).

C. In Eph. 1:5 the phrase "He predestined us" is an AORIST ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. This Greek term is a compound of "before" and "mark off." It refers to God's predetermined redemptive plan (cf. Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 17:31; Rom. 8:29-30). Predestination is one of several truths related to mankind's salvation. It is part of a theological pattern or series of related truths. It was never meant to be emphasized in isolation! Biblical truth has been given in a series of tension-filled, paradoxical pairs. Denominationalism has tended to remove the biblical tension by emphasizing only one of the dialectical truths (predestination vs. human free will; security of the believer vs. perseverance of the saints; original sin vs. volitional sin; sinlessness vs. sinning less; instantaneously declared sanctification vs. progressive sanctification; faith vs. works; Christian freedom vs. Christian responsibility; transcendence vs. immanence).

God's choice is not based on foreknowledge of human performance, but on His gracious character (cf. vv. 9 & 11). He wishes that all (not just some special ones like the Gnostics or modern day ultra-Calvinists) would be saved (cf. Ezek. 18:21-23,32; John 3:16-17; I Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11; II Pet. 3:9). God's grace (God's character) is the theological key to this passage (cf. vv. 6a, 7c, 9b), as God's mercy is the key to the other passage on predestination, Rom. 9-11.

Fallen mankind's only hope is the grace and mercy of God (cf. Isa. 53:6 and several other OT texts quoted in Rom. 3:9-18). It is crucial in interpreting these first theological chapters to realize that Paul emphasizes those things which are totally unrelated to human performance: predestination (chap. 1), grace (chap. 2), and God's eternal plan of redemption (mystery, 2:11-3:13). This was to counterbalance the emphasis of the false teachers on human merit and pride.

SPECIAL TOPIC: REPENTANCE

Repentance (along with faith) is a covenant requirement of both the Old Covenant (*Nacham*, I Kgs. 8:47; *Shuv,* I Kgs. 8:48; Ezek. 14:6; 18:30; Joel 2:12-13; Zech. 1:3-4) and the New Covenant.

1. John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3,8)
2. Jesus (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; 2:17; Luke 5:32; 13:3,5; 15:7; 17:3)
3. Peter (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 11:18; II Pet. 3:9)
4. Paul (Acts 13:24; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20; Rom. 2:4; II Cor. 2:9-10)

But what is repentance? Is it sorrow? Is it a cessation of sin? The best chapter in the NT for understanding the different connotations of this concept is II Corinthians 7:8-11, where three related, but different, Greek terms are used.

1. "sorrow" (*lupē*, cf. vv. 8 [twice], 9 [thrice], 10 [twice], 11). It means grief or distress and has a theologically neutral connotation.
2. "repentance" (*metanoeō*, cf. vv. 9,10). It is a compound of "after" and "mind," which implies a new mind, a new way of thinking, a new attitude toward life and God. This is true repentance.
3. "regret" (*metamelomai*, cf. vv. 8[twice], 10). It is a compound of "after" and "care." It is used of Judas in Matt. 27:3 and Esau in Heb. 12:16-17. It implies sorrow over the consequences, not over the acts.

Repentance and faith are the required covenant acts (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38,41; 3:16,19; 20:21). There are some texts which imply that God gives repentance (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18; II Tim. 2:25). But most of the texts see this as a necessary human covenantal response to God's offer of a free salvation.

The definitions of both the Hebrew and Greek terms are required to grasp the full meaning of repentance. The Hebrew demands "a change of action," while the Greek demands "a change of mind." The saved person receives a new mind and heart. He thinks differently and lives differently. Instead of "What's in it for me?" the question is now, "What is God's will?" Repentance is not an emotion that fades or a total sinlessness, but a new relationship with the Holy One that transforms the believer progressively into a holy one.

▣ **"to Me"** Notice the personal element (cf. Isa. 44:22, very similar to John's Gospel). It is God who we need more than any of His gifts. Covenant faith is personal! Truth is personal (cf. John 8:32; 14:6).

I have enjoyed and benefitted from Joyce D. Baldwin's Tyndale Commentaries on both Daniel and the post-exilic prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). Here is an example of her insight.

> "The new generation was free to make a new start (Ezek. 18:14ff); the Lord would return to them, despite the covenant-breaking of past generations if they would return to Him" *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (p. 87).

The invitation of Ezekiel 18 (both individual and corporate) is still open! This chapter is a new OT metaphor for the "seventh day of rest" (cf. Ps. 95; Heb. 3-4).

▣ **"that I may return to you"** Repentance restores fellowship with God (cf. Mal. 3:7; James 4:8; the negative form in II Chr. 15:2). The term *shub* (BDB 996, KB 1427) is used twice in v. 3; once in v. 4; and once in v. 6.

1:4 "the former prophets" This phrase becomes a technical term in later rabbinical writings for the "historical books" of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Here it refers to the pre-exilic writing prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries (cf. 7:7; II Chr. 24:19; 36:15).

▣ **"Return now from your evil ways and from your evil deeds"** This is an allusion from previous prophets (e.g. Isa. 1:16-19; Jer. 18:11; 25:5; 35:15; Ezek. 33:11). God's people rejected both God and His covenant requirements and went after other gods (i.e. fertility worship). This was the spiritual cause of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles. These post-exilic inhabitants of Jerusalem must be different!

The phrases "your evil ways" and "your evil deeds" function as a hendiadys. The term "ways" is used metaphorically for lifestyle. Biblical faith is (1) personal, (2) creedal, and (3) lifestyle. This lifestyle obedience is expressed early in Gen. 18:19 (cf. Jdgs. 2:22; Ps. 119:1). The related metaphor is "walk" (e.g. Prov. 6:20-22; Jer. 7:24; 10:9; Eph. 14:1,17; 5:2,15).

▣ **"But they did not listen or give heed to Me"** The two negated VERBS "listen"(BDB 1033, KB 1570) and "give heed" (BDB 904, KB 1151) reflect Deut. 6:4, which denotes hearing and obeying (cf. Deut. 5:32-33; 6:1-3). It is not enough to know God's words, they must be lived out (cf. James 1:22-25)!

The phrase "give heed" is from the Hebrew root which means "pay close attention to" (cf. Jer. 6:17; 11:7,8). This phrase is an allusion to Jer. 7:24,26; 17:23; 19:15; 29:19.

1:5 "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever" This verse emphasizes the frailty of humanity (both evil and good) versus the eternality of God (cf. Mal. 3:6) and His word (cf. Isa. 40:8; 45:23; 55:11; 59:21; Matt. 5:17-18; 24:35).

1:6 "My words and My statutes" God's revealed truths and covenant requirements are called by many terms, as Ps. 19:7-9 clearly shows.

1. "the law of the LORD," v. 7
2. "the testimony of the LORD," v. 7
3. "the precepts of the LORD," v. 8
4. "the commandment of the LORD," v. 8
5. "the fear of the LORD," v. 9
6. "the judgments of the LORD," v. 9

1:6 "My servants the prophets" Initially the Patriarchs are designated "servants" (e.g. Gen. 18:5). However, it came to refer to the family of Abraham collectively (i.e. Jacob, Israel, cf. Isa. 41:8,9; 42:1,19; 43:10; 44:1,2); then specifically to David the king of united Israel (e.g. II Sam. 7:5,8,19,20; Isa. 37:35). The phrase is used often in II Kings (cf. 9:7; 17:13,23; 21:10; 24:2) for God's speakers, the prophets. The phrase is also used extensively of the prophets in Jeremiah (cf. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15). It is obvious from the number of allusions in this context that Zechariah knew Jeremiah's writings well.

▣ **"overtake your fathers"** This is a hunting metaphor (BDB 673, KB 727, *Hiphil* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 14:9; 15:9; Deut. 19:6) and it seems to refer to "the cursings" of Deut. 28 if the covenant was violated.

▣ **"'to do to us in accordance with our ways and our deeds'"** This may be an allusion to Lam. 2:17. Each generation must respond to the covenant. The danger of religion is that it can become a family tradition instead of a personal faith. "The fathers" repented, but only after God's judgment!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:7-11

[7]On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the prophet, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows: [8]I saw at night, and behold, a man was riding on a red horse, and he was

standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine, with red, sorrel and white horses behind him. [9]Then I said, "My lord, what are these?" And the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "I will show you what these are." [10]And the man who was standing among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These are those whom the LORD has sent to patrol the earth." [11]So they answered the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees and said, "We have patrolled the earth, and behold, all the earth is peaceful and quiet."

1:7 "On the twenty-fourth day" It is uncertain why the twenty-fourth day was so significant, but it is referred to extensively by the prophet Haggai (cf. 1:15; 2:10,18,20). This exact date seems to be Feb. 15, 519 B.C.

▣ **"the eleventh month"** This would be February-March, three months from the date in 1:1. Zechariah 1:7 begins a series of eight visions which continue through 6:15.

▣ **"Shebat"** The name of this month is a post-exilic Babylonian loan word (BDB 987) which means "to kill," "to strike," or "to destroy." BDB suggests it refers to the rainy season which included floods and storms. It occurs only here in the OT. Other Babylonian dates (cf. 7:1) appear in Ezra-Nehemiah, which is the same historical period (i.e. early post-exilic or the Persian period).

For a good discussion of the calendars in use in the ancient Near East, see Jack Finegan, *Light From the Ancient Past: the Archeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion*, vol. 2, pp. 552-598 or Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, pp. 178-194.

1:8 "I saw" In Zechariah the Hebrew word "see" (BDB 906, KB 1157) is often used to introduce a new vision.

1. "I saw," 1:8
2. "I will show you," 1:9
3. "I lifted my eyes and looked," 1:18
4. "the LORD showed me," 1:20
5. "I lifted up my eyes and looked," 2:1
6. "he showed me," 3:1
7. "what do you see?" "I see," 4:2
8. "I lifted up my eyes and looked," 5:1
9. "lift up your eyes and see," 5:5
10. "I lifted up my eyes and looked," 5:9
11. "I lifted up my eyes again and looked," 6:1

▣ **"at night"** Does this imply revelation by dreams or that a vision came in the night-time? God often used dreams to reveal Himself, especially in Genesis (cf. 20:3,6; 31:10-11,24; 37:5-20; 40-41). Dreaming even becomes a way of identifying a true prophet (cf. Deut. 13:1,3,5; Jer. 23:25-32).

The terms "dream" and "vision" can be synonymous (cf. Num. 12:6; Isa. 29:7; Dan. 1:12). However, they are distinct in I Sam. 28:6,15.

The most famous OT book which uses dreams and visions as a way of communicating truth is Daniel. Daniel's relation to Nebuchadnezzar is very similar to Joseph's relation to Pharaoh. Dreams predominate in Dan. 1-7, while visions predominate in Dan. 8-11. Both are used by God to communicate truth.

Daniel and Zechariah share the apocalyptic element of dreams and angelic mediation.

▣ **"a man"** This is the Hebrew term *ish* (BDB 35), which usually denotes a male from a female (*ishshah*). The etymology of this word is uncertain because it is not found in the cognate languages.

In Zechariah it is used several times in the eight visions (cf. 1:8,10,21; 2:1; 4:1; 6:12), where it refers to:

1. angels (compare 1:8,10 with v. 11)
2. the prophet himself (cf. 4:1)
3. the Messiah (i.e. Branch, cf. 6:12)

This same person is called "the angel of the LORD" in vv. 11 and 12. For a good discussion of the different names for humans in the OT see Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 45-54. *Ish* is discussed on pp. 48-50.

▣ **"a red horse"** The term "red" is the Hebrew term *adam* (BDB 10), which means reddish brown. Colored horses are also mentioned again in the eighth vision of Zechariah in 6:1-8. They become the source of the Apostle John's Four Horses of the Apocalypse (cf. Rev. 6). Notice that there are two red horses in 1:8 and no black horses.

▣

NASB "and he was standing among the myrtle trees which were in the ravine"
NKJV "and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow"
NRSV "He was standing among the myrtle trees in a valley"
TEV "he had stopped among some myrtle trees in a valley"
NJB "standing among the deep-rooted myrtles"

From v. 11 it is possible that this is the angel of the Lord appearing as a man. He was also riding a red horse and standing among myrtle trees. There is debate as to how many angels appear in this vision. I think the man/angel on the red horse among the myrtle trees is different from the interpreting angel of vv. 9,13,14.

Myrtle (BDB 213) seems to be a metaphor for joy and happiness. This was Esther's Jewish name, *Hadassa*. However, it may simply refer to a type of shrub growing near Jerusalem.

▣ **"ravine"** This Hebrew term (BDB 847) is possibly used as a metaphor for deep distress (BDB 846, same consonants, cf. Exod. 15:5; Zech. 10:11). Because of the apocalyptic nature of these visions it is possible that v. 8 speaks of God's people in peace (myrtle) and yet stress (ravine).

BDB 847 calls the term "ravine" a rare, dubious word. It is possible that it refers to a physical location near Jerusalem. If so, it is a way of showing God's care and presence with His people. Verse 11 seems to support this interpretation. These angels "patrolled the earth," but returned and stopped outside the holy city of Jerusalem, the place where YHWH's name dwells.

▣ **"red, sorrel and white horses"** There seem to be four horses. Four is the number of the world (cf. 6:5-6; Rev. 7:1). This then would be a symbol of God's universal knowledge and presence.

There is an obvious parallel with 6:1-8 (also note Rev. 6:1-8). It has been noted that the names for the colors are PLURAL. Some commentators assume there were several of each color, not just three horses (or with the Septuagint, four adding a black one to match 6:1-8).

1:9 "My lord" This is not the covenant name for God, but simply the term *adoni* (BDB 10) for "my owner," "master," or "lord" (cf. 4:4,5,13). Zechariah is addressing his angel guide (cf. 1:19; 2:3; 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; 6:4; also note a similar angel in Ezek. 8:2-3; 40:3-4; Dan. 7:16; 8:16-17; 9:22; 10:18-21). See Special Topic: Names for Deity at dan. 4:2.

▣ **"I will show you"** This angel does not tell Zechariah, but allows him to hear the angel on the red horse among the myrtles (cf. vv. 11 and 12).

1:10 "the man" From v. 11 we believe that this was the angel of the Lord. We learn from v. 10 that these men on horses were angels who were patrolling the known world (cf. 6:5-7, i.e. the ancient Near East).

1:11 "they answered the angel of the LORD" The phrase "the angel of the Lord" is often used in the OT for a powerful angel (cf. Gen. 24:7,40; Exod. 32:34; Num. 22:22; Jdgs. 5:23; II Sam. 24:16; I Chr. 21:15-16; Zech. 1:12-13). However, in other contexts it seems to refer to God Himself (cf. Gen. 16:7-13; 18:2,22; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16; Exod. 3:2-6; 13:21; 14:9; 20:20-23; Jdgs. 2:1; 6:14,22; 13:9-18,22; Zech. 3:1-2). Many have asserted that these passages refer to the pre-Incarnate Jesus. It is obvious from v. 12 that the angel of the Lord is separate from the Lord of hosts. In v. 12 the angel prays an intercessory prayer to the Lord of hosts on behalf of the Jewish people (also note v. 10).

It seems to me that "the angel of the Lord" in v. 11 must be the same one speaking in v. 12.

▣ **"all the earth is peaceful and quiet"** This may refer to the decreed peace of the Persian Empire. We know from history that Dairus I Hystapes had to put down nineteen rebellions to his reign. Apparently these were over and peace had been restored by force.

The TEV interprets "peaceful"(BDB 442, KB 444, *QAL* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) and "quiet"(BDB 1053, KB 1641, *QAL* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) as "helpless and subdued." It is translating the Hebrew words in a unique way based on context. The interpretive question is what does the patrolling angel's answer mean: (1) all is quiet and well or (2) all is not well, but quiet? Is the Persian Empire a liberating force or an occupying force? It seems to me that it is a liberating force, so different from Assyria and Babylon. It had allowed the Jews to return home and even offered materials to rebuild their temple. In time it would allow the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem even amidst the objections of the surrounding nations (cf. Nehemiah).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:12-17

[12]Then the angel of the LORD said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which You have been indignant these seventy years?" [13]The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me with gracious words, comforting words. [14]So the angel who was speaking with me said to me, "Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion. [15]But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster." [16]Therefore thus says the LORD, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it," declares the LORD of hosts, "and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem."' [17]Again, proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "My cities will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem."'"

1:12 "how long will You have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah" The angel (cf. vv. 10,11) is addressing a question to YHWH about the extent of the exile. The angel is concerned about the lack of progress.

The Hebrew term "compassion" or "mercy" (BDB 933) is used in Hosea 1:6,19, and 23 as a word play between God's judgment (i.e. divorce) of His people and His promised renewal of the covenant.

The very fact that a prominent angel asked this question shows that the decree of Cyrus II in 538 B.C. to allow the Jews (along with all other captives) to return home was not the promised fulfillment which Jeremiah predicted. Zechariah addressed a discouraged people. The return had not been easy or blessed up to this point (519 B.C.).

Also note that an angel acting as an intermediary between YHWH and His people is surprising. It becomes a regular component of apocalyptic literature which magnifies the role of angels in human affairs.

▣ **"these seventy years"** This seems to be an allusion to Jer. 25:11,12 and 29:10 (cf. II Chr. 36:21; Dan. 9:2), giving the specific time of the exile. There has been much discussion about this seventy year period. Is it meant to be a symbol of a large indefinite period of time, like the Hebrew term "forty" or is it a specific seventy year period? The two suggestions are (1) the period from 605 B.C. (Battle of Carchemish) to 539 (fall of Babylon to Cyrus) or (2) the seventy year period of time which can be found between the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 586 B.C. to the rebuilding of the second temple in 516 B.C., which is the focus of the prophecy of both Haggai and Zechariah. This same temporal symbol is also found in Isa. 23:15,17, where it seems to refer to one life span (which may be the intended thrust of the prophecy, much like "this generation" of the forty year Exodus judgment).

1:13 "The LORD answered the angel who was speaking with me" Notice YHWH does not answer the angel of the Lord among the myrtle trees who asked the question in v.12, but He addresses the interpreting angel (cf. v. 9). The content of YHWH's gracious and comforting words is found in vv. 14-17.

▣ **"gracious words, comforting words"** The first ADJECTIVE (BDB 373) means "good," "agreeable," or "pleasant." The second (BDB 637) means "compassion" (cf. Isa. 57:18; Hos. 11:8). God will forgive and restore His covenant people because of His great love, not their merit.

These ADJECTIVES answer the angel's question of "no compassion" in v.12! YHWH has great compassion for His people and His restoration of the Abrahamic promise of the promised land (cf. Gen. 12:1-3).

1:14 Verses 14-17 are the essence of the gracious words of God mentioned in v. 13.

▣ **"I am exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem and Zion"** This is a COGNATE ACCUSATIVE, like v. 2. "Exceedingly jealous" (BDB 888, KB 1109) is from a term for dying a cloth an intense color. It came to be used for facial expressions showing deep emotions. Jealousy is a love word which speaks of the depth of God's compassion for the chosen people (cf. Exod. 20:5; Hos. 11:8; 13:14). For a good theological discussion of divine jealousy see Joyce Baldwin, Tyndale OT Commentaries, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, pp. 101-103.

The terms "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are often synonyms in the OT (e.g. 1:17; 2:7,10; 8:2,3; 9:9).

In light of the difficult historical setting (i.e. poor crops, poor relations with neighbors, small group that returned) this is a surprising revelation. The returning minority was not sure that God was with them or for them. It is so easy to judge spiritual issues based on physical circumstances.

1:15 This is a very significant verse. Although God used godless nations to judge His people (cf. Isa. 10:5; 47:6; Jer. 25:9; 51:20), apparently these nations went far beyond what God wanted and they would be punished for their excesses. In the ancient Near East military victory was a spiritual as well as military issue. YHWH explains why He allowed the pagan empires of Assyria and Babylon to oppress His people. He also explained that they went beyond His desires and purposes. The current conditions do not reflect God's intended desires nor do they truly reflect His feelings for a restored Judah.

This verse is the reason TEV translates v. 11c in a negative sense. The ADJECTIVE translated "ease" (BDB 983) has the added connotation of "careless, wanton, arrogant" ease (cf. Ps. 123:4; Isa. 32:9,11; Amos 6:1). This second vision (cf. 1:18-21) expands this theme of God's judgment on the very nations He used to punish His people.

1:16

NASB, NIV (LXX)	**"I will return to Jerusalem"**
NKJV	**"I am returning to Jerusalem"**
NRSV, NJB	**"I have returned to Jerusalem"**

TEV "I have come back to Jerusalem"

The VERB (BDB 996, KB 1427) is a *Qal* PERFECT. The time element must be discerned from the context. Be careful of personal bias or systematic theology setting a particular time frame (only context can denote the original author's intent). The Jewish Publication Society of America's translation supposes a current return. This is a play on the Hebrew word *shub*, used in 1:3,4,6. As they returned to God, He would return to them. This is also significant because in Ezek. 10:18,19; 11:23, God's presence left Jerusalem (the temple) and went east to be with the exiles. God assures the returning Jews that His glory will return to a rebuilt temple and that the covenant would be reestablished (i.e. 516 B.C.).

▣ **"with compassion"** This is also a prophetic word play going back to Hosea 1:5-9; 2:1-7 versus 2:14-20,21-23 (i.e. Lo-Ruhamah = No Compassion; Lo-Ammi = Not My People).

▣ **"and a measuring line will be stretched over Jerusalem"** Usually this term meant destruction (cf. II Kgs. 21:13; Isa. 34:11; Lam. 2:8). In this context it must stand for "restoration" (BDB 876)(cf. Ezek. 41 and Rev. 21:15-17). The use of a building metaphor references the emphasis on rebuilding the second temple.

1:17 "Again, proclaim" This parallels v. 14 (both *Qal* IMPERATIVES). The interpreting angel gives YHWH's words (cf. v. 13) in two parts: (1) restoration and (2) prosperity.

The word "again" (BDB 728) is repeated four times in this verse. That which was nullified or abrogated will be renewed and continued. The covenant is renewed!

▣ **"My cities will again overflow with prosperity"** In this context YHWH is asserting that the destroyed cities of Judah will be rebuilt and prosper. This is an unusual use of this VERB (BDB 807 II). It usually is used in contexts of destruction and defeat (cf. 13:7). This may be a deliberate ambiguity implying that the "overflow" (cf. Prov. 15:6) or "expansion" of Judah's cities will be by military means.

This is a good place to remind us that context, not lexicons, determines meaning. It is always surprising when an exact opposite usage occurs, but this just shows the dynamic nature of human speech and the power of idiomatic language.

▣ **"again choose Jerusalem"** This VERB (BDB 103, KB 119, *Qal* PERFECT) is regularly used to denote a divine choice (cf. 2:12; 3:2). God has chosen to restore His chosen ones. This is official covenant renewal language.

Here Jerusalem and Zion are metaphors, not for a city, but for a people. YHWH originally chose Jerusalem as the place for His name to dwell (cf. Deut. 12:5,11,21; 14:23-24; 16:2,6,11; 26:2; Neh. 1:9). This would be the location of the central sacrificial shrine.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:18-21

[18]Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, *there were* four horns. [19]So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." [20]Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. [21]I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these *craftsmen* have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up *their* horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

1:18 "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked" See note at 1:8. In the Masoretic Hebrew text v. 18 is 2:1 (cf. NJB).

▣ **"four horns"** Horns are symbolic of (1) power or (2) nations (cf. Jer. 48:25; Ezek. 48:25; Amos 6:13; and Dan. 8:3). The number four seems to be the number of the world (i.e. four horses of 1:8 and the four winds of 2:10). Some say that this refers to the kingdoms of Daniel, chapters 2 and 7 (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), but I believe that, in context, understanding world kingdoms that affect the Promised Land would be more appropriate.

1:19 "the angel who was speaking with me" Angelic mediation (cf. v. 9) is one characteristic of apocalyptic literature, as is the use of symbolic numbers (cf. v. 18) and colors (cf. v. 8).

▣ **"These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem"** These horns (BDB 901) represent the world powers that God used to judge His people (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon), but now God will judge them because of their excessively harsh treatment (cf. v. 15; Ps. 75:4-5).

This list of "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" is surprising in that Israel is usually listed first when speaking about the divided monarchy. If these refer to the two Jewish kingdoms formed after 922 B.C., why list the capital of Judah without the capital of Israel (i.e. Samaria)? It may be best to understand all three as collective terms for the people of God (only Judah is mentioned in v. 21).

1:20

NASB, NKJV	**"craftsmen"**
NRSV	**"blacksmiths"**
TEV	**"workers with hammers"**
NJB	**"smiths"**

God's creative power is seen in His use of four craftsmen (BDB 360) versus the destructive power of human government seen in the metaphor of four animal horns. It is uncertain if the craftsmen reflect artisans or workmen. Exactly what they do to the horns is unspecified, but they do change them and negate their power.

1:21 "so that no man lifts up his head" This is an idiom of defeat and rejection. Notice the repeat of the term "lift up" (BDB 669, KB 724). God's agents will reverse the roles, the scattering horns will be defeated and the defeated Jews' countenance will be lifted up!

There may be a word play on the phrase "throw down" (BDB 392), which can mean in the *Hiphil*, "give thanks" or in the *Piel* "cast down." The horns who wanted to cast down the people of God are now the focus of the praise and thanksgiving of the people to God for the nations' defeat.

▣ **"to scatter"** The terms "scatter" (BDB 279, KB 280, *Piel* PERFECT of 1:19, 21[twice]) and "gather" were often used in the ancient Near East as metaphors for the well being of nations based on the activity of their gods. In the Bible it is YHWH who allowed His people to be scattered, but He will protect them and gather them again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is Zechariah's father omitted in the list of priests in v. 1, but present in Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh. 12:4,16?
2. Define the Hebrew word *shub* or "return."
3. Who is the man riding on a red horse in v. 8?
4. What is the significance of the colored horses in v. 8?
5. Why is the angel upset in v. 12?
6. What is the significance of v. 15 in our understanding of the exile?
7. How does v. 16 fit the historical setting of Haggai and Zechariah?
8. Explain the significance of "horns" in the OT.
9. Who do the horns represent?

ZECHARIAH 2

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of the Measuring Line	The Third Vision: A Man Going to Measure Jerusalem	The Vision of the Measuring Line	(NJB uses MT chapter and verse) (2:5-9)
2:1-5	2:1-5	1:1-2a	
		2:2b	
		2:3-5	
Future Joy of Zion and Many Nations	An Appeal to the Exiles	The Exiles are Called to Come Home	
2:6-7	2:6-12	2:6-8a	
2:8-13			
		2:8b-9a	
		2:9b	Two Exhortations to the Exiles
		2:10	2:10-17
		2:11-12	
	2:13	2:13	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:1-5

[1]Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, *there was* a man with a measuring line in his hand. [2]So I said, "Where are you going?" And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see how wide it is and how long it is." [3]And behold, the angel who was speaking with me was going out, and another angel was coming out to meet him, [4]and said to him, "Run, speak to that young man, saying, 'Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. [5]'For I,' declares the LORD, 'will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.'"

2:1 "Then I lifted up my eyes and looked" See full note at 1:8. In the Masoretic Hebrew text this verse is 2:5 because the second vision (the four horns) starts chapter two.

▣ **"a man"** This apparently refers to an angelic being (cf. 1:8,10 compared to 1:11,12). Angelic beings often appear as male humans (only once in Zech. 5:9 are they depicted as female).

▣ **"a measuring line"** This is a construction metaphor (BDB 286 and 551, cf. 1:16, different Hebrew word, BDB 876), used of (1) judgment/destruction (cf. II Kgs. 21:13; Isa. 34:11; Lam. 2:8) or (2) restoration (cf. 1:16; Jer. 31:38-40; Ezek. 41; Rev. 21:15-17).

2:2 "So I said, 'Where are you going'" In Zechariah's visions many people speak.

1. the prophet himself (e.g. 1:9,21; 2:2)
2. the interpreting angel (e.g. 1:14,19,21; 2:3,4,12-15)
3. angels in the vision (e.g. 1:10,11,13; 2:2,4)
4. the Lord Himself (e.g. 1:13,14,15,16,17; 2:5,6-11)

These numerous speakers caused the texts to record several levels of direct quotes.

▣ **"to measure Jerusalem"** The time factor is crucial, but uncertain: (1) current Jerusalem; (2) restored post-exilic Jerusalem; or (3) heavenly, end-time Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 21:2,15).

2:4 "Run" Here is one angel commanding (*Qal* IMPERATIVE) another angel to change an action because of fuller information about God's purposes. Angels do not fully understand God's plans (cf. I Pet. 1:12; Eph. 2:7; 3:10; I Cor. 4:9).

▣ **"that young man"** The NET Bible (and the NIV Study Bible footnote) identifies him as a reference to Zechariah, but this does not fit the context. This seems to be "the man" of v. 1 (i.e. angel, cf. 1:8, 10, 11, 12), although a different Hebrew term is used (BDB 654).

▣ **"without walls"** The Hebrew term (BDB 826) means "open region" or "open country" (cf. Ezek. 38:11) with the implication of no fortifications for protection (i.e. walls, ditches, earth works, etc.). The very structures used for protection would limit the potential population.

There was no need for physical protection. This was possibly an answer to the nervous critics of Zechariah's day about rebuilding the Temple when there was no way to protect it (i.e. no wall around Jerusalem, cf. Nehemiah). This is the OT source for Rev. 21:25, where the new Jerusalem does not need gates for protection because God is present!

It is also possible in this universal context of all peoples being invited to come to worship YHWH and His representative that "without walls" may reflect the inclusiveness of "the gospel of Jesus Christ." The NT does not reaffirm the geographical or racial prophecies of the OT, but expands them into a

world-wide invitation to "whosoever will." The issue is no longer Jew vs. Gentile, but believer vs. unbeliever!

▣ **"because of the multitude of men and cattle"** This does not fit the historical conditions of the prophet's day, so obviously it refers to the future, but the time is uncertain. Some see v. 11 (universal gospel invitation of Isa. 49; Matt. 28:18-20 Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) as the reason for so many people being in Jerusalem. The Jews of the post-exilic period did not want to live in the city because of bitter memories of the siege of Nebuchadnezzar. In Nehemiah's day they had to cast lots to see who would live in the rebuilt, walled Jerusalem (cf. Neh. 7:4; 11:1-2).

▣ **"cattle"** This was a symbol of great prosperity (cf. Deut. 28:4,11,51; 30:9). This is the opposite of Hag. 1:10-11.

2:5 "wall of fire" This seems to refer to the *Shekinah* (to dwell with permanently, cf. v. 11) cloud of the glory which accompanied the Israelites during the Exodus experience (cf. Exod. 14:19-20; Isa. 60:18). See Special Topic: Fire at Daniel 7:10.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY

The biblical concept of "glory" is difficult to define. Believers' glory is that they understand the gospel and glory in God, not in themselves (cf. 1:29-31; Jer. 9:23-24).

In the OT the most common Hebrew word for "glory" (*kbd*) was originally a commercial term relating to a pair of scales ("to be heavy"). That which was heavy was valuable or had intrinsic worth. Often the concept of brightness was added to the word to express God's majesty (cf. Exod. 19:16-18; 24:17; Isa. 60:1-2). He alone is worthy and honorable. He is too brilliant for fallen mankind to behold (cf. Exod 33:17-23; Isa. 6:5). YHWH can only be truly known through Christ (cf. Jer. 1:14; Matt. 17:2; Heb. 1:3; James 2:1).

The term "glory" is somewhat ambiguous: (1) it may be parallel to "the righteousness of God"; (2) it may refer to the "holiness" or "perfection" of God; or (3) it could refer to the image of God in which mankind was created (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6), but which was later marred through rebellion (cf. Gen. 3:1-22). It is first used of YHWH''s presence with His people during the wilderness wandering period in Exod. 16:7,10; Lev. 9:23; and Num. 14:10.

▣ **"I will be the glory in her midst"** God's presence with His people is referred to here (cf. v. 11; Exod. 25:8; 40:34; Ezek. 43:1-5). This is the ultimate hope of the restoration of initiate fellowship with God (cf. Rev. 21:3,23). It also shows that the Covenant is restored and fulfilled! Immanuel is with His people (cf. Isa. 7:14; 8:8,10).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:6-12

[6]"Ho there! Flee from the land of the north," declares the LORD, "for I have dispersed you as the four winds of the heavens," declares the LORD. [7]"Ho, Zion! Escape, you who are living with the daughter of Babylon." [8]For thus says the LORD of hosts, "After glory He has sent me against the nations which plunder you, for he who touches you, touches the apple of His eye. [9]For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. [10]Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the LORD. [11]"Many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst,

and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. [12]The LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem."

2:6-13 These verses distinct from 2:1-5 are in poetic parallelism and meter (cf. NJB). Joyce Baldwin, Tyndale OT Commentaries, says,

> "there is a change, not only of *genre*, but also speaker and destination. Instead of the angel it is now Zechariah who speaks, first to the exiles in Babylon, then to the Jerusalem Jews, and there is nothing now to suggest a vision" (p. 107).

Many commentators think that this poetic section interprets and reemphasizes the second and third visions. YHWH will destroy the plundering nations (the four horns and craftsmen) and He will indwell and protect His people (the measuring line).

2:6

NASB	**"Ho there"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"Up, up"**
TEV	**-----**
NJB	**"Look out! Look out!"**

This Hebrew exclamation (BDB 222) is repeated for emphasis. This is not the Hebrew "woe," but often functions as a prelude to judgment (cf. 11:17; Isa. 10:5; 17:12; 28:11).

BDB mentions that it often functions as a way of denoting "a touch of sympathy," p. 223 (cf. Isa. 18:1; 55:1; Jer. 47:6; Zech. 2:10,11).

Who is the speaker in vv. 6-13? It could be one of the angels, but it seems best to see Zechariah as speaking for YHWH. The words are YHWH's promises and purposes. The vision had become a divine proclamation!

Another question is to whom are these verses addressed? There seem to be three target groups.

1. Jews exiled and remaining in surrounding lands (vv. 6-9)
2. Jews who returned to the Promised Land (vv. 10-12)
3. all humanity ("all flesh," cf. v. 13)

God uses Abraham's seed, and more specifically, David's, to address and affect all the sons and daughters of Adam (cf. Gen. 3:15; Ex. 19:5). God's actions for Jews is, in reality, God's action for humanity (cf. Gen. 12:3). God's city without walls may be a symbol of universal inclusion (Jews and Gentiles, cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13).

▣ **"Flee"** This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE of a Hebrew term (BDB 630, KB 681) used predominantly by Isaiah and Jeremiah. It is also used twice in Zech. 14:5.

In this context people are to leave the boundaries of the pagan empires which exiled Israel and Judah and return to the Promised Land. Only about 50,000 Jews returned under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel (cf. Ezra 1-2).

▣ **"from the land of the north"** This refers to Babylon (cf. v. 7). "The north" (BDB 860) became an OT metaphor for trouble and invasion (cf. Isa. 14:31; Jer. 1:14-15; 4:6; 6:1,22; 10:22) because this was the only accessible land route into Palestine. Although Assyria and Babylon were to the east, the invasion route and return route were always northerly. This phrase and v. 7 warn the Jews to return to Palestine because the judgment of God is about to fall on the nations which God used to punish His people.

▣ **"I have dispersed"** This VERB (BDB 831, KB 975, *Piel* PERFECT) could refer to the exiles of 722 or 586 B.C., but possibly also to the last days (cf. 1:17; 2:4,11).

The key theological point is that God Himself initiated (i.e. Assyria, cf. Isa.10:5; Babylon, cf. Jer. 51:20) the exile and He Himself will restore His people (cf. Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 11:16). YHWH was not defeated by the gods of the nations, but He used the military of pagan countries to discipline His people.

▣ **"the four winds"** The number four is used to symbolize the entire known world (e.g. 1:8,18,20; Dan. 7:2; 11:4). These same "four winds" are mentioned in a military sense (BDB 924 #2a), as in Jer. 49:36; Ezek. 37:9; Dan. 8:8; and Zech. 6:5.

2:7 "Ho" See note at 2:6.

▣ **"Zion"** This was the name of the Canaanite stronghold located on one of the hills within the city of Jebus (cf. II Sam. 5:7), which was not captured until David's day. It is not the same hill on which the temple was built (Mt. Moriah). It is often used as a synonym for Jerusalem or as a way to accentuate the religious life of the city versus the political life of the city. It is used extensively by Isaiah, Jeremiah (also Lamentations) and Zechariah (cf. 1:14,17; 2:7,10; 8:2,3; 9:9,13).

Here it is used to designate (1) the place to which the Jewish people who had not returned from exile must escape to (cf. LXX) or (2) the majority of Jewish people themselves (cf. Isa. 51:16; 52:1,2,7,8) who had not returned to Palestine.

▣ **"Escape"** This is a *Niphal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 572, KB 589) used in a REFLEXIVE sense. It parallels "flee" of v. 10.

▣ **"living with"** This is literally "dwell with" (BDB 442, KB 444, *Qal* PARTICIPLE). This is a word play related to God's promise to dwell with them from v. 5. They must choose YHWH or their settled, comfortable lives in foreign lands!

This was a way of encouraging and confirming that small group of returnees to Judah! God was with them! The irony is that during the exile God left Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 8) and went to dwell with the exiles (cf. Ezek. 1 and 10). But now, He has returned to Jerusalem (cf. vv. 10-11).

▣ **"the daughter of Babylon"** This is a Semitic way of referring to the people of the empires of Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers), also called the Fertile Crescent.

2:8 "the LORD of hosts" This is the most common post-exilic title for God. This refers to God as the Captain of the Army of Heaven (cf. Josh. 5:13-15) or the leader of the angelic council (cf. I Kgs. 22:19). It is first used in I Sam. 1:3. Because of Exod. 12:41 some relate it to Israel, but in contexts related to Babylon it seems to relate to God's supremacy over the astral deities. See Special Topic: Names for Deity at Dan. 4:2.

▣

NASB	**"After glory He has sent me"**
NKJV	**"He sent Me after glory"**
NRSV	**"(after his glory sent me)"**
TEV	**"sent me with this message"**
NJB	**"since the Glory commissioned me"**
NIV	**"after he has honored me and has sent me"**
JPSOA	**"He who sent me after glory"**
NET	**"says to me that for his own glory he has sent me"**
REB	**"spoken when he sent me on a glorious mission"**

There are three main issues involved in trying to understand the original intent of this phrase.

1. What does "after" mean?
   a. ADVERB (temporal)
   b. PREPOSITION (purpose)
   c. CONJUNCTION
2. What does "glory" mean?
   a. honor to the prophet (NIV)
   b. authority to the prophet
   c. glory as a quality of God
3. To whom was it addressed?
   a. a powerful angel (Keil and Delitzsch, Pulpit Commentary)
   b. the prophet (NASB Updated, TEV, NIV, REB)
   c. the Messiah (NKJV, NASB)

What do we know?

