

I, DANIEL

by

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In BAHÁ'Í NEWS, No. 77, September 1933, Shoghi Effendi tells us that only the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá [regarding biblical exegesis] are truly authoritative, but that if his statements cannot be discovered, we are free to tentatively accept the opinions of scholars.

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PREFACE

This essay does not begin to exhaust the wealth of meaning in the Book of Daniel. For one thing, it does not address the spiritual teachings in the Book, even though they are as pertinent today as when written. Nor does it review the history or Teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, which we believers accept as the working out of the Divine Will at the "time of the end."

We will not dwell on such mystical esoterica as number symbolism, gematria, astrological symbolism, and the like, except where minimally necessary. These subjects have already been addressed in a companion work, *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, to which the interested reader is referred. This is not meant to imply that there is nothing to gain by applying these tools to Daniel. To the contrary, this writer is convinced that there is a vast amount of mystical esoterica contained in Daniel awaiting some future discoverer.

During the research for *I, Daniel*, certain facts and Tablets were discovered that have caused this writer to reconsider his interpretations of a few passages in the Apocalypse. These are addressed in an Appendix to the present book.

Certain general observations might be made here. Daniel and Revelation are the two great apocalyptic works in Judeo-Christian literature. The Book of Daniel is directed primarily to the Jewish believer, whereas the Book of Revelation is directed primarily to the Christian believer. Both Books are profound, both Books are glorious; both Books are Divine Works; both Books confirm Bahá'u'lláh as the Latter Day Redeemer of the entire human race.

R. F. R.

INTRODUCTION

THE "PROPHET'S-EYE"

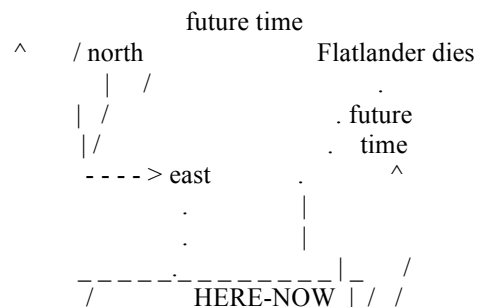
Flatlander is a creature who must exist and act on a plane instead of in a volume. He has a map with the usual east-west, north-south axes, but he is not aware of an up-down axis. He has freedom of will, whatever that may be, and is conscious of the point "here-now." He has a mind and can form concepts of space and time, but he is severely limited by the fact that he cannot get a view from above his flat plane of movement and vision. Consequently, he has serious doubts that anyone can predict the future course of events beyond what can be inferred from observing what is in one's immediate environment.

We humans, being in a superior world of four dimensions [three spatial dimensions plus time], can observe Flatlander from above as he makes choices and moves from place to place in Flatland. But, like Flatlander, we four-dimensional humans are addicted to making concepts and theories about ourselves and the universe, and it occurs to one of us to make a sketch of Flatlander's movements.

The location of Flatlander in his world is plotted horizontally, as it should be. But how do we show Flatlander's movements in our sketch? The most elegant solution is to show time as a third dimension projecting vertically out of the page. Flatlander's movements in space-time then trace out a three-dimensional curve called a "world line," an example being shown in the figure. In our model of Flatlander's movements, as he moves horizontally north, south, east or west, he moves "vertically" in time.

Now, in our mental experiment, let us suppose that somehow we observers living in our four-dimensional world have the ability to observe Flatlander's world line extending into his future as well as into his past. We get a "snap shot," so to speak, of every movement that Flatlander has made or will make, even though, as we have said, Flatlander has been gifted with freedom of will. We might also observe how his world line interacts in time and space with those other citizens of Flatland, observe important epochs, catastrophes, repeating patterns of events, and so forth.

This "prophet's-eye" view may give us some imperfect notion of how a true prophet, having access to a divine world of many higher dimensions unknown to us, might be able to observe the future course of human events, even though each one of us in our own contingent world of only four dimensions seems to have, to some extent, freedom of will.



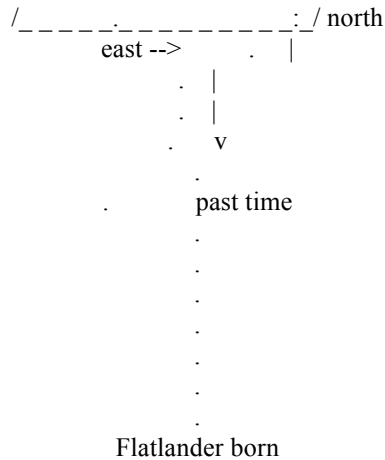


Figure I-1

“PRAGMATIC INTUITION”

The method this investigator has used in interpreting Daniel may be described as “pragmatic intuition”: try out various plausible ideas until you find the one that works. Since many worthier scholars have failed to unseal the secrets of Daniel, one may conclude that routine scholarship probably cannot unseal prophetic writings. Recourse might be made to the method of intuitive discovery that is familiar to creative scientists and artists; through it we might leap beyond what can be reached through routine scholarship.

