

The chapter divisions in the Bible are artificial and were added afterwards by those who believed it aids referencing, similar also with the use of verse numbering. This chapter begins with a conjunction, “also” which sets the scene for the speaking angel. This angel confirmed that he was supporting the transfer of power from Babylon to Persia, as the prophet himself had predicted, and had been supporting that power since inception. God truly rules in the Kingdoms of men.

The Silver arms and chest, the bear with the ribs, the ram with two horns; all these symbolic representations speak of the second major gentile power that God would permit stewardship over His land and His people. This chapter charts the development of the continuous historical outworking of God’s plan. From the overthrow of Babylon under the Chaldeans to the restoration of Jerusalem under the Messiah.

The angel precedes the prophecy with the phrase *“And now will I show thee the truth”*, blowing out the claim that prophecy has nothing to do with the Truth. Prophecy is an important element of the Truth and should never be dismissed as merely a matter of opinion, for those so inclined to indulge themselves in.

In the days of Daniel, he had witnessed the rise of Chaldea as a world power and also its demise. Then the rise of Medo-Persia under first Darius and now Cyrus. For the Persian looking on they would have considered the words of Daniel very closely. The first of their Kings were to be followed by Cambyses then Darius Hystapes before Xerxes invaded Greece in about 480BCE about 12 years after Darius himself invaded at the battle of Marathon. Was this done because or despite the prophecy? Without the actual regal records, it is not possible to say, and all those records were destroyed by Alexander the Great in 330BCE about 150 years later. It does happen that Kings take action in the knowledge of prophecy perhaps the most famous incident is Julian the Apostate’s attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple in 363CE in order to disprove the words of Jesus.

This chapter charts not only the interactions of the Persian empire and the Greek speaking people, but also goes beyond to the last of the great gentile powers who held sway over the Holy Land, the Romans both as an imperial and as an ecclesiastical power: “the king shall do according to his will” “in his estate he shall honour.....a god whom his fathers knew not”. This “*Strange god*” the trinitarian and its pope, he was destined to both “*acknowledge and increase with glory*”, until the time of the end. This is about 2,600 years of ongoing gentile history, the longest treatment in scripture.

The catholic religion is summarised so powerfully in verse 37 *“Neither shall he regard the god of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”* Such is her audacious ambition and arrogance!

Some dismiss this as written after the event but the whole point of the chain of events is that it has yet to reach the conclusion and it has been accurate thus far. The next great events are said to be during the “time of the end”. The end of what? It is not so much the end of the world, although in a sense society as we know it will change, but in context it is the end of the suffering of the Jewish people, something we know painfully today has not yet been concluded! More on that for the concluding chapter.

The events of the last six verses are interesting in light of current international news. First the requirement for the King of the North (Russia) to come down with “many ships” is being stalled by the war in the Ukraine, which is spilling out onto the Black Sea and Russia’s southern fleet. They will be unable to support a land attack on Israel whilst they are distracted with Crimea and that area, also the absolute supremacy of US naval power in the East Mediterranean Sea needs to be eclipsed, perhaps by a new more isolationist approach by the USA, who knows how that will be accomplished. So, Ezekiel 38, a parallel passage to these verses, is not yet in the end position.

Also, it should be noticed that the Arab powers are found on opposite sides. Here in Daniel 11 we have the Libyans and Ethiopians with the King of the North, and Edom Moab and Ammon escaping out of his hand, so a disunited (partly clay partly iron) mix of Arabic speaking people, there is no united anti-Israel coalition as Psalm 83 speaks of, that was from a former time when Amalek was still current, before God destroyed them as a nation. Psalm 83 warns the children of Lot that they would be “*put to shame and perish*” which is not an end time prophecy, but one already fulfilled. Ancient Moab, ancient Edom, ancient Ammon have all perished, the modern nations that have replaced them are there prophetic representations, but if it is their prophetic replacements (modern Arab countries) that are the subject of Psalm 83 then it is the modern Arab countries that must perish in response to their hatred, so there is no room whatsoever for this before Gog, the King of the North, invades “*the glorious land*”.

Egypt is also mentioned as an adversary or satan of the King of the North in this chapter. He shall not escape but will receive the full wrath, as party to the destruction of Hamas and the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, which occupies the ancient territory of the Philistines, perhaps there is to be a degree of retribution for siding against the interests of the invaders. From previous centuries of gentile history, Egypt has defined the King of the South, but in context here, it is interesting that at the time of the end, these are both mentioned separately. So, it seems more appropriate to look for the identification of the King of the South at that time outside of Egypt.

The end of the cycle of friction between the King of the North and the King of the South is interesting because it occurs only at “the time of the end”. However, there is a long pause in history when the territory of Israel is not fought over but absorbed into Islamic control during the late Roman era when it is the eastern Roman empire that is in the ascendancy. Both Egypt and Syria as well as Israel are all then under the same control for centuries with only brief interludes. The ancient rivalry between north and south in that area is submerged under the larger powers of that era. The Byzantines, the Caliphate, the Ottomans all held sway over these lands for long periods. During that time the ecclesiastical elements of Roman to the west, were more significant than any politics, which is covered off in verses 36-39.

The revival of the old feud between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, the original Kings of the South and the North will be overtaken by a new rivalry. How that transpires is yet to be fully seen. Some say that pushing of the King of the North by the King of the South has already taken place, but perhaps not yet.

Before the arrival of the Romans, the last autocrat or “King who shall do according to his will” (verse 3, Persian, verse 16 Greek, verse 36 Roman), there was the temporary

interlude of the Maccabees followed by the Hasmoneans, which allowed “*they that understand among the people to instruct many*”. This Jewish resurgence did not last long but it buried brightly for a time and apart from the prophetic anticipation was quite unexpected, except for the fervour of Jewish nationalism. During this period those in the line of Christ lived out their lives of faithful preparation to make the generation that Jesus would instruct eclipse any other in their responsibility and awareness, there was truly a Messianic theme for a few decades, even as the prophecy of the seventy weeks predicted, with many false claims, some of which the New Testament documents, Acts 5v34-37.

Verse 35 seems to refer to the later stages of the Jewish commonwealth in New Testament times when “*some of them of understanding shall fall, to try the and to purge and to make them white*”, although the phase of the Messiah as the suffering servant is not revisited here being covered off in chapter 9 as we have already considered. Instead, the Messiah, or the Michael (One like God or El) is treated as the conquering political victor in chapter 12. This is in context understandable as it was the Jewish people who were to reject him, and this chapter focuses on their restoration, not their final ignominy.