1. The Lord is the speaker (Lord of Hosts)
2. The term "glory" (BDB 458) is used earlier in the vision (cf. v. 5, UBS, *Handbook for Translators*) and seems to refer to YHWH Himself (NJB, NRSV, cf. Hag. 2:7), but this does not fit the "He has sent." However, the same VERB in the next verse has YHWH as the speaker.

Herein lies the interpretive problem. It seems that if one takes these visions as Messianic then the return from exile does not fit the expectations. If one takes them as eschatological then there is an obvious mixing of temporal and future references, which is common in the prophets. It is difficult to relate Messianic texts historically into the post-exilic period. However, the return of the Davidic and Aaronic seeds are a foreshadowing of a Priest/King Messiah (cf. Ps. 110, Zech.4), as is the inclusion of "the nations" within the people of God, which will become the gospel of Jesus Christ. The ultimate exodus and return are future and for all who believe (cf. v. 13).

My best guess is that "after" means "with" and "glory" means "with God's honor," "with God's message," or "with God's authority." The prophet/priest Zechariah proclaimed God's word to Jews in exile (cf. vv. 6-7), Jews in Palestine (cf. vv. 10-12), and the surrounding nations (cf. vv. 8-9).

▣ **"He has sent me"** This "Me" is capitalized in NASV (1970) and KJV (1982), which shows that those translators thought it referred to the Messiah, so too, Kimchi (Jewish exegete from the Middle Ages in Europe). The NET Bible and the TEV interpret this as another reference to Zechariah (this would make vv. 9-11; 4:9; and 6:15 also refer to Zechariah). There is no doubt that the Messiah is mentioned in 3:8; 6:12-13 in the first division of Zechariah (chapters 1-8), but here the context implies the prophet (cf. NASB, 1995 Update).

Zechariah asserts this conviction that prophetic fulfillment of YHWH's message and promises are sure and certain. The phrase "you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me" (cf. 2:9,11; 4:9; 6:15) is an idiom of confidence!

▣ **"against the nations"** This refers to 1:15, where God promises to restore His people to the Promised Land (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) and punish the surrounding nations.

Zechariah is to address YHWH's judgment against the surrounding plundering nations who attacked and took advantage of the exile of God's people. This does not imply that Zechariah ever directly addressed these nations. This is very similar to Isaiah's, Jeremiah's, and Ezekiel's denunciations of the surrounding nations (e.g. Isa. 13-24; Jer. 46-51; Ezek. 25-32).

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"apple of His eye"**
NRSV, NJB	**"the apple of my eye"**
TEV	**"what is most precious to me"**

This is an affectionate idiom referencing God's Covenant people (cf. Deut. 32:10; Prov. 7:2). "Little man" or "daughter" is the usual idiomatic form (cf. Ps. 17:8). The term "apple" is really "gate" (i.e. opening) or "pupil."

2:9 "I will wave My hand" This is a physical gesture for divine judgment (BDB 631, KB 682, *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE, cf. Isa. 11:15; 19:16).

▣

NASB	**"they will be plunder for their slaves"**
NKJV	**"they shall become spoil for their servants"**
NRSV	**"they shall become plunder for their own slaves"**
TEV	**"and you will be plundered by the people who were once your servants"**
NJB	**"they will be plundered by those whom they have enslaved"**

▣ **"then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me"** The Jews who returned to Judah will be fully confident ("You will know" - BDB 393, KB 390, *Qal* PERFECT) of YHWH's care, presence, and protection. The roles will be reversed. The Jews were made slaves and servants, but now the conquering pagan nations are conquered! Their demise and Judah's prosperity are confirming evidence of YHWH's promises being fulfilled and the Covenant completely restored.

2:10 "Sing for joy" This (BDB 943, KB 1247) is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE. It is an allusion to the "new day" promises of Isaiah (cf. 65:18-19; note 25:8; 30:19; 35:10; 51:11; and Rev. 21:4).

▣ **"be glad"** This (BDB 970, KB 1333) is another *Qal* IMPERATIVE. It is also reflected in the Messianic passage of 9:9.

▣ **"O daughter of Zion"** This is a Semitic idiom like v. 7. This refers to the people of God. See note on "Zion" at 1:7.

▣ **"dwell"** This (BDB 1014, KB 1496, *Qal* PERFECT) is the same root as *Shekinah* (cf. v. 11). The greatest blessing of the Covenant was the presence of the Lord with His people (cf. 8:3; 9:9; Ezek. 37:27). The concept is expressed in the Messianic title "Emmanuel," which means "God with us" (cf. Isa. 7:14; 8:8).

2:11 "many nations" This was a startling message that the Gentiles would be included with God's people (eg. 8:20-23; 14:16; Eph. 2:11-3:13). This was always YHWH's purpose (e.g. Gen. 12:3; Isa. 2:2-4; 11:10; 19:19-22; 24:13-16a; 25:6-7; 42:6-7,10-12; 49:6-23; 51:4; 56:3-8; Mic. 4:1-3). As a Gentile follower of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, it is hard to put into words the joy this verse brings to my heart!

▣ **"will join themselves"** This (BDB 530 I, KB 522) is a *Niphal* form. This is the grammatical question, is the VERB meant to be PASSIVE (cf. NKJV, NJB) or REFLEXIVE (NRSV, cf. Jer. 50:5)? This same theological issue is seen in Gen. 12:3 (cf. Isa. 56:3,6). See Special Topic: Predestination Versus Human Free Will at 1:4

▣ **"in that day"** This phrase is a prophetic idiom for God's coming for blessing or judgment. In this context it seems to refer to an eschatological future as it does in Isa. 55-56. These texts in Zechariah 1-8 are quoted extensively by John in the book of the Revelation.

▣ **"they will become My people"** This is standard covenant terminology (BDB 766 I, cf. 13:9; Jer. 30:22; 31:33; 32:38). Non-Jews who believe and obey are fully included in God's covenant (cf. Rom. 1:16; 2:28-29; Gal. 3:7-9,29; 6:16; Phil. 3:3).

▣ **"I will dwell in your midst"** This is a recurrent theme (cf. vv. 5, 10).

▣ **"you will know that the LORD has sent Me to you"** This is a repeated emphasis from v. 9. Fulfilled prophecy is one way to confirm God's word/promises to future generations of both believing Jews and Gentiles.

God promises in this context three evidences.

1. Judah restored to prosperity
2. the overthrow of the surrounding nations that plundered Israel and Judah
3. YHWH's prophetic spokesman among His people

A good reference on how to understand and apply these prophecies to the NT is found in the book by D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*.

2:12 "the LORD will possess Judah as His portion" Both the VERB (BDB 635, KB 686, *Qal* PERFECT) and "His Portion" (BDB 324) relate to inheritance (cf. Exod. 19:5; 34:9; Deut. 4:20; 7:6; 9:26,29; 14:2; 32:9; Ps. 33:2; Titus 2:14; I Pet. 2:9). The historical allusion is to the dividing of Palestine among the Jewish tribes by lot (cf. Josh. 12-19).

▣ **"in the holy land"** This is the only place in the OT where this phrase is used for Palestine. Jerusalem is holy because YHWH is present (cf. 8:3).

▣ **"and will again choose Jerusalem"** This (VERB, BDB 103, *Qal* PERFECT) is the emphasis in Deuteronomy on Jerusalem as the place of God's unique presence above the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies of the Temple (cf. Deut. 12:5,11). See note on "choose" at 1:17.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:13

[13]"Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for He is aroused from His holy habitation."

2:13 "be silent" This is an INTERJECTION (BDB 245), not a VERB (cf. Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7). The VERB form is found in Neh. 8:11.

▣ **"all flesh"** Here is that universal element again (cf. v. 11).

▣ **"for He is aroused from His holy habitation"** God has seemed to be inactive (i.e. asleep, BDB 734, cf. 4:1) during the period of the seventy year judgment, but that time has ended and YHWH emerges from His heavenly throne room (cf. Deut. 26:15; Isa. 63:15; Jer. 25:30) to act on behalf of His people and all people!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Does this chapter relate to Zechariah's day or another? Why?
2. To whom is the "Me" of vv. 8,9,&11 referring?
3. What is the meaning of v. 8?
4. Why is v. 11 so significant?
5. How does this chapter relate to Revelation 21?

ZECHARIAH 3

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of the High Priest	The Fourth Vision: Joshua and Satan	The Prophet's Vision of the High Priest	The Fourth Vision: The Investiture of Joshua
3:1-5	3:1-5	3:1-2	3:1-7
		3:3-4	
The Coming Branch		3:5	
3:6-10	3:6-10	3:6-10	The Coming of the "Branch"
			3:8-10

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This text (and chapter 4) combined with Gen. 14 and Ps. 110 caused some of the rabbis to assert that there would be two Messiahs, one royal from the tribe of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10; II Sam 7) and one from the tribe of Levi.

B. From the book of Hebrews in the NT, chapters 7-8, we see that Jesus fulfilled both of these anointed functions.

C. The pronouns in this chapter are very ambiguous. Remember that it is an apocalyptic vision.

D. In the vision the prophet does not ask help from the interpreting angel, which implies that he comprehended the meaning. Zechariah knew Joshua and his office and significance (i.e. Israel was a priestly nation to bring the world to faith in YHWH and His Messiah).

E. Joshua's forgiveness and complete restoration emphasizes the place of the restored temple and its significance as a sign of the fully restored covenant.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:1-5

[1]Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. [2]The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" [3]Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. [4]He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." [5]Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by.

3:1 "he showed me" This seems to be a vision in heaven before God similar to Job 1-2. In 1:20 it is YHWH who reveals the vision, so too, here (cf. Septuagint and Vulgate). However, many scholars see this as a reference to the interpreting angel (cf. 1:9,13,14,19; 2:2).

▣ **"Joshua"** This Hebrew name (BDB 221) means "YHWH saves." This is the same as the Aramaic name, Jesus (cf. Matt. 1:21). This particular Joshua was the Zadokian (son of Jehozadak or Jozadak) High Priest who returned in a second wave of returnees with Zerubbabel, a prince of the line of Judah (cf. Hag. 1:1,12,14; 2:2,4; Ezra 2:2; 5:2; Neh. 7:7; 12:1,10,26).

▣ **"the high priest"** This is not the Mosaic title for the leadership of the priests, but a post-exilic title found so often in Haggai and Zechariah. See Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2, pp. 397-403.

▣ **"standing before"** This word (BDB 763, KB 840, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) can be understood in this context in two distinct ways: (1) for priestly service (cf. Deut. 10:8; II Chr. 29:11; Ezek. 44:11,15, i.e. Joshua acting as High Priest on behalf of the nation) or (2) legal usage of someone brought before a judge (cf. Num. 27:2; Deut. 19:17; Josh. 20:6; I Kgs. 3:16, i.e. Joshua as sinful representative of all Jews).

▣ **"the angel of the LORD"** In this context this is obviously a distinct person from YHWH (cf. vv. 4-5,6-7). He is functioning as a defense advocate, speaking for YHWH. See note at 1:11. It is hard to be certain if this is meant to be a Messianic reference! The Messiah is surely referred to in this chapter as "My Servant the Branch" (cf. 6:12; Isa. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15).

As an interpreter my problem in this text is not that "the angel of the Lord" is identified as divine in the OT (cf. Gen. 16:7-13; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16; Ex. 3:2-4; 13:21; 14:19; Jdgs. 2:1; 6:22-24; 13:3-22), but that in chapter 1 the title is used of an angel who is patrolling the earth for YHWH (cf. v. 11) and prays to YHWH (cf. v. 13, i.e. separate from deity, cf Gen. 24:7,40; Ex. 23:20-23; 32:35; Num. 22:22; Jdgs. 5:23; II Sam. 24:16; I Chr. 21:15-30). This does not fit the exalted place of the Messiah. Also in chapter 1 many try to make "me" of vv. 8, 9, and 11 refer to the Messiah, when I think it refers to the prophet Zechariah. To put it bluntly interpreters are trying to find the Trinity too much in this

ambiguous apocalyptic book (as some do in trying to identify Michael with the Messiah in Daniel). Specificity is not the hallmark of Zechariah's visions! Be careful of (1) dogmatism; (2) reading a tight systematic theological grid into these texts; or (3) allowing personal preference to dictate one and only one possibility.

▣ **"Satan"** This is literally "the adversary" (BDB 966, KB 1316, cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; I Chr. 21:1). In I Kgs. 22:19ff, Satan is also before YHWH in heaven as one of the angelic attendants. The Bible often uses a court metaphor to describe activity in heaven (cf. Hos. 2; Ezek. 23; Rev. 4-5).

SPECIAL TOPIC: SATAN

This is a very difficult subject for several reasons.

1. The OT reveals not an arch enemy of good, but a servant of YHWH who offers mankind an alternative and also accuses mankind of unrighteousness. There is only one God (monotheism), one power, one cause in the OT—YHWH.
2. The concept of a personal arch-enemy of God developed in the interbiblical (non-canonical) literature under the influence of Persian dualistic religions (*Zoroastrianism*). This, in turn, greatly influenced rabbinical Judaism and the Essene community (i.e. Dead Sea Scrolls).
3. The NT develops the OT themes in surprisingly stark, but selective, categories.

If one approaches the study of evil from the perspective of biblical theology (each book or author or genre studied and outlined separately), then very different views of evil are revealed. If, however, one approaches the study of evil from a non-biblical or extra-biblical approach of world religions or eastern religions, then much of the NT development is foreshadowed in Persian dualism and Greco-Roman spiritism.

If one is presuppositionally committed to the divine authority of Scripture, then the NT development must be seen as progressive revelation. Christians must guard against allowing Jewish folklore or western literature (Dante, Milton) to further influence the concept. There is certainly mystery and ambiguity in this area of revelation. God has chosen not to reveal all aspects of evil, its origin, its development, its purpose, but He has revealed its defeat!

In the OT the term "satan" or "adversary" can relate to three separate groups.

1. human adversary, I Sam. 29:4; II Sam. 19:22; I Kgs. 11:14,20,29; Ps. 109:6
2. angelic adversary, Num. 22:22-23; Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1
3. demonic adversary, I Chr. 21:1; I Kgs. 22:21; Zech. 13:2

Only later in the intertestamental period is the serpent of Genesis 3 identified with Satan (cf. *Book of Wisdom* 2:23-24; *II Enoch* 31:3), and even later does this become a rabbinical option (cf. *Sot* 9b and *Sanh.* 29a). The "sons of God" of Gen. 6 become angels in *I Enoch* 54:6. I mention this, not to assert its theological accuracy, but to show its development. In the NT these OT activities are attributed to angelic, personified evil (cf. I Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9).

The origin of personified evil is difficult or impossible (depending on your point of view) to determine from the OT. One reason for this is Israel's strong monotheism (cf. I Kgs. 22:20-22; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6). All causality was attributed to YHWH in order to demonstrate His uniqueness and primacy (cf. Isa. 43:11; 44:6,8,24; 45:5-6,14,18,21,22).

Sources of possible information are (1) Job 1-2, where Satan is one of the "sons of God" (i.e. angels) or (2) Isa. 14; Ezek. 28, where prideful near-eastern kings (Babylon and Tyre) are possibly used to illustrate the pride of Satan (cf. I Tim. 3:6). I have mixed emotions about this approach.

Ezekiel uses Garden of Eden metaphors, not only for the king of Tyre as a fallen heavenly being (cf. Ezek. 28:12-16), but also for the king of Egypt as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Ezek. 31). However, Isa.14, particularly vv. 12-14, seems to describe an angelic revolt through pride. If God wanted to reveal to us the specific nature and origin of Satan, this is a very oblique way and place to do it. We must guard against the trend of systematic theology of taking small, ambiguous parts of different testaments, authors, books, and genres and combining them as pieces of one divine puzzle.

I agree with Alfred Edersheim (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, appendices XIII [pp. 748-763] and XVI [pp.770-776]) that rabbinical Judaism has been overly influenced by Persian dualism and demonic speculation. The rabbis are not a good source for truth in this area. Jesus radically diverges from the teachings of the Synagogue in this area. I think that the concept of an arch-angelic enemy of YHWH, as well as mankind (the two high gods of Judaic dualism, *Ahkiman* and *Ormaza*, good and evil), were developed into a biblical dualism of YHWH and Satan.

There is surely progressive revelation in the NT as to the personification of evil, but not as elaborate as the rabbis. A good example of this difference is the "war in heaven." The fall of Satan is a logical necessity, but the specifics are not given. Even what is given is veiled in apocalyptic genre (cf. Rev. 12:4,7,12-13). Although Satan is defeated in Jesus and exiled to earth, he still functions as a servant of YHWH (cf. Matt. 4:1; Luke 22:31-32; I Cor. 5:5; I Tim. 1:20).

We must curb our curiosity in this area. There is a personal force of temptation and evil, but there is still only one God and we are still responsible for our choices. There is a spiritual battle, both before and after salvation. Victory can only come and remain in and through the Triune God. Evil has been defeated and will be removed!

▣ **"standing at his right hand"** This language speaks of a judicial setting. The idiom is used of God's presence with His people in Ps. 16:8; 109:31; 110:5, while in Job 30:12; Ps. 109:6, it is used of an accuser, as it is here. The advocate or accuser stood on the defendant's right side.

3:2 "the LORD. . .the LORD" The first seems to refer to the angel of the Lord mentioned in v. 1 (NET, NJB, TEV, NAB, JPSOA).

▣ **"The LORD rebuke you, Satan"** The rebuke (BDB 172, KB 199, *Qal* IMPERFECT, an obvious JUSSIVE) is apparently directed at Satan's accusations (unrecorded) against Joshua, his priesthood, and his nation. Satan cannot attack what God wills and establishes (cf. Job 1-2; Jude 9).

▣ **"who has chosen Jerusalem"** YHWH has chosen (BDB 103, KB 119, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) Jerusalem again as in the days of Moses. This statement relates to 1:17 and 2:12. God's renewed covenant is evidenced by:

1. YHWH's promise of restoration and prosperity for the cities of Judah (cf. 1:17)
2. YHWH's promise of restoration to Jerusalem (cf. 2:12)
3. YHWH's refusal to condemn Joshua, but to forgive and restore the cultus

▣ **"a brand plucked from the fire"** God's people had experienced God's judgment (cf. Amos 4:6-12), but now they were brought out from under God's wrath (cf. Amos 4:11).

The term "brand" (BDB 15) was possibly a curved stick used to stir the fire (cf. Isa. 7:4).

The *Hophal* VERB (BDB 664-5, KB 717) has the connotation (from *Hiphil* form) "to rescue," "to recover," "to deliver from enemies," or "to deliver from sin and guilt" (cf. Ps. 39:8; 51:14; 79:9; 119:170).

Jacobus Nande, in his article in the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 1, p. 304, says, "the figure in Amos 4:11 and Zech. 3:2 suggests that Israel as a nation had been rescued from the furnace of Babylon to become a torch to enlighten the nations." This redemptive world-wide purpose for the Jews must be seen as the essence of God's having a chosen people (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5).

3:3 "Joshua was clothed with filthy garments" This is a Hebrew metaphor for defilement. He was the sinful representative of the chosen people (cf. Isa. 64:6). Even the priesthood and temple were corrupt (cf. Ezek. 8; Jer. 7). "Filthy" (BDB 844) refers to ceremonial pollution by human excretion (cf. Deut. 23:9-14), which separated the people from their holy God.

▣ **"standing before the angel"** This refers to v. 1. Notice "the angel of the LORD" from v. 1 is now just "the angel." However, this angel either speaks for YHWH (cf. v. 4,6) or this is a way of referring to the Messiah. It seems because the Messiah is referred to in v. 8 that this angel speaks for YHWH. The "he" is ambiguous in vv. 4-5 and the PRONOUNS shift from third person to first person.

3:4 "to those who were standing before him" Who does the "him" refer to (1) the angel of the LORD or (2) the LORD? Notice there are more angelic beings present than just the angel of the Lord and Satan. This is the throne-room of heaven. There are many angelic attendants (cf. v. 5).

▣ **"Remove the filthy garments. . .I have taken your iniquity away"** This is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (BDB 693-4, KB 747). Joshua's reproach is symbolically removed.

▣ **"See"** This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 906, KB 1157). This is a form of the same term used in 1:8,18; 2:1,9 to denote a new vision, but here the IMPERATIVE is used for emphasis. Joshua has been forgiven, recommissioned, and fully restored as priest and cultic supervisor! This new temple will be staffed!

▣ **"I have taken your iniquity away from you"** This is a *Hiphil* form of a word (BDB 716, KB 778) which meant "to pass over" (i.e. a river) or "pass through" (i.e. a land), but it came to have the connotation of forgiveness, deliverance (cf. 3:9; 13:2; Micah 7:18-19).

▣ **"will clothe you with festival robes"** This is a *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE. Not only is sin removed, but blessing and status are restored (cf. Luke 15:11-32). Often in the Bible clothing is used as a symbol of our spiritual life (e.g. Job 19:9; 29:4; Ps. 132:9,16,18; Isa. 3:18-24; 52:1; 59:17; 61:10). This is especially true of Paul's writing in I Cor. 15:53-54; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; 6:11; Col. 3:10,12; and I Thess. 5:8.

3:5 "I said" This refers to the speaker of v. 4, but who is it? The last phrase of v. 5 implies it was not the angel of the LORD, but the LORD. J. Baldwin (Tyndale OT commentaries, p. 114) thinks it is Zechariah ("and I said") who blurts out the need for the complete high priestly outfit.

▣ **"clean turban"** This term (BDB 857) is a cognate of the Hebrew term used in Exodus. It refers to the *miter* of the High Priest (cf. Exod. 28:36-39; 39:28,31).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:6-10

[6]And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, [7]"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing *here*.

[8]Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you— indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch. [9]For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. [10]In that day,' declares the LORD of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to *sit* under his vine and under *his* fig tree.'"

3:6 Notice the angel of the LORD either speaks on YHWH's behalf as the prophet does (cf. 2:9,11; 4:9; 6:15) or this is a Messianic reference. It is hard to decide, but I think it is YHWH Himself speaking through the angel.

▣ **"admonished"** This is a *Hiphil* form of the Hebrew word (BDB 729, KB 795) for "witness." In this form BDB says it means "exhort solemnly," "admonish," or "charge" (cf. Exod. 19:23; II Kgs. 17:13; Neh. 9:29-30; Jer. 11:7).

This message is very important. YHWH has fully and freely forgiven Joshua and, by implication, His covenant people, but the covenant is still conditional. Forgiveness of past acts does not remove the responsibility of future obedience!

3:7 "If you will walk in My ways" Notice the conditional element of a daily covenant lifestyle faith (i.e. "walk," e.g. Deut. 8:6; 10:12; 28:9). Biblical faith is a way of life, not a building, a creed, or a special event or ritual. By their fruits you will know who knows God (cf. Matt. 7).

The term "ways" (BDB 202) is a Hebrew idiom of lifestyle godliness (cf. 1:6; Josh. 1:8,15a; 45:13; 48:15; Jer. 3:21; 12:1; 23:12; Hos. 10:13; Ezek. 7:3,8,9,27; 14:22-23; 18:25,29,30; 24:14; 33:17,20; 36:19).

▣ **"if you will perform My service"** This refers to the ritual duties of the Levites and priests. The VERB (BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* IMPERFECT) and DIRECT OBJECT (BDB 1038) come from the same Hebrew root. God wants covenant obedience from priests and people.

▣ **"you will govern My house"** This is a *Qal* IMPERFECT (BDB 192, KB 220), which is used basically of the right to judge (of the Messiah in Ps. 72:2) or rule over.

▣ **"and also have charge of My courts"** This is the same verb as "perform My service" and refers here to the temple (BDB 346 I).

▣

NASB, NJB	**"free access"**
NKJV	**"places to walk"**
NRSV	**"the right of access"**
TEV	**"I will hear your prayers"**

This phrase (BDB 237) speaks to the duty of priests to approach God on behalf of needy/sinful people. Israel was to be a kingdom of such priests (cf. Exod. 19:5-6). Joshua and his fellow priests' intimacy and immediacy with God are meant to encourage all Jews that the sacrificial system had been fully renewed. Joshua's special access was not a personal privilege, but a cultic, corporate necessity. Joshua has access to God, even as Satan has access to God; one for advocacy and one for prosecution! God will hear both sides. It is not Joshua's sinlessness that provides access, but his role as high priest for God's people.

E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, asserts that the Hebrew word is a Chaldee PARTICIPLE in the *Hiphael*, which means "to guide" (p. 279).

▣ **"these who are standing *here*"** This refers to the heavenly court of angels.

3:8 "you and your friends who are sitting in front of you" This refers to the other priests and Levites.

▣ **"symbol"** This is literally "wondrous sign" (BDB 68-69). How the priests will be a symbol is not specified.

▣ **"My Servant"** This is an honorific title of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 52:13; 53:11) and also of Moses (cf. Josh. 1:1), Joshua (Josh. 24:29), David (II Sam. 7:5), and Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:23). This is possibly the background for Paul's use of "slave of Christ."

▣ **"the Branch"** This may be "sprout" (BDB 855). This is another Messianic title (cf. 6:12; Isa. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). See full discussion and Special Topic: Jesus the Nazarene at Dan. 4:15.

This title is used of Zerubbabel in 6:12 as a symbol of the royal Davidic line. It is surprising that it is used in this context which emphasizes the priestly aspect of the Messiah. The twin aspects of redeemer (priestly, cf. Isa. 53) and administrative leader (kingly, cf. Isa. 9:6-7) are merged in the book of Zechariah (cf. chapter 4).

3:9 "the stone. . .one stone" The identity and purpose of this stone has caused great confusion among interpreters. Some theories are (1) that it relates to the High Priest's breastplate (cf. Exod. 28:15-20; 39:10-14), the stone for Judah; (2) that the Messiah is represented by Zerubbabel (cf. 6:12; Hag. 2:23); (3) that it is the Messianic kingdom (cf. Dan. 2:44-45); (4) that it is a stone set in the *miter* worn by the High Priest (cf. v. 5); (5) that it is building material for the temple, possibly the cornerstone or capstone (cf. Ps. 118:22-23; Isa. 8:14-15; 28:16); or (6) that it is another Messianic title (servant, branch, stone).

▣ **"seven eyes"** This (BDB 744) refers to (1) eyes or (2) facets of a gem. This, like 4:10 and Ezek. 1:18, seems to be a symbol for God's knowledge.

▣ **"I will engrave an inscription on it"** This VERB (BDB 836 II, KB 988), in *Piel* PARTICIPLE form, is used most often of engraving a gem. Therefore, cornerstone or capstone is only a remote possibility for the theories of meaning.

▣ **"I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day"** The VERB (BDB 559 I, KB 561 *Qal* PERFECT) is a metaphor for cleansing and forgiveness. Does this refer to Joshua's forgiveness in v. 4? This could be an extension of his forgiveness. It may have a future reference (i.e. "in that day") to (1) the temple being rebuilt or (2) the Messiah's coming.

This verse would remind the Jews of the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16), which includes rituals involving the cleansing of the High Priest himself and their rituals for the cleansing of the nation.

3:10 "in that day" This is a prophetic idiom (cf. 2:11) of the coming day of judgment, forgiveness, and restoration of God's plan for all humanity. It is common in Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, and Joel.

▣ **"to sit under His vine"** Palestine was an agricultural society. This was a cultural idiom of family security and prosperity (cf. I Kgs. 4:25; Micah 4:4). Also note the twin emphases of prosperity and community fellowship.

The vine here could be (1) parallel with fig tree and denote fruit or (2) a way of identifying a cool, shady place for relaxation and community fellowship.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Who was Joshua? Who is the Angel of the LORD? Who is the Branch?
2. What is the meaning of Joshua's filthy garments in v. 3?
3. How is v. 7 related to v. 4?
4. What or who is the stone of v. 9?

ZECHARIAH 4

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of the Lampstand and Olive Tree	The Fifth Vision: A Golden Lampstand and Two Olive Trees	The Vision of the Lampstand	Fifth Vision: The Lamp-Stand and the Olive Trees
4:1-7	4:1-7	4:1-2a	4:1-6a
		4:2b-4	
		4:5a	
		4:5b	
4:8-10	4:8-10a	[TEV Reorders verses]	[NJB Reorders verses]
	4:10b-14	4:10b	4:10b-14
4:11-14		4:11-12	
		4:13a	
		4:13b	
		4:14	
		God's Promise to Zerubbabel	Three Sayings About Zerubbabel
		4:6-7	4:6
			4:7
		4:8-10a	4:8-10a

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:1-7

[1]Then the angel who was speaking with me returned and roused me, as a man who is awakened from his sleep. [2]He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; [3]also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side." [4]Then I said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these, my lord?" [5]So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." [6]Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. [7]'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'"

4:1 "the angel who was speaking with me" This refers to the angel guide (cf. 1:9,19; 2:3; 4:1,4,5; 5:5,10; 6:4). These angel guides and interpreters are common in apocalyptic literature (cf. Ezek. 8:2-3; 40:3-4; Dan. 7:16; 8:16-17; 9:22; 10:18-21).

▣ **"returned"** Because of the use of this same word (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERFECT) in 5:1 and 6:1, "and came again" is a better understanding (cf. NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB). Possibly the angel had left so that the prophet could rest.

▣ **"and roused me, as a man who is wakened from his sleep"** The prophet was resting. However, this was not a dream, but a vision.

4:2 "What do you see" This Hebrew word "see" (BDB 906, KB 1157) is a literary marker for a new vision. It is used three times in this verse. See full note at 1:8.

▣ **"lampstand"** This is the Hebrew word *menorah* (BDB 633), which is literally "lamp." There are two temple precedents: (1) Exod. 25:31-40; Num. 8:1-4, a lampstand in the Tabernacle which had seven branches and (2) I Kgs. 7:49, a lampstand in Solomon's temple which had ten branches. However, this vision may be a different kind of lampstand. The description does not fit the *menorah* of the temple.

▣ **"seven lamps"** Each of the branches was topped with a bowl which contained seven wicks.

▣

NASB	**"seven spouts"**
NKJV	**"seven pipes"**
NRSV	**"seven lips"**
TEV	**"places for seven wicks"**
NJB	**"seven openings"**

This Hebrew word (BDB 427) can refer to pipes (cf. NKJV) and thereby relate to v. 12 or it refers to the indentions on the bowl's outer rim into which wicks were laid (cf. NASB, NRSV, TEV, NJB).

4:3 "two olive trees" The lamps burned olive oil, so these are symbolically the two sources of YHWH's abundant illumination, power, and provision (cf. vv. 11-14). These same two symbols, the lamp and olive tree, are also used in Rev. 11:3-4.

4:4 This fifth vision returns to the pattern of one through four, where the prophet asked the interpreting angel for an interpretation of the vision (cf. 1:9,19; 2:2; 5:6,10; 6:4).

▣ **"my lord"** This is the Hebrew term *adoni* (cf. v. 5). See note at 1:9.

4:5 The angel questions Zechariah (cf. v. 13), the point being, that without supernatural help Zechariah (i.e. all humans) could not receive the revelation.

4:6 "Zerubbabel" There is some confusion connected with Zerubbabel.

1. his genealogy
   a. son of Shealtiel (cf. Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:1,12,14; 2:2,23)
   b. son of Pedaiah (cf. I Chr. 3:17-19), a relative of Shealtiel
2. his relationship to Sheshbazzar
   a. both were of the line of David (cf. Ezra 1:8)
   b. both were governors of Judah appointed by the Persian court
   c. both were involved in rebuilding the temple (cf. Ezra 5:14-16 vs. Hag. 1:14)

He was apparently the grandson of the exiled Davidic king, Jehoiachin (cf. Ezra 3:2; Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27). He was born and raised in exile. He becomes the symbol (cf. Hag. 2:23) of the restored Jewish Davidic leader (cf. II Sam. 7), but he was never king and he was not succeeded by a relative of David. His main task was the rebuilding of the second temple. He is usually mentioned in connection with Joshua (seed of the exiled high priest).

▣ **"but by My Spirit"** This is an OT way of speaking of the very presence and power of God. It was often understood as the active force of God's word and will (e.g. Num. 11:17,25,29; Isa. 63:11,14; Neh. 9:20). From this developed the concept of the Spirit as God's personal agent (cf. Hag. 2:5). This was the recognition of the need for God's power and presence to overcome all of the political, spiritual, and physical barriers. Only divine action could fulfill God's promises.

It is possible that since the two olive trees are discussed in vv. 11-14, that here the oil itself is being discussed. If so, then the Spirit is identified with the oil. A special anointing oil was used to install leaders into office (priests, kings, and possibly prophets). The Spirit is the agent of the empowering for service.

So far in Zechariah we have been introduced to several powerful spiritual personalities.

1. LORD/YHWH (e.g. 1:1)
2. LORD of hosts (e.g. 1:6)
3. LORD/*adon* (e.g. 1:9)
4. the angel of the LORD (e.g. 1:11)
5. Satan (e.g. 3:1)
6. those who were standing there (e.g. 3:4)
7. My Servant the Branch (e.g. 3:8)
8. My Spirit (e.g. 4:6)

Some of these are different titles for God, while others refer to angelic beings. There is an incipient plurality in God expressed in different persons.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TRINITY

Notice the activity of all three Persons of the Trinity in vv. 4-6. The term "trinity," first coined by Tertullian, is not a biblical word, but the concept is pervasive.

1. the Gospels

a. Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19
b. John 14:26

2. Acts - Acts 2:32-33, 38-39
3. Paul
   a. Romans 1:4-5; 5:1,5; 8:1-4,8-10
   b. I Corinthians 2:8-10; 12:4-6
   c. II Corinthians 1:21; 13:14
   d. Galatians 4:4-6
   e. Ephesians 1:3-14,17; 2:18; 3:14-17; 4:4-6
   f. I Thessalonians 1:2-5
   g. II Thessalonians 2:13
   h. Titus 3:4-6
4. Peter - I Peter 1:2
5. Jude - vv. 20-21

It is hinted at in the OT

1. Use of plurals for God
   a. Name *Elohim* is plural, but when used of God always has a SINGULAR VERB
   b. "Us" in Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22; 11:7
   c. "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 is plural (as it is in Gen. 2:24; Ezek. 37:17)
2. The angel of the Lord as a physical representative of deity
   a. Genesis 16:7-13; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16
   b. Exodus 3:2,4; 13:21; 14:19
   c. Judges 2:1; 6:22-23; 13:3-22
   d. Zechariah 3:1-2
3. God and Spirit are separate, Genesis 1:1-2; Psalm 104:30; Isa. 63:9-11; Ezek. 37:13-14
4. God (YHWH) and Messiah (*Adon*) are separate, Psalm 45:6-7; 110:1; Zechariah 2:8-11; 10:9-12
5. Messiah and Spirit are separate, Zechariah 12:10
6. All three mentioned in Isa. 48:16; 61:1

The deity of Jesus and the personality of the Spirit caused problems for the early believers who were strictly monotheists:

1. Tertullian - subordinated the Son to the Father
2. Origen - subordinated the divine essence of the Son and the Spirit
3. Arius - denied deity to the Son and Spirit
4. Monarchianism - believed in a successive manifestation of God

The trinity is a historically developed formulation informed by the biblical material

1. The full deity of Jesus was equal to the Father, affirmed in 325 A.D. by the Council of Nicea
2. The full personality and deity of the Spirit equal to the Father and Son was affirmed by the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.)
3. The doctrine of the trinity is fully expressed in Augustine's work *De Trinitate*

There is truly mystery here. But the NT seems to affirm one divine essence with three eternal personal manifestations.

▣ **"Not by might nor by power"** This is the Hebrew term (BDB 298) which usually refers to human physical strength, although it often refers to God's gracious endowment of help to the needy and faithful. Here it is parallel with "power" (BDB 470). Human effort, ability, and ingenuity are not capable of fulfilling God's plan. Only God's power can accomplish His will but He chooses to use human instrumentality.

4:7 "What" This Hebrew PRONOUN (BDB 566) may be "who." The mountain is a metaphor for obstacles: physical, personal, and spiritual (e.g. Isa. 40:4; 41:15; 45:11) and refers to the rebuilding of the second temple. However, it may refer to the Samaritan opposition (cf. Ezra 4) or to Jewish apathy (Haggai).

▣ **"the top stone"** This refers to rebuilding of the temple, but also may relate to 3:8-9, which links it somehow to the Messiah or the stone of Dan. 2:44-45 (i.e. the eternal Messianic kingdom). See Special Topic: Cornerstone at Dan. 2:34, esp. I. D).

▣ **"grace, grace to it"** The Hebrew term (BDB 336) is doubled for emphasis. It is also used in 12:10 for God's grace or favor. This probably refers to God's blessing on the rebuilt temple (cf. Ezra 3:10-11).

This Hebrew term can also mean "beauty" (cf. NEB, TEV). It is unsure if this is an affirmation to God or about God's work.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:8-10

[8]Also the word of the Lord came to me, saying, [9]"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will finish *it.* Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. [10]For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—*these are* the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

4:8 The revelation is of God, not Zechariah!

4:9 "the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundations of this house" This text causes controversy when one compares it with Ezra 5:16 and 3:6. There are several possible solutions.

1. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are the same person.
   a. both princes of Judah
   b. both called governor
   c. both returned from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem
   d. both involved in laying the foundation of the second temple
2. Sheshbazzar repaired and restored the sacrificial altar, but not the temple itself.
3. The foundations were started by Sheshbazzar, but discontinued and restarted later by Zerubbabel.
4. For a good discussion of the possibilities see Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 216-219.

Also note that this is a figure of speech because Zerubbabel himself probably did not work on the temple itself, but delegated others.

▣ **"Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me"** Although NASB (1971) and NKJV have the PRONOUN "me" capitalized, most other English translations, including the 1995 Updated NASB, do not. This phrase probably relates to Zechariah (cf. 2:8,9,11; 4:9; 6:15).

4:10 "For who has despised. . .small things" Some speculate that Zechariah (or other current leaders) was taken into captivity as a young man and was now very old. He remembered Solomon's glorious temple, and this second temple was quite modest compared to it. The differences were somewhat discouraging to the people (cf. Ezra 3:12; Hag. 2:3).

▣ **"these seven"** There is disagreement among English translations as to where this should be placed in the text.

1. as subject of "will be glad" (NASB, NKJV)
2. as relating to "the eyes of the Lord" (NRSV)

They may relate to the "seven faceted stone" of 3:9 or to the seven branched and cupped lampstand of 4:2. However, their function relates to the four angelic horsemen of the first vision and the four chariots of the last vision.

▣ **"the plumb line"** This word combination (BDB 6, "stone" and BDB 95, "tin, "plummet") is uncertain. It is the compound word from "stone" and "tin" (cf. II Kgs. 21:13; Amos 7:7-8), which was a building metaphor often used for destruction (e.g. Isa. 34:11), but in this context, for rebuilding. The plumb line had been in the LORD's hands (i.e. exile), but now is in Zerubbabel's hands for restoration through God's Spirit, who represents His power for His purpose (cf. v. 6).