If this essay succeeds, it is not because the author has any special abilities at prophecy-reading, nor does it suggest that he has had any extraordinary divine assistance. Instead, it means that the writer may have stumbled upon some truth, and anyone with adequate patience and with a penchant for historical research can achieve, and probably improve on, the result.

A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

It will be necessary to define certain terms that will be used in the following pages. Most of them have been developed and used by other biblical commentators and scholars with various degrees of success.

First, we must understand what is meant by the “archetype of a number.” In the language of ancient number symbolism, any number will have an archetype between “one” and “nine.” It is found by continuously adding the digits in a number until one digit remains. For example, the number 1269 has an archetype of “nine”; since $1 + 2 + 6 + 9 = 18$, and (continuing the process) $1 + 8 = 9$. Another example: the archetype of 258 is “six”; since $2 + 5 + 8 = 15$, and (continuing) $1 + 5 = 6$. The simplest cases are “decadal successors” like 7, 70, 700, 7000, etc., all of which have an archetype of seven. Similarly, 3, 30, 300, 3000, etc. all have an archetype of three. These last two examples will be used in the explanation of Daniel 9.

Next, we have to know the meanings of certain temporal terms:

A “prophetic day” usually means a calendar year. Most biblical scholars justify this definition by quoting Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, in which it is said that a day of the Lord is equal to a year. But, by recognizing that a number-archetype may be involved, “One prophetic day” may equal 1 year, or 1 decade, or 1 century, and so on. It behooves us to consider whether some decadal successor of “one” might be meant in its particular context.

An “evening and a morning” is taken as an exact “prophetic day.” The justification for this definition is that it works well in the one place it is encountered: Daniel 8:13.

A “prophetic week” usually means seven calendar years. But, again, if “seven prophetic days” are intended, it might mean 7 years, or 7 decades, or even 7 centuries. In the text of Daniel chapter 9, it will be convenient to emphasize this fact by retaining the correct translation of the Hebrew word “shabua” as “seven.”

A “sabbatic year” is a special term and is equal to 7 decades (i.e., 70 years). This definition is arbitrary and is equal to the span of time of the Jewish exile in Babylon.

A “prophetic year” is 360 calendar days. Again, this definition is arbitrary but sometimes useful. It is based on the 360-day calendar of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. The use of the 360-day calendar in biblical allegory can be inferred by correlating the dates in Genesis 7:11,24 and 8:4.

A “time” is taken as 360 lunar years. The justification for this definition is (1) the use of a lunar calendar in the ancient Near East, and (2) allowing a year for each day of the 360-day “prophetic year.”

A lunar year is the time required for twelve lunations. It is equal to 354.367 days.

A solar year is the time between equinoxes or solstices. It is equal to 365.242 days.

The word “times” is taken as 2-“times,” that is 720 lunar years. The justification for this definition is the dual form of the Hebrew word in Daniel 12:7 in which “times” is clearly 2-“times.”

A “season” is taken as 90 prophetic days, one-fourth of a prophetic year.

ABOUT TRANSLATIONS

Anyone who has compared different translations of biblical texts for the first time will receive a rude awakening. Translations are generally inconsistent and often disagree on important particulars. The special case of Daniel is even worse than most, since much of the Hebrew is obscure and may have suffered some distortions along the way.

The method that this writer has used to minimize this problem was to compare several translations, word by word. When serious disagreements occurred, the writer chose the translation that seemed to be the most consistent with the rest of the Book and with the historical scenario implied by the prophecy. On rare occasions, it was found necessary to “clean up” the result by rewording sections to make them more readable, hopefully without straying from the meaning of the original translations. The translations most used were *The New English Bible*, (1970), *The Revised English Bible*, (1989), *The New International Version*, (1983), *The Revised Standard Version*, (1951), and the *King James Version*, (1611).

For whatever it is worth, this writer usually, but not always, found the *New English Bible* to be the easiest to correlate with historical events. It is noteworthy that both English Bibles were translated by scholars drawn from various British universities without denominational considerations. Also, in the words of Daniel Ebor, Chairman of the (multi-denominational) Joint Committee in charge of the translation of the *New English Bible*,

...There is probably no member of the panel who has not found himself obliged to give up, perhaps with lingering regret, a cherished view about the meaning of this or that difficult passage, but in the end the panel accepted corporate responsibility for the interpretation set forth in the translation adopted.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN DANIEL

The following Table should be referenced frequently during the reading of the text.

