

God's Design in the Hebrew Scriptures: Daniel

Chapter 7 — The Vision Of Things To Come — Part 2

- I. The dream of Daniel, 1-14
 - A. The four kingdoms of man seen as beasts, 1-8
 - B. The kingdom of God seen in a Man, 9-14
- II. The interpretation of the dream of Daniel, 15-28
 - A. The source of the interpretation of the dream, 15-16
 - B. The four kingdoms of man seen as beasts explained, 17-18
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Most scholars interpret "for a time, times and half a time" to mean three and one half-years. Keil argues that the phrase is symbolic of an indefinite period of time, but his explanation is unconvincing. Montgomery rightly points out that "the 'half' still militates against the theory of a round number." Other Scripture passages also indicate that these three and one-half times are, in fact, three and one-half years. (1) The seven times in 4:16 are generally interpreted as seven years. (2) The Hebrew equivalent of this phrase occurs in 12:7 and is taken to approximate the 1,290 days of 12:11 and 1,335 days of 12:12, both of which are just over three and one-half years. (3) Revelation 13:5 says that the beast (who represents the same individual described in this chapter) will have power for forty-two months, which is equal to three and one-half years. (4) Revelation 11:2 relates that Jerusalem will be trampled for forty-two months, which is the time of the persecution of the Antichrist. (5) The same phrase is found in Rev 12:14; and the duration of this period is explained in 12:6 to be 1,260 days, which again is three and one-half years. (6) The period of three and one-half years is referred to in Dan 9:27, where a covenant is broken in the middle of the seventieth "seven" (or week). Most scholars understand the "sevens" spoken of in chap. 9 to be sevens of years. Thus one "seven" is seven years. Religious activities are stopped at the midpoint of the final "seven" (seven years), which would make the time of trial three and one-half years (see chap. 9 for discussion).

Thus the persecution of the saints will continue for three and a half years, which is exactly half of Antichrist's seven-year career. Commonly, this latter part of Antichrist's rule is called the "great tribulation" (cf. Rev 7:14). During this period, the judgments described in Rev 14-19 will come upon the earth.

Stephen R. Miller, vol. 18, Daniel, Includes Indexes., electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1994), 214.
 - D. The promised Kingdom of God seen in a Man unfolded as triumphant over all, 26-27
 - E. The impact of the interpretation on Daniel, 28

The Times of the Gentiles

God's program for the world chs. 2-7

Daniel wrote 2:4b-7:28 in the Aramaic language. This literary change gives the reader a clue that this part is a distinct section of the book. The content of this section also identifies it as special. It concerns the future history of the Gentiles during "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). Aramaic was the common language of the world in which Daniel lived when he wrote. It is natural that he would have recorded what concerns the world as a whole in the language of the Gentiles.

The writer constructed this section of the book in chiasmic form.

- A** A prophecy of an image concerning four Gentile nations and their end ch. 2
- B** The supernatural persecution and deliverance of Daniel's three friends ch. 3
- C** God's revelation to the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar ch. 4
- C'** God's revelation to the Gentile king Belshazzar ch. 5
- B'** The supernatural persecution and deliverance of Daniel ch. 6
- A'** A prophecy of animals concerning four Gentile nations and their end ch. 7

"Chapters 2 and 7 explain the succession of four Gentile empires that would exert control over Jerusalem and the Jews until God's kingdom is established. Chapters 3 and 6 warned the Jews of the persecution they would face during this period and exhorted them to remain faithful to God. Chapters 4 and 5 encouraged the Jewish remnant by reminding them that a time would come when even the Gentile rulers would acknowledge that the God of Israel rules over the nations."

Tom Constable, Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003), Dan 1:21.