▣ **"eyes"** This is an anthropomorphic idiom. God knows all things and desires that Judah and Jerusalem be rebuilt and prosper. However, the surrounding nations will be judged.

▣ **"range to and fro"** This is the Hebrew word "range" (BDB 1001-1002, KB 1439). It is used in several senses.

1. for God's blessing, here and II Chr. 16:9
2. for those seeking God, Amos 8:12 and possibly Dan. 12:4
3. for seeking one who is godly, Jer. 5:1

God's knowledge is depicted by horses (chapter 1) and chariots (chapter 6) patrolling the whole earth (i.e. ranging throughout the whole world). Here it means that a special stone (cf. v. 7) or a special lampstand (cf. v. 2) also symbolize His presence, purpose, and knowledge.

In a sense this metaphor of rebuilding is exactly what the angel of the LORD wanted to see from 1:12-17.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:11-14

[11]Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right of the lampstand and on its left?" [12]And I answered the second time and said to him, "What are the two olive branches which are beside the two golden pipes, which empty the golden *oil* from themselves?" [13]So he answered me, saying, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." [14]Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth."

4:11 "What are these" Again the prophet asks the angelic guide for an interpretation of the vision.

▣ **"these two olive trees"** From the context, both historical and biblical, they represent Zerubbabel and Joshua, who represent the two aspects of the Messiah's person and work, administrative/royal and sacrificial/priestly.

4:12 "the two olive branches" The Hebrew term "branches" (BDB 987) is literally "ear of grain" (cf. Gen. 41:5; Isa. 17:5) from the idea of "to hand down." However, in this context it refers to the olive branches that contain olives.

All commentators need to remind themselves that this is an apocalyptic vision. Precision, consistency, and logic are not required! Context (literary and historical) and authorial intent are the key interpretive elements!

▣ **"pipes"** This word is used only here in the OT (BDB 857). It is possibly the fruit-laden branches of the olive tree. It seems to refer to the two olive trees which supplied oil to the seven branches by means of these golden channels or conduits.

▣ **"golden pipes. . .golden *oil*"** The same Hebrew term "gold" (BDB 262) occurs twice in this verse. The first designated the channels through which the oil flows. The second use seems to relate to the color of the olive oil itself, which is golden.

4:13 "my lord" This is Zechariah's normal term (adoni) of address to the angelic guide (cf. 1:9,19; 4:4,5,13).

4:14 "the two anointed ones" This Hebrew word "anointed" (BDB 844 I), which is the word for "fresh oil," was not used for ceremonial anointing. There is another Hebrew word used for ceremonial anointing in the OT (BDB 602), so the literal phrase "sons of fresh oil" did not have obvious Messianic (i.e. The Anointed One) connotations. It may have the connotation here of blessed ones or prosperity (cf. 3:10).

Context, not a lexicon or dictionary, must determine meaning. Authorial intent as expressed in an inspired text must take precedence. A similar lexical problem with the word/concept of anointing is found in James 5:14, where an unexpected non-religious word for anointing is used.

Joshua and Zerubbabel are both God's instruments to accomplish a temporal task (rebuild the temple) and be an eschatological symbol of the coming Messiah as a Priest-King (like Melchizedek, cf. Gen.14).

▣ **"the Lord of the whole earth"** Zechariah has been using the term *adon* (BDB 10) to address the angelic guide, but here and in 6:5 it refers to YHWH, the creator, sustainer, provider, and lover of all creation (cf. Josh. 3:11,13; Ps. 97:5; Micah 4:13). It is exactly this universal dimension of God's character which requires Jerusalem and the temple to be restored, because Messiah will come from the Jewish people and nation! God's redemptive plan includes the Gentiles, which surely surprised Haggai and the Jewish leadership (e.g. 9:7,10; 14:16).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How are chapters two and three related to chapter four?
2. Why is the vision so seemingly unrelated to the interpretation?
3. Why are the details so elusive?

ZECHARIAH 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of the Flying Scroll	The Sixth Vision: A Flying Scroll	The Vision of the Flying Scroll	The Sixth Vision: The Flying Scroll
5:1-4	5:1-4	5:1-2	5:1-4
		5:3-4	
Vision of the Woman in a Basket	The Seventh Vision: A Woman in a Basket	The Vision of the Woman in the Basket	The Seventh Vision: The Woman in the Bushel Basket
5:5-11	5:5-11	5:5	5:5-11
		5:6	
		5:7	
		5:8-9	
		5:10	
		5:11	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph

2. Second paragraph

3. Third paragraph

4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1-4

[1]Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, *there was* a flying scroll. [2]And he said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits." [3]Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side. [4]I will make it go forth," declares the LORD of hosts, "and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones."

5:1 "Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked" This is the regular literary introduction for a new vision. See full note at 1:8. This chapter contains two visions (cf. v. 5).

▣ **"a flying scroll"** This may imply an outstretched banner (VERB, BDB 733 I, KB 800, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE and NOUN, BDB 166). From v. 3 its message is characterized as a "curse." This same negative connotation connected to a "scroll" is found in Jer. 36:2 and Ezek. 2:9.

5:2 "he said to me" Apocalyptic literature is characterized by dialogue between a human and an angelic being. Zechariah has more angelic interaction than any other book of the OT.

1. angel guide
2. angel of the LORD
3. Satan
4. angel attendants
5. angels active in the visions themselves

▣ **"twenty cubits. . .ten cubits"** A cubit (BDB 52) is equal to the length from a man's elbow to his longest finger. It was about eighteen inches. The size of this scroll is unusually large, ten yards by 5 yards. Some commentators see it related to the dimensions of "the Holy Porch" of I Kgs. 6:3, which was the place of religious teaching and judicial administration (cf. I Kgs. 7:67), but here it just seems to denote a readable message. Remember this is apocalyptic imagery!

5:3 "the curse" This Hebrew term (BDB 46) has two related covenantal meanings.

1. swear an oath (cf. Deut. 29:12,14)
2. the oath broken turns into a curse (cf. Deut. 29:18,19,20-21; Jer. 21:10; Ezek. 16:59; 17:16,18,19; Dan. 9:11)

This term is used almost exclusively for God's anger towards His people's unfaithfulness and rebellion. The best summary of the covenant's requirements and consequences is Deut. 27-29. To whom much is given, much is required (cf. Luke 12:48).

▣ **"the whole land"** This refers to Palestine because the next two verses relate to Decalog violations.

▣

NASB	**"purged away" (twice)**
NKJV	**"expelled" (twice)**
NRSV	**"cut off" (twice)**
TEV	**"be removed"**
	"taken away"

NJB, NIV "banished"

This Hebrew word (BDB 667, KB 720) in the *Niphal* form means "to be cleaned out" or "purged." The problem is that it can also mean "cleansed from guilt" or "made innocent." However, v. 4 confirms the negative connotation in v. 3.

As Joshua was cleansed and restored to covenant purity in chapter 3, so too, must the people of God be. Those who refuse to conform (e.g. 3:7) will be eliminated (cf. v. 4).

▣ **"the writing on one side"** The cultural symbol of writing on both sides of a scroll implies a full and complete curse (cf. Ezek. 2:9-10; Rev. 5:1).

5:4 "the one who swears falsely by My name" This covenant violation (i.e. "swear" BDB 989) could involve two different ways of taking God's name in vain.

1. during worship (cf. Deut. 5:11; 6:13; 10:20)
2. falsehood in a court proceeding (cf. Exod. 20:16; 23:7; NJB, NEB, REB)

If in fact these two laws represent the two aspects of the Mosaic covenant, actions and attitudes toward YHWH and YHWH's people (they symbolize the whole covenant), then #1 is better.

▣ **"it"** The first "it" refers to the flying curse scroll. The scroll is personified as it enters the covenant violator's house. The second "it" refers to the house (i.e. "timbers and stones").

▣ **"consume"** This Hebrew term (BDB 477, KB 476) in the *Piel* PERFECT form means "to finish," "to bring to an end," or "complete." In this context it refers to a complete and total judgment. This same term is used in the covenant cursing and blessing passage in Deuteronomy (cf. 28:21; see also Jer. 14:12). Covenant breakers will be completely and totally destroyed and removed.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:5-11

[5]Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, "Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth." [6]I said, "What is it?" And he said, "This is the ephah going forth." Again he said, "This is their appearance in all the land [7](and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah." [8]Then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening. [9]Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens. [10]I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?" [11]Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."

5:5 "lift up now your eyes and see" This literary phrase (esp. "see") introduces a new vision. See note at 1:8.

5:6 "What is it" Again the prophet asked for an angelic interpretation of the vision, as he did in all but one of the six visions.

▣ **"ephah"** This is the Hebrew term (BDB 35) for the largest dry measure used by the Jews. There were possibly two types (cf. Deut. 25:14; Prov. 20:10). Modern scholarship puts it between five and ten gallons (cf. Ezek. 45:11). Here it functions in describing a large basket used as a cage. The NIV Study Bible, p. 412, makes an interesting suggestion, "This one is undoubtedly enlarged (like the flying scroll of vv. 1-2) for like purpose of the vision."

▣

NASB	**"appearance"**
NKJV	**"resemblance"**
NRSV, NIV	**"iniquity"**
TEV	**"sin"**
NJB, NAB, NEV, REB	**"guilt"**
JPSOA	**"eye"**

This Hebrew word could be "what is seen" (BDB 744, "eye," cf. NKJV, NET, JPSOA) or some manuscripts have "iniquity" (BDB 730, cf. LXX, Peshitta, NRSV, TEV, NJB). The only difference between the two terms is between a *waw* and a *yod*. The understanding of "iniquity" fits the immediate context best (cf. vv. 8,11), however, the NET Bible asserts that "eye" in this verse is parallel with "eye" in 4:10. This one's evil is pervasive in the land as YHWH's knowledge is pervasive in the land.

5:7 "lead cover" There are two views about the lead covered basket.

1. This could refer to a measuring stone used in commerce. This one was as heavy as lead. If this is so it strengthens the view that this vision concerns corrupt commerce and, thereby, fallen economic world systems (cf. Hos. 12:7; Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11).
2. The more likely interpretation is that the "lead" was for the purpose of security. Wickedness was isolated and contained and would be removed from the Promised Land. She tried to escape, but could not (cf. vv. 6-8).

5:7-8 "woman. . .Wickedness" Wickedness is a FEMININE NOUN (BDB 958, often used in contrast to righteousness. This is probably why it is personified as a woman (cf. Rev. 17:3-8,18). If the ephah is regular size, then this is a very small woman. Some see her as representing idolatry (cf. v. 11), which means this parallels 5:3-4. Wickedness will be removed from God's people and God's Promised Land.

5:8 "he threw her down" The woman tried to escape, but the angel forced her into the ephah. The context favors the symbol as sinful Jews (cf. 5:3-4).

The same VERB (BDB 1020, KB 1527, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is used to describe how the angel handled both the woman and the lead weight.

▣ **"the lead weight on its opening"** This is literally "mouth" (BDB 804), but here it refers to the lid of the ephah cage and not the woman's mouth.

5:9 "two women" Some see them as helpers of "wickedness" (cf. v. 11). Others see them as God's servants removing the wicked from the Promised Land, but because the word "wickedness" is FEMININE, so too, are these angels. These are the only female angels mentioned in all of the Bible.

▣ **"the wind in their wings"** Some relate "the wind" to the Spirit (cf. 4:6). The word can mean this in both Hebrew (BDB 924) and Greek, but it is probably referring to the proverbial lifting power of stork wings or their speed. Storks were known for their strength and carrying ability.

5:11 "to build a temple for her" This may be sarcasm or typology. The faithful, obedient Jews will have a rebuilt temple to worship YHWH, so will the idolatrous, unfaithful Jews have an apostate place of worship**.**

▣ **"Shinar"** This is an ancient name for Babylon (BDB 1042, cf. Gen. 10:10; 11:2,4; 14:1; Isa. 11:11,13-14; 47; Jer. 50-51; Dan. 1:2; Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:1-7), which is a biblical metaphor for evil.

Many relate this to the exilic experience (cf. 2:6-7) and also to those Jews who did not return to Palestine!

▣ **"she will be set"** This means (BDB 628, KB 679 *Hophal* PERFECT) "set as an idol which cannot move." This is possibly a metaphor for the cleansing of the land of Palestine from idolatry and the setting of the stage for God's judgment of the empires of the Fertile Crescent.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Does this vision relate primarily to the future or the past?
2. Who is it addressing?
3. How is it related to the other visions? (Remember to try to relate all eight visions into one unified whole.)
4. To what temple does v. 11 refer?

ZECHARIAH 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Vision of Four Chariots	The Eighth Vision: Four Chariots	The Vision of the Four Chariots	The Eighth Vision: The Chariots
6:1-8	6:1-8	6:1-4	6:1-8
		6:5	
		6:6-8	
The Command to Crown Joshua	The Crowning of the Messianic Leader	The Command to Crown Joshua	The Votive Crown
6:9-13	6:9-14	6:9-14	6:9-15a
6:14-15			
	6:15	6:15	
			6:15b

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This eighth vision seems to parallel 1:7-17, the first vision (the same number of colored horses and the same patrolling activity in all directions).

B. The main thrust is God's knowledge and control of human history to accomplish His complete redemptive purposes.

C. Verses 9-15 are not another vision, but a historical reference focused toward Joshua. This Messianic passage links the royal aspect (i.e. "crown," v. 11; "set and rule on His throne," v. 13) and the priestly aspects ("the high priest," v. 11; "He will be a priest on His throne," v. 13).

Yet, it must be asserted that the term "Branch" may refer to Zerubbabel (cf. 3:8). It is obvious that Joshua and Zerubbabel are linked together (cf. 4:1,14; 6:13). This linking of king and priest is also present in Ps. 110:1,4 and implied in I Sam. 2:35.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1-8

[1]Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains *were* bronze mountains. [2]With the first chariot *were* red horses, with the second chariot black horses, [3]with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. [4]Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord?" [5]The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth, [6]with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country. [7]When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth." And He said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. [8]Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, "See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north."

6:1 "I lifted up my eyes again and looked" See note at 1:8.

▣ **"four chariots"** Four (BDB 916) is often used as a symbol of the whole world (or known world, cf. Dan. 2,7) or universe (cf. Dan. 8:8; 11:4; Zech. 6:5, see John J. David, *Biblical Numerology*, pp. 122-123; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 12, pp. 1255-1259; or Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 382).

1. four horsemen, 1:8
2. four horns/four craftsmen, 1:18,20
3. four winds of heaven, 2:10
4. four chariots, 6:1
5. four spirits (or "winds," like 2:10) of heaven, 6:5

"Chariots" (BDB 939) are war machines, the fastest and deadliest of the day.

▣ **"two mountains"** The term "mountain" (BDB 249) is used several times in Zechariah.

1. 4:7, the problems (the surrounding nations) facing Zerubbabel in rebuilding the temple
2. 6:1, bronze mountains of opposition against YHWH's judgment on the nations
3. 14:4-5, opposition of the nations to YHWH and the safety of God's people

Mountains often symbolize the opposition of the nations which YHWH will remove (e.g. Isa. 41:15; Jer. 13:16; 51:25).

The aspect of "two" mountains with a valley in between may foreshadow 14:4-5 (the eschatological work of the Messiah), which builds on the literal valley between the temple (Mt. Moriah) and the Mount of Olives.

If the Jerusalem area is the object of the symbol, it is also possible that the two "bronze pillars" in front of the temple itself (cf. I Kgs. 7:15-22) are the focus. This would imply that YHWH dwells with His people again in the temple being rebuilt.

▣ **"bronze"** This was the strongest alloy known in that day (BDB 638, cf. I Kings 7:13-22). This description as being of bronze shows their symbolic nature.

6:2 "red horses" The color red (BDB 10) is probably reddish brown when it refers to animals.

▣ **"black horses"** Chapters 1 and 6 do not parallel exactly. There are two reddish houses in chapter1, but no black one is specifically mentioned.

6:3

NASB	**"strong dappled horses"**
NKJV	**"dappled horses—strong *steeds*"**
NRSV	**"dappled gray horses"**
TEV	**"dappled horses"**
NJB	**"vigorous, piebald horses"**
NIV	**"dappled—all of them powerful"**
JPSOA	**"spotted—dappled"**

From these English translations it is obvious there are two options: (1) the color of the horses (but different from the ones mentioned in 1:8) or (2) the strength of the horses. The Hebrew term (BDB 55) means "strength" or "might" and probably applies to all of the horses, not the color of the last horse (BDB 136, spotted or dappled, cf. Gen. 31:10,12).

It is also possible that the red chariot (following chapter 1) contains the leader of the group and it, thereby, is designated by the term "strong" (cf. Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 355).

6:4 This parallels 1:19.

6:5

NASB, NKJV	**"the four spirits of heaven"**
NKJV, TEV, NJB	**"the four winds of heaven"**

The Hebrew word (BDB 924) can be translated "breath," "wind," or "spirit," depending on the context. In Ezekiel 37 it is used in all three senses.

1. breath, vv. 5,6,8,9,10 (cf. Gen. 6:17; 7:15,22)
2. wind, v. 9 (cf. Gen. 8:1)
3. spirit, vv. 1,14 (cf. Gen. 1:2; 6:3; 41:38; 45:27)

The phrase, "the four winds" is also used in Jer. 49:36; Dan. 7:2; 11:4; Rev. 7:1 in a universal sense.

▣ **"standing before"** This is a Hebrew idiom (BDB 426, KB 427, *Hithpael* INFINITIVE), which denotes service. Here it speaks of angelic beings presenting themselves before YHWH as in Job 1:6; 2:1.

▣ **"the Lord of all the earth"** See note at 4:14.

6:6 "north" This term refers to the invaders of Palestine from Mesopotamia. Because of the desert these empires followed the Euphrates River to the coastal plain and then went south. Therefore, "the north" became an idiom of peril, invasion, death, exile.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"go forth after them"**
NRSV	**"go toward the west country"**
TEV	**"were going to the west"**

NJB **"following them"**
NIV **"toward the west"**

The Hebrew text has the term (BDB 29) "after them" or "following them." This means the black and white horses would go the same direction. It is possible to understand the PREPOSITION in v. 6 as "beside," implying another direction (i.e. west) or "the region of the west" or "toward the sea," which seems to fit the context of "four" representing the entire known world.

6:7

NASB **"the strong ones"**
NKJV **"strong *steeds*"**
NRSV **"steeds"**
TEV, JPSOA **"dappled horses"**
NJB **"vigorously eager"**
NET **"all these strong ones"**
NIV **"the powerful horses"**

The term "strong" (BDB 55) was used in v. 3 to describe all of the four colored horses, so too here, instead of a color.

▣

NASB, NRSV **"to go to patrol the earth"**
NKJV **"to walk to and fro throughout the earth"**
TEV **"to go and inspect the earth"**
NJB **"to patrol the world"**
NET **"to go and walk about over the earth"**
NIV **"straining to go throughout the earth"**

These angels were ready and eager to serve God, but they must wait for His permission (BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, "go" and BDB 229, KB 246, *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE, "partrol"). They are a symbolic way of representing God's omniscient presence and knowledge, as does the "four colored horses" of 1:8-11.

6:8

NASB **"have appeased"**
NKJV **"have given rest"**
NRSV **"have set. . .at rest"**
TEV **"have quieted"**
NJB **"brought. . .to rest"**

This Hebrew term (BDB 628, KB 679) is the *Hiphil* PERFECT, meaning "to cause to rest" or "give rest." It is also used several times of YHWH's wrath being appeased in Ezekiel (cf. 5:13; 16:42; 24:13).

▣

NASB **"My wrath"**
NKJV **"My Spirit"**
NRSV, NJB **"my spirit"**
TEV **"the LORD'S anger"**

Literally it is "my spirit" referring to YHWH's personified wrath. This may refer to Cyrus' defeat (cf. Isa. 44:28-54:1) of Babylon.

Verses 7 and 8 are direct speech, but from whom? It is difficult in this type of literature to identify the speakers. Sometimes the prophet (cf. vv. 9-12) and the angels speak for God (cf. v. 7). However, this is complicated in Messianic texts when the Messiah (angel of the LORD, cf. 3:6-8) speaks as God. I think it best to understand vv. 7 and 8 as YHWH speaking and vv. 5-6 as the angel speaking.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:9-15

[9]The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, [10]"Take *an offering* from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon. [11]Take silver and gold, make an *ornate* crown and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. [12]Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD. [13]Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices."' [14]Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the LORD to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen the son of Zephaniah. [15]Those who are far off will come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And it will take place if you completely obey the LORD your God."

6:9 "The word of the LORD also came to me" This is a prophetic formula which introduces a new revelation from YHWH (cf. 1:1,7; 4:6,8; 6:9; 7:1,4,8; 8:1,18). Theologically this asserts that the information is not from human origin, but from a divine source. Inspiration is a crucial, non-compromisable truth. The Bible is not just another "holy" book of the world religions!

6:10

NASB	**"take *an offering* from the exiles"**
NKJV	**"receive *the gift* from the captives"**
NRSV, NJB	**"collect. . .from the exiles"**
TEV	**"take the gifts given by the exiles"**
NET	**"choose some people from among the exiles"**

Most English translations understand the VERB (BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE) as referring to (1) the silver and gold from Persia or (2) an offering from the exiles, but the RSV, NAB, and NET Bibles assume it refers to a select group from among the exiles as a way to honor all those Jews who chose to return. There is no stated object of the VERB in the Hebrew text.

▣ This refers to the returning Jewish Levites and priests from Babylon coming with a gift from the Persian court to help rebuild the temple (cf. Ezra 7:13-16; 8:24-30). They are told to go immediately to Josiah's house (another priest, cf. Jer. 29:25,29), who was possibly their host.

▣ **"enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon"** It is possible to interpret this as all four men named had just come from Persia with gifts for the temple. Josiah's lineage is given because he was the most prominent of the group (cf. Joyce Baldwin, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, p. 132).

The other way is to see Josiah as a resident of Jerusalem, where the group of three men stayed (cf. H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah*, p. 121). If so the concluding phrase is out of normal order (cf. UBS' *Handbook on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, pp. 170-171).

6:11 "crown" This is PLURAL (used with a SINGULAR VERB in v. 14), but it seems to refer to one crown, possibly a double crown (like those from Egypt) symbolizing "the two offices" (cf. v. 13). The Hebrew term (BDB 742) does not refer to a priestly crown (BDB 63, cf. Exod 29:6; Lev. 8:9), but to a royal one (cf. 9:16; I Chr. 20:2; Isa. 28:5; 2:3; Jer. 13:18; Ezek. 21:26).

▣ **"on the head of Joshua. . .the high priest"** Some theories relating to the high priest crowned as king are: (1) for political reasons Zerubbabel could not be crowned; (2) a textual error; (3) a scribal change;

(4) Joshua was a type of Christ as both priest and king as Jesus was in the NT in the book of Hebrews (cf. 5:1-10; 7:1-25); or (5) the high priest, after Zerubbabel's death, took over the office of king (as did eight Hasmonian rulers).

6:12 "then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts'" It is difficult to follow the levels of direct and indirect speech in Zechariah. Here it is obvious the LORD directs Zechariah to speak on His behalf. Sometimes the angel of the LORD speaks on YHWH's behalf. It is possible that in certain contexts the angel of the LORD is the Messiah. The antecedent to the PRONOUNS is not always evident from the context.

▣ **"a man"** The Messiah will be a human person (cf. Dan. 7:13). In Zechariah angels are designated as men (e.g. 1:8,10; 2:1,4), as well as the Messiah (symbolized by Joshua and Zerubbabel). God will use human instrumentality to reveal Himself, accomplish redemption, and provide an example for all other human beings.

▣ **"Branch"** This word (BDB 855) means "sprout" (cf. 3:8; 6:12; Isa. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). This is a title for the Messiah. In Zechariah it refers to Zerubbabel as a type of the Messiah (cf. Ibn Ezra and Rashi). The name, Zerubbabel, in Akkadian, means "shoot of Babylon." This was possibly a play on his name since he rebuilt the temple in 516 B.C., but it is really an ultimate reference to Jesus. This title and the matching VERB ("will branch out," *Qal* IMPERFECT) appear together in this verse.

▣

NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NIV, JPSOA	**"for He will branch out"**
TEV	**"will flourish"**
NJB	**"there will be a branching out"**
NET	**"who will sprout up"**

The title "Branch" is used as a VERB (BDB 855, KB 1033, *Qal* IMPERFECT). This may imply a world-wide kingdom (cf. Isa. 45:22; 52:10; Micah 5:4; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8) or a renewed (Davidic) kingdom (cf. II Sam. 7; Isa. 11:1).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TENSION BETWEEN OLD COVENANT PROPHETIC MODELS AND NEW COVENANT APOSTOLIC MODELS

(OT racial, national, geographical categories vs. all believers over all the world)

TENSION

The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but Jesus nor the NT Apostles ever focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world:

1. OT prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)
2. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezekiel 37-39; Daniel 7-12; Zechariah)
3. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch, which is alluded to in Jude)
4. Jesus Himself (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
5. the writings of Paul (cf. I Cor. 15; II Cor. 5; I Thess. 4-5; II Thess. 2)

6. the writings of John (I John and Revelation).

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope ("the mystery of Christ," cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13. See Special Topic at 10:7). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem in the OT is used as a metaphor of the people of God (Zion), but is projected into the NT as a term expressing God's acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the new people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) is foreshadowed in God's promise to redeem fallen mankind in Gen. 3:15 before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham's call (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) involved the Gentiles (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5).
2. In the OT the enemies of God's people are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a worldwide, cosmic conflict (cf. Colossians).
3. The promise of a land which <u>is</u> so integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises of Genesis, cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7-15; 17:8) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes down to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Rev. 21-22).
4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are (1) the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29); (2) the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:10; 2:23, quoted in Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45,quoted in II Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2, quoted in Titus 2:14); (3) the temple is now Jesus and through Him the local church (cf. I Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. I Cor. 6:19); and (4) even Israel and its characteristic descriptive OT phrases now refer to the whole people of God (i.e. "Israel," cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16, i.e. "kingdom of priests," cf. I Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6)

The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the book of Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus, Paul and other writers! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication. There is no organized, logical system to Jesus' or Paul's eschatology. Their purpose is primarily redemptive or pastoral.

However, even within the NT there is tension. There is no clear systemization of eschatological events. In many ways the book of Revelation surprisingly uses OT allusions in describing the end instead of the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13)! It follows the literary genre initiated by Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, but developed during the intertestamental period (Jewish apocalyptic literature). This may have been John's way of linking the Old and New Covenants. It shows the age-old pattern of human rebellion and God's commitment to redemption! But it must be noted that although Revelation uses OT language, persons, and events, it reinterprets them in light of first century Rome.

▣ **"He will build the temple"** This seems to refer to Zerubbabel historically (cf. 4:9), but to Jesus eschatologically. The temple that Jesus will build seems to be spiritual (cf. John 2:19-21), although some see it as the temple of Ezekiel 38-40. The book of the Revelation speaks of a heavenly temple (cf.

3:12; 7:15; 11:1-2,19; 14:15,17; 15:5,6,8; 16:1,17). However, when New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven (cf. Rev. 21:22), there is no temple mentioned. The book of Hebrews speaks of a heavenly tabernacle into which Jesus entered once and for all to offer Himself as a sacrifice to God on our behalf (cf. Heb. 8-10), but it is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture, although the detailed plans of Exod. 25-27 seem to imply a heavenly original.

The term "house" (BDB 108) is used often (cf. 1:16; 3:7; 4:9; 8:9) to refer to the temple (BDB 228). However, in 8:9 both terms are used synonymously, so there is no intended distinction.

6:13 This seems to combine in one person both kingly and priestly offices (cf. Ps. 104:1,4). Others see v. 13 as an emphasis on two offices (i.e. two thrones). This would attribute to Zerubbabel the rebuilding of the temple, and to Joshua, sitting and co-ruling (both VERBS *Qal* PERFECTS) in it.

▣ **"the counsel of peace"** These two leaders would reign together in perfect cooperation and harmony. The peace (*shalom*, BDB 102) between them would bless the nation they serve and reflect the God of the nation they represent.

6:14 These four Hebrew names refer to those mentioned in v. 10, but two of the names are different. The Peshitta, NRSV, TEV, and NIV take the word *hen* (BDB 336), which means "grace," "favor," or "kindness" ("gracious one," possibly their host) as referring to Josiah, son of Zephaniah (cf. v. 10).

The Hebrew language often uses different spellings for the same person. For example, there are four ways to spell Joshua.

1. *Yehoshu'a*, Deut. 3:21
2. *Hoshe'a*, Deut. 32:44
3. *Yeshoshu'a*, Joshua 1:1
4. *Yeshu'a*, Neh. 8:17

The same person can also go by several names (nick names, titles). For example, Moses' father-in-law:

1. Jethro, Exod. 3:1
2. Jether, Exod. 4:18
3. Reuel, Exod. 2:18
4. Priest of Median, Exod. 3:1
5. Hobab, Jdgs. 4:11

6:14

NASB	**"the crown will become a reminder in the temple of the LORD"**
NKJV	**"the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the LORD"**
NRSV	**"the crown shall be in the care of. . .as a memorial in the temple of the LORD"**
TEV	**"the crown will be a memorial in the LORD's Temple in honor of"**
NJB	**"the crown will serve. . .as a memorial of favor in Yahweh's sanctuary"**
NIB	**"the crown will be given to. . .as a memorial in the temple of the LORD"**
JPSOA	**"the crown shall remain in the Temple of the LORD as a memorial to"**

This majestic coronation of Joshua as symbolic co-ruler with the Branch is a powerful symbol of the coming Priest-King Messiah! Exactly how this is related to the men listed is uncertain. This event is far more significant than just a memorial to four men. This is the focus of the preceding visions. It had national and international implications (cf. v. 15).

The crown (BDB 742 I PLURAL) was obviously not worn everyday, but displayed as a fulfilled and to-be fulfilled promise of restoration and complete eschatological restoration!

6:15 "those who are far off" Historically this refers to (1) the Jews of the Diaspora (cf. in the Fertile Crescent and Egypt; (2) the Persian court, possibly represented by the three men of vv. 10 and 14; and (3) eschatologically it refers to the Gentiles (cf. 2:11; 8:20-23; Isa. 2:2-4; 56:6-8; 60:5c-9,10; Micah 4:1-5; Eph. 2:11-22).

▣ **"then you will know that the *LORD* of Hosts has sent me"** If this is historical, then this is referring to Zechariah (cf. 2:8,9,11; 4:9). If it is eschatological then it refers to Jesus. The inclusion of Gentiles into God's covenant plan does not fit the historical setting of the post-exilic period (esp. Nehemiah and Haggai). The PRONOUNS are ambiguous in this book and could refer to (1) the prophet; (2) an angel in the visions; or (3) the Messiah.

▣ **"it will take place if you completely obey the LORD your God"** Notice that there is a conditional element in these promises (cf. 3:7). This is a quote from Deut. 28:1 (Deut. 27-29 contains the Covenant Cursing and Blessing Litany).

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

The OT term *berith*, covenant, is not easy to define. There is no matching VERB in Hebrew. All attempts to derive an etymological definition have proved unconvincing. However, the obvious centrality of the concept has forced scholars to examine the word usage to attempt to determine its functional meaning.

Covenant is the means by which the one true God deals with His human creation. The concept of covenant, treaty, or agreement is crucial in understanding the biblical revelation. The tension between God's sovereignty and human free-will are clearly seen in the concept of covenant. Some covenants are based exclusively on God's character and actions

1. creation itself (cf. Gen. 1-2)
2. the call of Abraham (cf. Gen. 12)
3. the covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen. 15)
4. the preservation of and promise to Noah (cf. Gen. 6-9)

However, the very nature of covenant demands a response

1. by faith Adam must obey God and not eat of the tree in the midst of Eden
2. by faith Abraham must leave his family, follow God, and believe in future descendants
3. by faith Noah must build a huge boat far from water and gather the animals
4. by faith Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt and received specific guidelines for religious and social life with promises of blessings and cursings (cf. Deut. 27-29)

This same tension involving God's relationship to humanity is addressed in the "new covenant." The tension can be clearly seen in comparing Ezek. 18 with Ezek. 36:27-37. Is the covenant based on God's gracious actions or mandated human response? This is the burning issue of the Old Covenant and the New. The goals of both are the same: (1) the restoration of fellowship lost in Gen. 3 and (2) the establishment of a righteous people who reflect God's character.

The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 solves the tension by removing human performance as the means of attaining acceptance. God's law becomes an internal desire instead of an external performance. The goal of a godly, righteous people remains the same, but the methodology changes. Fallen mankind proved themselves inadequate to be God's reflected image. The problem was not the covenant, but human sinfulness and weakness (cf. Rom. 7; Gal. 3).

The same tension between OT unconditional and conditional covenants remains in the NT. Salvation is absolutely free in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but it requires repentance and faith (both initially and continually). It is both a legal pronouncement and a call to Christlikeness, an indicative statement of acceptance and an imperative to holiness! Believers are not saved <u>by</u> their performance, but <u>unto</u> obedience (cf. Eph. 2:8-10). Godly living becomes <u>the evidence</u> of salvation, <u>not the means of</u> salvation. This tension is clearly seen in Hebrews.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What are the eight visions trying to convey to us?
2. Do the visions relate to the post-exilic period or to the end-time?
3. Why is Joshua crowned in v. 11 and not Zerubbabel?
4. Will Jesus rebuild the Jewish temple?

ZECHARIAH 7

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Obedience Better Than Sacrifice	An Answer to An Inquiry About Fasting	The Lord Condemns Insincere Fasting	A Question About Fasting
7:1-3	7:1-7	7:1	7:1-3
		7:2-3	A Survey of the Nation' Past
7:4-7		7:7	7:4-14
Disobedience Resulted in Exile		Disobedience, the Cause of Exile	
7:8-14	7:8-14	7:8-10	
		7:11-14	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Chapters 7-8 form a literary unit. The theological issue is the Jews' covenant faithfulness (cf. vv. 9-13) vs. religious ritual (i.e. national fasting, cf. v. 3; 8:19).

B. God used the Jews' disobedience and subsequent dispersion for His own redemptive purposes (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38; Rom. 9-11). God will restore the Jews and welcome the nations to Himself (cf. 8:20-23).

C. The promised covenant renewal still requires obedience (cf. 6:15 and 8:16-17). The covenant requirements of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant are the same.

1. repentance
2. faith
3. obedience
4. perseverance

The Old Covenant was based on human performance, but the New Covenant is based on a new heart and a new spirit from God (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38).

D. for a good discussion of fasting see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, pp. 780-783.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:1-7

[1]In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth *day* of the ninth month, *which is* Chislev. [2]Now *the town* of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech and their men to seek the favor of the LORD, [3]speaking to the priests who belong to the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, "Shall I weep in the fifth month and abstain, as I have done these many years?" [4]Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, [5]"Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? [6]When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? [7]Are not *these* the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it, and the Negev and the foothills were inhabited?'"

7:1 "fourth year of King Darius" This is almost two years later than the initial eight visions (cf. 1:1,7). The dating of this chapter is very specific.

▣ **"the fourth *day* of the ninth month"** This would possibly be December 7, 518 B.C. (cf. UBS, *A Handbook on Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi*, p. 180).

▣ **"Chislev"** This is a month in the Babylonian calendar (cf. Neh. 1:1), approximately November or December.

▣ **"the word of the LORD came to Zechariah"** This phrase introduces a new revelation. It also seems to mark the paragraph divisions of this chapter. Zechariah did not choose the time or subject. This is YHWH's message (cf. v. 4).

The Hebrew word *dbr* (BDB 182) is used regularly for God's revelation (cf. 1:1,6,7; 4:6; 7:1,4,7,12; 8:1,18; 9:1; 11:11; 12:1).

7:2

NASB	**"the *town of* Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"the people sent Sherezer with Regem-Melech"**
TEV	**"the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech"**
NJB	**"Bethel sent Sharezer"**
JPSOA	**"Bethel-sharezer and Regem-melech. . .sent"**
PESHITTA	**"sent to Bethel Sherezar and Rab-mag, and the king. . .had sent word to pray for him"**

The Hebrew is very ambiguous. There are several theories: (1) King James translates "Bethel" as "the house of God," not a town; (2) RSV, TEV, NIV and JB have "Bethel," which is a cultic city about twelve miles north of Jerusalem and the center of calf worship during 922-722 B.C.; (3) NEB combines "Bethel" and "Sharezer" into one name. Similar compounds using Sharezer are found in Jer. 39:3, while compound names using Bethel are found in Babylonian documents and in the Elephantine Papyri (cf. W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, p. 169); (4) the term "Regemmelech" (BDB 920) means "the king's spokesman" in Ugaritic (the Syriac translation has "Rab-mag," which is an official title, cf. Jer. 39:3,13), which implies that Darius or influential Jews sent two men (i.e. Bether-Sharezer and Regem-Melech).

▣ **"to seek the favor of the LORD"** This is the INFINITIVE construct of the *Piel* VERB (BDB 318 II, KB 316), which denotes the cessation of hostility (cf. Dan. 9:13), as well as the presence of God's blessing and acceptance (cf. Ps. 119:58). This same VERB is used in 8:21-22 for what the nations will seek from God.

7:3 "speaking to the priests. . .the prophets" The priests would refer to those who had returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and Joshua or Ezra. It is uncertain to whom "the prophets" refers. Haggai and Zechariah are the only ones known by name. I think both Joel and Obadiah were also early post-exilic prophets. Whomever they were these emissaries came to the representatives of the God asking about the continuance of a fast denoting the destruction of Jerusalem, now that the Jews had returned to Jerusalem.

▣ **"Shall I weep in the fifth month"** This refers to a national day of mourning (fasting) which the Jews initiated to remember the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple (cf. II Kgs. 25).

▣

NASB	**"abstain"**
NKJV	**"fast**
NRSV, JPSOA	**"practice abstinence"**
TEV, NJB	**"fasting"**
PESHITTA	**"separating myself"**

The term (BDB 634) in the *Niphal* means to "dedicate oneself to God," "treat with awe," or "fast." In this context "fast" is best. Context determines meaning!

▣ **"as I have done these many years"** This again is an allusion to the 70 year prophecy of exile by Jeremiah (cf. 25:8-11; 29:10; Dan. 9:2,24; Zech. 7:5).

7:5 "say to all the people of the land" This is an idiom for the common, non-leadership (cf. Jer. 34:10; Hag. 2:4) people of God's covenant promise (i.e. Jews). For a good discussion of the way this idiom developed and changed through Israel's history see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, vol. 1, pp. 70-72.