EVENT	CHRISTIAN SOLAR RECKONING	MUSLIM LUNAR RECKONING	EPOCH IN DANIEL
	BCE: [pre-Christian]	BH: [BH in the Islamic calendar denotes “Before the Hegira—the exodus from Mecca to Medina.”] [pre-Islamic]	
Nebuchadnezzar reigns in Chaldea	605-562		“Golden” Era (2:3)
Nebuchadnezzar goes insane	602	1261	Begin 2520 years (4:23)
Cyrus conquers Media	550		Longer Horn (8:20)
Cyrus conquers Chaldea	537		Begin “Silver” Era (2:39)
Artaxerxes’ Decree	457		Begin 49 years (9:25)
			Begin 2300 years (8:13)
Jerusalem rebuilt	408		End 49 years (9:25)
			Begin 434 years (9:25)

Alexander conquers Persia	331		Great Horn (8:5) Begin "Bronze" era (2:39) Begin Time of Troubles (9:25) (11:5)
House of Ptolemy acquires South	323		
Ptolemy Soter takes Palestine	318		
House of Seleucus acquires North	301		(11:5)
Beginning of North-South wars over Palestine	220		
Antiochus Epiphanes usurps throne of Seleucids	175		First Little Horn (8:9)
Antiochus sacks Jerusalem, desecrates the Temple	168		(11:28)
Begin Maccabean Revolt	167		(11:38)
Antiochus massacres Jews, desecrates the Temple for a second time, replaces Jehovah	164		First Abomination of Desolation (11:31)
Antiochus 'broken'	164		(8:25)
End of Maccabean Revolt. Seleucids driven out of Judea	142		End of Wrath (8:19)
Probable Birth of Jesus	c. 6-4		
	CE: [Christian]		
Traditional Birth of Jesus	1		
Ministry of Jesus	27-34		End 434 years (9:25)
The Crucifixion	34		End 490 years (9:24) Messiah cut-off. Begin 35 years. (9:26)
Sacrileges in the Temple	40-70 69		Middle of Seven. End 35 years. (9:27) (9:27)
Jerusalem falls to Titus. Daily Sacrifice terminated	70		
Christianity firmly established	70-104		Strong Covenant (9:27)
Bar Cocheba's revolt	132-5		Author of Desolation (9:27)
Hadrian replaces Jehovah	c. 136		Second Abomination of Desolation (9:27)
Muhammad's first public declaration	613	11-12	Begin 1290 years (12:11)
		AH: [AH in the Islamic calendar denotes "After the Hegira—the exodus from Mecca to Medina.] [Islamic]	
The Hegira	622	1	Begin the 1260 years (7:25, 12:7)
Islam firmly established	622-8		Begin 1335 years (12:12)
Babylon falls to Islam	635		Begin "Iron" era (2:40)
Jerusalem falls to Islam	637		Islam becomes new South
House of Umayyah usurps caliphate	661		First ten-horned Beast (7:7)
House of Abbas usurps caliphate	750		Second 10-horned Beast
As-Saffa rules Islam	750-4		Second Little Horn (7:8)
Fall of House of Abbas	861		
The First Crusade	1095		Christendom becomes new North
Islam takes Akka, ending Crusades	1291		Begin Time of the End (11:35)
Napoleon invades Palestine	1798		Latter Day King of the North (11:36) (11:45)
Napoleon defeated at Akka	1799		Appearance of Michael (12:1)
Napoleon exiled to St. Helena	1815		
Birth of Bahá'u'lláh	1817		
Birth of the Báb	1819		
Napoleon dies	1821		(11:45)
Edict of Toleration	1844	1260	End of the Jewish exile End of the 1260 years (7:25, 12:7) End of the 2520 years (4:33) End of the 2300 years (8:13)

Declaration of the Báb	1844		End of the Abomination of Desolation (7:12)
The Báb imprisoned in Mah-ku	1847		Begin 450 years (?) (7:12)
Martyrdom of the Báb	1850		Begin 21-years (10:13)
First public Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh	1863	1279	End of the 1290 years (12:11)
Bahá'u'lláh exiled from Baghdad	1863		(12:5)
The Lawh-i-Sultan of Bahá'u'lláh	1868		Michael aids the Báb
			End of the 21 years. (10:13)
Bahá'u'lláh imprisoned at Akka	1868		
Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	1892		
Caliphate abolished	1924		End of the "Iron" era (2:44)
The Nazi holocaust	1935-45		Time of Distress (12:11)
The founding of modern Israel	1948		Israel delivered (12:1)
Bahá'í Faith firmly established	1957-1963		End of the 1335 years (12:12)

Chapter One

THE FOUR ERAS OF BABYLON

In Chapter 2 of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar II, the king of Chaldea (neo-Babylonia), has a dream and challenges his 'wise men: magicians, exorcists, sorcerers, and Chaldeans' both to describe and interpret his dream or to suffer death. None of the wise men summoned before the king were able to meet the challenge, and Nebuchadnezzar, in a fit of rage, ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. Daniel, being a 'wise man,' was among those threatened with execution. But with the help of God, Daniel was able to reveal the king's dream, was thereby to save the lives of his colleagues and to win other favors.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of an image, 'huge and dazzling, ... fearful to behold':

Daniel 2

32 The head of the image was of fine gold, its breasts and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

33 Its legs of iron, its feet part iron and part clay.

34 While (Nebuchadnezzar) looked, a stone was hewn from a mountain, not by human hands; it struck the image on its feet of part iron and part clay and shattered them.