▣ **"seventh month"** This refers to another national fast day to remember the death of Gedaliah, the appointed governor (cf. II Kgs. 25:25; Jer. 40:1-41:3). I think that possibly the ambiguous terms in v. 2 and the fast days commended (cf. 8:19) related to a delegation of Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem to discuss the status of the official ritual calendar.

▣ **"was it actually for Me that you fasted"** God did not initiate these fasts and really they were done out of self pity more than worship (cf. Isa. 1:11-12; 58:1-12).

7:6 "when you eat and drink" This is sarcasm. They were fasting and/or feasting for themselves, not for God (cf. Isa. 29:13; Col. 2:20-33).

7:7 "the former prophets" See note at 1:4.

▣ **"when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous"** This refers to the time before the Babylonian exile. Nebuchadnezzar conducted four deportations.

1. 605 B.C. - Daniel and his three friends
2. 597 B.C. - Ezekiel and 10,000 skilled Jews
3. 586 B.C. - Jerusalem and the temple destroyed and most of the remaining population exiled
4. 582 B.C. - after the death of Gedaliah the Babylonian military returned and exiled everyone they could find

▣ **"the Negev"** This (BDB 616) refers to the uninhabited pasture land in southern Judea.

▣ **"the foothills"** This is literally "*Shephelah*" (BDB 1050), which refers to the coastal plain along the Mediterranean.

At the time of Haggai and Zechariah neither of these geographical areas belonged to the returned Jews. Zerubbabel only controlled a small area around the city of Jerusalem.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:8-14

[8]Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah saying, [9]"Thus has the LORD of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; [10]and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.'" [11]But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears from hearing. [12]They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts. [13]And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts; [14]"but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate."

7:8 Is this a textual marker to designate a new context? Joyce Baldwin, in *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, says it is an editorial addition that misunderstood the unity of the passage (cf. p. 145).

7:9-10 The prophets always direct the people back to their covenant responsibilities. They are "covenant watch dogs"! Verses 9-10 go back to the Mosaic covenant and its social requirements.

As an example the Ten Commandants have requirements towards God (which they had violated, cf. vv. 9-10). The blessings of God as well as the cursings of God are related to covenant fidelity (cf. Deut. 27-29). These requirements and guidelines for life were not new or surprising to these returning Jews.

7:9 "Dispense true justice" There is a word play between the NOUN construct (BDB 1048) and the *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 1047, KB 1622). Covenant people are to treat each other fairly (cf. Micah 6:8). This particular phrase refers to judicial discussions (e.g. Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:16-17; Prov. 31:9; Ezek. 18:8; 45:9), but has a wider metaphorical implication of appropriate covenant relationships between all the members of God's people. This very term is repeated in 8:16. Injustice offends God (cf. Hosea 4:1-6).

▣ **"kindness"** This word is *hesed* (BDB 338), the special covenant NOUN which speaks of YHWH's longsuffering covenant loyalty (possibly best understood as family love). God is a faithful, loving God and He demands the same of His people. For a good discussion see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 2, pp. 211-218.

▣ **"mercy"** The term (BDB 933) originally had a family orientation ("from the womb"). This same term was used earlier in the angel's prayer to God about not having "compassion" for Jerusalem. The two terms, "kindness" and "mercy" are used in Dan. 1:9 to describe God's graciousness to Daniel through Nebuchadnezzar's overseer. As God treats us, we as His people should treat one another (cf. I John 3:16). Our attitudes and actions show to whom we belong!

7:10 "do not oppress the widow. . .the orphan. . .the stranger. . .the poor" The NEGATED VERB (BDB 798, KB 897) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense. Justice without partiality is a recurrent theme of the book of Deuteronomy (cf. 1:17; 10:17; 16:19; 24:14,17). God defends the defenseless.

▣

NASB, JPSOA	**"the stranger"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"the alien"**
TEV	**"foreigners"**
NJB	**"the foreigner"**
PESHITTA	**"the proselyte"**

This is the Hebrew term (BDB 158) which denotes a resident alien. These were free people, not slaves, but they had limited civil rights. God was seen as their protector and defender as He was for all socially deprived and poor people (cf. Exod. 22:21-24; Deut. 10:18). A special third year tithe was received locally to aid society's needy (cf. Deut. 14:28-29).

For a good discussion of Israelite social order see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*, vol. 1, pp. 69-79.

▣ **"do not devise evil in your hearts"** This VERB (BDB 362, KB 359) is another *Qal* IMPERFECT used as a JUSSIVE. This refers to legal procedures (cf. 8:17) with an emphasis on proper attitude and motives. Treat others with respect as fellow covenant partners. Evil is always self-centered; love is always others-centered!

7:11-12 This is a series of four parallel phrases describing the attitudes of disrespect and disobedience of God's people.

1. "they refused to pay attention"
2. "they turned a stubborn shoulder" (cf. Neh. 9:29)
3. "they stopped their ears from hearing" (cf. Jer. 5:21; 6:10)
4. "they made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear"
5. also note v. 13a and compare Isa. 6:9-10

7:12 "they made their hearts like flint" This Hebrew term (BDB 1038 I) refers to some kind of very hard material like corundum or diamond (cf. Jer. 17:1). It is used metaphorically here of the hardness of the Jewish ancestors' hearts toward God. This same metaphor of hardness is used in a positive way in Ezek. 3:9 for God equipping the prophet to face strong opposition.

This is active refusal to listen and heed God's word and will (the opposite of *shema*). God's people were in open, active, willful rebellion!

▣ **"sent His Spirit through the former prophets"** This refers to the inspiration of the OT prophets (cf. 1:4; 7:7; Neh. 9:20,30) by the agency of the Holy Spirit (cf. I Pet. 1:11; II Pet. 1:21; "the God breathed" of II Tim. 3:16).

Often in the OT the Spirit is a way of referring to God (e.g. Ps. 139:7-8; Isa. 40:13; 60:10-11) or God's creative activity (e.g. Gen. 1:2). God energizes humans to perform tasks with His strength and wisdom (e.g. Exod. 28:3; 31:3; 35:31,34; Jdgs. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:54; 14:6,19; 15:14).

The OT does not clearly reveal the NT concept of three divine persons with one essence, but it does begin to reveal a personal plurality in deity. The problem is that plurality and monotheism are hard to reconcile. The church is forced to articulate a triune unity because of the NT affirmations of:

1. the deity of Jesus
2. the personality of the Spirit.

See Special Topic: The Trinity at 4:6.

▣ **"therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts"** This willful disrespect and disobedience caused the curse of Deut. 28 to become a reality (cf. Dan. 9:1-19).

This disobedience with its resulting wrath (cf. v. 14) caused the nations to misunderstand God and His redemptive purposes (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38).

7:13 "God called" God called to them through the covenants, the Exodus, the temple, and the prophets (cf. Hos. 11:2), but they would not obey!

▣ **"they called and I would not listen"** Now the tables are turned! God called and they would not hear, now they call for God's help, but He will not hear (cf. Isa. 1:15), not only because of their covenant disobedience, but also their covenant hypocrisy (cf. Isa. 1:11-15). If they would truly repent, YHWH would respond (cf. Isa. 1:16-20).

7:14 "I scattered" God is in control of history! This refers to the Exile.

This VERB (BDB 704, KB 762) is a *Piel* IMPERFECT. In the ancient world a military defeat meant the defeat of the national god. Israel and Judah's defeat was not because of YHWH's weakness, but their sin (cf. Dan. 9). It was YHWH who caused both the Assyrian (cf. Isa. 10:5) and Babylonian exiles (cf. Jer. 51:20-24).

▣ **"the land is desolated"** The covenant promises were rescinded (cf. Deut. 27-29). The Covenant has always been conditional on God's grace and an appropriate human response.

God brought desolation (cf. Jer. 4:6) so that He could bring restoration to a repentant people. Judgment is an act of love (cf. Heb. 12:5-13).

▣

NASB	**"no one went back and forth"**
NKJV	**"no one passed through or returned"**
NRSV	**"no one went to and fro"**
TEV	**"no one living in it"**
NJB	**"no one came or went"**

This unusual phrase is found only in Zech. 7:14 and 9:8. Zechariah is using ?? divided into two literary units (chapters 1-8 and 9-14). This unusual phrase appears in both units and thereby becomes evidence for the unity of the book by one author.

ZECHARIAH 8

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Jerusalem, Holy City of the Future	The Lord Will Return to Zion and Do Good to Jerusalem and Judah	The Lord Promises to Restore Jerusalem	A Prospect of Salvation
8:1-8	8:1-8	8:1-5	8:1-8
		8:6-8	
8:9-13	8:9-13	8:9-13	8:9-13
8:14-17	8:14-17	8:14-17	8:14-15
			8:16-17
			The Answer to the Question of Fasting
8:18-23	8:18-19	8:18-19	8:18
			8:19
			A Prospect of Salvation
	8:20-23	8:20-23	8:20-22
			8:23

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)

FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:1-8

[1]Then the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, [2]"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.' [3]Thus says the LORD, 'I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts *will be called* the Holy Mountain.' [4]Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. [5]And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.' [6]Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?' declares the LORD of hosts. [7]Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; [8]and I will bring them *back* and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.'"

8:1 This phrase introduces a new stage of the discussion beginning in 7:1 and 8.

8:2 "the LORD of hosts" This was a common post-exilic title. See Special Topic: The Names for Deity at Dan. 4:2.

▣ **"I am exceedingly jealous"** See full notes at 1:14.

▣ **"Zion"** This is one of the seven hills in Jerusalem, but it came to stand for the entire city, including Mount Moriah on which the temple stood. See note at 1:14.

▣

NASB, NRSV	**"with great wrath"**
NKJV	**"with great fervor"**
TEV	**"made me angry"**
NJB	**"furious jealousy"**

The Hebrew root (BDB 404) means "to be hot." The implication here is YHWH's passion (the *Piel* form means "to conceive"). This term is often used by the seventh century prophets (i.e. Jeremiah and Ezekiel, note specifically Ezek. 36:6-7). The interpretive question is how to understand "wrath." (1) Is it meant to refer to God's hot passion for His people or (2) His anger at those He chose to discipline her? I believe the Hebrew phrase, "I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, with great wrath, I am jealous" best fits option #2 (cf. NIV, REB). This is not the same Hebrew word as 7:12 (BDB 893).

8:3 "I will return to Zion" YHWH had left the temple in Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 10) because of the Jews' idolatry (cf. Ezek. 8), before the city was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Ezek. 9). YHWH went to be with the Jews in exile (cf. Ezek. 1).

His return (BDB 996, *Qal* PERFECT) was the confirmation that He had forgiven His people and renewed His covenant with them.

▣ **"will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem"** There is no greater blessing than the personal presence of God with His people (e.g. Exod. 25:8; Lev. 26:11-12; Num. 5:3; 35:23; Deut. 23:14). The sacrificial system and temple were the hope of sinful people who God would forgive (cf. Exod. 29:45).

Notice these two phrases are parallel with (both *Qal* PERFECTS) each other, as are the next two phrases in v. 3.

▣ **"City of Truth"** This could also be translated "city of faithfulness" (BDB 893). The faithful God had returned to the faithless descendants of Abraham.

In Isa. 1:21-23 Jerusalem is sarcastically called "the faithful city," yet in 1:24-26 YHWH the Faithful will change her and forgive her so that she would truly be "the faithful city" (cf. v. 2b) again.

▣ **"the mountain of the LORD"** This refers to the temple area or Mt. Moriah ("YHWH provides"). This is the place where:

1. Melchizedek was anointed priest/king, Gen. 14
2. Abraham was to offer Isaac, Gen. 22
3. David offered a sacrifice to stop God's judgment, I Chr. 21:9-30
4. Solomon built the temple, II Chr. 3:1

▣ **"the Holy Mountain"** It is holy because YHWH's presence is there. His presence must be reflected in His people (cf. Deut. 28:9). They must be different; they must be like Him (e.g. Lev. 19:2 [I Pet. 1:16]; Matt. 5:48). See Special Topic: Holy at Dan. 4:8.

8:4 "old men and old women" Most of the elderly died because of the exile and those who grew old in Babylon could not easily return, therefore, elderly people in the land was a sign of lengthy prosperity (cf. Deut. 28:3) or the new age (cf. Isa. 65:20).

8:5 "boys and girls playing" This was a sign of God's blessing (cf. Deut. 28:4) and normal social life. This shows the reversal of YHWH's curse (i.e. the fall of Jerusalem, cf. Deut. 27-29) and His restored presence and blessing!

8:6 "If it is too difficult" The Jewish people had become accustomed to captivity and judgment so these promises overwhelmed them! The term "difficult" (BDB 810, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) also means "wonderful." See note at Dan. 8:24.

▣ **"the remnant of this people"** The Hebrew term "remnant" (BDB 984) basically means "the remainder," "what is left," "the residue." In the prophets it takes on a special meaning, "the faithful remnant," which refers to the few descendants of Abraham who believed, trusted, and worshiped YHWH. It is these He would restore (cf. Isa. 37:4,32; 46:3; Jer. 23:3; 31:7; Micah 2:15; 5:7,8; 7:18; Zeph. 2:7,9; Ezra 9:14; Zech. 8:6,11,12). The difficulty about this term is the time factor. Does it refer to (1) the post-exilic period or (2) the end-time (notice the phrase in Zech. 8:6, "in those days")? This may be an example of multiple fulfillment prophecy.

▣ **"will it also be too difficult in My sight"** There is a faith connection between God's acts and the faith of His people. However, even if God's people do not have faith, God still acts. God is committed to sinful humanity's redemption (cf. vv. 7-8; Ezek. 36:22-38).

8:7 "save" The Hebrew VERB "save" (BDB 446, KB 448 *Hiphil* PARTICIPLE) is used in several senses.

1. *Hiphil* = "to deliver" (cf. 9:9; Jer. 30:7-11; 31:7-8) or "to give victory" (e.g. Isa. 59:16; 63:5)
2. *Niphal* = "to be liberated," "to be saved," or "to be victorious"

It is used of the activity of God on behalf of His people (cf. 8:7,13; 9:16; 10:6; 12:7). YHWH delivers those who trust Him (e.g. v. 6; Ps. 37:40; 86:2).

Just a note to acknowledge that modern scholarship is still uncertain about the origin or root meaning of this term. It has been assumed that it is from an Arabic root meaning "to be wide or spacious," but this is not a consensus.

In this context YHWH is promising to deliver His people from exile and restore them to the Promised Land. However, the apocalyptic nature of the book projects this promise into the future as well as the present. It surely refers to the return to Jerusalem in 538 B.C. (Cyrus' decree), but since "the nations" (e.g. 2:11; 8:20-23) are included and the concept of Messiah is revealed and expanded in chapters 9-14, then this must also have an eschatological focus.

▣ **"east. . .west"** These compass directions are used in the universal sense as in Ps. 50:1; 113:3; Isa. 59:19; Mal. 1:11.

8:8 "My people and I will be their God" This is covenant language (e.g. Lev. 26:12; Deut. 4:20; 18:2; 29:12-13; Jer. 31:33; 32:38; Hos. 2:23) and clearly shows that the covenant is restored.

▣ **"truth"** This Hebrew word (BDB 54) means "firmness," "faithfulness," or "truth." Originally it referred to a stable stance and then came to be used metaphorically for that which is trustworthy or faithful or reliable. This then becomes a description of YHWH (e.g. Ps. 71:22; 117:2; 146:6; Isa. 38:18-19; Neh. 9:33). Faithless, fallen humanity's only hope is in the unchanging, faithful mercy of God!

This term is used in chapter 8 several times (cf. vv. 3,8,16[twice],19) in the sense of "truth." In 7:9 and 8:16 it refers to a true or faithful testimony in court. Verses 16 and 19 are parallel and speak of the truthful and trustworthy relationship between covenant partners in society. Truth has a corporate societal focus. Truth is relational as well as propositional!

For a good discussion of this Hebrew word in all its forms see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 1, pp. 427-433.

▣ **"righteousness"** See Special Topic at Dan. 4:27.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:9-13

[9]"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Let your hands be strong, you who are listening in these days to these words from the mouth of the prophets, *those* who *spoke* in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, to the end that the temple might be built. [10]For before those days there was no wage for man or any wage for animal; and for him who went out or came in there was no peace because of his enemies, and I set all men one against another. [11]But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,' declares the LORD of hosts. [12]For *there will be* peace for the seed: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce and the heavens will give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these *things*. [13]It will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you that you may become a blessing. Do not fear; let your hands be strong.'"

8:9 "let your hands be strong" This is a *Qal* IMPERFECT (BDB 304, KB 302) used in a JUSSIVE sense. Notice that this idiomatic phrase begins and concludes (cf. v. 13) this paragraph. This phrase shows the human side of the covenant relationship.

This may be an allusion to Haggai 2:4, who prophesied just before Zechariah. Both of them addressed the same issue—the rebuilding of the temple needs to be finished. Throughout Israel's history God has encouraged His people to be strong and courageous and not to fear (e.g. Josh. 1:6-9; I Chr. 22:13; Isa. 35:4).

8:10 This is a summary of what life in Palestine was like ("before those days") between the fall of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (586 B.C.) and the return ("but now" of v. 11) to Jerusalem decreed by Cyrus (538 B.C.).

The phrase "I set all men one against another" is the exact opposite of vv. 3-8. God's presence or absence can be noted by how people treat each other (cf. 7:8-14). We reap what we sow (cf. Gal. 6:7). Israel reaped the bounty of the presence and forgiveness of God (cf. vv. 11-12).

Notice that God takes personal responsibility for Israel and Judah's exile (cf. v. 14; 7:14). God allowed foreign nations to defeat His people (cf. Isa. 10:5; Jer. 51:20). This judgment was the necessary discipline to bring about a renewed covenant and people.

8:11 "the remnant" See note at 8:6.

8:12 This reflects the covenant blessings of Deut. 27-29 (cf. Hag. 2:19).

8:13 This is a very important verse because it shows the intended purpose of Israel. God called Abraham to call a world (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5-6). God's special relationship and blessing to the descendants of Abraham was meant to attract the notice of the rest of the sons of Adam. The nationalism of Gen. 10-11 is reflected in v. 10c. However, the Jewish people were not faithful to the covenant. Their lives did not reflect the holiness of YHWH, but the fallenness of Gen. 3. Those who were meant to be a light became a deterrent (cf. Ezek. 36:18-23). God had to first change His own people's hearts and minds. They could not perform God's covenant requirements. Therefore, a new covenant was required; one based on God's character and provision (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-38). With this new covenant God's people can become their intended "blessing" to a lost world. The "curse" of Deut. 27-29 has been removed through Messiah. The tragedy is that Israel did not recognize this new opportunity to fulfill her world-wide missionary mandate. She turned inward into exclusivism and pride instead of outward. God's heart for "the nations" was not her heart. Monotheism and the unity of mankind (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) demands a universal people! Israel was a means to that end, not that end! The new age of righteousness depicted in Isa. 55-66 was not fulfilled in the post-exilic return, but it will be in the Messianic Kingdom.

▣ **"Do not fear; let your hands be strong"** These are both *Qal* IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense (cf. Vv. 9,15). This is a recurrent admonition.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:14-17

[14]"For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Just as I purposed to do harm to you when your fathers provoked Me to wrath,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and I have not relented, [15]so I have again purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not fear! [16]These are the things which you should do: speak the truth to one another; judge with truth and judgment for peace in your gates. [17]Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD."

8:14 "I have not relented" The Hebrew VERB (BDB 636, KB 688), in its *Niphal* PERFECT form, means "to be sorry," "to console oneself." YHWH was patient with His people. He relented the punishment that they deserved (cf. Amos 7:3,6), but there was a limit to His relenting (cf. Jer. 15:8). There came a time when YHWH disciplined His people and He did not relent (cf. 8:14; Ezek. 24:14), but He wanted to (cf. Jer. 26:3,13; Hos. 11:8).

This anthropomorphic word shocks us because we think of God as unchangeable. It is surely true that His character and commitment to redemption are unchangeable, however, if God is unchangeable in all ways, why do we pray? Intercessory prayer is based on the belief that supplication can change God's

dealings with humans, both individually and corporately. There is a true personal relationship between God and believers.

God's word is sure, both positively and negatively (e.g. Jer. 4:28; Ezek. 24:14; Gal. 6:7). God's faithless people finally reaped the consequences of their acts (cf. 7:9-14). God allowed exile to make restoration a possibility (cf. v. 15). God wants a people who reflect His character (cf. vv. 8, 16-17; 7:9-10) so that the nations can know Him and trust Him!

8:15 Judgment is God's last resort. He wants to bless (e.g. Hos. 11:8) to fulfill His larger redemptive purposes.

8:16-17 "these are the things which you should do" These verses reflect 7:9-10 and 8:8, but they truly reflect the Mosaic legislation. It was very clear to these Jewish people what God's will for them was among each other and foreigners (i.e. two positive commands in v. 16 and two negative commands in v. 17).

This ethical aspect to biblical faith is needed in a day like theirs and ours when faith in God is limited to:

1. initial decision (ticket to heaven)
2. emotional moment
3. selected times and places
4. rituals/liturgy

These things are good, but unless they issue in a daily, moral lifestyle they are false hopes (cf. Matt. 7; John 15; II Pet. 2). The goal of biblical faith is not only heaven when we die, but Christlikeness now. Anything less is biblically suspect! Western Christianity is characterized by "what is in it for me?" but true biblical faith is meant to serve and reflect God!

▣ **"gates"** This was the place of judicial acts and social events.

8:17 The first two negated VERBS are *Qal* IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense. God hates premeditated schemes!

▣ **"all these are what I hate"** Both "hate" (BDB 971, KB 1338, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Prov. 6:16-19) and "love" (BDB 12, *Qal* IMPERFECT and *Qal* IMPERATIVE, v. 19) are human emotions applied to God (anthropomorphism). God is surely personal and thereby has feelings and emotions, but His holy, gracious, unchanging character controls the mood swings experienced by fallen humans. These words are analogous, not definitive!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:18-19

[18]Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, [19]"Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth *months* will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.'"

8:19 This literary unit which begins in 7:1 with a question about the need to continue certain fast days related to the Babylonian exile. After discussing the reason for the exile and the hope of restoration, Zechariah returns to the question about specific fast days.

▣ **"the fast of the fourth"** This was a fast in memory of Jerusalem's walls being breached (cf. Jer. 39:2; II Kgs. 25:3).

▣ **"the fast of the fifth"** This was a fast in memory of the destruction of the Temple (cf. II Kgs. 25:8).

▣ **"the fast of the seventh"** This was a fast in memory of Gedaliah's death (cf. II Kgs. 25:25).

▣ **"the fast of the tenth"** This was a fast in memory of the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar II's siege of Jerusalem (cf. II Kgs. 25:1-2; Jer. 39:1).

▣ **"will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts"** There will be no more fasts! Israel's mourning will be changed to joy, her captivity into deliverance (cf. Jer. 31:10-14). Isaiah 65 combines a renewed Jerusalem with the new age!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:20-23

[20]"Thus says the LORD of hosts, '*It will* yet *be* that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. [21]The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, "Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go." [22]So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.' [23]Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'"

8:20-21 As some came (possibly from Bethel (cf. 7:2) to seek the favor of the Lord, so now other cities of Judah come to Jerusalem and the new temple to seek YHWH's blessing.

8:21 "to seek the LORD" There are two parallel phrases:

1. "to entreat the favor of" - *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, BDB 318 II, KB 316
2. "to seek" - *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, BDB 134, KB 152

This is an idiom for worship (cf. Isa. 51:1; Jer. 50:4; Hos. 3:5; 5:6) which usually refers to Jews, but here to Gentiles.

▣ **"I will also go"** This is an emphatic statement of intent (two COHORTATIVE forms of "go," cf. v. 23). There is an urgency to v. 21.

8:22 "so many peoples and mighty nations will come" The Hebrew ADJECTIVE "mighty" (BDB 783) can mean "numerous" (cf. Ps. 35:18; Prov. 7:26; Isa. 53:12; Amos 5:12). If so, then "many peoples" is parallel to "numerous nations."

As other Jews come so now the initial purpose of God is fulfilled when "many peoples and mighty nations" come to Him. This universal aspect in Zechariah (cf. 2:11) is surprising in light of (1) Zech. 1:15,21; (2) the racial tone of Haggai; and (3) the problems faced by Nehemiah (cf. Neh. 4:6). Zechariah is looking beyond the immediate (cf. Isa. 2:2-4; 56:7; 66:18-24; Micah 4:1-3). He is looking to the days of "the wounded shepherd" (cf. chapters 12-13)!

8:23

NASB	**"will grasp the garment of a Jew"**
NKJV	**"will grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man"**
NRSV	**"shall take hold of a Jew, grasping his garment"**
TEV	**"come to one Jew"**
NJB	**"will take a Jew by the sleeve"**
JPSOA	**"they will take hold of every Jew by a corner of his cloak"**
PESHITTA	**"shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew"**
NIV	**"will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe"**

The Hebrew VERB "take hold" (BDB 304, KB 302) in the *Hiphil* form is repeated twice (first IMPERFECT then PERFECT) for emphasis and urgency (see use in I Kgs. 1:50; 2:28; II Kgs. 4:27; Prov. 26:17; Isa. 4:1).

The intended purpose of the call of Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:3) is to be realized!

The confusion (many languages) of the tower of Babel has now been overcome. Pentecost is the reversal of Gen. 10-11 as these people from many lands heard the gospel in their own language. This verse is a prophetic glimpse.

▣ **"we have heard that God is with you"** God's presence is the greatest blessing (cf. Isa. 7:14; 8:8,10; 45:14) and the goal of creation (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 3:8-9). The barrier (cf. Gen. 3:10-21) between God and mankind is removed.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is there a lapse of time between 1:1 and 7:1?
2. Who does verse 7:2 refer to?
3. Why was God so upset with their religious fasts?
4. What is the ultimate purpose of Israel?
5. Why is 8:20-23 so surprising, yet so important?

ZECHARIAH 9

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Israel Defended Against Enemies	The Restoration of Israel; the Day of the Lord (9:1-11:17)	Judgment on Neighboring Nations	The New Promised Land
9:1-8	9:1-8	9:1-4	9:1-8
		9:5-8	
The Coming King	The Prince of Peace	The Future King	The Royal Savior
9:9-10	9:9-10	9:9-10	9:9-10
God Will Save His People	The Ingathering of Dispersed Israelites	The Restoration of God's People	The Restoration of Israel
9:11-13	9:11-13	9:11-13	9:11-17
9:14-17	9:14-15	9:14-15	
	9:16-17	9:16-17	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHT

A. This begins a new section of the book. Zechariah 9:2-11:3 is in a poetic format (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NJB). As chapters 1- 8 are dated specifically and the author is specified (cf. 1:1), chapters 9-14 are undated and the author's name is not mentioned. This pattern is common in the prophetic books (cf. Isa. 1-39 and 40-66; Ezek. 1-39 and 40-48; Dan. 1-6 and 7-12).

B. Chapters 1-8 are quoted often in the book of the Revelation, while chapters 9-14 are quoted often in the Gospels. Zechariah had an important theological message which still has relevance.

C. This chapter, so it seems to me, depicts God as invading Palestine from the north in an eschatological sense. His invasion is for spiritual renewal and reunification, not only of Judah and Israel, but also the surrounding ancient enemies (Hadrach, Syria, Phoenicia, and Philistia).

D. It is possible from this passage to see YHWH coming in judgment in vv. 1, 4-8. Many commentators see these verses as referring to Alexander's conquest of Syria, Phoenicia, and Philistia, but his sparing of Jerusalem in the early 330's B.C. If this is so then v. 1 involves all men of the area watching the coming of Alexander as God's instrument of judgment.

E. In his commentary on Zechariah H. C. Leupold assumes that vv. 1-10 reflect the conquest of Alexander the Great of Palestine in the 330's B.C., while vv. 11-17 reflect the Maccabean period, 168-165 B.C. The historical setting is uncertain; possibly it is a prophetic collage of:
   1. the past
   2. the post-exilic present
   3. the eschatological future.

F. There are dramatic theological-historical paradoxes in this chapter.
   1. destruction of the surrounding nations versus their inclusion in the covenant people
   2. the reference to peace in vv. 8-10 versus a great war of vv. 13-15
   3. the first coming of the Messiah in v. 9 versus the second coming of the Messiah in v. 10.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:1-10

[1]The burden of the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach, with Damascus as its resting place (for the eyes of men, especially of all the tribes of Israel, are toward the LORD),
[2]And Hamath also, which borders on it;
Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise.
[3]For Tyre built herself a fortress
And piled up silver like dust,
And gold like the mire of the streets.
[4]Behold, the LORD will dispossess her
And cast her wealth into the sea;
And she will be consumed with fire.
[5]Ashkelon will see *it* and be afraid.
Gaza too will writhe in great pain;
Also Ekron, for her expectation has been confounded.
Moreover, the king will perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon will not be inhabited.
[6]And a mongrel race will dwell in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.
[7]And I will remove their blood from their mouth
And their detestable things from between their teeth.

Then they also will be a remnant for our God,
And be like a clan in Judah,
And Ekron like a Jebusite.
[8]But I will camp around My house because of an army,
Because of him who passes by and returns;
And no oppressor will pass over them anymore,
For now I have seen with My eyes.
[9]Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey,
Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
[10]I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
And the bow of war will be cut off.
And He will speak peace to the nations;
And His dominion will be from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.

9:1

NASB, NKJV	**"The burden"**
NRSV	**"An Oracle"**
TEV	**"message"**
NJB	**"a proclamation"**

This Hebrew term (BDB 672) is used in several senses.

1. a load or burden carried by a donkey or camel (e.g. Isa. 46:1-2), metaphorical for people (e.g. Num. 11:11,17; Deut. 1:12)
2. Levites carrying the tabernacle (e.g. Num. 4:15,19,24,27,49) and, in worship, possibly Levitical singers lifting their voices
3. a prophetic utterance (e.g. Isa. 14:28; Jer. 23:33,34,38; Ezek. 12:10; Zech. 9:2; 12:1; Mal. 1:1)

Zechariah had a message from God he had to deliver. There was a sense of urgency.

▣ **"against"** This is one of the meanings of this Hebrew PREPOSITION (BDB II 89, e.g. Gen. 16:12; I Sam. 3:9). The negative connotation to vv. 1-2 is supported by vv. 3-7. However, it is not the most common usage and probably if this was the author's intent, another Hebrew PREPOSITION would have been used (cf. USB, *Handbook*, pp. 229-230). Verses 1-2 seem very positive. YHWH's message was not only to Judah, but also to the surrounding nations. It was a message of hope and forgiveness (cf. vv. 2,10).

▣ **"Hadrach"** Verses 1-4 deal with the northernmost geographical areas of the Promised Land (cf. Num. 34:1-12). This chapter depicts a spiritual invasion by YHWH beginning in the north and moving south. This first term, *Hadrach*, appears only here in the OT. It referred to: (1) a district near Damascus or (2) a city in North Syria mentioned in the Assyrian documents.

▣ **"Damascus"** This was the capital of Syria, Israel's traditional northern enemy (cf. Jer. 49:23-27).

▣ **"as its resting place"** This Hebrew term (BDB 629) could mean that (1) YHWH's word is focused on His people's enemies or (2) YHWH's word was resting or abiding in Damascus.

The term does not have a negative connotation (e.g. II Sam. 14:17; Isa. 32:18). It is even used of God's resting place in II Chr. 6:41 and Ps. 132:8. It is also used in connection with the nations coming to YHWH in Isa. 11:10.

▣

NASB, NKJV, NIV **"for the eyes of men"**
NRSV, REB **"the capital of Aram"**
TEV **"the capital of Syria"**
NJB **"for the source of Aram"**
NAB **"for the cities of Aram"**
JPSOA **"for all men's eyes"**

This phrase is literally "the eye of man" ("Adam" BDB 9). The focus and attention of (1) all human creation will be on the covenant-making God, as well as His covenant people (cf. 8:20-23); (2) YHWH's care and desire for all humans to know Him and serve Him (cf. v. 10); or (3) the inhabitants of the ancient Near East, especially Palestine, are on Alexander the Great's conquest, as he was an instrument in the hand of God (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 657-658).

The NRSV and TEV translations require textual changes to arrive at their wording (Adam to Aram with the addition of "cities of").

9:2 The NKJV adds the word "against" from v. 1 here (twice) assuming the context refers to punishment, but TEV links this verse with the phrase "belong to the Lord" (cf. NJB, v. 1) and thereby turns it into an affirmation of YHWH's love for the nations. The context, especially v. 4, favors NKJV's understanding.

▣ **"Hamath"** This is a city in the northern part of the Promised Land, which is mentioned in II Kgs. 14:28. It is often depicted as the northern-most limit of God's geographical covenant with Abraham (cf. Num. 13:21; 34:1-12; Josh. 13:5; Jdgs. 3:3).

▣ **"Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise"** This refers to the Phoenician coastal cities mentioned in Ezek. 28:3-5,7 as being proverbially wise. However, judgment came on them because of their pride (cf. Ezek. 28:2,5-6) and arrogance (cf. Ezek. 28:2,6,9).

Now, the contextual question returns, is this context positive (the nations turn to YHWH) or negative (YHWH judges the nations)? The Hebrew CONJUNCTION (BDB 453-455) in v. 2b has many possible meanings. The TEV has "with"; REB has "for," not "though." Phoenicia was the source of artisans who designed and built Solomon's temple (cf. I Kgs. 7:13-14; II Chr. 2). This could be the intent of the phrase "they are very wise."

When we look at the following context the same paradox of blessing and cursing repeats itself. It is obvious that vv. 3-6 are negative, but look at vv. 7-10!

9:3 "Tyre. . .fortress" There is a play on the Hebrew word for "Tyre," which is *sor* (BDB 862), and the Hebrew word for fortress, *masor* ("rampart" or "siege work" BDB 848). There was an old city of Tyre and a new Tyre. New Tyre was an island fortress about a half-mile off the coast, with walls over 150 feet high. It was besieged by several Assyrian kings and finally fell to Shelmanezzar V after a five-year siege. It was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar II, but after thirteen years without it falling, Ezek. 29:18 implies that he gave up. It fell to Alexander the Great in 322 B.C. in a seven-month siege. Many commentators speculate that this chapter reflects Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine in the 330's B.C. as he moved toward Egypt because:

1. he destroyed the old Tyre and used the rubble to build a causeway to the island fortress (cf. v. 4b)
2. he destroyed the island fortress with fire (cf. v. 4c).

▣ **"plied up silver like dust and gold like the mire of the streets"** These are metaphors reflecting the commercial power of the city of Tyre from their extensive maritime activities (cf. Isa. 23; Ezek. 27).

9:4

NASB "the LORD will dispossess her"
NKJV "the LORD will cast her out"
NRSV "the LORD will strip it of its possessions"
TEV "the Lord will take away everything she has"
NJB "the Lord is going to dispossess her"

There is irony here. The Hebrew term (BDB 439, KB 441) means to inherit, but in certain contexts in the *Hiphil* form can mean dispossess or disinherit (e.g. Num 14:12). YHWH wants to include the nations into His family and give them an inheritance, but they must turn from idolatry and materialism and trust in Him.

Also notice that NASB, NKJV and NRSV have "LORD" in all capitals which denotes YHWH, but the term here is *Adon*, as in TEV and NJB.

▣

NASB "cast her wealth into the sea"
NKJV "will destroy her power in the sea"
NRSV "hurl its wealth into the sea"
TEV "will throw her wealth into the sea"
NJB "at sea he will break her power"
NET "shove her fortifications into the sea"

The question is over the OBJECT of the VERB.

1. wealth (BDB 298 #3, cf. Zech. 14:14)
2. power (BDB 298 #1)
3. fortifications

The NET Bible (p. 1672) asserts that the form can reflect the word "fortress" and that the chiastic structure supports this root. Alexander the Great used the rubble of the old city of Tyre to reach the island fortress and then threw (BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiplil* PERFECT, "hurl") its walls into the ocean (332 B.C.).

However, as the UBS *Handbook* notes (p. 234) the Hebrew term can refer to sea power (cf. NKJV, NAB, REB, NIV). Sea power was the source of Phoenicia's wealth and power.

▣ **"she will be consumed with fire"** This VERB (BDB 37, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) means "devoured." This was predicted in Amos 1:9-10 (cf. Isa. 23; Ezek. 26) and fulfilled by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.

9:5 "Askelon. . .Gaza. . .Ekron. . .Ashdod" These are four of the five city states of the Philistines in the Promised Land (Gath was earlier destroyed by the Assyrians). The Philistines invaded Egypt around the 1200's, but were defeated and then settled in the southern coastal areas of Palestine. They were apparently of the same racial stock as the Phoenicians, possibly from Cypress or the Aegean Islands. They are the only uncircumcized people in Canaan and were traditional enemies of the people of God (cf. Judges, I Samuel). Because of vv. 5-7b, although they are going to be judged, they are also going to be included in the covenant people (cf. v. 7c-d). What a surprising message of grace!

▣

NASB, NRSV	**"will see *it* and be afraid"**
NKJV	**"shall see it and fear"**
TEV	**"will see this and be afraid"**
NJB	**"seeing this. . .will be terrified"**

The NASB has "it" italicized, which means that the word does not appear in the Hebrew text. From the immediate context, "it" must refer to the siege and utter destruction of the powerful city of Tyre.

Verse 5 may be an allusion to the prophecy of destruction in Amos 1:6-8 (esp. v. 8).

▣ **"will writhe in great pain"** This Hebrew term (BDB 296, KB 297, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used of childbirth (e.g. Isa. 26:12; 45:10) and became an idiom for judgment (cf. Isa. 13:8; Jer. 30:7; Micah 4:9-10; Matt. 24:8; Mark 13:8; Acts 2:24; I Thess. 5:3). This fear and pain was brought on by the destruction of Tyre, Philistia's northern ally. With Phoenicia conquered by Greece, Philistia was next!

▣ **"Ekron"** We learn from Josh. 15:45-47 that Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza were considered to be in the tribal allocation of Judah and were its traditional enemy!

▣

NASB	**"her expectation has been confounded"**
NKJV	**"He dried up her expectation"**
NRSV	**"its hopes are withered"**
TEV	**"her hopes will be shattered"**
NJB	**"at the ruin of her prospects"**
JPSOA	**"at the collapse of her hopes"**

There is confusion of whether this *Hiphil* VERB is "be ashamed" (BDB 101, KB 116, cf. 10:5) or "be dried up" (BDB 386). The second one is found in Zechariah in 10:11 (*Hiphil*) and 11:17 (*Qal*). However, Joel, which I think is early post-exilic, also has four places where these same two roots are confused (Joel 1:10,12[twice] and 17).

If "be ashamed" is adopted then the idiom reflects defeat in battle (cf. 10:5; II Kgs. 19:26; Isa. 37:27; 41:11; Jer. 46:24; 48:20; 50:11-16; 51:45-58; Ezek. 32:30; Micah 7:16), which fits this context.

9:6 "a mongrel race" This seems to refer to the Assyrian exile of the Jewish people from Israel (722 B.C.) and the import of pagan people from Media; therefore, this area was populated by people of mixed national origins. The rabbis later use this term (BDB 561, an Aramaic word for incest) to describe a child of the union between a Jew and a pagan (cf. Deut. 23:2-3) or to a child born of rape or incest.

▣ **"I will cut off the pride of the Philistines"** In this VERB (BDB 503, KB 500, *Hiphil* PERFECT) there is a change from the THIRD PERSON to the FIRST PERSON. This is common in prophecy as God begins to speak for Himself through the prophet.

As YHWH overthrew Phoenicia (Tyre and Sidon) because of their pride (cf. vv. 2-4; Isa. 23; Ezek. 27-28), so too, Philistia and also Egypt (cf. Ezek. 30:18; 32:12) and Assyria (cf. 10:11).

9:7 "I will remove their blood from their mouth" This may mean that the Philistines will keep the Jewish food laws (cf. Lev. 11; 17:10-16; Deut. 14) and thereby be God's people. Even God's people were accused of eating forbidden, bloody meat (cf. Ezek. 33:25), which violated the Levitical laws. They were destroyed (cf. Ezek. 33:27-28), but these uncircumcized pagans will be saved.

▣ **"then they also will be a remnant for our God"** The concept of "remnant" (BDB 983) is a very important historical and theological concept. The multiple uses can be seen in the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 4, p. 15.

1. those who survived a divine catastrophe (e.g. Philistines, cf. Amos 1:8; Jer. 47:4 and Jews, cf. Isa. 37:4,31-32; 40:11; 42:2; Jer. 25:20)
2. those who remain faithful and obedient to YHWH (e.g. Isa. 10:20-22; Amos 5:15; Micah 5:3,7,8)
3. those who form the eschatological people of God (e.g. Amos 9:12; Jer. 23:3; 31:7; Isa. 11:11,16)

This is a very strong statement for the inclusion of these hated Philistine enemies. Some see this prophecy fulfilled in the ministry of Philip in Acts 8:26-40.

▣

NASB, NRSV,
TEV, NJB **"and be like a clan in Judah"**
NKJV **"shall be like a leader of Judah"**

The Hebrew term (BDB 48-49) is literally "thousands." It is used in several senses.

1. literally (e.g. Gen. 20:16; Exod. 32:28)
2. family units or leaders (e.g. Josh. 22:14; Jdgs. 6:15; I Sam. 23; Zech. 9:7)
3. military units or leaders (e.g. Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15)
4. symbolically (e.g. Gen. 24:60; Exod. 20:6; 34:7; Deut. 7:9; Jer. 32:18)

The difference between NKJV and the others is over vocalization. The ancient versions (Septuagint and Vulgate) translated it as "leader," but most modern English translations have "clan" (cf. 12:5-6). The contextual issue is not leadership, but covenant inclusion. This inclusion is all the more shocking when the traditional area enemy of Judah becomes part of Judah!

▣ **"Ekron like a Jebusite"** The Jebusites were the original Canaanite inhabitants of the city of Jebus, also called Salem (cf. Gen. 14), and later called Jerusalem. When David finally defeated their stronghold (cf. II Sam. 5:6-10; I Chr. 11:45-9) he did not relegate them to the sword, but allowed them to live (cf. Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21; I Kings 9:20-21). This Philistine city is now included into the very heart of Judah—Jerusalem.

9:8 "But I will camp around My house" The VERB (BDB 333, KB 332) is a *Qal* PERFECT. This may be an allusion to 2:5 (cf. Ps. 34:8), which speaks of God's protecting His people (cf. Isa. 60:15-22) in a military sense. The Promised Land had been invaded again and again because of its strategic location, but there will come a day when God will personally indwell and protect the Promised Land.

▣

NASB **"because of an army"**
NKJV **"because of the army"**
NRSV **"as a guard"**
TEV **"I will guard my land and keep armies from passing through it"**
NJB **"to defend it against all comers"**

The *BDB Lexicon* (663) speculates that this form, which is found only here, is from one of two roots, "to stand guard" or "to garrison" (BDB 662, cf. NRSV and TEV). However, it also mentions that the MT notes suggest that it may come from another term, "because of a host" or "because of an army" (NASB, NKJV).

▣ **"For now I have seen with My eyes"** There will be no more invasions of the Promised Land because of God's personal presence and power (cf. Deut. 11:12). This idiom of God's all-knowing presence possibly refers to 4:10.

9:9 "Rejoice greatly" This (BDB 162, KB 189, plus ADVERB 547) is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (cf. Zech. 2:10; Zeph. 3:14,15). This is a shout of joy over the military conquest by YHWH's Messiah. This rejoicing includes both Jews and Gentiles (cf. 2:10-13). This inclusion is so surprising and unexpected (cf. Zeph. 3:14-20).

▣ **"O daughter of Zion"** This idiomatic phrase is often used in judgment passages, but here is an allusion to the love that God has for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

▣ **"shout *in triumph*"** This (BDB 929, KB 1206) is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE. This phrase is parallel to "rejoice greatly."

▣ **"Behold, your king is coming to you"** The VERB (BDB 97, KB 112) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT. This is one of many quotes from this section of Zechariah. It is used in the Gospels for Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 21:5; John 12:15). For the concept of God and the Messiah as King see I Sam. 8:7; 12:12.

▣

NASB	**"He is just and endowed with salvation"**
NKJV	**"He *is* just and having salvation"**
NRSV	**"triumphant and victorious is he"**
TEV	**"He comes triumphant and victorious"**
NJB	**"he is vindicated and victorious"**

This first term "just" or "righteous" (BDB 841-843) seems to be used in several passages in the prophets to describe the ethical reign of the Messiah (cf. Isa. 9:7; 11:4,5; 16:5; 32:1; Jer. 23:5-6). The Messiah is called "the Righteous One" in the Suffering Servant song of Isa. 53:11. He is qualified to reign by lineage and actions.

The term "salvation" (BDB 446, KB 448) is a *Niphal* PARTICIPLE used in the sense of someone who is made victorious or someone who is delivered. Both of these terms are used together in Isa. 45:8; 46:13; 51:4,5.

▣ **"Humble"** This word (BDB 776) is used in several ways in Zechariah: (1) in the sense of "afflicted" (cf. 11:7,11; Isa. 14:32; 49:13; 51:21; 54:11) or "poor" (cf. 7:10; Isa. 3:14-15; 10:30; 11:4; 32:7; 41:17; 58:7; 61:1). "Afflicted" describes the Suffering Servant of Isa. 53, although vv. 2 and 3 use a different term. Isaiah 53:7 uses the same root (BDB 776 III) or (2) here it is the sense of "lowly" or "meek" (e.g. Prov. 16:19).

▣ **"and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt the foal of a donkey"** Donkeys were the royal mount of Israeli kings (cf. II Sam. 13:29; 16:2; 18:9; I Kgs. 1:33-34,38,44). They were a symbol of royalty, however, the colt of a donkey was used because only the king could ride on this donkey. Therefore, this would be the first time the colt had been ridden. This entire verse reflects Gen. 49:8-12, which is a prophecy about the tribe of Judah, but is also a description of the coming Messiah. He will be (1) of the royal line of Judah (cf. II Sam. 7); (2) humble; and (3) a suffering servant (cf. Isa. 53).

9:10 "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim" Verse 9 speaks of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, while v. 10 describes the Second Coming. Also notice YHWH speaks (cf. vv. 6,8) in v. 10a,c, but the Messiah is spoken of in 10d-f.

▣ **"And he will speak peace to the nations"** This latter part of v. 10 seems to reflect Ps. 72:8-11, where the peace of Palestine is used in a universal sense of the reign of the Messiah. However, it is significant that the Messiah will speak peace to all the nations as well as the Jews (e.g. 8:20-23; Isa. 2:2-

4; Micah 4:1-3; 5:4). This surprising, yet prophesied inclusion (cf. Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:16; Exod. 19:5), is the ultimate fulfillment of Gen. 3:15, which relates to all humanity, not only the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!

▣ The last two poetic lines of v. 10 are parallel in the ideal limits of the Promised Land (cf. Exod. 23:31; Num. 34:1-12; I Kgs. 4:21). "The River" refers to the head waters of the Euphrates.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:11-17

[11]As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you,
I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
[12]Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have the hope;
This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you.
[13]For I will bend Judah as My bow,
I will fill the bow with Ephraim.
And I will stir up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece;
And I will make you like a warrior's sword.
[14]Then the LORD will appear over them,
And His arrow will go forth like lightning;
And the Lord GOD will blow the trumpet,
And will march in the storm winds of the south.
[15]The LORD of hosts will defend them.
And they will devour and trample on the sling stones;
And they will drink *and* be boisterous as with wine;
And they will be filled like a *sacrificial* basin,
***Drenched* like the corners of the altar.**
[16]And the LORD their God will save them in that day
As the flock of His people;
For *they are as* the stones of a crown,
Sparkling in His land.
[17]For what comeliness and beauty *will be* theirs!
Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.

9:11 "the blood of My covenant" This is a CONSTRUCT of BDB 196 and 136. This can either refer to the original covenant of God with Abraham mentioned in Gen. 15:9-11 or to the Mosaic covenant in Exod. 24:8. This phrase is also used by Jesus in the Upper Room in Mark 14:24. See Special Topic: Covenant at Zech. 6:15.

▣ **"I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit"** The VERB (BDB 1018, KB 1511) is a *Piel* PERFECT. Apparently this is a metaphor describing the returning Jewish exiles (cf. Isa. 24:22; 51:14).

9:12 "Return" This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE. Verses 11 and 12 both are encouragement to the returning remnant (cf. Ezra and Nehemiah). Very few of the Jews in exile ever returned to Palestine.

This term (BDB 996, KB 1427), however, is often used for repentance (cf. 1:3,4). God's people must return to Him, not just to a geographical location or even to an ancient promise. Biblical faith is personal. See Special Topic: Repentance at Zech. 1:3.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"the stronghold"**
NRSV	**"your stronghold"**
TEV	**"your place of safety"**
NJB	**"the fortress"**
JPSOA	**"Bizzaron"**

This term (BDB 131) is found only here in the OT. Its basic root means (1) "is cut off" (used of grapes); (2) "inaccessible" (used most often for fortifications, e.g. Zeph. 1:16); or (3) "fortress by enclosure" (cf. Isa. 22:10). The TEV takes it as a metaphor for God's care and protection in the Promised Land (cf. Jer. 16:19; Joel 3:16). The JPSOA, in its footnote, thinks it is a nickname ("fortress") for Samaria, the northern capital of Israel destroyed in 722 by Assyria.

▣

NASB	**"prisoners who have the hope"**
NKJV	**"you prisoners of hope"**
NRSV	**"O prisoners of hope"**
TEV	**"you exiles who now have hope"**
NJB	**"you prisoners waiting in hope"**

The hope is in the covenant-making (cf. v. 11), promise-keeping, deliverance-giving God. This phrase is given either to encourage those who have returned or to motivate others to return (NJB).

▣ **""I will restore double to you"** The VERB (BDB 996, KB 1427) is a *Hiphil* IMPERFECT. This is an idiom for something that is complete and full. It can relate to YHWH's judgment (cf. Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18) or YHWH's promise of restoration (cf. Isa. 61:7). YHWH is just and acts according to His word.

9:13 "I will bend Judah as My bow" This chapter is filled with paradoxes! The coming Messianic peace is mentioned in vv. 8-11 and yet v. 13 speaks again of war (BDB 201, KB 231 *Qal* PERFECT). Possibly this verse shows the promise of v. 8!

As verse 10 mentioned "Ephraim" and "Jerusalem," which denotes Israel and Judah, so too, v. 13a,b. The divided kingdom will be reunited! As a bow and arrow are used as one instrument, so too, God's reunited people (cf. 10:4d).

▣ **"'I will stir'"** The term (BDB 734 I, KB 802, *Polel* PERFECT) is used several times in Zechariah.

1. YHWH is aroused from His holy habitation, 2:13
2. the interpreting angel wakes the prophet, 4:1 (twice)
3. YHWH arouses the inhabitants of Zion against the Greeks, 9:13
4. YHWH arouses His sword against His own Shepherd, 13:7

Two other prophets use this same term in connection with Greece, Dan. 11:2 and Joel 3:6. Isaiah uses this term often in connection with God directing the history of His people (e.g. "the Medes," 13:17; "one from the east," 41:2; "one from the north," 41:25; "Cyrus," 45:13; "Jerusalem and Zion," 51-52). Isaiah's use of this term in chapters 51 and 52 may parallel Zech. 9:13d, "I will make you like a warrior's sword." It is God's strength and purpose, but He chooses to use human instrumentality.

▣ **"'O Zion, against your son, O Greece'"** The term here for Greece is *Jawan* or *Javan*, which was used originally in the OT for a descendant of Japheth (cf. Gen. 10:2,4; Isa. 66:19), while in Isa. 66:19 it is used for a nation. In the books of Daniel and Joel, it is used to designate Greece (cf. Dan. 8:21; 10:20; Joel 3:6). I agree with Joyce Baldwin, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, that it is used in its Gen. 10 sense of a distant people on the fringe of civilization, which is how it is used in this eschatological context (cf. p. 169).

9:14 "Then the LORD will appear over them" The VERB (BDB 906, KB 1157) is a *Niphal* IMPERFECT. This may be an allusion to the promise of protection in 2:5 (cf. 9:8a). It also may be an allusion to Isa. 31:5, where God is a protecting bird of prey (cf. Exod. 19:4b) or a mother bird hovering overhead (cf. Deut. 32:11; Ps. 91:4). The third possibility is borrowing the imagery of Assyria where their god fluttered over his troops in battle.

Verses 14-17 are the hyperbolic language of theophany. The phrases are reminiscent of other prophetic texts. They are patterned, standard idioms (see *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*: *Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*, D. Brent Sandy).

▣ **"His arrows will go forth like lightning"** Lightning and arrows are often used metaphorically of YHWH's fighting on behalf of His people (cf. Ps. 18:14; 144:6; Hab. 3:11). The concept of YHWH's arrows being like lightning is found in Ps. 7:12-13, where it may refer to arrows set on fire to incinerate wooden defenses.

▣ **"the Lord GOD"** This is the combination of the Hebrew term YHWH (BDB 217) and *adon* (BDB 10). Because it would be repetitive in English to say "Lord, LORD," when these two terms appear together (so too, YHWH and *Elohim*, e.g. v. 16 and Gen. 2:4). They are translated, "Lord GOD."

▣ **"Blow the trumpet"** "Trumpet" (*shofar*) has an uncertain etymology. It came to be used in Hebrew for a ram's horn (BDB 1051). The rabbis designated it to be made (softened and lengthened by soaking it in water) from the left horn of a male goat. It is used for

1. military purposes, Josh. 6:4,5,20; Jdgs. 7:8,16
2. religious purposes, Exod. 19:13,16,19; Lev. 25:9; II Sam. 6:15; II Chr. 15:14; Ps. 81:3; 98:6; 150:3
3. information gathering (usually about military matters), Jdgs. 3:27; 6:34; I Sam. 13:3
4. coronation of a king, I Kgs. 1:34,39; Ps. 47:5
5. invasion of the land, Jer. 4:5; 6:1; Hos. 5:8; 8:1; Joel 2:1; Amos 2:2; 3:6; Zeph. 1:16

Notice in this context it is YHWH who blows (i.e. "sounds," BDB 1075, *Qal* IMPERFECT) the trumpet (cf. Isa. 27:13; Matt. 24:31; I Cor. 15:52; I Thess. 4:16; Rev. 11:15).

▣ **"the storm winds of the south"** This could be a reference to (1) the Siniatic covenant (cf. Exod. 24); (2) God's presence as a desert storm (cf. Isa. 29:6; Ezek. 1:4; 13:11,13); or (3) "the south" being the antonym to "the north," which was a metaphor for invasion. The south is a metaphor for salvation and deliverance (cf. Jdgs. 5:4-5; Hab. 3:3).

9:15 "The LORD of hosts will defend them" God Himself will act on His people's behalf. His victory is their victory. The term "hosts" in this context would refer to the angelic army at YHWH's command. See Special Topic at Dan. 4:2.

The VERB "defend" (BDB 170, KB 199, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) can be translated "cover," "surround," or "defend" (cf. 12:8). In Isa. 31:5 it is used of a mother bird protecting her young (cf. Deut. 32:11; Ps. 91:4). Here it is used as a shield protecting the soldiers from projectiles.

▣ **"the sling stones"** These were stones used in sling weapons (BDB 887 I), which were used to defend cities and forts (cf. Jdgs. 20:16; I Sam. 17:40,50; II Chr. 26:14; Job 41:28). This is a metaphor for the complete destruction of a military foe.

▣ **"they will drink *and* be boisterous as with wine"** Both VERBS (BDB 1059, KB 1667 and BDB 242, KB 250) are *Qal* PERFECTS. This refers to the victory celebration of God's soldiers (cf. Ps. 78:65).

▣ **"filled like a *sacrificial* basin"** English translations differ on how to understand these last two poetic lines. They seem to refer to the previous line about God's people rejoicing with wine over His victory (i.e. another *Qal* PERFECT VERB, BDB 569, KB 583). The wine reminded our author about (1) the blood of the slain enemies, captured in a bowl or (2) blood as an aspect of sacrifice to YHWH. The corners of the altar are where the blood in the bowl was poured out at the base of the altar of sacrifice.

YHWH made a blood covenant with the descendants of Abraham (cf. v. 11). Now He defends them by spilling the blood of their enemies.

9:16 "the LORD their God will save them in that day" This is parallel to the opening lines of vv. 14 and 15. As v. 14 had *Adon* YHWH, this verse has YHWH *Elohim*.

The term "save" (BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* PERFECT) includes several connotations from the context: (1) military victory; (2) spiritual renewal and inclusion; and (3) God's personal care, protection, and provision.

▣ **"as the flock of His people"** This whole section of Zechariah reflects Jer. 31:10-14. God is the shepherd (e.g. Ps. 23) who acts on behalf of His flock. Later in this section of Zechariah the Messiah will be described as the wounded shepherd (cf. chapters 12-13) and His people as the afflicted flock (cf. chapter 11).

▣ **"as the stones of a crown"** This may be (1) a contrast to the sling stones mentioned in v. 15; (2) an allusion to Isa. 62:3, the precious stones used to describe God's people; or (3) an allusion to the coronation of the new king (the Messiah as YHWH's representative)

▣

NASB	**"Sparkling in His land"**
NKJV	**"Lifted like a banner over His land"**
NRSV	**"they shall shine on his land"**
TEV	**"they will shine in his land"**
NJB	**"sparkle over his country"**

The VERB in the *Hithpoel* form is rare and ambiguous.

1. BDB - "to be high," "conspicuous," "prominent" (BDB 651 II)
2. *Lexicon*, William Holladay, "rally around the banner" (p. 240). This comes from Ps. 60:4, which may refer to Exod. 17:15 or possibly Isa. 62:10.
3. KB - "to assemble under the banner" (KB 704)
4. "sparkle," "glitter," "shine" are the most common English translations (cf. Isa. 62:3)

9:17 As the previous verses may be an allusion to Jer. 31:10-11, so too, this may refer to the return from exile, but extends it to the eschatological future and the time of the "new covenant" (cf. Jer. 31:31-34).

The promised days of abundance and stability for an obedient covenant people (cf. Deut. 27-29) have now been realized by the gracious actions of YHWH, not human performance (cf. Jer. 31:31-34).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is this chapter so difficult to place in its historical setting?
2. Does this chapter refer to the judgment of pagan nations or to their inclusion in the covenant people?
3. Is there a definite historical separation between vv. 1-10 and vv. 11-17? Why?
4. Explain the Messianic elements in v. 9 and show their NT counterpoints.
5. To whom does *Javan* refer? Why is the nation mentioned?

ZECHARIAH 10

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Restoration of Judah and Israel	The Lord Alone Controls Nature	The Lord Promises Deliverance	Faithfulness to Yahweh
10:1-2	10:1-2	10:1-2	10:1-2
	The Lord Alone Controls History		Israel's Deliverance and Return
10:3-12	10:3-12	10:3-5	10:3-12
		10:6-12	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This chapter continues the same themes as chapter. 9. The time element is still ambiguous.

B. Verses 4 and 11-12 are Messianic. Notice the capitalizations of NASB. The Aramaic Targums also assert these verses as Messianic. However, others see v. 4 as referring to Judah and vv. 11-12 as referring to YHWH.

C. The theme of this chapter is the covenant people's dependence on YHWH, not Ba'al. This is the focus of v. 1. Verse 2 shows the falsehood that Israel was depending on (cf. Hos. 11:3). The chapter concludes with an emphasis on His people's victorious return in YHWH's name, not a fertility idol's name.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:1-12

[1]Ask rain from the LORD at the time of the spring rain—
The LORD who makes the storm clouds;
And He will give them showers of rain, vegetation in the field to *each* man.
[2]For the teraphim speak iniquity,
And the diviners see lying visions
And tell false dreams;
They comfort in vain.
Therefore *the people* wander like sheep,
They are afflicted, because there is no shepherd.
[3]My anger is kindled against the shepherds,
And I will punish the male goats;
For the LORD of hosts has visited His flock, the house of Judah,
And will make them like His majestic horse in battle.
[4]From them will come the cornerstone,
From them the tent peg,
From them the bow of battle,
From them every ruler, *all* of them together.
[5]They will be as mighty men,
Treading down *the enemy* in the mire of the streets in battle;
And they will fight, for the LORD *will be* with them;
And the riders on horses will be put to shame.
[6]I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph,
And I will bring them back,
Because I have had compassion on them;
And they will be as though I had not rejected them,
For I am the LORD their God and I will answer them.
[7]Ephraim will be like a mighty man,
And their heart will be glad as if *from* wine;
Indeed, their children will see *it* and be glad,
Their heart will rejoice in the LORD.
[8]I will whistle for them to gather them together,
For I have redeemed them;
And they will be as numerous as they were before.
[9]When I scatter them among the peoples,
They will remember Me in far countries,
And they with their children will live and come back.
[10]I will bring them back from the land of Egypt
And gather them from Assyria;
And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon

Until no *room* can be found for them.
[11]And He will pass through the sea *of* distress
And strike the waves in the sea,
So that all the depths of the Nile will dry up;
And the pride of Assyria will be brought down
And the scepter of Egypt will depart.
[12]And I will strengthen them in the LORD,
And in His name they will walk," declares the LORD.

10:1 "Ask rain" This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 981, KB 1371). Rain was a gift from God, e.g. Isa. 30:23; Jer. 10:13). The emphasis of 1:17; 9:17 is on social stability and fruitfulness being from YHWH. Famine was part of the curse of Deut. 28 (cf. Jer. 14:1-6), but abundant rain was also part of the promised blessing if they followed God (cf. Deut. 11:13,14; 28:12). During Israel's periods of idolatry (e.g. Hos. 4) she ascribed fertility to Ba'al (Canaanite storm and fertility god) and not to YHWH (cf. Jer. 14:22). Chapter 10 highlights this grave mistake (cf. 14:17).

▣ **"at the time of the spring rain"** In Palestine there were only two periods of rain (cf. Deut. 11:14; Joel 2:23).

1. early rain at the autumn time before spring planting (Oct. - Nov.)
2. latter rain at the time of the maturing plant (Mar. - April)

Most regular moisture came from the heavy dew. Because of the covenant promises and cursing of Deut. 27-29, these periods of rain became metaphors of spiritual renewal and the presence of God with His people for blessing.

The "latter rains" became an idiom for God's blessing in the end-time (e.g. Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23).

▣

NASB, NRSV
NJB "the storm clouds"
NKJV "flashing clouds"
TEV "rain clouds"

The Hebrew word (BDB 304) is found twice in Job in contexts implying lightning (JB, cf. 28:26; 38:15). The thrust of the passage is that God controls the weather and, thereby, food production and fertility (cf. Deut. 11:14-15).

10:2 "teraphim" This refers to household idols, apparently in humanoid form, used to discern the will of the departed family spirits or the family gods (cf. Gen. 31:19,34; Jdgs. 17:5; 18:14-20; I Sam. 15:23; 19:13; II Kgs. 23:24; Hos. 3:4). The exact etymology of this term (BDB 1076) is uncertain.

▣

NASB "speak iniquity"
NKJV "speak delusion"
NRSV "utter nonsense"
TEV "nonsense"
NJB "have talked nonsense"

The VERB (BDB 180, KB 210) is a *Piel* PERFECT.

The NOUN (BDB 19) basically means "trouble," "sorrow," or "wickedness" (cf. Num. 23:21; Ps. 10:7; 55:11; Isa. 10:1; 55:7). It is used in combination with Bethel in Hosea 4:15; 5:8; 10:5,8; and Amos 5:5 to label the worship of the golden calf as wilfully idolatrous (i.e. "nothing," cf. Isa. 1:11-15).

Possibly the classic text is I Sam. 15:22-23. It is surprising that a list of idolatrous activities is mentioned in the post-exilic period (cf. Mal. 3:5). This whole chapter may be an allusion to Moses' prophecy in Deut. 4:25-31.

▣ **"the diviners see lying visions"** This is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 890, KB 1115, "the ones divining") plus a *Qal* PERFECT VERB (BDB 302, KB 301, "see lies"). Most of these false methods of attempting to find the will of God are mentioned in Deut. 18:9-13, esp. v. 10 (cf. II Kgs. 17:17). Divining is especially mentioned in I Sam. 15:23. It either refers to natural (e.g. flight of birds, clouds, sheep livers) or manmade (e.g. casting sticks, tea leaves) means of determining the will of God (cf. Ezek. 21:21). Here this term (BDB 890) refers to false prophets (cf. Isa. 3:2; Jer. 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 13:9,23; 22:38; Micah 3:11).

For a good discussion of "divination" see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, pp. 945-951 or *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of The Bible*, vol. 2, pp. 146-149.

▣ **"and tell false dreams"** The VERB (BDB 180, KB 210) is a *Piel* IMPERFECT. God did often speak through dreams (e.g. Jacob, Gen. 28; Joseph, Gen. 37:39-41; Dan. 1:17; 2:4,7). However, sometimes dreams were simply manipulative lies or imaginations of the human subconscious (e.g. Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 23:32; 27:9-10; 29:8-9).

▣ **"They comfort in vain"** The VERB (BDB 636, KB 688) is also a *Piel* IMPERFECT. The NOUN (BDB 210 I) "vain," or "empty," so common in Ecclesiastes, is the same root as "idol" (cf. II Kgs. 17:15; Jer. 23:32; 27:9,10). They are nothing, just figments of human superstition and fear, as is this false hope from false prophets!

▣ **"Therefore *the people* wander like sheep"** The VERB (BDB 652 I, KB 704) is a *Qal* PERFECT. The term "the people" is in italics, which shows that it is not in the Hebrew text. This verse could refer to the religions leaders, the people, or both. The classic prophetic text about false shepherds and God's flock is in Ezek. 34, but also is used often by Jeremiah (cf. 2:8; 10:21; 23:1-2; 50:6).

▣ **"They are afflicted, because there is no shepherd"** This is a *Qal* IMPERFECT VERB (BDB 776 III, KB 853) followed by a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, "shepherding" (BDB 944 I, KB 1258). The concept of shepherd as a title for kings is very common in the ancient East (cf. Baldwin, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, pp. 171-172). The king often stands as a representative of the national god. YHWH is often spoken of as shepherd and His people as sheep (cf. Gen. 49:24; Num. 27:17; Ps. 23:1-2; Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:12).

This discussion of a divine shepherd sets the stage for chapters 11-13. Zechariah is unique in his imagery of a wounded shepherd (cf. 12:10; 13:7), which is theologically parallel to the Suffering Servant of Isa. 53 (the same Hebrew term, "afflicted" (BDB 776 III) is used in Isa. 53:4,7).

10:3 "My anger is kindled against the shepherds" This is another *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 944 I, KB 1258) and a *Qal* PERFECT VERB (BDB 354, KB 351), "is hot." In Ezek. 34 (esp. v. 17) God also condemns His covenant people's civil and religious leaders for their lack of faithfulness to Him. The term "male goats" may refer to foreign leaders (TEV, cf. v. 11; Isa. 14:9; Jer. 51:40).

▣ **"For the LORD of hosts"** See Special Topic: Names for Deity at Dan. 4:2.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"has visited"**
NRSV	**"cares for"**

TEV **"will take care of them"**
NJB **"comes to visit"**

The Hebrew VERB (BDB 823, KB 955, *Qal* IMPERFECT) means "visited" (for blessing, cf. v. 3c; Gen. 50:24; Exod. 3:16; 4:31; 13:19, or for judgment, cf. v. 36; I Sam. 15:2; Lam. 4:22; Hos. 8:13; 9:9). The best parallel passage is Jer. 23:2. In Zech. 11:16 God allows an evil shepherd to decimate the flock.

▣ **"His flock, the house of Judah"** This refers to the southern tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon and most of the tribe of Levi. The northern remaining tribes were known as Israel (collective name), Ephraim (largest tribe) or Samaria (the capital city). This tribal split occurred in 922 B.C. (cf. I Kgs. 11:9-13,26-40).

In this chapter Judah is mentioned in v. 3 and Ephraim in v. 7. This prophet emphasizes their reunification (cf. v. 6a,b). The post exilic community and the eschatological will be one people (cf. vv. 4d; 6a,b; 8:13;

▣ **"He will make them like His majestic horse in battle"** The VERB (BDB 962 I, KB 1321) is a *Qal* PERFECT. The term majestic (BDB 217 I) is used to describe horses in Job 39:19-25, esp. v. 20. This same word is used in 6:13 for the majesty of the coming king, but here of His war mount. These are metaphors for God's people being used (cf. Jer. 51:20-33) and honored by God's Messiah when He returns to rule and reign.

God is transforming and equipping His people so as to change them from sheep (or devious "he goats") into majestic war stallions (cf. 9:13). This is an example of the drastic contrasts in prophetic literature (e.g. no war in 9:10 vs. war in 9:13; 10:3).

10:4 "From them" The Masoretic Text has "from him" (cf. NKJV and NAB, also note "He" of v. 11). There have been several possibilities as to the object of this verse: (1) it refers to future events, either Maccabean or eschatological; (2) it is a direct reference, which means out of Judah leaders will come (NIV, cf. vv. 3-6; Gen. 49:10; II Sam. 7); or (3) the Targums, which are Aramaic translations and interpretations of the Hebrew text, assert that this refers to King Messiah.

▣ **"the cornerstone"** This refers to the Messiah in Ps. 118:22 and Isa. 28:16. See Special Topic at Dan. 2:34.

▣ **"tent-peg"** This Hebrew term (BDB 450) is used of two kinds of pegs.

1. for tents (cf. Jdgs. 4:21; 5:26; Isa. 33:20; 54:2)
2. for hanging things on (cf. Isa. 22:22-24; Ezek. 15:3)
3. for building the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 27:19; 35:18; 38:20,31)

The point of the metaphor is its holding ability and thereby permanence (cf. Ezra 9:8). In this context #1 fits best.

▣ **"the bow of battle"** This is a military idiom (cf. 9:10; Exod. 15:5). The metaphors of this verse speak of stability, victory, and unified leadership.

▣ **"ruler"** This is literally "oppressor." This is the very same Hebrew word (BDB 620) which is used in 9:8 in a negative sense. However, it seems to be used in a positive sense here (cf. Isa. 60:17) for the administrative or military leaders at the inauguration of the reign of the coming Messiah.

10:5 "treading down *the enemy* in the mire of the streets in battle" "Treading down" (BDB 100, KB 115) is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, possibly "trampling." This phrase is a standard idiom of defeat (cf. II Sam. 22:43). However, in this context where rain is mentioned (cf. v. 1) it may refer to mud caused by God's special presence (cf. Jdgs. 4-5).

The term "streets" (BDB 299) means "outside streets," which seems to refer to an open market (e.g. 9:3; 10:5; Isa. 5:25; 10:6; 15:3; 24:11; 51:20,23; Jer. 5:1;7:17,34; 37:21; Ezek. 11:6; 28:23).

▣ **"they will fight, for the LORD *will be* with them"** Zechariah 9:1-10 shows that God would do the fighting, but 9:13-16 and 10:3-7 seem to say that the Israelites would do the fighting (BDB 535, KB 526 *Niphal* PERFECT), but with God in their midst (cf. Jer. 51:20-23).

▣ **"the riders on horses will be put to shame"** YHWH turns His people into majestic war horses (cf. v. 3d), but the war horses of the enemies are defeated (BDB 101, KB 116 *Hiphil* PERFECT, cf. Amos 2:15; Hag. 2:22).

10:6 Notice the parallelism in the first two lines. God will unify His people (i.e. "Judah" and "Joseph"). Also notice the parallelism of the VERBAL form in which the first person PRONOUN is inherit of the first three lines. His people are "strengthened" (BDB 149, KB 175 *Piel* PERFECT) and "saved" (BDB 446, KB 448, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) because He acts! The entire verse reflects God's sovereignty, past, present, and future.

Zechariah speaks of YHWH's salvation and deliverance (1) from the Exile (cf. 8:7); (2) from cursing to blessing (8:13); and (3) unto an eschatological triumph (cf. 9:9; 10:6; 12:7).

▣ **"Joseph"** This is another way of referring to the northern tribes, as are Israel, Ephraim (v. 7), and Samaria.

▣ **"I shall bring them back"** This word (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Hiphil* PERFECT) is a combination of (BDB 998), "bring them back" (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB, cf. 10:10) and "make them dwell" (BDB 442, cf. NASB footnote and v. 4), which is the translation of the Septuagint. Many rabbis assert that the form is definitely ambiguous so as to emphasize both elements (i.e. repentance and permanent residence in the Promised Land).

▣

NASB, NRSV	**"because I have had compassion on them"**
NKJV	**"because I have mercy on them"**
TEV	**"I will have compassion on them"**
NJB	**"because I have taken pity on them"**

This Hebrew VERB (BDB 933, KB 1216, *Piel* PERFECT) is used often for God's compassion on His people (cf. Exod. 33:19; Deut. 30:3; II Kgs. 13:23; Isa. 14:1; 30:18; 49:10,13; 54:8,10; 55:7; 60:10; Jer. 12:15; 30:18; 31:20; 33:26; Hos. 1:6-7; 2:19,23; Micah 7:18-20). This word assured them that YHWH had reestablished the covenant with all of its benefits!

▣ **"they will be as though I had not rejected them"** This verse surely speaks of God's forgiveness and restoration, but it also denotes that YHWH broke the covenant because of His people's sins. It is so difficult to talk about the mercy and forgiveness of God while at the same time reminding humans that the covenant is conditional. God desires fellowship with a holy people. He wants a holy people to reflect His character to a lost world. The old covenant was performance based (cf. Deut. 27-29), but fallen humans were incapable of obedience (cf. Rom.7 and Gal. 3). Therefore, the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38) is based on the gracious, unchanging character of YHWH (cf. Mal. 3:6), the work of the Messiah, and the drawing power of the Spirit (cf. John 6:44,65). The goal is still a righteous people, but the mechanism of that righteousness has changed.

▣ **"For I am the LORD their God, and I will answer them"** These covenant terms emphasize the restoration of the covenant relationship. Answered prayer (BDB 772 I, KB 851, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is one of the benefits. The broken covenant is illustrated in 7:13.

10:7 "Ephraim will be like a mighty man" The northern ten tribes, so devastated by exile, will be reunited with Judah into one family. The term "mighty" (BDB 150) is used of Judah's men in v. 5.

▣ **"their heart will be glad as if *from* wine"** Psalm 104:15 says that wine is a gift from God to gladden the hearts of men. In Zech. 9:15 it described victorious soldiers. Here it is also a metaphor of joy for military victory provided by YHWH.

SPECIAL TOPIC: BIBLICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOLISM

I. Biblical Terms
   A. Old Testament
      1. *Yayin* - This is the general term for wine, which is used 141 times. The etymology is uncertain because it is not from a Hebrew root. It always means fermented fruit juice, usually grape. Some typical passages are Gen. 9:21; Exod. 29:40; Num. 15:5,10.
      2. *Tirosh* - This is "new wine." Because of climatic conditions of the Near East, fermentation started as soon as six hours after extracting the juice. This term refers to wine in the process of fermenting. For some typical passages see Deut. 12:17; 18:4; Isa. 62:8-9; Hos. 4:11.
      3. *Asis* - This is obviously alcoholic beverages (Joel 1:5; Isa. 49:26).
      4. *Sekar* - This is the term "strong drink." The Hebrew root is used in the term "drunk" or "drunkard." It had something added to it to make it more intoxicating. It is parallel to *yayin* (cf. Prov. 20:1; 31:6; Isa. 28:7).
   B. New Testament
      1. *Oinos* - the Greek equivalent of *yayin*
      2. *Neos oinos* (new wine) - the Greek equivalent of *tirosh* (cf. Mark 2:22).
      3. *Gleuchos vinos* (sweet wine) - wine in the early stages of fermentation (cf. Acts 2:13).
II. Biblical Usage
   A. Old Testament
      1. Wine is a gift of God (Gen. 27:28; Ps. 104:14-15; Eccl. 9:7; Hos. 2:8-9; Joel 2:19,24; Amos 9:13; Zech. 10:7).
      2. Wine is a part of a sacrificial offering (Exod. 29:40; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:7,10; 28:14; Deut. 14:26; Jdgs. 9:13).
      3. Wine is used as medicine (II Sam. 16:2; Prov. 31:6-7).
      4. Wine can be a real problem (Noah - Gen. 9:21; Lot - Gen. 19:33,35; Samson - Jdgs. 16:19; Nabal - I Sam. 25:36; Uriah - II Sam. 11:13; Ammon - II Sam. 13:28; Elah - I Kgs. 16:9; Benhadad - I Kgs. 20:12; Rulers - Amos 6:6; and Ladies - Amos 4).
      5. Wine can be abused (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Isa. 5:11,22; 19:14; 28:7-8; Hosea 4:11).
      6. Wine was prohibited to certain groups (Priests on duty, Lev. 10:9; Ezek. 44:21; Nazarites, Num. 6; and Rulers, Prov. 31:4-5; Isa. 56:11-12; Hosea 7:5).
      7. Wine is used in an eschatological setting (Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18; Zech. 9:17).

B. Interbiblical
   1. Wine in moderation is very helpful (Ecclesiasticus 31:27-30).
   2. The rabbis say, "Wine is the greatest of all medicine, where wine is lacking, then drugs are needed." (BB 58b).