35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, were all shattered into fragments and were swept away like chaff before the wind from a threshing floor in summer, until no trace of them remained. But the stone which struck the image grew into a great mountain filling the whole earth.

In verse 28, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that the dream reveals what is to be at the 'end of the age.' In later verses, Daniel interprets the dream as four 'kingdoms,' the kingdom of gold referring to that of Nebuchadnezzar himself; the silver kingdom would replace Nebuchadnezzar's but would be inferior to his; the third or bronze kingdom would have sovereignty 'over the whole world.'

Still later, the fourth kingdom would be as 'strong as iron,' breaking and shattering the whole earth. But the kingdom of 'iron mixed with clay' would be a divided kingdom, partly strong and partly brittle. The 'stone hewn from a mountain, not by human hands' refers to a final kingdom to be established by God that would shatter all the other kingdoms, while it shall itself, endure forever.

It is interesting that Nebuchadnezzar's dream was delivered in the metaphor of the traditional four "eras" of man: gold, silver, bronze, and iron, a canon held by various philosophers and theologians of antiquity. In Hebrew mystical terminology, a "day of creation," a "Lord's Day," "era," or a "world" referred to phases of progressive revelation.² The succession of Days or eras represents different cultures with different customs and religions, what today's historians would call civilizations.

There is also an astrological connotation of an "age," related to the gradual shifting of the stellar constellations of the zodiac throughout the course of millennia, called the precession of the equinoxes by astronomers. Daniel lived at a time when the sun was entering the constellation PISCES at the SPRING equinox, and the constellation Virgo at the Fall equinox; that is, they were entering the astrological age of PISCES-Virgo. Today, we are entering the succeeding astrological age of AQUARIUS-Leo. Thus, in astrological terms, our own time is the "end of the age." This sometimes bewildering subject is discussed at length by de Santillana in *Hamlet's Mill*.³

² Ref 10

³ Ref 14

The metals have qualities descriptive of the eras or civilizations: Gold is the most precious metal, brilliant and desirable for its symbolic or “spiritual” attributes. Silver is also precious but less so, and less desired for its spiritual attributes. Bronze is a strong, blended metal, less desired than either silver or gold, but an important metal of war and commerce. Finally, iron is the strongest of metals, the metal of the sword, least desired of the four for its symbolic or spiritual attributes.

We can, indeed, identify four eras or civilizations in Chaldea, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom, sixth century BCE. Chaldea was the heir and participant in the civilization of Mesopotamia, the primal region of Chaldea. To Chaldea, Sumer, Assyria, and old Babylonia we owe the invention of the first practical system of writing that eventually led to our modern alphabet, the wheel, origins of scientific mathematics and astronomy (via the pseudoscience of astrology), the idea of a social system based upon a written code of law, and an elected bicameral legislative system of government.

The religion of Chaldea had its beginnings in remote antiquity, perhaps more than five thousand years ago. It involved a rich complex of ritual and myth that has profoundly affected the religions of the West – especially Judaism and Christianity. The Book of Genesis has many parallels in Chaldean literature – the Creation story, Paradise, the Flood, the Cain-Abel rivalry, the Babel of Tongues. So, too, does the concept of a personal God, the concept that man was created primarily to serve God, and the concept that God’s creative power is in His Word. From the Babylonian Captivity, the Jews acquired chants, such as the Kol Nidre, that are still used today. The Christians acquired, among other things, the rite of Baptism.⁴

Nebuchadnezzar’s capital, Babylon, was the greatest and most impressive city on earth, with massive walls, imposing temples, and soaring towers. Some historians believe one of these soaring towers, completed by Nebuchadnezzar, the three-hundred-foot-high ziggurat of Etemananki, to be the fabulous “Tower of Babel” that has inspired poets, artists, and mystics for millennia. Another architectural triumph of Nebuchadnezzar was the “hanging gardens,” considered to be one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Babylon was visited by the Greek historian Herodotus in the fifth century BCE, who described it as a city “with such magnificence that none other can approach it.” The defensive towers that punctuated the walls of Babylon were so broad across the top that there was “room for a four-horse chariot to turn.”

The golden era of Chaldea was short lived. The rulers of Chaldea who followed Nebuchadnezzar were weak and vacillating. The last king, Nabonidus, engrossed in antiquarian researches, incurred the wrath of many of his compatriots by tampering with established religious beliefs and customs. His weakened kingdom was easily conquered by the brilliant warrior-statesman Cyrus the Great of Media-Persia in 539 BCE, who had a well-deserved reputation for respecting the traditions of those he conquered.