C. New Testament
   1. Jesus changed a large quantity of water into wine (John 2:1-11).
   2. Jesus drank wine (Matt. 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-34; 22:17ff).
   3. Peter accused of drunkenness on "new wine" at Pentecost (Acts 2:13).
   4. Wine can be used as medicine (Mark 15:23; Luke 10:34; I Tim. 5:23).
   5. Leaders are not to be abusers. This does not mean total abstainers (I Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:7; 2:3; I Pet. 4:3).
   6. Wine used in eschatological settings (Matt. 22:1ff; Rev. 19:9).
   7. Drunkenness is deplored (Matt. 24:49; Luke 11:45; 21:34; Rom. 13:13-14; I Cor. 5:11-13; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; I Pet. 4:3).

III. Theological Insight

A. Dialectical tension
   1. Wine is a gift of God.
   2. Drunkenness is a major problem.
   3. Believers in some cultures must limit their freedoms for the sake of the gospel (Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1- 23; I Cor. 8-10; Rom. 14).

B. Tendency to go beyond given bounds
   1. God is the source of all good things.
   2. Fallen mankind has abused all of God's gifts by taking them beyond God-given bounds.

C. Abuse is in us, not in things. There is nothing evil in the physical creation (cf. Mark 7:18-23; Rom. 14:14,20; I Cor. 10:25-26; I Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:15).

IV. First Century Jewish Culture and Fermentation

A. Fermentation begins very soon, approximately 6 hours after the grape is crushed.

B. Jewish tradition says that when a slight foam appeared on the surface (sign of fermentation), it is liable to the wine-tithe (*Ma aseroth* 1:7). It was called "new wine" or "sweet wine."

C. The primary violent fermentation was complete after one week.

D. The secondary fermentation took about 40 days. At this state it is considered "aged wine" and could be offered on the altar (*Edhuyyoth 6:1*).

E. Wine that had rested on its lees (old wine) was considered good, but had to be strained well before use.

F. Wine was considered to be properly aged usually after one year of fermentation. Three years was the longest period of time that wine could be safely stored. It was called "old wine" and had to be diluted with water.

G. Only in the last 100 years with a sterile environment and chemical additives has fermentation been postponed. The ancient world could not stop the natural process of fermentation.

V. Closing Statements

A. Be sure your experience, theology, and biblical interpretation do not depreciate Jesus and first century Jewish/Christian culture! They were obviously not total-abstainers.

B. I am not advocating the social use of alcohol. However, many have overstated the Bible's position on this subject and now claim superior righteousness based on a cultural/ denominational bias.

C. For me, Romans 14 and I Corinthians 8-10 have provided insight and guidelines based on love and respect for fellow believers and the spread of the gospel in our cultures, not personal freedom or judgmental criticism. If the Bible is the only source for faith and practice, then maybe we must all rethink this issue.

▣ **"their children will see *it* and be glad"** This speaks of social stability and peace, as does 9:17.

▣ **"their hearts will rejoice in the LORD"** This same VERB (BDB 162, KB 189, *Qal* IMPERFECT used as a JUSSIVE) was used in 9:9 (*Qal* IMPERATIVE) at the coming of the Lord. In this verse the root is used of exalting in the Lord Himself and His acts of deliverance and establishment of His people. This verse may be an allusion to Isa. 41:16.

10:8 "I will whistle for them" This (*Qal* IMPERFECT COHORTATIVE) refers to a characteristic call or sound (i.e. piping) of the shepherd gathering (SECOND verb, "GATHER" [BDB 867, KB 1062] is a *Piel* IMPERFECT used as a COHORTATIVE) his sheep (cf. Jdgs. 5:16). The exact sound is uncertain (BDB 1056, KB 1656), but it is an allusion to God's gathering His scattered people (cf. Isa. 5:26; 7:18,19).

▣ **"I have redeemed them"** This Hebrew term (BDB 804, KB 911 *Qal* PERFECT) means to buy back or ransom. Here it is used of God's activity of restoring His people to the Promised Land (cf. Jer. 31:11). Jeremiah 31:10-13 may be the background to Zech. 9:17. Zechariah uses many phrases and terminologies from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets before his day.

SPECIAL TOPIC: RANSOM/REDEEM

I. OLD TESTAMENT

A. There are primarily two Hebrew legal terms which convey this concept.

1. *Gaal*, which basically means "to free" by means of a price paid. A form of the term *go'el* adds to the concept a personal intermediary, usually a family member (i.e. kinsman redeemer). This cultural aspect of the right to buy back objects, animals, land (cf. Lev. 25,27), or relatives (cf. Ruth 4:15; Isa. 29:22) is transferred theologically to YHWH's deliverance of Israel from Egypt (cf. Exod. 6:6; 15:13; Ps. 74:2; 77;15; Jer. 31:11). He becomes "the redeemer" (cf. Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; Prov. 23:1; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16; Jer. 50:34).
2. *Padah*, which basically means "to deliver" or "to rescue"
   a. the redemption of the first born, Exod. 13:13,14 and Num. 18:15-17
   b. physical redemption is contrasted with spiritual redemption, Ps. 49:7,8,15
   c. YHWH will redeem Israel from their sin and rebellion, Ps. 130:7-8

B. The theological concept involves three related items.

1. There is a need, a bondage, a forfeiting, an imprisonment.
   a. physical
   b. social
   c. spiritual (cf. Ps. 130:8)
2. A price must be paid for freedom, release, and restoration.
   a. of the nation, Israel (cf. Deut. 7:8)
   b. of the individual (cf. Job 19:25-27; 33:28)
3. Someone must act as intermediary and benefactor. In *gaal* this one is usually a family member or near kin (i.e. *go'el*).
4. YHWH often describes Himself in familial terms.
   a. father
   b. husband
   c. near kin

   Redemption was secured through YHWH's personal agency; a price was paid, and redemption was achieved!

II. NEW TESTAMENT

A. There are several terms used to convey the theological concept.

1. *Agorazō* (cf. I Cor. 6:20; 7:23; II Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:34). This is a commercial term which reflects a price paid for something. We are blood-bought people who do not control our own lives. We belong to Christ.
2. *Exagorazō* (cf. Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). This is also a commercial term. It reflects Jesus' substitutionary death on our behalf. Jesus bore the "curse" of a performance-based law (i.e. Mosaic Law), which sinful humans could not accomplish. He bore the curse (cf. Deut. 21:23) for us all! In Jesus, God's justice and love merge into full forgiveness, acceptance, and access!
3. *Luō*, "to set free"
   a. *Lutron*, "a price paid" (cf. Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). These are powerful words from Jesus' own mouth concerning the purpose of His coming, to be the Savior of the world by paying a sin-debt He did not owe (cf. John 1:29).
   b. *Lutroō*, "to release"
      (1) to redeem Israel, Luke 24:21
      (2) to give Himself to redeem and purify a people, Titus 2:14
      (3) to be a sinless substitute, I Pet. 1:18-19
   c. *Lutrōsis*, "redemption, deliverance, or liberation"
      (1) Zacharias' prophecy about Jesus, Luke 1:68
      (2) Anna's praise to God for Jesus, Luke 2:38
      (3) Jesus' better, once offered sacrifice, Heb. 9:12
4. *Apolytrōsis*
   a. redemption at the Second Coming (cf. Acts 3:19-21)
      (1) Luke 21:28
      (2) Romans 8:23
      (3) Ephesians 1:14; 4:30

(4) Hebrews 9:15

b. redemption in Christ's death

(1) Romans 3:24

(2) I Corinthians 1:30

(3) Ephesians 1:7

(4) Colossians 1:14

5. *Antilytron* (cf. I Tim. 2:6). This is a crucial text (as is Titus 2:14), which links release to Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross. He is the one and only acceptable sacrifice; the one who dies for "all" (cf. John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; I Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11; II Pet. 3:9; I John 2:2; 4:14).

B. The theological concept in the NT implies:

1. Mankind is enslaved to sin (cf. John 8:34; Rom. 3:10-18; 6:23).
2. Mankind's bondage to sin has been revealed by the OT Mosaic Law (cf. Gal. 3) and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matt. 5-7). Human performance has become a death sentence (cf. Col. 2:14).
3. Jesus, the sinless lamb of God, has come and died in our place (cf. John 1:29; II Cor. 5:21). We have been purchased from sin so that we might serve God (cf. Rom. 6).
4. By implication both YHWH and Jesus are "near kin" who act on our behalf. This continues the familial metaphors (i.e. father, husband, son, brother, near kin).
5. Redemption was not a price paid to Satan (i.e. medieval theology), but the reconciliation of God's word and God's justice with God's love and full provision in Christ. At the cross peace was restored, human rebellion was forgiven, the image of God in mankind is now fully functional again in intimate fellowship!
6. There is still a future aspect of redemption (cf. Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30), which involves our resurrection bodies and physical intimacy with the Triune God.

▣ **"they will be as numerous as they were before"** This context is reminiscent of Jer. 30:18-22. Not only will the remnant return, but YHWH will restore the full number of residents (cf. Ezek. 36:37-38).

One of God's promises to the Patriarchs was that their descendants would be numerous (cf. Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:14; 32:12; Num. 23:10).

10:9 "I scatter them" This context emphasizes the sovereignty of YHWH over history and redemption (cf. vv. 3,6,9,10). God acts in blessing and cursing (cf. Deut. 27-29) based on His people's obedience to the Mosaic covenant. But even amidst disobedience, He still acts in faithfulness to His own character and purpose (cf. Jer. 31:27-28).

The Hebrew term "scatter" (BDB 281, KB 282, *Qal* IMPERFECT) can mean "sow" (NKJV). God sowed them because of their idolatry and faithlessness to His covenant (cf. Ezek. 6:9-10), but after judgment they will remember Him and be faithful to Him and teach their children about Him. This was God's plan for taking His message to the world. Often acts of judgment turn into blessings: (1) the dispersion after the tower of Babel in Gen. 10-11 caused nationalism, which protects humanity from a one-world government; (2) the wilderness wandering period was due to their unbelief, but YHWH turned it into a unique time of His personal care, provision, and presence with His people; (3) Calvary looked so evil and hateful, but God used it for universal redemption; and (4) the persecution of the early church resulted in world-wide gospel proclamation [cf. Acts 8:4]). His people did not reach out so He

sowed them into the world that He might bring them and others (cf. 8:20-23) back with them to Himself (see Solomon's prayer in I Kgs. 8, especially vv. 43 and 60)!

▣ **"they will remember Me"** The VERB (BDB 269, KB 269) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT. This reminds one of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (cf. I Kgs. 8:46-53). Note the personal element "remember Me," not just the stipulations. Both are part of the covenant relationship.

God's people are to remember what God has done for them (i.e. Exodus) and trust Him in the present difficulties. God acts according to His unchanging, gracious character. Even His judgment is an act of mercy (i.e. Exodus, Exile).

10:10 "Egypt. . .Assyria" These were the ancient enemies of Israel used to symbolize all of the enemies of God's people.

▣ **"the land of Gilead"** This was a famous pasture land (cf. Jer. 22:6; 50:19) on the east side of Jordan above the Jabbok River. It was known for its cattle and medicine (cf. Jer. 8:22; 46:11).

▣ **"Lebanon"** This refers to the realm of Hiram, later called Phoenicia. It was famous for its artisans and lumber (cf. I Kgs. 4:33; 5:6,9,14; 7:2; 16:17,21; Isa. 35:2). It was a place of famed beauty and fertility (cf. Song of Songs 4:8,11,15; 5:15; 7:4). It is included in the Promised Land in Deut. 1:7; 11:24 and Joshua 1:4.

▣ **"Until no *room* can be found for them"** This is an idiom of abundance. The Promised Land will be completely filled with God's faithful people.

This multiplication of inhabitants (especially children, cf. v. 7c) is also mentioned in Isa. 49:14-21 and 54:1-3.

10:11

NASB	**"He will pass through the sea *of* distress"**
NKJV	**"He shall pass through the sea with affliction"**
NRSV	**"They shall pass through the sea of distress"**
TEV	**"When they pass through their sea of trouble"**
NJB	**"they will cross the sea of Egypt"**

As is so common to prophetic and apocalyptic literature, the subject and mood change without notice or textual markers. This is especially true of this context in Zechariah. See Contextual Insights at the beginning of chapter 9.

The problem is trying to find the SUBJECT and OBJECT of vv. 11 and 12. Some assert that (1) it is the returnees because of v. 10, "they," LXX; (2) it is the Messiah (MT, "he"); (3) it is YHWH (cf. v. 12; Isa. 43:2, *The Pulpit Commentary, Zechariah*, vol. 14, p. 108) and is an allusion to the Exodus (cf. JB and RSV translations). In my opinion, because v. 12 implies YHWH and another person ("he"), I believe that these verses are Messianic.

▣ **"so that all the depths of the Nile will dry up"** This is surely a historical allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea (cf. Exod. 15:5) and Jordan Rivers. These were mighty acts of provision. The return from Exile is depicted in the same way (cf. Isa. 44:27). Eschatologically YHWH removes all natural barriers to Himself: rivers, valleys, mountains, as a symbol of a full and free access.

10:11 "the pride of Assyria" See note at 9:6.

10:12 "in His name" Verse 1 of chapter 10 begins by saying they were to pray for rain from God, as they had previously been praying to idols. Verse 12 concludes this thought by asserting that they would walk in God's name and not in the idol's name (cf. Micah 4:5).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the time element of this chapter? (past, present, near future, or end-time) Why?
2. Does v. 2 ever describe the life of the Jewish nation? If so, when?
3. Why is God called "shepherd" and His people sheep?
4. List the Messianic references of this chapter.
5. How and when will Judah and Ephraim be reunited?

ZECHARIAH 11

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Desolation of Israel	The Fall of the Tyrants	The Fall of the Tyrants	A Taunt Against Enemies
11:1-3	11:1-3	11:1-3	11:1-3
Prophecy of the Shepherds	The Two Shepherds	The Two Shepherds	The Two Shepherds
11:4-6	11:4-6	11:4-5	11:4-6
		11:6	
11:7-14	11:7-14	11:7-12	11:7-14
		11:13-14	
11:15-16	11:15-16	11:15-17	11:15-16
11:17	11:17		11:17

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

TEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This chapter, as others in this section (chapters 9-14), is very difficult to interpret because of the ambiguity of the historical setting and the literary genre.

B. Each of these chapters contains material used in the Gospels to describe the life of Jesus. However, the original setting can be (1) pre-exilic; (2) post-exilic; (3) interbiblical; (4) Jesus' day; or (5) eschatological. Possibly the ambiguity is purposeful to allow the prophecy to show

God's faithfulness and His people's faithlessness throughout history. If victory comes it will come from YHWH's gracious character and redemptive purpose brought about through a wounded shepherd (the Messiah, cf. chapters 12 and 13).

C. The context of chapter 11 is obviously the rejection of a godly leader and his replacement by wicked leadership. Jesus saw Himself as both the wounded Shepherd (cf. Mark 8:32-33; 9:32-34; 10:35-37) and the Good Shepherd (cf. John 10).

D. Verses 1-3 are in poetic form (as is v. 17). Some see it relating to chapter 10 concerning the judgment of the surrounding nations (which is also in poetic form, i.e. vv. 2-12), while others relate it to chapter 11 and the appropriate judgment on God's people.

E. Some possible theories about the historical setting of v. 8.
   1. early date, Targums - Moses, Aaron, Miriam
   2. pre-exilic, last three kings of Judah - Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah
   3. post-exilic
   4. interbiblical
      a. three high priests of Seleucid period - Jason, Menelaus, Lysimachus
      b. three kings of Seleucid empire - Seleucus IV, Heliodorus, Demetrius
   5. Jesus' day (A.D. 70), Jewish conspirators in the Temple during Jewish revolt - Eleazar, John, Simon
   6. after Jesus' day, Roman Caesars
   7. end-time? (possibly related to Antichrist in Dan. 7:8)
   8. in context these are possibly the three types of leaders: prophets, priests, and civil leaders/ kings

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:1-3

[1]Open your doors, O Lebanon,
That a fire may feed on your cedars.
[2]Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen,
Because the glorious *trees* have been destroyed;
Wail, O oaks of Bashan,
For the impenetrable forest has come down.
[3]There is a sound of the shepherds' wail,
For their glory is ruined;
There is a sound of the young lions' roar,
For the pride of the Jordan is ruined.

11:1 "Open your doors" This (BDB 834 I, KB 986) is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (i.e. submit to be taken over). Verses 1-3 form a literary unit. This poem could relate to (1) chapters 9 and 10, the judgment of God on the surrounding nations or (2) the rest of chapter 11, the judgment of God on His own people.

This idiomatic phrase (cf. Isa. 45:1) is a way of personifying the nation of Phoenicia (cf. 9:3-4). It depicts the military defeat of Phoenicia (Lebanon).

▣ **"Lebanon"** Lebanon was proverbial for its wealth and power. This poem uses the analogies of certain well-known trees (cedars, cypress, and oak) and their destruction to describe the judgment of God (i.e. fire, see Special Topic at Dan. 7:10).

▣ **"a fire may feed on your cedars"** The VERB (BDB 37, KB 46) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT used as a JUSSIVE. This is either an emphasis on God's judgment or an invasion from the north (possibly by YHWH, cf. chapter 9).

11:2 "Wail" There are two *Hiphil* IMPERATIVES (v. 2a,c). This term (BDB 410, KB 413) is used for God's judgment on God's people (cf. Hos. 7:14; Micah 1:8; Zeph. 1:11) and for God's judgment on the surrounding nations (cf. Isa. 13:6; 16:7; 23:1,6,14; 52:5; Jer. 48:39; 49:3).

▣ **"cypress"** The tree (BDB 141) may be a juniper, which was the major source of lumber in Lebanon. It was an evergreen used in the temple.

1. floors, I Kgs. 6:15
2. doors, I Kgs. 6:34
3. panels for the hall, II Chr. 3:5

▣

NASB, TEV **"the glorious *trees* have been destroyed"**
NKJV **"the mighty *trees* are ruined"**
NRSV **"the glorious trees are ruined"**
NJB **"the majestic ones have been ravaged"**

The NOUN (BDB 12) means "glory" or "magnificence." It is also used in v. 13 in a sarcastic sense. Here it may refer to leaders, symbolized as mighty, beautiful trees.

The VERB (BDB 994, KB 1418, *Pual* PERFECT) means "to despoil," "devastate," or "ruin." It can refer to

1. cities, Isa. 15:1; 23:1; Jer. 48:1; 49:3
2. nations, Jer. 4:20; 9:18; 48:15,20
3. houses, Jer. 4:20; 10:20
4. trees, Zech. 11:2

▣ **"O oaks of Bashan"** Bashan, in the transJordan area, part of Gilead (cf. 10:10), was mostly a pasture land, but it was dotted with groups of beautiful trees. Its name (BDB 143) means "smooth" (i.e. fertile) land.

▣ **"impenetrable forest has come down"** The destruction of a forest is used to symbolize the fall of nations and governments.

11:3 "shepherds' wail" The metaphor has changed from a burning gate and a cut down forest to a shepherd's weeping over the loss of a pasture land. The metaphor will change again in the last of v. 3 to young lions' roaring because their natural habitat (i.e. "pride") is destroyed. Possibly this poem is an allusion to Jer. 25:34-38.

▣ **"the pride of the Jordan is ruined"** This refers to the flood plain of the Jordan, which was a dense undergrowth (cf. Jer. 12:5; 49:19; 50:49), but is now destroyed and, therefore, no hiding place for the lions.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:4-6

[4]Thus says the LORD my God, "Pasture the flock *doomed* to slaughter. [5]Those who buy them slay them and go unpunished, and *each* of those who sell them says, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich!' And their own shepherds have no pity on them. [6]For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD; "but behold, I will cause the men to fall, each into another's power and into the power of his king; and they will strike the land, and I will not deliver *them* from their power."

11:4-14 This section deals with two kinds of shepherds (i.e. leaders), the coming of a godly ruler who is rejected and replaced by wicked rulers (cf. vv. 4-6 and 15-17). Verses 7-14 refer to the good shepherd, the Messiah (YHWH's personal representative). Jesus picked up on this theme in His discourse on He, Himself being the Good Shepherd in John 10.

11:4 "Pasture the flock *doomed* to slaughter" "Pasture" (BDB 944 I, KB 1258). This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (i.e. "shepherd"). "The flock" seems to refer to God's people (cf. v. 6; Ps. 44:22; Jer. 12:1-3). This phrase does not imply that these are faithful to YHWH, but that they are exploited by their own leaders or foreigners (same ambiguity as 10:3a-b).

11:5 "Those who buy them slay them" A *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 888, KB 1111) is followed by a *Qal* IMPERFECT (BDB 246, KB 255). This is the allusion of the new owners of the sheep who use them for food (not wool). This may typify careless and uncompassionate acts of merchants or governmental leaders (cf. 10:3).

▣ **"Blessed be the LORD, for I have become rich"** This seems to be a sarcastic comment by Jewish leaders praising God for their ill-gotten gain from the exploitation of the poor and under privileged. Deuteronomy 27-29 was often interpreted in such a way that wealth equaled God's blessing!

▣ **"their own shepherds have no pity on them"** Here shepherds means leaders. That which characterizes God (compassion) does not characterize these Jewish leaders.

11:6 "For I will no longer have pity on the inhabitants of the land" This language is similar to Hosea 1:6-9; 2:1-23. Hosea was told to live his life (i.e. marry a prostitute) in order to model YHWH's love for faithless Israel. Zechariah, or the future Messiah, is also modeling YHWH's attitudes! The Jewish leaders were to model God's leadership.

▣ **"I will cause"** Notice another characteristic of apocalyptic literature is the "God is totally sovereign" motif ("I will" three times).

▣ **"each into another's power and into the power of his king"** The problem of human leadership is that because of the fall it is incapable of the selfless administration of power and authority.

The NASB translates this Hebrew idiom "into the hand of" (twice) as "into the power."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:7-14

[7]So I pastured the flock *doomed* to slaughter, hence the afflicted of the flock. And I took for myself two staffs: the one I called Favor and the other I called Union; so I pastured the flock. [8]Then I annihilated the three shepherds in one month, for my soul was impatient with them, and their soul also was weary of me. [9]Then I said, "I will not pasture you. What is to die, let it die, and what is to be annihilated, let it be annihilated; and let those who are left eat one another's

flesh." [10]I took my staff Favor and cut it in pieces, to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. [11]So it was broken on that day, and thus the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized that it was the word of the LORD. [12]I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give *me* my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty *shekels* of silver as my wages. [13]Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, *that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty *shekels* of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. [14]Then I cut in pieces my second staff Union, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

11:7 "I" The "I" of v. 6 (as v. 16) referred to YHWH, so too, vv. 7-11, 12-14. It is possible that Zechariah speaks and acts for YHWH or that the Messiah speaks and acts for YHWH. The NIV footnote says, "Zechariah, as a type (foreshadowing) of the Messianic Shepherd-King" (p. 1418). This is the fluidity in apocalyptic prophecy, which makes it so difficult to be specific.

▣

NASB "the afflicted of the flock"
NKJV "in particular the poor of the flock"
NRSV "so on behalf of the sheep merchants"
TEV "those who bought and sold sheep hired me"
NJB "belonging to the sheep-dealers"

The ADJECTIVE (BDB 776) can mean "afflicted," "poor," or "humble." It is often used of the faithful being persecuted by wicked Jews or pagan nations (cf. Isa. 14:32; 51:21; 54:11; Hab. 3:14; Zeph. 3:12-13).

It is obvious, however, that the NRSV, TEV, and NJB are following the Septuagint's understanding of combining the terms (BDB 485 and 776) into one Hebrew word "merchants" (i.e. Canaanite, BDB 488 I, cf. 14:21).

▣ **"I took my two staffs. . .Favor. . .Union"** From Ps. 23:4 we learn that shepherds usually carry one large, crooked-necked staff to control the sheep, and one war club in their belt to fight off predators. Here, the shepherd obviously carried two large, crooked-necked staffs (BDB 596). One is called "pleasantness" (BDB 653), while the other one is called "union" or "binding cords" (BDB 287). These staffs stand for God's attempt to reunite Israel and Judah (cf. v. 14; 9:13; 10:6).

11:8 "I annihilated the three shepherds in one month" The term "annihilate" (BDB 470, KB 469, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) means "to totally destroy" (cf. Exod. 23:23; I Kgs. 13:34; II Chr. 32:21; Ps. 83:4). The *Niphal* is used in vv. 9 and 16 with the same meaning. The UBS, *Handbook*, says it can mean "deposed" or "dismissed," as well as "disposed of" (p. 291).

There are over forty current theories as to the historical application of this verse, none of which literally occur in one month. The commentator's presupposition is often superimposed on this chapter to find an allusion to history. See the Contextual Insights at the beginning of this chapter for the current theories. Interpreters must remember this is apocalyptic language, not historical narrative. See D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic*.

▣ **"for my soul was impatient with them, and their soul was weary of me"** There are several theories about the PRONOUN's antecedents. This shows the attitude of the godly shepherd (i.e. "impatient" BDB 894, KB 1126, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Num. 21:4; Jdgs. 10:26; Job 21:4) because of the rebellious attitude of the people (i.e. the sheep of v. 9; "weary" BDB 103, KB 119, *Qal* PERFECT may mean (1) "nauseated," "loathed" (but there are no cognates); (2) this shows the godly shepherd's

attitude toward the three shepherds (NRSV); or (3) this shows the godly shepherd's attitude toward the sheep merchants (cf. vv. 7,11).

11:9 "I will not pasture you" Most English translations see the "you" as referring to the sheep. However, the UBS, *Handbook*, points out that the PRONOUN is MASCULINE, not FEMININE (pp. 292-293). It can mean "pasture for you," which would make it refer to the "sheep merchants" of vv. 7,11.

▣ **"What is to die, let it die"** The first VERB (BDB 559, KB 562) is *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, FEMININE, SINGULAR and obviously refers to the sheep. The second is a *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense. The sheep are going to die. Their sins have found them out (similar to Rom. 1:24,26,28).

▣ **"eat one another's flesh"** This is another *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense. It does not reflect God's view on cannibalism, but it develops the metaphor from vv. 4-5. This is part of the "sheep" and "slay" terminology.

11:10 "my staff. . .Favor. . .to break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples" The symbolic destruction of the staff "Favor" shows God's attitude toward: (1) the Jewish people (*Qal* IMPERFECT); (2) the Jews of the Diaspora; or (3) that His attitude toward Gentile nations had changed! The VERB "break" (BDB 154, KB 180) has a violent connotation (cf. Isa. 10:33) of something being "cut off" or "sawed off." It is used in the *Piel* for the destruction of Canaanite fertility objects (cf. Deut. 7:5; 12:3; II Chr. 14:3; 31:1; 34:4,7).

The very concept of YHWH breaking His eternal covenant (cf. Isa. 24:5) with the descendants of Abraham was shocking, but notice Jer. 14:21 and Ezek. 16:59.

The phrase "all the people" (CONSTRUCT BDB 481 plus 766 I) seems to imply the universal element (cf. 8:20-23; 9:7).

11:11 "So it was broken on that day" The real interpretive question is does this refer to (1) the past acts of YHWH; (2) the future acts of the Messiah; or (3) a typology of God's leaders?

This refers to the staff "Favor," but it also refers to the breaking (BDB 830 I, KB 974, *Hophal* IMPERFECT) of God's covenant, either with the surrounding nations or with the Jewish people. This is shocking! The faithful God knowingly turns from His promises and covenant (cf. Jdgs. 2:1) because of the people's continued unfaithfulness (cf. Jer. 14:19-22). The Mosaic covenant was conditional (cf. Lev. 26:40-45)!

▣ **"the afflicted of the flock who were watching me realized it was the word of the LORD"** The "afflicted of the flock" refers to the sheep merchants (cf. NRSV, TEV, NJB). See full note at 11:7. The good shepherd's actions were recognized as being directed by YHWH. God was actively involved in this process of judging:

1. the sheep
2. the three shepherds
3. the sheep merchants

11:12 "give *me* my wages" This refers to the prophet asking (BDB 396, KB 393, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) for payment for his services (i.e. "wages," BDB 969 I) from the owners of the flock. This verse is used in Matt. 26:15 to refer to Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus to the High Priests.

▣ **"weighed out thirty *shekels* of silver as my wages"** The term "shekels" is in italics, which means that it is not in the original text. In the Mosaic legislation this was the price of a gored slave (cf. Exod. 21:32).

11:13 "the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the potter'" The VERB "throw" (BDB 1020, KB 1527) is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE. There have been several textual emendations to explain "potter" (BDB 428): (1) the Septuagint has the term "furnace smelter" (cf. II Kgs. 12:10; 22:9); (2) the Peshitta has the term "treasury"; (3) the Vulgate has the term "sculptor"; and (4) the Masoretic text has the term "potter" (i.e. shaper). Some believe that it refers to Levites who made the vessels used by the priests, and therefore, a potter's shop was located in the temple. Others say that it is a Hebrew idiom for "that which is worthless and needs to be remade."

▣ **"*that* magnificent price at which I was valued by them"** This refers either to irony at their lack of understanding of the value of the Messiah or it is an allusion for the high price (CONSTRUCT BDB 12 and 429, KB 431) to be paid for human life, even that of a slave (cf. Exod. 21:32; Lev. 27:2-3). It is uncertain which of these opposing views was in Zechariah's mind, but the first fits the context best.

▣ **"threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD"** In the NT it refers to Judas throwing his ill-gotten treason money back into the priests' possession (cf. Matt. 27:3-5). They saw it as blood money and could not accept it back into the temple's treasury, so they bought a worn out potter's field in which to bury strangers in (cf. Matt. 27:6-10).

11:14 "my second staff, Union, in pieces, to break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" In chapters nine and ten there is an emphasis on the restoration of the people of God, but here, old scars are reopened and the union disappears! The footnote in the JB suggests this might refer to the Samaritan schism in 328 B.C. in which they built a rival temple on Mt. Gerizin (p. 1541).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:15-17

[15]The LORD said to me, "Take again for yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. [16]For behold, I am going to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing, but will devour the flesh of the fat *sheep* and tear off their hoofs.

[17]Woe to the worthless shepherd
Who leaves the flock!
A sword will be on his arm
And on his right eye!
His arm will be totally withered
And his right eye will be blind."

11:15-17 This may be Zechariah play acting the wicked shepherd, as he did the good shepherd (cf. v. 4).

11:15

NASB,	**"equipment"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"implements"**
TEV	**"act the part of"**
NJB	**"the gear"**

This term (BDB 479) is very general and refers to the items of a trade. The TEV gets it translation from "take again" (BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE and the PREPOSITION, 728, "repeat,"

"return," or "do again"), which starts the verse and implies a previous role playing (i.e. good shepherd, v. 7).

▣

NASB, NKJV "foolish"
NRSV, TEV "worthless"
NJB "good-for-nothing"

This Hebrew ADJECTIVE (BDB 17) is used often in Proverbs of someone who despises wisdom (i.e. a fool). It is used of prophets in Ezek. 13:3,10 and Hosea 9:7 and of God's people in Jer. 4:22.

11:16 This verse expresses in a negative way (cf. Ezek. 34:1-4) the very attributes of YHWH and His Messiah (cf. Ezek. 34:11-16,23). This may be the reality of v. 9.

11:17 "Woe" Less emphatic than (BDB 17) this word (BDB 222) usually introduces a pronouncement of judgment in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Habukkuk. It is often translated "Ah" or "Alas."

Many English translations print v. 17 as poetry (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, NJB).

▣ **"who leaves the flock"** This was a major failure for the profession of shepherd. To leave the sheep left them open to attack and theft. Jesus picks up on this very point in John 10:7-18 (esp. vv. 10,12).

▣ **"a sword will be on his arm"** This is idiomatic language for effectiveness in leadership and influence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What does the poem of vv. 1-3 refer to?
2. What three different metaphors are used in this poem?
3. Explain the different theories of v. 8. Which one do you think is best and why?
4. What is so shocking about vv. 8b and 9?
5. How does v. 12 relate to its own day and to NT usage?
6. Why is this chapter so difficult to interpret in history?

ZECHARIAH 12

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
	The Coming Great Day of the Lord (12:1-14:21)		
The Coming Deliverance of Judah	Jerusalem Shall Lament Its Sin and Be Purged of Idolatry (12:1-13:6)	The Future Deliverance of Jerusalem (12:1-13:6)	The Deliverance and Restoration of Jerusalem (12:1-13:6)
12:1-9	12:1-5	12:1-5	12:1
			12:2
			12:3-8
	12:6	12:6	
	12:7-9	12:7-9	
Mourning For the Pierced One			12:9-14
12:10-14	12:10-14	12:10-14	

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

TEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. There is a parallel relationship between chapters 9-11 and 12-14, which can be seen in the use of "burden," 9:1 and 12:1 (see Baldwin, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, p. 187 and H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah*, p. 223). Chapters 12-14 form a literary unit.

B. The emphasis of this chapter is on the restoration of God's people.
   1. God fighting for them as symbolized in Jerusalem under siege by the nations.
   2. Their repentance and faith in the crucified Messiah (cf. John 19:37 and Rev. 1:7).
   3. The phrase "in that day" or "on that day" occurs sixteen times in chapters 12-14. This phrase is often linked to an eschatological setting.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:1-5

[1]The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him, [2]"Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. [3]It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it. [4]In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. [5]Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the LORD of hosts, their God.'"

12:1 "The burden of the word" It seems that Zech. 9:1 and 12:1 introduce a parallel section in this closing section of the book of Zechariah. See note on "burden" at 9:1.

▣ **"concerning Israel"** This is the only use of "Israel" in this chapter and it seems to refer to all of the Jewish people, not just the northern tribes (cf. 9:1,13; 11:14). During this period the Jewish people only controlled a small area around Jerusalem.

▣ **"the LORD who"** There are three major theological statements about YHWH's creative activity: (1) He "stretches out the heavens"; (2) He "lays the foundation of the earth"; and (3) He "forms the spirit of man within him." All of these verbal forms are *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLES, which emphasize ongoing creation.

▣ **"stretches out the heavens"** This means to "put up a tent" (BDB 639, KB 692, *Qal* PARTICIPLE, e.g. Gen. 33:19; Exod. 12:8; Isa. 40:22; 42:5; 45:12; 51:13). This refers to the atmosphere above the earth. It was idiomatically spoken of as an inverted bowl of stretched skin.

▣ **"lays the foundation of the earth"** This refers to creation (cf. Job 38:4-6; Ps. 102:25-26 [Heb. 1:10-12]; 104:5; Isa. 48:13; 51:13,16). It may be an allusion to Isa. 42:5. In chapters 12-14 this term (BDB 75-76) is used in several ways.
   1. all the earth, 12:1,3; 14:9,17
   2. inhabitants of a region, 12:12; 13:8
   3. a region, 13:2; 14:10

▣ **"forms the spirit of man within him"** The Hebrew term "spirit" (BDB 924-926) can mean "breath," "wind," or "spirit." In Gen. 2:7 God's breath turned a clay-formed man into a living being (*Nephesh*). The "wind" of God (cf. Gen. 8:1, re-creation after the flood) and the "Spirit" of God (cf. Gen. 1:2, initial creation) are active forces of YHWH *Elohim* in Genesis. The unseen God is active initially and

continually in creation. The physical material aspect of creation is only part of the wonder and scope of God's creative activities.

God created/creates (first three PARTICIPLES are *Qal* ACTIVE) for the purpose of fellowship with mankind. We are partially like the animals of this planet (*Nephesh*) and also partially like God ("image or likeness," cf. Gen. 1:26). The "spirit" of man means the unique person (cf. Ps. 139) with the potential of rebellion or fellowship.

12:2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup" It must be seen that this phrase is in the Hebrew parallel relationship with "Jerusalem a heavy stone" from v. 3. This phrase means that the unbelieving nations who come against God's people are going to be made drunk and foolish (cf. Jer. 51:7) because of their attacking Jerusalem. The idiom of "cup" (several different words) in the Bible usually refers to judgment (cf. Ps 75:8; Isa. 51:17,22; Jer. 25:15-16,27-28; 49:12; Matt. 20:22; 26:39,42; Luke 22:42; John 18:11).

▣ **"to all the peoples around"** This refers to the nations which have attacked God's people (cf. v. 3; Isa. 51:22; Jer. 25:17,28).

▣

NASB	**"and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah"**
NKJV	**"when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem"**
NRSV	**"it will be against Judah also in the siege against Jerusalem"**
TEV	**"And when they besiege Jerusalem, the cities of the rest of Judah will also be besieged"**
NJB	**"(That will be at the time of the siege of Jerusalem)"**

This is a very ambiguous phrase because of the brevity of the Hebrew. There is no consistency in how the ancient versions translate it.

Because of 14:14 some Jewish interpreters see this as Judah being forced to fight against Jerusalem by the invading enemy army (cf. UBS, *Handbook*, p. 311).

12:3 "all who lift it will be severely injured" This seems to be used of a stone which the nations attempted to lift off of its foundation, but all were herniated by the attempt.

This cognate VERB and NOUN (BDB 976, KB 1355, *Niphil* IMPERFECT) mean "to scratch" or "cut." The pagan nations practiced ritual cutting (cf. Lev. 19:28; 21:5), but Israel was forbidden to do this. Now the eschatological judgment on these attacking pagan nations will be "cutting" or "scratching" (irony).

▣ **"and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it"** It is a continuing emphasis throughout prophetic literature that the kingdoms of this world will attack God and His people in a future, end-time, climactic battle (cf. v. 3; Ps. 2; Isa. 8:9-10; 17:12-14; Ezek. 38-39; Dan. 9:24-27; 11:36-45; Joel 3:9-17; Zech. 14:2; Rev. 16:14-16; 19:17-19). History is moving toward a climactic moment of confrontation with evil. Evil will lose and be isolated.

12:4 "in that day" This is a common theme in the literary unit of chapters 12-14. It is used sixteen times and refers to an eschatological future (cf. Zeph. 1:14-18; 3:16; Amos 5:18-20; Joel 1:15; 2:11; 3:14; Mal. 4:5).

▣ **"I will strike every horse with bewilderment, and his rider with madness"** This is related to the curse of Deut. 28:28 (both BDB 1067, "bewilderment" and BDB 993, "madness"); also "blindness" (BDB 234) is used in Deut. 28 and 29. The history of God's OT people can be viewed through the cursing and blessing section of Deut. 27-29.

▣

NASB **"I will watch over the house of Judah"**
NKJV **"I will open My eyes on the house of Judah"**
NRSV **"But on the house of Judah I will keep a watchful eye"**
TEV **"I will watch over the people of Judah"**
NJB **"(But I shall keep watch over Judah)"**

The NKJV is the most literal. This is a Hebrew idiom for care and attentiveness (cf. I Kgs. 8:29; II Chr. 7:15; Neh. 1:6). The question remains if this phrase intends to show that Judah had been forced to join in the attack against Jerusalem and if so that God spared the Judean soldiers when all the rest of the invading army was struck mad.

In the ancient Near East, cavalry and chariots were the most powerful and feared military weapon, but YHWH will overpower them (cf. 10:5; 12:4; 14:15; Hag. 2:22), and remove them, even those of Ephraim and Judah, 9:10. He is the victor!

This intervention by God on behalf of His people is reminiscent of His action during (1) the Exodus; (2) conquest and settlement of Canaan; and (3) the fall of Mesopotamian capitals.

12:5 "A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through. . .their God" This phrase is understood in several ways.

1. there was a tension between the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the rest of Judah (cf. v. 7 and *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 1, p. 440)
2. Judah was forced to participate in the besieging of Jerusalem (cf. v. 2c; 4b), but took courage to rebel when they saw the faith of Jerusalem's defenders (UBS, *Handbook*)
3. Judah's leaders recognized YHWH's help by His defense of Jerusalem

▣ **"the LORD of hosts"** This is a common post-exilic title (YHWH *Sabaoth*), which emphasizes God as military warrior. It seems to see God as the captain of the military army. Verse 5 also recognizes the intervention of the supernatural God, which must be linked to vv. 7 and 8. See Special Topic: Names for Deity at Dan. 4:2.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:6-9

[6]"In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem. [7]The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. [8]In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. [9]And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

12:6 "In that day" See note at v. 4.

▣ As verse 5 affirms God's help to Jerusalem, verse 6 affirms God's help to the "clans of Judah" (BDB 49 II, lit. "thousands," but used of leaders, cf. 9:7).

God will make the clans rebel and become a destroying flame against the invading army of the nations. They became God's destroyers amidst the enemy's army.

There is a constant tension between "the nations" as enemies (cf. v. 9) and welcomed converts (cf. 2:11; 8:20-23) throughout the book of Zechariah.

SPECIAL TOPIC: *ELEPH* (THOUSAND)

This is the Hebrew word for "thousand" (BDB 48). However, it is used in several senses.

1. a family unit, Josh. 22:14; Jdgs. 6:15; I Sam. 23:23; Zech. 9:7; 12:6
2. a military unit, Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15
3. a literal thousand, Gen. 20:16; Exod. 32:28
4. a symbolic number, Gen. 24:60; Exod. 20:6; 34:7; Deut. 7:9; Jer. 32:18
5. the Ugaritic cognate *alluph* means "chieftain," Gen. 36:15

12:7 "The LORD also will save the tents of Judah first" The VERB (BDB 446) is a *Hiphil* PERFECT. There are two ways to understand this phrase.

1. God allows the Judean forces to defeat the invaders so that Jerusalem will not be overly exalted.
2. God saves the tents of Judah first because they are more vulnerable to attack. In this way He shows that He has no favoritism between those who live in Jerusalem and those who live in the countryside.

The word "tents" (BDB 13) is being interpreted in two senses: (1) a military camp or (2) a metaphor for homes.

12:8 "the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem" This means "cover as with a shield" (BDB 170, KB 199, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT, cf. 4:14-15; 9:15).

▣ **"and the one who is feeble among them"** The literal meaning is "stumble" (BDB 505, KB 502, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE). This refers to the oldest and weakest of the community who will be made as strong as King David, who was noted as a formidable warrior.

▣ **"the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them"** This is a striking metaphor used in the sense of God's empowering of His people. The term for God is the term *Elohim*, which is used in the sense of supernatural beings (cf. Exod. 4:16; 7:1; I Sam. 28:13; Ps. 8:5; 82:1,6).

The angel of the LORD is often seen as God's representative among the people (cf. Exod. 13:21; 14:19; 23:20-21; 32:34; 33:2,14-15,22). In two passages David is likened to the angel of the Lord (cf. I Sam. 29:9; II Sam. 14:17,20; 19:27). Remember there are three phrases (no VERBS) here which build on each other for literary, not theological, effect.

12:9 This shows the continuing metaphor of God's sovereign protection of His people. These invading nations were defeated by Judean forces, but through YHWH's empowerment!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:10-14

[10]"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. [11]In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. [12]The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves; [13]the family of the house of Levi by itself and their

wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves; [14]all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.

12:10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication" The phrase "I will pour out" (BDB 1049, KB 1629, *Qal* PERFECT) is used quite often in the OT to denote God giving the Spirit (cf. Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28,29, a different word but same concept in Isa. 12:15; 44:3). The terms "grace" (BDB 336, cf. 4:7) and "supplication" (BDB 337, cf. Jer. 31:9) are from the same root. This is a strong verse which emphasizes the national conversion of Israel to faith in God's crucified ("pierced") Messiah (cf. Rom. 11:25-27; John 19:37; Rev. 1:7). The physical deliverance of vv. 2-9 are not complete without the spiritual deliverance of v. 10!

The phrase "a spirit of" (NRSV, NJB) or "the Spirit" (NASB, NKJV) has no ARTICLE in the Hebrew text. This is not a reference to the Holy Spirit, but the human spirit: (1) positive attributes (a) Deut. 34:9, "filled with the spirit of wisdom"; (b) Isa. 28:6, "a spirit of justice" and (2) negative attributes, (a) Num. 5:14,30, "a spirit of jealousy"; (b) Isa. 19:4, "a spirit of distortion"; (c) Isa. 29:10, "a spirit of deep sleep"; and (d) Hos. 4:12, "a spirit of harlotry." These physically delivered Jewish people will be empowered by God to see and understand their spiritual need and God's redemptive plan.

Other prophetic texts where "the Spirit" is poured out are Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 39:29 and also the classic text of Zech. 4:5. It is God who energizes and motivates the fallen human spirit to appropriate and righteous attitudes and actions.

▣ **"so that they will look on Me"** The VERB (BDB 613, KB 661) is a *Hiplil* PERFECT. The Hebrew PREPOSITION translated "on" (BDB 39) in this verse should really be translated as "to" or "unto" (see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, p. 9 and *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 683). It speaks of looking to this one for help or grace (cf. Num. 21:9; Isa. 45:22 for this usage of the PREPOSITION).

▣ **"whom they have pierced"** This VERB (BDB 201, KB 230, *Qal* PERFECT) means "to pierce through" ("kill," cf. Num. 25:8; Jdgs. 9:54; I Sam. 31:4; I Chr. 10:4). This is a different word from the one in Isa. 53, but the theological concept is exactly the same (cf. John 19:37; Rev. 1:7).

▣ **"they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son"** The VERB (BDB 704, KB 763) is another *Qal* PERFECT. This seems to imply their repentance and faith ("look to") in the one whom they had pierced (cf. Isa. 53:5). The mourning (lit. "wailing" or "lamenting" BDB 704, cf. vv. 10,11,12) will be intense like that over an only son (cf. Jer. 6:26), who in a Jewish home was an especially important person.

This verse has been extremely difficult for the rabbis to interpret.

1. Therefore, they developed from this verse the concept of two Messiahs; one of the son of David and one of the son of Joseph, who was going to die (cf. the Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkah*, 52a). This same theory also appears among the Essenes of the Dead Sea community.
2. The modern translators of the Jewish Publication Society of America turn this verse into a lament by Israel to God to spare the remnant of the invading nations, but admits in the footnote that the Hebrew is uncertain.

▣ **"they will weep bitterly"** The term (BDB 600, KB 638, *Hiphil* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE), which is used twice, means a bitter outcry (cf. Isa. 22:4).

12:11 "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo" There have been many theories to try to describe what is referred to here: (1) the RSV and NRSV translate this as referring to a person; (2) the KJV and NKJV, following Jerome,

interpret this to refer to a city located four miles from Megiddo (the site of the end-time battle, cf. vv. 2-9); (3) recent scholars believe that this refers to a Canaanite deity, *Ba'al*, mentioned in II Kgs. 5:18. This word, "Hadadrimmon" is made up of two proper names (one Syrian and one Assyrian) which are used in the OT for ancient deities; or (4) the term is ambiguous. It is possible that it refers to the mourning over Josiah's death at this geographical location (609 B.C., cf. II Kgs. 23:29ff; II Chr. 35:20ff). The exact allusion is uncertain, but great mourning occurred over something and this is simply the illustration used to back up the emphasis of v. 10.

12:12 "And the land will mourn" This could mean several things.

1. the term land stands for the inhabitants of the land, as in v. 12 and 13:8
2. the land is affected by human actions (e.g. Gen. 3:17-19; Deut. 27-29; Rom. 8:19-25)

▣ **"every family by itself"** This is a continuing emphasis on the gravity and extent of the mourning. The royal family is mentioned, David and his son Nathan (cf. II Sam. 5:14; I Chr. 3:5; 14:4; Luke 3:31; this is the line of David [i.e. Judah]). Levi and his son (Shimeites) are mentioned in Num. 3:18; I Chr. 6:17. The royal family and the priestly family (Shimeites were Levites, cf. Exod. 6:16-17; Num. 3:12-18,21) are uniquely involved in this mourning as representatives of the entire people. It is also possible to note that Zechariah combined the royal and priestly roles (cf. chapters 3 & 4, as well as 6:9-15).

The Mishnah teaches that these verses prove that men and women should mourn and worship separately (cf. *Sukkoth* 51b, 52a).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Is the continuing allusion in the prophets to the people of God's battle with the surrounding nations a continuing event, a contemporary event of the prophet, or a future event? Why?
2. Why and how did the rabbis develop the theory of two Messiahs?
3. List the prophecies in this chapter which were fulfilled in the life of Jesus.
4. Will national Israel repent and turn to the Messiah one day? (Give references)
5. What is your interpretation of v. 11 and why?

ZECHARIAH 13

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Idolatry Cut Off	Jerusalem Shall Lament Its Sin and be Purged of Idolatry (12:1-13:6)	The Future Deliverance of Jerusalem (12:1-13:6)	The Deliverance and Restoration of Jerusalem (12:1-13:6)
13:1-3			13:1
			13:2-6
13:4-6			
The Shepherd Savior	God's Shepherd, Smitten for Sheep	The Command to Kill God's Shepherd	Invocation to the Sword; the New People
13:7-9	13:7-19	13:7-9	13:7-9

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:1

[1]"In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

13:1 "In that day" This is the repeated eschatological marker of chapters 10-14 (cf. 13:2).

▣ **"a fountain will be opened"** The concept of a fountain of life comes from Isa. 12:2-3; Jer. 2:13 (for the negative see Jer. 51:36; Hos. 13:15); and 17:13. God is the source of life (cf. Ps. 36:5-9). In this

context it refers to the forgiveness of sin, which is obviously related to the repentance mentioned in 12:10. This is a picture of the new covenant of Jer. 31:34; Ezek. 36:25 (cf. Rom. 11:26-27; Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5).

The VERB (BDB 834 I, KB 986, *Niphal* PARTICPLE) also connected to it is a *Qal* IMPERFECT, "to be" (BDB 224, KB 243), which denotes an emphasis of permanently opened! God's life-giving water will now flow forever (cf. 14:8; Ezek. 47:1-12; Rev. 22:1; Ps. 46:4).

▣ **"for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem"** The royal line and the people who returned from exile are the recipients (cf. 12:10). Notice there is no distinction between Jerusalem and Judah, as in 12:2,5,7.

▣ **"for sin"** This is the common Hebrew term (BDB 308) which means "to miss the goal," "to miss the mark," or "to miss the way" (cf. BDB 306).

▣ **"for impurity"** This Hebrew term (BDB 622) was used mostly of ceremonial defilement by menstrual flow, but was also used for idolatry (cf. II Chr. 29:5-6; Ezra 9:11).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:2-6

[2]"It will come about in that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; and I will also remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land. [3]And if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who gave birth to him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD'; and his father and mother who gave birth to him will pierce him through when he prophesies. [4]Also it will come about in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies, and they will not put on a hairy robe in order to deceive; [5]but he will say, 'I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground, for a man sold me as a slave in my youth.' [6]And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, '*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"

13:2 "it will come about in that day, declares the LORD of hosts" This is the continuing use of the eschatological phrase, "that day," combined with the common post-exilic title for God, which implies military power.

▣ **"that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land"** The VERB "cut off" (BDB 503, KB 500, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) means to remove and destroy the idols and their followers (cf. Micah 5:10-15; Zeph. 1:4-6).

Again, the time setting of chapters 9-14 is very difficult to ascertain. It is obvious that idol worship was a major problem with the Jewish people before the Exile, but after the Exile this was not a problem. This verse seems to imply that idolatry will again become a major sin of the people of God.

This context is similar to Ezek. 36:22-38 in that YHWH chooses to act Himself because of His people's inadequacy to act. In Ezekiel He acts on their behalf to inaugurate the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). Here He acts to remove evil from their midst (i.e. idols, false prophets, and the unclean spirit).

▣ **"and I will also remove the prophets"** The VERB (BDB 716, *Hiphil* #4, KB 778) is used of removing evil people in I Kgs. 15:12 and II Chr. 15:8.

This obviously refers to false prophets (cf. LXX). The discussion in vv. 3-6 deals with those who claim to know and speak for God, but who are actually a tool for the evil one (cf. Matt. 24:4-5,11,23-24).

▣ **"and the unclean spirit from the land"** The presence of the DEFINITE ARTICLE could mean that we are identifying a particular figure (i.e. Satan, cf. I Kgs. 22:21) or this is a hendiadys, which means "the prophets" and "the unclean spirit" form one group (i.e. false prophets). This same phrase is also used quite often in the NT to refer to the demonic. It (i.e. Leupold, p. 246, "spirit of uncleanness") is obvious that this is the exact opposite of "the spirit of grace" mentioned in 12:10.

13:3 "And it will come about that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother" A tremendous change of attitude has occurred where even parents are ready to discipline their children for idol worship.

There are several similarities between this paragraph and 12:10-14. It almost seems that a true prophet suffered the fate of the false prophets.

▣ **"You shall not live, for you have spoken falsely in the name of the LORD"** This refers to the punishment for false prophets from Deut. 13:1-10; 18:20,22. The only difference is that in v. 3 the offender is pierced, while in Deuteronomy they are stoned.

▣ **"pierce him through"** This is the same term used in 12:10 and the implication is that he is pierced by his parents because he is a false prophet and a blasphemer. This may be so that the whole family may not be judged (cf. Jer. 23:34). This is exactly the reason that the Jews crucified Jesus because they saw Him as a false prophet and a blasphemer.

13:4 "in that day that the prophets will each be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies" Verses 4-6 describe the excuses that these false prophets will make when they are confronted with their false prophecies. A good descriptive parallel to "ashamed" (BDB 101) prophets is Micah 3:5-7.

▣ **"a hairy robe"** This was (CONSTRUCT BDB 12 and 972) the distinctive dress of some prophets.

1. Samuel, I Sam. 28:14 (different word)
2. Elijah, I Kgs. 19:13; II Kgs. 2:8
3. Elisha, I Kgs. 19:19; II Kgs. 2:13,14
4. John the Baptist, Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6

13:5 "I am not a prophet; I am a tiller of the ground" This man will claim to be a farmer, not a prophet.

▣

NASB "for a man sold me as a slave in my youth"
NKJV "man taught me to keep cattle from my youth"
NRSV "for the land has been my possession since my youth"
TEV "I have farmed the land all my life"
NJB "for the land has been my living since I was a boy"

This phrase is very ambiguous, but it is related to the phrase, "a tiller of the ground." The differences are because of the possible origins of *hqnni*.

1. NKJV, connects it to *mqnh* (BDB 889), a flock or herd
2. NASB, connects it to *qnh* (BDB 888, KB 1114), acquire or purchase
3. NRSV, slightly changes the MT by adding one consonant

F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions*, makes a good point,

> "The clause is an amplification of the preceding one ('I am a tiller of the ground') and means that the speaker is a simple agricultural laborer and no prophet" (p. 38).

13:6 "And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms'" The false prophet will be easily recognized by special cultic marks on his body. "Between his arms" is a Hebrew idiom (BDB 388) for somewhere on his back, chest, arms, or hands. There seem to be two OT allusions to this practice: (1) the prophets of Ba'al (cf. I Kgs. 18:28) and (2) special pagan practices for mourning (cf. Lev. 19:28; 21:5; Deut. 14:1; Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 48:37).

▣ **"Then he will say, '*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends'"** He tries to explain his wounds by saying he received them while meeting with his friends (Hebrew is MASCULINE). However, the term "friends" or "lovers" (BDB 12, *Piel*) is used in the OT for associates in idolatry (cf. Jer. 22:20,22; 30:14; Ezek. 16:33,36,37; 23:5,9,22; Hos. 2:7,9,12,14,15; also LXX of Hos. 7:14).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:7-9

[7]"Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd,
And against the man, My Associate,"
Declares the LORD of hosts.
"Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered;
And I will turn My hand against the little ones.
[8]It will come about in all the land,"
Declares the LORD, "
That two parts in it will be cut off *and* perish;
But the third will be left in it.
[9]And I will bring the third part through the fire,
Refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
And I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are My people,'
And they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

13:7 There is an obvious radical break between vv. 6 and 7. As v. 6 refers to false prophets, v. 7 refers to the coming Messiah. Notice in your translation that 13:1-6 is in prose, while 13:7-9 is poetry. This poetry is definitely related to 11:4-14, which describes the godly shepherd.

▣ **"Awake"** This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 734, KB 802).

▣ **"O sword"** This is obviously a personification of death (cf. the VOCATIVE is also used in Jer. 47:6-7 in a military sense). Notice that God is the spokesman. God is the One who strikes the Shepherd. The terms "awake" and "sword," in v. 7a, are both FEMININE, while the word "strike" in v. 7d is *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE MASCULINE SINGULAR (BDB 645, KB 697) and refers to God striking the shepherd (i.e. vicarious substitutionary atonement, cf. Isa. 53:10; Acts 2:23; II Cor. 5:21).

▣ **"My Shepherd"** This is an obvious reference to the Davidic king (cf. 12:10). "Shepherd" originally referred to God (cf. Ps. 23), but it is later used of the leaders of Israel (cf. Ezek. 34). It is used in the NT to describe the Messiah (cf. John 10).

▣ **"And against the man, My Associate"** The NIV translates this "and against the man who is close to me." This is obviously a reference to a close associate (BDB 765). This is why identifying this shepherd with the one in 11:17 is misleading. This term (BDB 765) is used only here and in the book of Leviticus (cf. Lev. 5:21; 18:20; 19:15,17; 24:19; 25:14,15). It obviously means a close friend or covenant neighbor.

▣ **"strike the shepherd"** This VERB (BDB 645, KB 697) is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE.

▣ **"that the sheep may be scattered"** The VERB (BDB 806 I, KB 918) is a *Qal* IMPERFECT used as a JUSSIVE. This is used as a fulfillment of the cursing section of Deut. 28:64. Jesus makes an allusion to this when He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27).

▣ **"I will turn My hand against the little ones"** The VERB (BDB 996 [top of, p. 999], KB 1427, *Hiphil* PERFECT) is used especially of God's judgment (cf. Isa. 1:25; Zech. 13:7; Ps. 81:15). The phrase "the little ones" is parallel to "the sheep," which are scattered in the previous verse. This must be a time of testing initiated by God Himself.

13:8 "That two parts in it will be cut off *and* perish; But the third will be left in it" This seems to refer to some type of punishment by God where two-thirds of the people perish. This is either a reference to a military invasion or to the spiritual rejection of the Messiah by two-thirds of God's people. Again, the time setting is ambiguous.

13:9 "And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested" This refers to the purpose of refining (BDB 864, cf. Mal. 3:2) for strengthening (cf. Isa. 48:10; Dan. 11:35). YHWH wants a purified people who reflect His character! This use of the metallurgical term is quite common in the Bible to describe God testing His people (i.e. the faithful remnant) for approval (cf. Prov. 17:3; Isa. 1:25; 48:10).

▣ **"They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' And they will say, 'The LORD is my God'"** This is a series of covenant phrases (e.g. Hos. 2:19-23) to describe that in the midst of God's judgment on the shepherd and the sheep, His purpose is a stronger covenant relationship (cf. 8:8).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the historical setting of chapter 13?
2. How is the unclean spirit related to the idols and prophets?
3. Why is the false prophet in v. 3 pierced instead of being stoned?
4. Was a hairy robe a sign of YHWH's prophets in the OT?
5. List the major theological truths about the purpose of God in v. 7.
6. How is chapter 13 related to chapter 11?
7. Will only a remnant of Israel be saved? How does this apply or not apply to the church?

ZECHARIAH 14

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Day of the Lord	The Final Warfare and the Final Victory	Jerusalem and the Nations	The Eschatological Battle; the Splendor of Jerusalem
14:1-2	14:1-5	14:1-5	14:1-5
14:3-7			
	14:6-7	14:6-7	14:6-11
14:8-11	14:8	14:8-9	
	14:9		
	14:10-11	14:10-11	
14:12-15	14:12-15	14:12	14:12-15
		14:13-14	
The Nations Worship the King		14:15	
14:16-19	14:16-19	14:16-19	14:16-19
14:20-21	14:20-21	14:20-21	14:20-21

READING CYCLE THREE (see p. vii in introductory section)
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3, p. viii). Compare your subject divisions with the four translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

1. First paragraph
2. Second paragraph
3. Third paragraph
4. Etc.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. There have been many interpretations of this chapter. There are two extremes.
   1. to take it very literally as national Israel
   2. to spiritualize it to fit the church exclusively

B. We must assert that this section, chapters 9-14, is very Messianic. As chapters 1-8 are quoted most often by John in the Revelation, so chapters 9-14 are quoted most often in the Gospels. Yet, the entire book points toward the end-time. It seems that the OT authors used past and current events to overshadow future events. When the last generation comes I think that this prophecy and all prophecy will be more easily understood.

C. Although, as historical-grammatical interpreters, we look closely at the text, we must remember that Christ is the focus of the OT. These passages are very Messianic, even though the historical setting is ambiguous.

D. It is obvious that God is still involved in national Israel. Their repentance and faith is coming (cf. Rom. 9-11). The Church, in many ways, has supplemented, complemented, and fulfilled Israel's initial task, which was to be a kingdom of priests to bring all humans to YHWH through the Messiah (cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 18:18; Exod. 19:4-6; I Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6).

E. Be careful of being too dogmatic concerning your personal interpretation. Often we are overly influenced by theories which are current in our day.

F. Chapter 14 is a picture of the sons of God's victory in history (cf. Rev. 11:15). It is not as Messianic as chapters 10-13. The Father is the focus and the ideal age is the setting. However, OT functions, as well as titles for God, are transferred to the Son. This apocalyptic literature is an idealized future scene in terms of ancient Israel's capital.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:1-5

[1]Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. [2]For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. [3]Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. [4]In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. [5]You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, *and* all the holy ones with Him!

14:1 This is a summary of the entire chapter which emphasizes God's fighting on behalf of His people. In this chapter His people are depicted as ancient Israel. God judged them and dispersed them, but now He restores their losses (cf. Isa. 53:12) and their place (i.e. Promised Land).

▣ **"a day is coming for the LORD"** The "day of the Lord" is a common theme of chapters 12-14, but this phrase has an added Hebrew PREPOSITION "of" (BDB 750 #5), which denotes that the day is His day!

The VERB (BDB 97, KB 112, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) denotes an approach or arrival. YHWH will be publicly acknowledged as King and victor (cf. v. 9).

▣ **"you"** This is FEMININE SINGULAR referring to Jerusalem (cf. v. 2).

14:2 "For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle" Notice the emphasis is on God's control of history (cf. v. 9; 12:2,3,6,9; Ps. 2; Isa. 8:9-10; 17:12-14; Ezek. 38-39; Joel 3:9-17; Rev. 16:14-16; 19:17-19).

▣ **"the city will be captured"** The VERB (BDB 539, KB 530) is a *Niphil* PERFECT. This final, ultimate confrontation between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of our God will result in the partial fall of Jerusalem (cf. 13:8). This fall is described in vivid terms from Jerusalem's past experience with conquering invaders. However, a remnant will remain (in 13:8 only 1/3, but here 1/2). This is a stark contrast to the divine protection promised in 12:1-9.

14:3 YHWH fights on behalf of His people as He did in the exodus from Egypt and the conquest and settlement of Canaan.

In an eschatological sense God is depicted as once-and-for-all fighting on behalf of His people and setting up a new order (cf. Ps. 2; Isa. 2:2-4; Ezek. 38-39; Zech. 14; also in intertestamental, apocalyptic literature, I Enoch 56:5-8 and IV Ezra 13:1-13,25-53; and in the NT in Rev. 20:7-9.

14:4 "And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives" The PRONOUN anthropomorphically reflects YHWH (cf. "LORD" of vv. 1,3,5 and PRONOUN of v. 2a). However, the Messiah often takes on the titles and functions of the Father. In context, this chapter is oriented toward God the Father.

▣ **"the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley"** The Mount of Olives is a 2½ mile ridge running to the east of Jerusalem and culminates in the city of Bethany. Apparently this earth-shaking event will occur for two purposes: (1) the return of the Lord to do battle for His people and (2) a way of escape for the remnant that are still left in the city.

This splitting will be for (1) the remnant to flee (cf. v. 5) and (2) the water of life to flow (cf. v. 8; 13:1; Ps. 46:4; Ezek. 47:1-12; Rev. 22:1).

14:5

NASB	**"And you will flee by the valley of My mountains"**
NKJV	**"then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley"**
NRSV	**"and you shall flee by the valley of the LORD'S mountain"**
TEV	**"You will escape through the valley that divides the mountain in two"**
NJB	**"the valley between the hills will be filled"**

There has been much confusion in the translation of this verse. The word "flee" occurs three times in v. 5 (BDB 630, KB 681, *Qal* PERFECTS), but the ancient translations fluctuate the translation from "flee" to "you shall be stopped" (BDB 711) The Masoretic Text is followed by the Peshitta and the Vulgate, while the Septuagint and Symmachus' translation follow the Aramaic Targums.

▣

NASB	**"Azel"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"Azal"**
TEV	**----**
NJB	**"Jasol"**

This seems to refer to a city, possibly also mentioned in Micah 1:11 ("Beth-ezel"), which shows the terminus of this supernaturally-made valley (cf. NRSV).

▣ **"the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah"** Josephus (*Antiq*. 9.225) links it with II Chr. 26:16-23, when Uzziah offered a sacrifice and was struck with leprosy. This same earthquake is referred to in Amos 1:1 (i.e. 750 B.C.). This may imply that an earthquake will form the valley, but this

is not a certainty. Earthquakes are used to describe God's presence in judgment (cf. Isa. 29:6; Ezek. 38:19).

▣ **"the LORD. . .will come *and* all the holy ones"** This refers to YHWH's coming with angels (cf. Deut. 33:2-3). Angels are called holy ones in Job 5:1; 15:5; Ps. 89:5,7; Dan. 8:13. The term "holy" is also used of believers in the OT (cf. Ps. 16:3; 34:9; Isa. 4:3; Dan. 7:18,21,22,25,27; 8:24). In the NT it refers to Jesus' Second Coming and may include angels and believers (cf. Matt. 16:27; 25:31; Mark 8:38; II Thess. 1:7; Rev. 19:14).

▣ **"with Him"** The Masoretic Text has "with You," which may refer to Jerusalem (FEMININE SINGULAR, cf. v. 1).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:6-7

[6]In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. [7]For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

14:6

NASB	**"In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle"**
NKJV	**"there will be no light, the lights will diminish"**
NRSV	**"on that day there shall not be either cold or frost"**
TEV	**"when the time comes, there will no longer be cold or frost"**
NJB	**"that Day, there will be no light, but only cold and frost"**

The Septuagint and the Vulgate interpret the last phrase as "no cold and ice" (cf. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, pp. 952, 995). However, the eschatological context may refer to the dwindling light (BDB 21) of the heavenly bodies (cf. Isa. 13:10; 24:23; 60:19; Jer. 4:23; Ezek. 32:7,8; Joel 2:31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Acts 2:19).

The second Hebrew phrase has two words: (1) "precious," "rare," "splendid," "weighty" (BDB 429) and (2) "thicken," "condense," "congeal" (BDB 891, KB 1117, *Qal* IMPERFECT). The NASB footnote has "glorious ones will congeal."

14:7 "For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD" This possibly refers to Matt. 24:36 and reenforces the understanding that this section refers to God the Father. The uniqueness may be that there is no more night (cf. TEV).

▣ **"at evening time there will be light"** God's presence provides continual light (cf. Isa. 60:19,20; Rev. 21:25; 22:5), as it did before the creation of the sun, stars, and moon (cf. Gen. 1:3-5 versus 1:14-19).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:8

[8]And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter.

14:8 "living waters will flow out of Jerusalem" This seems to be used in the sense of life-giving, supernatural waters (cf. Gen. 2:10), which issue not only in physical bounty, but also in spiritual bounty. These waters are often referred to in the Bible (cf. Ps. 46:4; Isa. 33:21-23; 49:10; Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel 3:18; John 4:13-15; 6:35; 7:37-38; Rev. 22:1,2 and in a negative way in Jer. 2:13; Zech. 9:11). Jerusalem, because of YHWH's presence, is the center of all creation. The King is enthroned there!

▣ **"the eastern sea. . .the western sea"** This refers to the Dead Sea (which will no longer be dead!) and the Mediterranean Sea.

▣ **"it will be in summer as well as in winter"** In Palestine there are really only two seasons. This verse implies continual water, which is not related to the seasonal changes. This whole context speaks of a new natural order which is not dependent on regular cycles of nature.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:9

[9]And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one.

14:9 "the LORD will be king" This continues the motif of YHWH as King of the earth (cf. 14:16,17; I Sam. 8:7; 12:12; Ps. 93:1; 97:1; 99:1). In 9:9 it is the Messiah who is king (cf. Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 10:7; 23:5). YHWH does not become King. He has always been King, but now all humans recognize it (cf. Matt. 6:10).

▣ **"over all the earth"** Here is the continuing theme of the universal reign of God (cf. v. 16; Ps. 22:27-28; 47:8-9; Isa. 2:2-4; 45:2-3).

▣ **"in that day the LORD will be *the only* one, and His name *the only* one"** This is an emphasis on monotheism (cf. Exod. 8:10; 9:14; Deut. 4:35,39; 6:4-5; 33:26; I Sam. 2:2; II Sam. 22:32; I Kgs. 8:23; Ps. 86:8; Isa. 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:10-11

[10]All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. [11]People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

14:10 "All the land will be changed into a plain from" This supernatural altering of the earth's terrain has been interpreted in several ways: (1) as a theological symbol of the holiness of the area; (2) as universal access to the place where God dwells; or (3) as the equal distribution of this living water to all people. Some see an allusion to this topographical preparation in Isa. 40:4.

▣ **"Geba"** This is a city located six miles north of Jerusalem, which is mentioned in II Kgs. 23:8. Its name means "height." It was the northern boundary of Judah (cf. Josh. 18:24).

▣ **"Rimmon south of Jerusalem"** This village is mentioned several times in the OT (cf. Josh. 15:32; 19:7; and Neh. 11:29), but its exact location is uncertain. It was in the tribal allocation of Simeon. It is not the same as Rimmon mentioned in Josh. 19:13, which was in the tribal allocation of Zebulun.

▣ **"Jerusalem will rise"** This topological rising (BDB 926 or 910, KB 1163, *Qal* PERFECT) of the city above its surrounding area was predicted by Isa. 2:2 and Micah 4:1, which are both eschatological passages that predict the nations will come in great numbers to YHWH in Jerusalem (cf. 8:20-23). Is this symbolic of access to God or is it an actual physical modification of Judah? Other prophets speak of a completely new and permanent earth (cf. Isa. 65:17; 66:22). This tension is one reason (along with expecting all prophecies relating to Israel's geographical promises to be literally fulfilled) that many see an earthly kingdom (millennium, Rev. 20:1-6) before the eternal kingdom (cf. Dan. 7:13; Rev. 21-22).

My problem is that no NT writer reaffirms these national, geographical promises. Jesus even asserts that true worship is not connected to any mountain (cf. John 4:20-26).

▣ **"and remain on its site"** The VERB (BDB 442, KB 444) is a *Qal* PERFECT. This verse is very specific. Although all of the sites and gates within the city are now uncertain, it is obvious that it refers to the entire city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is secure (cf. 12:6; Jer. 30:18).

14:11 "And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse" The curse mentioned may have several origins: (1) the curse of Gen. 3:17, which is related to mankind's sin; (2) the curse of Deut. 28, which is related to Israel's breaking the covenant (cf. Zech. 8:18 and Rev. 22:3); or (3) the curse of complete destruction (i.e. Jericho, cf. Josh. 6:17,21; Jer. 25:9). It is obvious that Jerusalem will be densely populated, which was a change from the prevailing attitude of Zechariah's own day (cf. Neh. 7:4; 11:1-2).

This "no more curse" is picked up in Rev. 22:3.

▣ **"for Jerusalem will dwell in security"** This VERB (BDB 442, KB 444, *Qal* PERFECT #4) has the meaning of "abide in its place" (cf. 2:8; 9:5; 14:11; Lev. 26:5; Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 28:26; 34:25-31; 38:8). They are secure (BDB 105) and dwell in the land because YHWH and His Messiah (cf. Isa. 7:14) dwell with them!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:12-15

[12]Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. [13]It will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. [14]Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. [15]So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps.

14:12 "Now this will be the plague" God will defeat the nations (cf. vv. 2-3) by a means (i.e. plague BDB 620) which He had employed earlier in His defense of Jerusalem against Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (cf. II Kgs. 19:35; Isa. 37:36). This may be a reference to Deut. 28:20-24, which is now turned against Israel's enemies (e.g. Deut. 28:7; Ps. 89:22-24).

▣ **"the LORD will strike"** This VERB (BDB 619, KB 669, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is often used of God's defense of His people (but there are exceptions, cf. Exod. 21:22; Ps. 91:12; Pro. 3:23).

14:13 "a great panic from the LORD will fall on them" This is another supernatural means whereby the army of the nations will fall. They will simply destroy themselves (cf. Exod. 15:16; 23:27; Jdgs. 7:22; I Sam. 14:15-20; II Chr. 20:22-23; Hag. 2:22). Confusion (BDB 223) of the enemies of YHWH is part of the Day of the Lord (cf. Deut. 7:23; 28:20; Isa. 22:5).

14:14 "and Judah also will fight at Jerusalem" The VERB (BDB 535, KB 526) is a *Niphil* IMPERFECT. The PREPOSITION "at" (i.e. place) is also used in the NIV, while the RSV changes it to "against" (cf. Vulgate, Targums). The same PRONOUN is translated "against" in v. 3.

▣ **"the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered"** The VERB (BDB 62, KB 74) is a *Pual* PERFECT. See verse 1.

14:15 This information seems out of place. It should go with the plague on humans mentioned in v. 12. It seems to refer to the complete destruction of this invading army's military capabilities.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:16-19

[16]Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. [17]And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. [18]If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no *rain will fall* on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. [19]This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

14:16 "any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts" This magnifies the eternal redemptive plan of God. This could mean (1) that some few soldiers survived or (2) that some from the nations they represent survived, but those of the nations who are left will be converted (cf. 8:20-23)! There is an allusion to the world-wide annual worship in Isa. 2:2-4 (cf. Isa. 66:19-24).

▣ **"to celebrate the Feast of Booths"** This feast is described in Lev. 23:34-44 and Deut. 16:13-17. Foreigners were welcome to participate (cf. Deut. 16:14). It was basically a time for (1) thanksgiving for the harvest; (2) God's provision for the poor; and (3) a time for reading the Torah (cf. Neh. 8:14-18). The mention of living waters in 8:14 and their use in John 7, during the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths), seems to be significant. During the Feast of Tabernacles several ceremonies pointed toward this living water as a symbol of spiritual strength.

14:17-19 "there will be no rain on them" All of the remaining pagans seem to be converted to faith in YHWH at this eschatological period. Any who refuse to come and worship at least annually are cursed with the plague of Deut. 28:22-24. Egypt had seen the plagues of YHWH before! It is surprising that some nations may not come. It is possible to interpret this as "not everyone is fully converted to faith in Christ." Some see this as characteristic of the millennium of Rev. 20:1-6.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:20-21

[20] In that day there will *be inscribed* on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." And the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the bowls before the altar. [21]Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.

14:20,21 "In that day there will *be inscribed*. . .'Holy to the LORD'" These two verses describe human society that has now become entirely sanctified and holy. This can be seen by the insignia which was originally on the turban of Aaron, the high priest (cf. Exod. 28:36), and now on the eschatological High Priest (cf. Zech. 3:9, is also on the common things and people). The different aspects of society which were affected are (1) the bells of the horses; (2) the cooking pots in the Lord's house; and (3) the cooking pots in the homes of the people of Jerusalem and Judea (who are now partakers of the holy food of the temple; joint heirs with the Levites and priests).

14:21 "And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day" The term "Canaanite" (NASB, NKJV, NIV) can refer to any unholy person not included in the covenant

people, but there should not be any of these remaining. Therefore, many translators interpret this term as "merchant" (BDB 489 II, i.e. one who weighs out gold and silver, cf. Prov. 31:24; Isa. 23:8; Ezek. 16:29; 17:4; Hos. 12:7) and this is how it is used in the NT of money changers and sellers in the court of the Gentiles in the temple (cf. Matt. 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45-46; John 2:13-16).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Will this chapter be fulfilled literally or symbolically? Why?
2. Is this chapter apocalyptic literature and if so, what does that imply in its interpretation?
3. Relate the significant themes of chapter 12-14 and compare them with a reference Bible throughout the Old Testament.
4. Is this chapter Messianic or YHWH oriented? Why?
5. How and why is Zechariah's prophecy so influential on NT writers?

APPENDIX ONE

INTRODUCTION TO OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening Statements

1. The believing community does not agree on how to interpret prophecy. Other truths have been established as to an orthodox position throughout the centuries, but not this one.
2. There are several well defined stages of OT prophecy
   a. pre-monarchial (before King Saul)
      1) individuals called prophets
         a) Abraham - Gen. 20:7
         b) Moses - Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 18:15; 34:10
         c) Aaron - Exod. 7:1 (spokesman for Moses)
         d) Miriam - Exod. 15:20
         e) Medad and Eldad - Num. 11:24-30
         f) Deborah - Judg. 4:4
         g) unnamed - Judg. 6:7-10
         h) Samuel - I Sam. 3:20
      2) references to prophets as a group - Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22
      3) prophetic groups or guilds - I Sam. 10:5-13; 19:20; I Kgs. 20:35,41; 22:6,10-13; II Kgs. 2:3,7; 4:1,38; 5:22; 6:1, etc.
      4) Messiah called prophet - Deut. 18:15-18
   b. non-writing monarchial prophets (they address the king)
      1) Gad - I Sam. 7:2; 12:25; II Sam. 24:11; I Chron. 29:29
      2) Nathan - II Sam. 7:2; 12:25; I Kgs. 1:22
      3) Ahijah - I Kgs. 11:29
      4) Jehu - I Kgs. 16:1,7,12
      5) unnamed - I Kgs. 18:4,13; 20:13,22
      6) Elijah -I Kgs. 18; II Kgs. 2
      7) Milcaiah - I Kgs. 22
      8) Elisha - II Kgs. 2:8,13
   c. classical writing prophets (they address the nation as well as the king): Isaiah—Malachi (except Daniel)

B. Biblical Terms

1. *ro'eh* = seer, I Sam. 9:9. This reference shows the transition to the term *Nabi,* which means "prophet" and comes from the root, "to call." *Ro'eh* is from the general Hebrew term "to see." This person understood God's ways and plans and was consulted to ascertain God's will in a matter.
2. *hozeh* = seer, II Sam. 24:11. It is basically a synonym of *ro'eh*. It is from a rarer Hebrew term "to see in a vision." The participle form is used most often to refer to prophets.
3. *nabi'* = prophet, cognate of Akkadian verb *nabu* = "to call" and Arabic *naba'a* = "to announce." This is the most common OT term to designate a prophet. It is used over 300 times. The exact etymology is uncertain, but "to call" at present seems the best option. Possibly the best understanding comes from YHWH's description of Moses' relationship to Pharaoh through Aaron (cf. Exod. 4:10-16; 7:1; Deut. 5:5). A prophet is someone who speaks for God to His people (cf. Amos 3:8; Jer. 1:7,17; Ezek. 3:4).