We identify the Medeo-Persian period of Chaldea as its silver era. The religion of Cyrus was Zoroastrianism, and while Cyrus was scrupulous in preserving the religious traditions of Chaldea, it was inevitable that Zoroastrianism would make inroads into the region. It has been claimed by many scholars that some of the beliefs of Zoroastrianism have also made their way into Judaism and Christianity.

While much of its capital Babylon was destroyed by Cyrus, it retained its identity as a great city as confirmed by Herodotus and others of the time. Nevertheless, Chaldean culture was on the decline. An insurrection by Babylon in 521 BCE led to the destruction of the walls of Babylon by Darius, and, by the fourth century BCE, the cultural identity of Chaldea was altered forever.

The Medeo-Persian period of Chaldea was disrupted by the conquests of Alexander the Great in 331 BCE, the Macedonian-Greek conqueror of the known world whom we will meet again in another chapter. By Alexander’s time, Babylon had become the winter capital of the Medeo-Persian kings, less opulent than the ceremonial capital of Persepolis and largely in ruins. In fact, Alexander had intended to rebuild the great ziggurat of Babylon [Etemananki] as a symbol of his conquest, but the task proved to be too difficult and the project was abandoned. Chaldea under Alexander and his Seleucid successors continued its decline.

The Seleucids, too, soon went into decline. They withdrew from much of Chaldea and were, in turn, conquered by Rome. Chaldea then became a region of contention between the Roman Empire and a revived Persian empire under the Parthians and the Sassanians. Chaldea was eventually recovered by Persia but continued its cultural decline. Throughout this chaotic period, Chaldea retained a large population, canals and dikes were kept in repair, and commerce and architecture flourished. But in spite of the tenacious economic vitality of the region, the reins of government were held by the “vilest tyranny of sots, drunkards, tyrants, lunatics, savages, and abandoned women....”⁵

The Hellenistic period of Chaldea, initiated by Alexander, was continued by his Seleucid heirs and, intermittently, by Rome. We identify the Hellenistic (Graeco-Roman) period as the bronze era of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, roughly a millennium.

The culture and belief system of Hellenism had its impact on the entire region conquered by Alexander and his Hellenistic successors. The pagan religion of the Hellenistic civilization persisted for many centuries, even after Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman empire in the fourth century CE. And while it can be argued that Roman Christianity made some inroads into parts of Chaldea, the long-term effects were largely inconsequential.

⁴ Ref 15

⁵ Ref 2, p. 639

The iron era of Chaldea was ushered in by the Islamic conquests of the seventh century CE. The invincible Arabian warriors swept over the known world like a “plague of locusts.” Most of Chaldea was in the hands of the Muslim caliphate by 633. Jerusalem fell in 637, and by 644 most of Persia and its great horde of treasures had been taken.

But the caliphate (successorship) of Muhammad contained a fatal flaw: there was no written document defining the Islamic successorship, only a deathbed statement by Muhammad declaring the young and inexperienced ‘Ali to be his Caliph. The result was a permanent and bitter split between the two major factions of Islam – the Sunni and the Shi’ih – that has persisted to this day. The Sunni faction has promoted a caliphate based on apparent capability and experience; the Shi’ih faction has promoted a caliphate based on ‘Ali’s descendants – the Imamate. Thus the Muslim empire proved to be ‘brittle,’ like ‘iron mixed with clay.’ By the end of Caliph Harun ar-Rashid’s reign in 809 CE, the Muslim empire had passed its zenith and had broken into pieces.

Under early Islam, the region of old Chaldea had a resurgence of prosperity reminiscent of the era of Alexander’s empire. The city of Babylon continued to decay and became a ruin, but the capital of the Muslim empire was placed in the region of Chaldea, briefly at Damascus and finally at Baghdad – not far from the ruins of Babylon.

During the reign of the ‘fourth kingdom’ and as the iron era draws to a close in Daniel’s interpretation, the final ‘kingdom’ of divine origin is represented by a ‘stone hewn from a mountain.’ A mountain has often represented a religion in sacred literature, while a stone may represent Truth. In ancient times, and even in some areas of today’s world, “stones from heaven” (meteorites) have become objects of reverence. The Ka’bih at Mecca still contains such a stone that was revered even before Muhammad’s time.

The symbol is appropriate and describes the Bahá’í Revelation (stone) that was hewn from the Faith (mountain) of the Báb. The stone struck the weakest foot of the Muslim world – the iron mixed with clay – that symbolizes the Shi’ih tradition centered in modern Iran. Daniel goes on to prophesy that this stone will, itself, become a great mountain that will shatter all the other ‘kingdoms’ and will endure ‘forever.’ The meaning is clear: the Bahá’í Faith will inevitably become a great religion that will transcend all others, both in spiritual power and in duration.