4. All three terms are used of the prophet's office in I Chron. 29:29; Samuel - *Ro'eh*; Nathan - *Nabi'*; and Gad - *Hozeh*.
5. The phrase *'ish ha - 'elohim*, "man of God," is also a broader designation for a speaker for God. It is used some 76 times in the OT in the sense of "prophet."
6. The word "prophet" is Greek in origin. It comes from (1) *pro* = "before" or "for"; (2) *phemi* = "to speak."

II. DEFINITION OF PROPHECY

A. The term "prophecy" had a wider semantic field in Hebrew than in English. The Jews labeled the history books of Joshua through Kings (except Ruth) "the former prophets." Both Abraham (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:5) and Moses (Deut. 18:18) are designated as prophets (also Miriam, Exod. 15:20). Therefore, beware of an assumed English definition!

B. "Propheticism may legitimately be defined as that understanding of history which accepts meaning only in terms of divine concern, divine purpose, divine participation" (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 896).

C. "The prophet is neither a philosopher nor a systematic theologian, but a covenant mediator who delivers the word of God to His people in order to shape their future by reforming their present" ("Prophets and Prophecy," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 13, p. 1152).

III. PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

A. Prophecy is a way for God to speak to His people, providing guidance in their current setting and hope in His control of their lives and world events. Their message was basically corporate. It is meant to rebuke, encourage, engender faith and repentance, and inform God's people about Himself and His plans. Often it is used to clearly reveal God's choice of a spokesman (Deut. 13:1-3; 18:20-22). This, taken ultimately, would refer to the Messiah.

B. Often, the prophet took a historical or theological crisis of his day and projected it into an eschatological setting. This end-time view of history (teleological) is unique to Israel and her sense of divine election and covenant promises.

C. The office of prophet seems to balance (Jer. 18:18) and supplant the office of High Priest as a way of knowing God's will. The Urim and Thummim transcend into a verbal message from God's spokesman. The office of prophet seems to also have passed away in Israel after Malachi (or the writing of Chronicles). It does not appear until 400 years later with John the Baptist. It is uncertain how the New Testament gift of "prophecy" relates to the OT. New Testament prophets (Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 14:29,32,37; 15:32; I Cor. 12:10,28-29; Eph. 4:11) are not revealers of new revelation, but forth-tellers and fore-tellers of God's will in recurrent situations.

D. Prophecy is <u>not</u> exclusively or primarily predictive in nature. Prediction is one way to confirm his office and his message, but it must be noted ". . .less than 2% of OT prophecy is Messianic. Less than 5% specifically describes the New Covenant Age. Less than 1% concerns events yet to come" (Fee & Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, p. 166).

E. Prophets represent God to the people, while Priests represent the people to God. This is a general statement. There are exceptions like Habakkuk, who addresses questions to God.

F. One reason it is difficult to understand the prophets is because we do not know how their books were structured. They are not chronological. They seem to be thematic, but not always the way one would expect. Often there is no obvious historical setting, time-frame, or clear division between oracles, it is difficult (1) to read the books through in one sitting; (2) to outline them by topic; and (3) to ascertain the central truth or authorial intent in each oracle.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPHECY

A. In the Old Testament there seems to be a development of the concept of "prophet" and "prophecy." In early Israel there developed a fellowship of prophets, led by a strong charismatic leader such as Elijah or Elisha. Sometimes the phrase "the sons of the prophets" was used to designate this group (II Kgs. 2). The prophets at times were characterized by forms of ecstasy (I Sam. 10:10-13; 19:18-24).

B. However, this period passed rapidly into the time of individual prophets. There were those prophets (both true and false) who identified with the King, and lived at the palace (Gad, Nathan). Also, there were those who were independent, sometimes totally unconnected with the status quo of Israelite society (Amos). They are both male and female (II Kgs. 22:14).

C. The prophet was often a revealer of the future, conditioned on a person's or a people's immediate response. Often the prophet's task was to unfold God's universal plan for His creation which is not affected by human response. This universal eschatological plan is unique among the prophets of Israel in the ancient Near East. Prediction and Covenant fidelity are twin foci of the prophetic messages (cf. Fee and Stuart, p. 150). This implies that the prophets were primarily corporate in focus. They usually, but not exclusively, address the nation of Israel.

D. Most prophetic material was presented orally. It was later combined by means of theme or chronology, or other patterns of Near Eastern literature, which are lost to us. Because it was oral, it is not as structured as written prose. This makes the books difficult to read straight through and difficult to understand without a specific historical setting.

E. The prophets use several patterns to convey their messages
   1. Court scene - God takes His people to court; often it is a divorce case where YHWH rejects his wife (Israel) for her unfaithfulness (Hosea 4; Micah 6).
   2. Funeral dirge - the special meter of this type of message and its characteristic "woe" sets it apart as a special form (Isaiah 5; Habakkuk 2).
   3. Covenant blessing pronouncement - the conditional nature of the Covenant is emphasized and the consequences, both positively and negatively, are spelled out for the future (Deuteronomy 27-29).

V. BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR VERIFICATION OF A TRUE PROPHET

A. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (predictions/signs are linked to monotheistic purity)

B. Deuteronomy 18:9-22 (false prophets/true prophets)

C. Both men and women are called and designated as prophets or prophetesses
   1. Miriam - Exodus 15
   2. Deborah - Judges 4:4-6
   3. Huldah - II Kings 22:14-20; II Chronicles 34:22-28

G. In the surrounding cultures prophets were verified by means of divination. In Israel they were verified by
   1. a theological test - the use of the name of YHWH
   2. a historical test - accurate predictions

VI. HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY

A. Find the intent of the original prophet (editor) by noting the historical setting and the literary context of each oracle. Usually it will involve Israel breaking the Mosaic Covenant in some way.

B. Read and interpret the whole oracle, not just a part; outline it as to content. See how it relates to surrounding oracles. Try to outline the whole book (by literary units and to paragraph level).

C. Assume a literal interpretation of the passage until something in the text itself points you to figurative usage; then attempt to put the figurative language into prose.

D. Analyze symbolic action in light of historical setting and parallel passages. Be sure to remember that this is ancient Near Eastern literature, not western or modern literature.

E. Treat predictions with care
   1. Are they exclusively for the author's day?
   2. Were they subsequently fulfilled in Israel's history?
   3. Are they yet future events?
   4. Do they have a contemporary fulfillment and yet a future fulfillment?
   5. Allow the authors of the Bible, not modern authors, to guide your answers.

F. Special concerns:
   1. Is the prediction qualified by conditional response?
   2. Is it certain to whom the prophecy is addressed (and why)?
   3. Is there a possibility both biblically and/or historically for multiple fulfillments?
   4. The NT authors under inspiration were able to see the Messiah in many places in the OT that are not obvious to us. They seem to use typology or word play. Since we are not inspired, we best leave this approach to them.

VII. HELPFUL BOOKS

A. *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy* by Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque

B. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

C. *My Servants the Prophets* by Edward J. Young

D. *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* by D. Brent Sandy

E. *Cracking the Old Testament Code*, D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr.

APPENDIX TWO

KINGS AND EVENTS OF THE BABYLONIAN, PERSIAN, AND GREEK DYNASTIES

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

612 B.C.	Nineveh falls to neo-Babylonian army (Nebuchadnezzar)
608	Pharaoh Necho II marched to Carchemesh to halt expansion of neo-Babylonian power
	Josiah, King of Judah, tries to stop him
	Death of Josiah and assumption of throne by his son, Jehoahaz
	Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, replaced Jehoahaz on the authority of Pharaoh Necho II within 3 months
	Palestine and Syria under Egyptian rule
	Josiah's reforms dissipate
605	Nabopolassar sends troops to fight remaining Assyrian army and the Egyptians at Carchemesh
	Nebuchadnezzar chased them all the way to the plains of Palestine
	Nebuchadnezzar got word of the death of his father (Nabopolassar) so he returned to Babylon to receive the crown
	On the way back he takes Daniel and other members of the royal family into exile
605 - 538	Babylon in control of Palestine, 597; 10,000 exiled to Babylon
586	Jerusalem and the temple destroyed and large deportation
582	Because Jewish guerilla fighters killed Gedaliah another last large deportation occurred

SUCCESSORS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

562 - 560	Evil-Merodach released Jehoiakim (true Messianic line) from custody
560 - 556	Neriglissar
556	Labaski-Marduk reigned
556 - 539	Nabonidus:
	Spent most of the time building a temple to the mood god, *Sin*. This earned enmity of the priests of Marduk.
	Spent the rest of his time trying to put down revolts and stabilize the kingdom.

	He moved to Tema and left the affairs of state to his son, Belshazzar
	Belshazzar:
	Spent most of his time trying to restore order.
	Babylonia's great threat was Media.
Rise of Cyrus	
585 - 550	Astyages was king of Media (Cyrus II was his grandson by Mandane)
550	Cyrus II, a vassal king, revolted
	Nabonidus, to restore balance of power, made alliances with:
	1. Egypt 2. Crecus, King of Lydia
547	Cyrus marched against Sardis (capital Lydia) and captured all of Asia Minor
539	Gobiyas took Babylon without resistance (Dan. 5; Belshazzar Nabonidus' co-regent; also Gobiyas possibly Darius the Mede, Dan. 5:31).
Oct. 11, 539	Cyrus entered as liberator from Nabonidus' moon goddess, *Zin*
Cyrus' Successors	
530	Cyrus' son succeeded him (Cambyses II)
530 - 522	Reign of Cambyses (Elephantine Papyri)
	Added Egypt in 525 to the Medo-Persian Empire
522 - 486	Darius I came to rule
	He organized the Persian Empire along Cyrus' plan of satraps
	He set up coinage like Lydia's
486 - 465	Xerxes I (Esther)
	Put down Egyptian revolt
	Intended to invade Greece, but was defeated in the Battle of Thermopoly in 480
	Xerxes I was assassinated in 465
480	Battle of Thermopoly
465 - 424	Artaxerxes I Longimanus (Ezra 7-10, Nehemiah, and Malachi)
	Greeks continued to advance until confronted with Pelopanisian Wars
	Wars lasted about 20 years
	During this period the Jewish community is reconstructed
423 - 404	Darius II

Authorized the feast of unleavened bread in the Elephantine Temple

404 - 358 Artaxerxes II

358 - 338 Artaxerxes III

338 - 336 Arses

336 - 331 Darius III

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

359 - 336 Philip II of Macedon built up Greece

He was assassinated in 336

336 - 323 Alexander the Great (Philip's son)

Routed Darius II at battle of ISUS

He died in 323 in Babylon of a fever after conquering the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East

ALEXANDER'S SUCCESSORS
Alexander's generals divided his empire at his death:

1. Cassander - Macedonia and Greece
2. Lysimicus - Thrace
3. Selects I - Syria and Babylon
4. Ptolemy - Egypt and Palestine
5. Antigonus - small part of Asia Minor

Seleucids vs. Ptolemies

301 Palestine was under Ptolemy's rule for 100 years

175 - 163 Antiochus Epiphanes

Wanted to Hellenize Jews, constructed gymnasium

Constructed pagan altars; priests were mistreated

Dec. 13, 168 Hog was slain on the altar by Antiochus Epiphanies. Some consider this to be the abomination of desolation.

167 Mattathias and sons rebel. Mattathias killed. Judas took control.

Judas Maccabeaus wages successful guerilla warfare

Dec. 25, 165 Temple rededicated

RULERS

BABYLON

626 - 605	Nabopolassar dies ("Nabu, Protect the Sun")
	625 - 585
	Cyrzares
605 - 562	Nebuchadnezzar II
	("Nebo, Protect the Boundary")
	585 - 550
	Astyages
562 - 560	Evil Merodack 550
	Cyrus II
556	Labaski Marduk
556 - 539	Nabonidus
	Belshazzar
539 -	Gobiyas

MEDO-PERSIAN RULERS

550 - 530	Cyrus II (538 Medo-Persian dominate power called Achaemenian Empire)
530 - 522	Cambyses II (Egypt added and Cyprus)
522	Gaumata or Pseudo, Smerdis (reign 6 months)
522 - 486	Darius I (Hystaspes)
486 - 465	Xerxes I (Esther's husband)
465 - 424	Artaxerxes I (Ezra and Nehemiah in Palestine)
423 -	Xerxes II
424 - 404	Darius II Nothus
404 - 359	Artaxerxes II Mnemon
359 - 338	Artaxerxes III Ochus
338 - 336	Arses
336 - 331	Darius III Codomannus

GREEK RULERS

359 - 336 Philip II of Macedon

336 - 323 Alexander the Great

323 - Generals divide Empire

1. Cassander - Macedonia
2. Lysimicus - Syria
3. Seleucus I - Syria and Babylon
4. Ptolemy - Egypt
5. Antigonus - Asia Minor (killed in 301 B.C.)

The Ptolemies controlled Palestine, but in 175 - 163 control passed to the Seleucids

175 - 163 Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the eighth Seleucid ruler

*Dates and names have been mostly taken from *A History of Israel* by John Bright, pp. 461-471.

APPENDIX THREE

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE POWERS OF MESOPOTAMIA

(using dates based primarily on John Bright's *A History of Israel*, p. 462ff.)

I. Assyrian Empire (Gen.10:11)

A. Religion and culture were greatly influenced by the Sumerian/Babylonian Empire.

B. Tentative list of rulers and approximate dates:

1. 1354-1318 - Asshur-Uballit I:
   (a) conquered the Hittite city of Carchemish
   (b) began to remove Hittite influence and allowed Assyria to develop
2. 1297-1266 - Adad-Nirari I (powerful king)
3. 1265-1235 - Shalmaneser I (powerful king)
4. 1234-1197 - Tukulti-Ninurta I
   - first conquest of Babylonian empire to the south
5. 1118-1078 - Tiglath-Pileser I
   - Assyria becomes a major power in Mesopotamia
6. 1012- 972 Ashur-Rabi II
7. 972- 967 - Ashur-Resh-Isui II
8. 966- 934 - Tiglath-Pileser II
9. 934- 912 - Ashur-Dan II
10. 912- 890 - Adad-Nirari II
11. 890- 884 - Tukulti-Ninurta II
12. 883- 859 - Asshur-Nasir-Apal II
13. 859- 824 - Shalmaneser III
    - Battle of Qarqar in 853
14. 824-811 - Shamashi-Adad V
15. 811-783 - Adad-Nirari III
16. 781-772 - Shalmaneser IV
17. 772-754 - Ashur-Dan III
18. 754-745 - Ashur-Nirari V
19. 745-727 - Tiglath-Pileser III:
    a. called by his Babylonian throne name, Pul, in II Kings 15:19
    b. very powerful king
    c. started the policy of deporting conquered peoples
    d. In 735 B.C.. there was the formation of the "Syro-Ephramatic League" which was an attempt to unify all the available military resources of the transjordan nations from the head waters of the Euphrates to Egypt for the purpose of neutralizing the rising military power of Assyria. King Ahaz of Judah refused to join and was invaded by Israel and Syria. He wrote to Tiglath-Pileser III for help against the advise of Isaiah (cf. II Kgs. 16; Isa. 7-12).
    e. In 732 Tiglath-Pileser III invades and conquers Syria and Israel and places a vassal king on the throne of Israel, Hoshea (732-722). Thousands of Jews from the Northern Kingdom were exiled to Media (cf. II Kings 15).
20. 727-722 - Shalmaneser V
    a. Hoshea forms an alliance with Egypt and is invaded by Assyria (cf. II Kgs.17)
    b. besieged Samaria in 724 B.C.

21. 722-705 - Sargon II:
    a. After a three year siege started by Shalmaneser V, his successor Sargon II conquers the capital of Israel, Samaria. Over 27,000 are deported to Media.
    b. The Hittite empire is also conquered.
    c. In 714-711 another coalition of transjordan nations and Egypt rebelled against Assyria. This coalition is known as "the Ashdad Rebellion." Even Hezekiah of Judah originally was involved. Assyria invaded and destroyed several Philistine cities.
22. 705-681 - Sennacherib:
    a. In 705 another coalition of transjordan nations and Egypt rebelled after the death of Sargon II. Hezekiah fully supported this rebellion. Sennacherib invaded in 701. The rebellion was crushed but Jerusalem was spared by an act of God (cf. Isa. 36-39 and II Kgs. 18-19).
    b. Sennacherib also put down the rebellion in Elam and Babylon.
23. 681-669 - Esarhaddon:
    a. first Assyrian ruler to attack and conquer Egypt
    b. had great sympathy with Babylon and rebuilt its capital city
24. 669-633 - Ashurbanipal:
    a. also called Osnappar in Ezra 4:10
    b. His brother Shamash-shum-ukin was made king of Babylon (later demoted to viceroy). This brought several years of peace between Assyria and Babylon, but there was an undercurrent of independence which broke out in 652 led by his brother.
    c. fall of Thebes, 663 B.C.
    d. defeated Elam, 653, 645 B.C.
25. 633-629 - Asshur-Etil-Ilani
26. 629-612 - Sin-Shar-Ishkun
27. 612-609 - Asshur-Uballit II:
    a. enthroned king in exile in Haran
    b. the fall of Assher in 614 B.C. and Nineveh in 612 B.C.

II. Neo-Babylon Empire:

A. 703-? Merodach-Baladan
    - Started several revolts against Assyrian rule

B. 652 Shamash-shum-ukin:
    1. Esarhaddon's son and Asshurbanipal's brother
    2. he started a revolt against Assyria but was defeated

C. 626-605 Nabopolassar:
    1. was the first monarch of the Neo-Babylonian Empire
    2. he attacked Assyria from the south while Cyaxares of Media attacked from the northeast
    3. the old Assyrian capital of Asshur fell in 614 and the powerful new capital of Ninevah fell in 612 B.C.
    4. the remnant of the Assyrian army retreated to Haran. They even installed a king.
    5. In 608 Pharaoh Necho II (cf. II Kings 23:29) marched north to help the remnant of the Assyrian army for the purpose of forming a buffer zone against the rising power of Babylon. Josiah, the godly king of Judah (cf. II Kings 23), opposed the movement of the Egyptian army through Palestine. There was a minor skirmish at Megiddo. Josiah was wounded and died (II Kgs. 23:29-30). His son, Jehoakaz, was made king. Pharaoh Necho II arrived too late to stop the destruction of the Assyrian forces at Haran. He engaged the

Babylonian forces commanded by the crown prince Nebuchadnezzar II and was soundly defeated in 605 B.C. at Carchemesh on the Euphrates River.

On his way back to Egypt Pharaoh Necho stopped at Jerusalem and sacked the city. He replaced and deported Jehoahaz after only three months. He put another son of Josiah, Jehoiakim, on the throne (cf. II Kings 23:31-35).

6. Nebuchadnezzar II chased the Egyptian army south through Palestine but he received word of his father's death and returned to Babylon to be crowned. Later, in the same year, he returned to Palestine. He left Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah but exiled several thousand of the leading citizens and several members of the royal family. Daniel and his friends were part of this deportation.

D. 605-562 - Nebuchadnezzar II:
   1. From 597-538 Babylon was in complete control of Palestine.
   2. In 597 another deportation from Jerusalem occurred because of Jehoakim's alliance with Egypt (II Kings 24). He died before the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar II. His son Jehoiachin was only king for three months when he was exiled to Babylon. Ten thousand citizens, including Ezekiel, were resettled close to the City of Babylon by the Canal Kebar.
   3. In 586, after continued flirtation with Egypt, the City of Jerusalem was completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (II Kgs. 25) and a mass deportation occurred. Zedekiah, who replaced Jehoiachin, was exiled and Gedaliah was appointed governor.
   4. Gedaliah was killed by Jewish renegade military forces. These forces fled to Egypt and forced Jeremiah to go with them. Nebuchadnezzar invaded a fourth time (605, 596, 586, 582) and deported all remaining Jews that he could find.

E. 562-560 - Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son, was also known as Amel-Marduk (Akkadian, "Man of Marduk")
   - He released Jehoiakim from prison but he had to remain in Babylon (cf. II Kings 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31).

F. 560-556 - Neriglissar
   - He assassinated Evil-merodach, who was his brother-in-law
   - He was previously Nebuchadnezzar's general who destroyed Jerusalem (cf. Jer. 39:3,13)

G. 556 - Labaski-Marduk
   - He was Neriglissar's son who assumed kingship as a boy, but was assassinated after only nine months (Berossos).

H. 556-539 - Nabonidus (Akkadian, "Nebo is exalted"):
   1. Nabonidus was not related to the royal house so he married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar
   2. He spent most of the time building a temple to the moon god "Sin" in Tema. He was the son of the high priestess of this goddess. This earned him the enmity of the priests of Marduk, chief god of Babylon.
   3. He spent most of his time trying to put down revolts (in Syria and north Africa) and stabilize the kingdom.
   4. He moved to Tema and left the affairs of state to his son, Belshazzar, in the capital, Babylon (cf. Dan.5).

I. ? - 539 - Belshazzar (co-reign)
   - The city of Babylon fell very quickly to the Persian Army under Gobryas of Gutium by diverting the waters of the Euphrates and entering the city unopposed. The priests and people of the city saw the Persians as liberators and restorers of Marduk. Gobryas was

made Governor of Babylon by Cyrus II. Gobryas may have been the Darius the Mede of Dan. 5:31; 6:1. “”Darius”“ means “”royal one.”“

III. Medio-Persian Empire: Survey of the Rise of Cyrus II (Isa. 41:2,25;44:28-45:7; 46:11; 48:15):

A. 625-585 - Cyaxares was the king of Media who helped Babylon defeat Assyria.
B. 585-550 - Astyages was king of Media (capital was Ecbatana). Cyrus II was his grandson by CambysesI (600-559, Persian) and Mandane (daughter of Astyages, Median).
C. 550-530 - Cyrus II of Ansham (eastern Elam) was a vassal king who revolted:
   1. Nabonidus, the Babylonian king, supported Cyrus.
   2. Astyages' general, Harpagus, led his army to join Cyrus' revolt
   3. Cyrus II dethroned Astyages.
   4. Nabonidus, in order to restore a balance of power, made an alliance with:
      a. Egypt
      b. Croesus, King of Lydia (Asia Minor)
   5. 547 - Cyrus II marched against Sardis (capital of Lydia) and it fell in 546 B.C.
   6. 539 - In mid-October the general Ugbaru and Gobryas, both of Gutium, with Cyrus' army, took Babylon without resistance. Ugbaru was made governor, but died of war wounds within weeks, Gobryas was then made governor of Babylon.
   7. 539 - In late October Cyrus II "the Great" personally entered as liberator. His policy of kindness to national groups reversed years of deportation as a national policy.
   8. 538 - Jews and others (cf. the Cyrus Cylinder) were allowed to return home and rebuild their native temples (cf. II Chr. 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-4). He also restored the vessels from YHWH's temple which Nebuchadnezzar had taken to Marduk's temple in Babylon (cf. Ezra 1:7-11; 6:5).
   9. 530 - Cyrus' son, Cambyses II, succeeded him briefly as co-regent, but later the same year Cyrus died while in a military campaign.
D. 530-522 - reign of Cambyses II
   1. added Egyptian empire in 525 B.C. to the Medo-Persian Empire;
   2. he had a short reign:
      a. some say he committed suicide;
      b. Heroditus said he cut himself with his own sword while mounting his horse and died of the resulting infection.
   3. brief usurpation of the throne by Pseudo-Smerdis (Gaumata) - 522
E. 522-486 - Darius I (Hystapes) came to rule
   1. He was not of the royal line but a military general.
   2. He organized the Persian Empire using Cyrus' plans for Satraps (cf. Ezra 5-6; also during Haggai's and Zechariah's time).
   3. He set up coinage like Lydia.
   4. He attempted to invade Greece, but was repulsed.
F. 486-465 - Reign of Xerxes I:
   1. put down Egyptian revolt
   2. intended to invade Greece and fulfill Persian dream but was defeated in the battle of Thermopoly in 480 B.C. and Salamis in 479 B.C.
   3. Esther's husband, who is called Ahasuerus in the Bible, was assassinated in 465 B.C.

G. 465-424 - Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) reigned (cf Ezra 7-10; Nehemiah; Malachi):
   1. Greeks continued to advance until confronted with the Pelopanisian Civil Wars
   2. Greece divides (Athenian - Pelopanisian)
   3. Greek civil wars lasted about 20 years
   4. during this period the Jewish community is strengthened
   5. brief reign of Xerxes II and Sekydianos - 423

H. 423-404 - Darius II (Nothos) reigned
I. 404-358 - Artaxerxes II (Mnemon) reigned
J. 358-338 - Artaxerxes III (Ochos)reigned
K. 338-336 - Arses reigned
L. 336-331 - Darius III (Codomannus)reigned until the Battle of Issus 331 and was defeated by Greece

IV. Survey of Egypt:

A. Hyksos (Shepherd Kings - Semitic rulers)-1720/10-1550

B. 18th Dynasty (1570-1310):
1. 1570-1546 - Amosis
a. made Thebes the capital
b. invaded southern Canaan
2. 1546-1525 - Amenophis I (Amenhotep I)
3. 1525-1494 - Thutmosis I
4. 1494-1490 - Thutmosis II - married Thutmosis I's daughter, Hatshepsut
5. 1490-1435 - Thutmosis III (nephew of Hatshepsut)
6. 1435-1414 - Amenophis II (Amenhotep II)
7. 1414-1406 - Thutmosis IV
8. 1406-1370 - Amenophis III (Amenhotep III)
9. 1370-1353 - Amenophis IV (Akhenaten)
a. worshiped the Sun, Aten
b. instituted a form of high-god worship (monotheism)
c. Tel-El-Amarna letters are in this period
10. ? Smenkhare
11. ? Tutankhamun (Tutankhaten)
12. ? Ay (Aye-Eye)
13. 1340-1310 Haremhab

C. 19th Dynasty (1310-1200):
1. ? Rameses I (Ramses)
2. 1309-1290 - Seti I (Sethos)
3. 1290-1224 - Ramesses II (Ramses II)
a. from archaeological evidence most likely Pharaoh of the exodus
b. built the cities of Avaris, Pithom and Ramses by Habaru (possibly Semites or Hebrew) slaves
4. 1224-1216 - Marniptah (Merenptah)
5. ? Amenmesses
6. ? Seti II
7. ? Siptah
8. ? Tewosret

D. 20th Dynasty (1180-1065)
1. 1175-1144 - Rameses III
2. 1144-1065 - Rameses IV - XI

E. 21st Dynasty (1065-935):
1. ? Smendes
2. ? Herihor

F. 22nd Dynasty (935-725 - Libyan):
   1. 935-914 - Shishak (Shosenk I or Sheshong I)
      a. protected Jeroboam I until Solomon's death
      b. conquered Palestine about 925 (cf. I Kgs. 14-25; II Chr. 12)
   2. 914-874 - Osorkon I
   3. ? Osorkon II
   4. ? Shoshnek II

G. 23rd Dynasty (759-715 - Libyan)

H. 24th Dynasty (725-709)

I. 25th Dynasty (716/15-663 - Ethiopian/Nubian):
   1. 710/09-696/95 - Shabako (Shabaku)
   2. 696/95-685/84 - Shebteko (Shebitku)
   3. 690/689, 685/84-664 - Tirhakah (Taharqa)
   4. ? Tantamun

J. 26th Dynasty (663-525 - Saitic):
   1. 663-609 - Psammetichus I (Psamtik)
   2. 609-593 - Neco II (Necho)
   3. 593-588 - Psammetichus II (Psamtik)
   4. 588-569 - Apries (Hophra)
   5. 569-525 - Amasis
   6. ? - Psammetichus III (Psamtik)

K. 27th Dynasty (525-401 - Persian):
   1. 530-522 - Cambyses II (Cyrus II''s son)
   2. 522-486 - Darius I
   3. 486-465 - Xerxes I
   4. 465-424 - Artaxerxes I
   5. 423-404 - Darius II

L. Several brief dynasties (404-332)
   1. 404-359 - Artaxerxes II
   2. 539/8 - 338/7 - Artaxerxes III
   3. 338/7 - 336/7 - Arses
   4. 336/5 - 331 - Darius III

*for a differing chronology see Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 2 p. 231.

V. Survey of Greece:

A. 359-336 - Philip II of Macedon:
   1. built up Greece
   2. assassinated in 336 B.C.

B. 336-323 - Alexander II "the Great" (Philip's son):
   1. routed Darius III, the Persian king, at the battle of Isus
   2. died in 323 B.C. in Babylon of a fever at 32/33 yrs. of age

3. Alexander's generals divided his empire at his death:
    a. Cassender - Macedonia and Greece
    b. Lysimicus - Thrace
    c. Seleucus I - Syria and Babylon
    d. Ptolemy - Egypt and Palestine
    e. Antigonus - Asia Minor (He did not last long)

C. Seleucids vs. Ptolemies struggle for control of Palestine:
    1. Syria (Seleucid Rulers):
        a. 312-280 - Seleucus I
        b. 280-261 - Antiochus I Soter
        c. 261-146 - Antiochus II Theus
        d. 246-226 - Seleucus II Callinicus
        e. 226-223 - Seleucus III Ceraunus
        f. 223-187 - Antiochus III the Great
        g. 187-175 - Seleucus IV Philopator
        h. 175-163 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes
        i. 163-162 - Antiochus V
        j. 162-150 - Demetrius I
    2. Egyptian (Ptolemaic Rulers):
        a. 327-285 - Ptolemy I Soter
        b. 285-246 - Ptolemy II Philadelphus
        c. 246-221 - Ptolemy III Evegetes
        d. 221-203 - Ptolemy IV Philopator
        e. 203-181 - Ptolemy V Epiphanes
        f. 181-146 - Ptolemy VI Philometor
    3. Brief Survey:
        a. 301 - Palestine under Ptolemy rule for 181 years.
        b. 175-163 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the eighth Seleucid ruler, wanted to Hellenize Jews by force, if necessary:
            (1) constructed gymnasiums
            (2) constructed pagan altars of Zeus Olympius in the Temple
        c. 168 - December 13 - hog slain on the altar in Jerusalem by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Some consider this to be "the abomination of desolation" in Daniel 8.
        d. 167 - Mattathias, priest in Modin, and sons rebel. The best known of his sons was Judas Maccabeas, "Judas the Hammer."
        e. 165 - December 25 - Temple rededicated. This is called Hanukkah or "Festival of Lights."

For a good discussion of the dating problems, procedures and presuppositions see *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 10-17.

APPENDIX FOUR

CHART OF THE WHOLE OLD TESTAMENT
(on next page)

MALACHI
10
WALLS OF JERUSALEM - NEHEMIAH
THIRD RETURN - EZRA
ARTAXERXES I (P)
XERXES I - AHASUERUS (P)
EZRA 7-10
NEH.
ESTHER
DARIUS I (P)
CAMBEES II (P)
CYRUS II (P)
OBADIAH
JOEL
HAGGAI
ZECHARIAH
EZRA 1-6
9
SECOND RETURN - ZERUBBABEL
FIRST RETURN - SHESHBAZZAR
PERSIA
BELSHAZZAR (B)
NABONIDUS (B)
EXILE
8
BABYLON
NEBUCHADNEZZAR (B)
JEREMIAH
EZEKIEL
DANIEL
NAHUM
HABAKKUK
ZEPHANIAH
7
NABOPOLASAR (B)
ASHURBANIPAL (A)
ESARHADDON (A)
SENNACHERIB (A)
ASSYRIA
6
SARGON II (A)
SHALMANEZAR V (A)
TIGLATH PILESER III (A)
JONAH
AMOS
HOSEA
ISAIAH
MICAH
I & II KINGS
II CHRONICLES
SYRIA
ELIJAH
ELISHA
ISRAEL
JUDAH
5
PHILISTIA
4
R. JD. S (SDS)
I & II SAMUEL
I CHRONICLES
CANAAN
JOSH.
3
DEUT.
NUM.
EGYPT
LEV.
EX.
2
GEN. 12-50
JOB
1
GENESIS 1-11
TOWER OF BABEL (4)
FLOOD OF NOAH (3)
FALL OF MAN (2)
CREATION (1)
p - GEDALIAH (P)
o - ZEDEKIAH (J)
n - JEHOIACHIN (J)
m - JEHOIAKIM (J)
l - JEHOAHAZ (J)
k - JOSIAH (P)
j - MANASSEH (J)
i - HEZEKIAH (J)
h - UZZIAH (J)
g - JEROBOAM II (I)
f - AHAB (I)
e - JEROBOAM I (I)
d - REHOBOAM (J)
c - SOLOMON (UM)
b - DAVID (UM)
a - SAUL (UM)
DR. BOB UTLEY
BIBLE LESSONS IN'L '96

Undated events (Gen. 1-11):

1. creation (Gen. 1-2)
2. the fall (Gen. 3)
3. the flood (Gen. 6-9)
4. the tower of Babel (Gen. 10-11

Dateable Events:

1. the Patriarchal Period (Gen. 12-50 & Job) — 2000 B.C.
2. the exodus (Exodus) — 1445/1290 B.C.
3. the conquest (Joshua) — 1400/1250 B.C.
4. the united monarchy (Saul, David, Solomon) — 1000 B.C.
5. the divided monarchy (Rehoboam-Jeroboam I) — 922 B.C.
6. the fall of Samaria (Israel) — 722 B.C.
7. the fall of Jerusalem (Judah) — 586 B.C.
8. the decree of Cyrus (Persia) — 538 B.C.
9. the second temple — 516 B.C.
10. the close of the OT (Malachi) — 430 B.C.

List of Kings:

1. United Monarchy
   a. Saul (a)
   b. David (b)
   c. Solomon (c)
2. Israel
   a. Jeroboam I (e)
   b. Ahab (f)
   c. Jeroboam II (g)
3. Judah
   a. Rehoboam(d)
   b. Uzziah (h)
   c. Hezekiah (i)
   d. Manasseh (j)
   e. Josiah (k)
   f. Jehoahaz (3 months) (l)
   g. Jehoiakim (m)
   h. Jehoiachin (3 months) (n)
   i. Zedekiah (o)
   j. Gedaliah (Persian Governor) (p)
4. Assyria
   a. Tiglath Pileser III (745-727)
   b. Shalmanesar V (727-722)
   c. Sargon II (722-705)
   d. Sennacherib (705-681)
   e. Esarhaddon (681-669)
   f. Ashurbanipal (669-663)
5. Babylon
   a. Nabopolasar (626-605)
   b. Nebuchadnezzar (605-562)
   c. Nabonidus (556-539)
   d. Belshazzar
6. Persia
   a. Cyrus II (550-530 B.C.)
   b. Cambyses (530-522 B.C.)
   c. Darius I (522-486 B.C.)
   d. Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.)
   e. Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.)

APPENDIX FIVE

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

I do not particularly care for statements of faith or creeds. I prefer to affirm the Bible itself. However, I realize that a statement of faith will provide those who are unfamiliar with me a way to evaluate my doctrinal perspective. In our day of so much theological error and deception, the following brief summary of my theology is offered.

1. The Bible, both the Old and New Testament, is the inspired, infallible, authoritative, eternal Word of God. It is the self-revelation of God recorded by men under supernatural leadership. It is our only source of clear truth about God and His purposes. It is also the only source of faith and practice for His church.

2. There is only one eternal, creator, redeemer God. He is the creator of all things, visible and invisible. He has revealed Himself as loving and caring although He is also fair and just. He has revealed Himself in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Spirit; truly separate and yet the same in essence.

3. God is actively in control of His world. There is both an eternal plan for His creation that is unalterable and an individually focused one that allows human free will. Nothing happens without God's knowledge and permission, yet He allows individual choices both among angels and humans. Jesus is the Father's Elect Man and all are potentially elect in Him. God's foreknowledge of events does not reduce humans to a determined pre-written script. All of us are responsible for our thoughts and deeds.

4. Mankind, though created in God's image and free from sin, chose to rebel against God. Although tempted by a supernatural agent, Adam and Eve were responsible for their willful self-centeredness. Their rebellion has affected humanity and creation. We are all in need of God's mercy and grace both for our corporate condition in Adam and our individual volitional rebellion.

5. God has provided a means of forgiveness and restoration for fallen humanity. Jesus Christ, God's unique son, became a man, lived a sinless life, and by means of his substitutionary death, paid the penalty for mankind's sin. He is the only way to restoration and fellowship with God. There is no other means of salvation except through faith in His finished work.

6. Each of us must personally receive God's offer of forgiveness and restoration in Jesus. This is accomplished by means of volitional trust in God's promises through Jesus and a willful turning from known sin.

7. All of us are fully forgiven and restored based upon our trust in Christ and repentance from sin. However, the evidence for this new relationship is seen in a changed, and changing, life. The goal of God for humanity is not only heaven someday but Christlikeness now. Those who are truly redeemed, though occasionally sinning, will continue in faith and repentance throughout their lives.

8. The Holy Spirit is "the other Jesus." He is present in the world to lead the lost to Christ and develop Christlikeness in the saved. The gifts of the Spirit are given at salvation. They are the life and ministry of Jesus divided among His body, the Church. The gifts which are basically the attitudes and motives of Jesus need to be motivated by the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is active in our day as He was in the biblical times.

9. The Father has made the resurrected Jesus Christ the Judge of all things. He will return to earth to judge all mankind. Those who have trusted Jesus and whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will receive their eternal glorified bodies at His return. They will be with Him forever. However, those who have refused to respond to God's truth will be separated eternally from the joys of fellowship with the Triune God. They will be condemned along with the Devil and his angels.

This is surely not complete or thorough but I hope it will give you the theological flavor of my heart. I like the statement:

"In essentials—unity, In peripherals—freedom, In all things—love."