Chapter Two

THE SEVEN TIMES

Chapter 4 of Daniel purports to be a letter from king Nebuchadnezzar ‘to all peoples and nations of every language living in the whole world,’ exalting and glorifying the Most High God, the Everlasting One, the King of heaven. The background for this outpouring of praise begins with another dream of Nebuchadnezzar that only Daniel can interpret for him.

Nebuchadnezzar first dreams of a tree of great height at the center of the earth, visible to earth’s farthest bounds, yielding food for all, and shelter for beasts and birds. This is followed by another vision in which a Watcher, a Holy One, comes down from heaven and commands that the tree be hewn down, its branches and foliage stripped, but commands that the stump and roots be left in the ground.

Daniel 4

15 ... So, tethered with an iron ring, let him eat his fill of the lush grass; let him be drenched with the dew of heaven and share the lot of the beasts in their pasture; let his mind cease to be a man’s mind, and let him be given the mind of a beast.

16 Let seven times pass over him. The issue has been determined by the Watchers and the sentence pronounced by the Holy Ones.

17 Thereby the living will know that the Most High is sovereign in the kingdom of men; he gives the kingdom to whom he will and he may set over it the humblest of mankind. [*New English Bible*]

Daniel’s interpretation of the dream is that the tree represents Nebuchadnezzar. The power is to be taken from Nebuchadnezzar, he will be banished from society, will live with the wild beasts, feed on grass, and be rained on until seven times pass over him.

Daniel 4

25 ... Seven times will pass over you until you have learnt that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

26 The command was given to leave the stump of the tree with its roots. By this you may know that from the time you acknowledge the sovereignty of heaven your rule will endure.

The term ‘seven times’ is repeated thrice in this chapter before the events indicated by the dream happened to Nebuchadnezzar. The trigger that caused his downfall was a later boast: of the great city of Babylon that he had built and of his own mighty power and majesty. A voice from heaven immediately warns him that he will be banished, etc., and that seven times will pass over him until he has learnt that the Most High is the true Sovereign of all mankind.

The events prophesied by Daniel then occurred; Nebuchadnezzar was banished, ate grass like oxen, etc.. At the end of the appointed time:

Daniel 4

34 At the end of the appointed time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes to heaven and returned to my right mind.

after which Nebuchadnezzar gives praise and glory to the Most High for the restoration of his sanity and his kingdom.

Nebuchadnezzar's spell of insanity is interesting in its own right because it warns us of the folly of arrogance before the Lord of the Universe. But the emphasis on the 'seven times' seems to indicate that the revelation has a hidden meaning that should be investigated.

As usual, Daniel gives us everything we need to date the beginning of the seven times. Daniel 2:1 gives the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign as the date when Nebuchadnezzar began to have troubling dreams. This would be the year 603 BCE. The date for the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's madness is given in 4:29 as "after twelve months." There is no other date given between verses 2:1 and 4:29. Thus the beginning of the count of the seven times is 602 BCE.

As explained in the Introduction, a "time" is 360 lunar years. Seven times is therefore equal to 2520 lunar years or 2445 solar years. This is the span of time between 602 BCE and the Edict of Toleration in 1844 CE. The Edict of Toleration permitted the Jewish people to resettle the holy land after almost eighteen centuries of exile, and was the prerequisite necessary for the re-establishment of Israel as a modern nation. More will be said about this Edict in later chapters.

Another curious thing about 'seven times' is that it is twice the 'time, times and half a time' (3 1/2 times) that will be found elsewhere in Daniel and Revelation. This is 1260 lunar years. The year 1260 AH in the Muslim calendar corresponds to 1844 CE in the Christian calendar. In other words, the Muslim calendar starts half way between Nebuchadnezzar's spell of insanity and the Edict of Toleration.

The Watchers and Holy Ones are also interesting. In certain ancient mystical writings, the Watchers and Holy Ones, (the "Household of the Upper World") are listed as Uriel, Raphael, Michael, Zerachiel, Gabriel, and Remiel. Four of these Angels are represented as 'Faces on the four sides of the Deity': Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, and Uriel.⁶ Only two of these are named in Daniel: Michael and Gabriel. In later chapters of this book, the case will be made that Michael and Gabriel correspond to Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb at the time of the end.⁷

Text note reference is missing

1. *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia.*

Chapter Three

THE FOUR BEASTS

These visions appeared to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar, the (caretaker?) king of Babylon, as Daniel lay in his bed:

Daniel 7

2 ... I, Daniel ... saw a great sea churned up by the four winds of heaven,

3 And the four huge beasts coming out of the sea, each one different from the others.

4 The first was like a lion but had eagle's wings. I watched while its wings were plucked off and it was lifted from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man.

⁶ Ref. 10, p. 52

⁷ According to Judeo-Christian mysticism, Gabriel is the Archangel of Yesod (Foundation). Historically, the appearance of Gabriel has often accompanied an important announcement of a new 'foundation'; that is, the beginning of a new era of human events. For example, Gabriel was the one who delivered the Revelation to Muhammad on Mount Hira that He was to be the Messenger to mankind. In Luke 1, it is Gabriel who delivers the message to Zechariah that he will be the father of John the Baptist, and to Mary that she will be the mother of Jesus.

Michael is the Archangel of Hod (Glory), and is associated in sacred literature with victory. For example, Michael is the Victor over the forces of the dragon in Revelation 12.

A modern Jungian psychologist would call Gabriel and Michael 'archetypes of the collective unconscious.' We will have to await our own encounters with the invisible realm to find out if Michael and Gabriel exist literally, or figuratively, or both.

Ancient mystical esoterica is a vast study unto itself. We prefer to leave the exploration of that maze to experts. But the "four sides of the Deity" suggests an astrological connotation: the four sides of the Deity may correspond to the four corners of the "square earth," that is, the four principal directions of the cosmos. If so, Michael and Gabriel may stand watch over the equinoxes, while Raphael and Uriel may stand watch over the solstices. The equinoxes of the new astrological age we are now entering are in the signs Leo and Aquarius. In reference 1, we find that these two signs probably correspond to Bahá'u'lláh and the Bab. Raphael and Uriel would then stand watch over Taurus and Flying Eagle (Scorpio), the signs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

Daniel's vision begins with the sea of humanity, 'churned up' by the forces of heaven. Great movements and nations are to result from this churning, each symbolized by a 'beast' with different attributes.

The lion with eagle's wings was a symbol used by the Assyrian kings. But Assyria was conquered by an alliance of the Chaldeans and the Medes near the end of the seventh century BCE, thereby initiating the Chaldean (neo-Babylonian) empire. The lion became a symbol prominent in Chaldean art, now without wings. The two "feet" of the "plucked lion" were Chaldea and Media.

Daniel 7

5 Then I saw another, a second beast, like a bear. It was half crouching and had three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth. the command was given: 'Up, gorge yourself with flesh.'

The bear is an inhabitant of primitive wilderness areas, is slow-moving but powerful. Its attributes describe Media-Persia before she undertook the conquest of the Near East. Situated in a rugged and undeveloped region, Media (soon to be called Media-Persia) was considered a poor empire without real wealth. The bear is half crouching in Daniel's vision because, although considered dangerous, Media-Persia did not appear desirous of attacking Chaldea or any other power in the Near East. The dangerous aspect of Media-Persia is apparent from a look at a political map of the time that shows Chaldea and Lydia, the other great powers of the region, beneath the "jaws" of the bear. It was only after an unwarranted and ill-advised attack upon Media-Persia by King Croesus of Lydia in 546 BCE that the slow-moving bear became a determined aggressor.⁸ Seven years after its annexation of Lydia, Media-Persia conquered Chaldea; after another fourteen years, she conquered Egypt. The three ribs in the bear's jaws represent the three great kingdoms conquered by Media-Persia: Lydia, Chaldea, and Egypt.

Following the death of Darius the Mede, who had suffered a humiliating defeat by the Greeks in 490 BCE, Xerxes, the son of Darius, kept a slave by his side at the dinner table whose job it was to whisper, "Master, remember the Athenians." In 480 BCE, Xerxes undertook a punitive invasion of Greece to avenge his father's defeat. Thus the command to "gorge yourself with flesh" was given by Xerxes to his vast army. Nevertheless, the invasion of Greece ended in a second disastrous failure.

Daniel 7

6 After this as I gazed I saw another, a beast like a leopard with four wings on its back; this creature had four heads, and it was invested with sovereign power.

The leopard is descriptive of the empire of Alexander the Great: poised, ready to leap, swift-moving, and highly successful in capturing its prey.

Alexander, in his "lair" of Macedonia, was poised, ready to leap onto Asia in 335 BCE. Behind him he had four great victories ("wings") in Europe – Thessaly, Thrace, Illyria and Thebes. These four victories, achieved in only one year, had set the stage for four more incredible victories in Asia, achieved in only three years – Granicus, Issus, Tyre and Gaugamela. These four victories, corresponding to the four wings of victory of the leopard in Daniel 7:6, achieved the capture of the entire Persian empire.

A "head" is that upon which a crown is placed – that is, a dominion. The four heads of the leopard correspond to the four dominions that were established upon the death of Alexander: those of Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.

Daniel 7

7 Next in my visions of the night I saw a fourth beast, dreadful and grisly, exceedingly strong, with great iron teeth and bronze claws. It crunched and devoured, and trampled underfoot all that was left. It differed from all the beasts which preceded it in having ten horns.

8 While I was considering the horns I saw another horn, a little one, springing up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted to make room for it. And in that horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth that spoke proud words.

In later verses, Daniel receives further information regarding the beast with ten horns that improves Daniel's understanding, and ours:

Daniel 7

23 ... The fourth beast signifies a fourth kingdom which shall appear upon the earth. It shall differ from the other kingdoms and shall devour the whole earth, tread it down and crush it.

⁸ There is a famous anecdote, related by Herodotus, connected with Croesus' decision to invade Media-Persia. Croesus enquired of the two famous Oracles at Delphi and Pytho as to whether he should undertake the invasion. The replies of both Oracles agreed: if he invaded Media-Persia, he would destroy a great empire. Croesus mistakenly assumed that the great empire to be destroyed would be Media-Persia.

24 As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones and shall put down three kings....

The fourth beast is the Muslim empire, while the ten horns refer to its rulers. The Muslim empire will combine the attributes of military power (iron teeth) and economic greed (bronze claws).

A 'horn' is a "handle"; that is, a name. The ten horns represent names of the leaders of the Usurpers of the caliphate (Successorship) to Muhammad.

The first of these Usurpers was the House of Umayyah. Abu-Sufyan, an idolater from Mecca, was the shrewd and infamous leader of the Umayyad clan, and was the driving force behind the usurpation of the Islamic caliphate from 'Ali, the rightful heir, in 661 CE.

There were fifteen leaders of the Umayyah, beginning with Abu-Sufyan. But there were only ten names among these leaders, since several of these were repeated. The unrepeated names were: Abu-Sufyan, Mu'awiya, Yazid, Marwan, 'Abdu'l-Malik, al-Walid, Sulayman, Umar, Hisham, and Ibrahim.

Mu'awiya, the son of Abu-Sufyan, was the Caliph who introduced the insidious practice of fabricating traditions ascribed to Muhammad, maligning and denigrating 'Ali. Through his direction, several minions were bribed into corrupting and distorting Muslim doctrine, text, belief and practice.⁹

Following their fall from power in 750 CE, one Umayyad, 'Abd al-Rahman, escaped to Andalusia (Spain) where he set up another Umayyad dynasty in 756 CE, usually called the "Cordoban caliphate." The pattern of ten horns followed the House of Umayyah to Spain. There were eighteen neo-Umayyad Caliphs of the Cordoban caliphate, but, again, with only ten unrepeated names: 'Abd al-Rahman, Hisham, Hakam, Muhammad, Munzir, Abdullah, Hijab, al-Mansur, 'Abdu'l Malik, al-Mahdi, and Sulayman. The Cordoban caliphate came to its end in 1031 CE.

The beast with ten horns is a subject of Revelation 12, in which it is revealed that the beast also has seven heads. The seven heads are the seven dominions that were ruled by the Umayyah: Syria, Persia, Egypt, Africa, Arabia, Andalusia, and Transoxania.

The fall of the House of Umayyah came at the hand of another tyrant: the House of 'Abbas. Oddly enough, the House of 'Abbas also had ten 'horns,' from their usurpation of power in 750 CE until their loss of sovereignty to the Turks in 861 CE: As-Saffa, al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, al-Hadi, ar-Rashid, al-Amin, al-Ma'mun, al-Mu'tasim, al-Wathiq, and al-Mutawakkil.¹⁰ While the Umayyad dynasty was founded in Arabia, the Abbasid dynasty was founded in Persia; and while the capital of the Umayyah was in Damascus, the capital of the Abbasids was in Baghdad.

The rise to power of the House of 'Abbas had a history too complex to trace here, but of particular interest is that, like the House of Umayyah, the 'Abbasids used trickery and deceit in their rise to power. Those who had, in the past, heroically resisted the "accused Umayyah," were expecting to see a member of the House of 'Ali assume the caliphate. Instead, it was the nefarious leader of the House of 'Abbas who came out of hiding and seized the reigns of power. His name was Abu'l-'Abbas 'Abdu'llah, very soon to become known as As-Saffa, the 'Shedder of Blood.' As-Saffa was the 'little horn' in Daniel's vision. During the rebellion, three Umayyad commanders were defeated. These three had the names Yazid, Abdu'l-Malik and Marwan.¹¹ It will be seen that their names are included in the ten horns of the House of Umayyah, thereby confirming the prophecy of Daniel 7:8, 24.

At the mosque of 'Ali in Kufah, a city that had been a center of the heroic rebellion, As-Saffa ascended the pulpit and announced a reign of justice, equity, and righteousness. The new caliphate was to be a sacred trust that would be handed over to Jesus, the Son of Mary, on His Second Coming.

Contrary to promises, the blasphemous and perfidious House of 'Abbas ruled with teeth of iron and claws of bronze. In Revelation 13 the 'Abbasid dynasty is characterized as the 'second beast' and the 'image of the first beast.' Indeed, a reader of Islamic history finds little to recommend the 'Abbasids over the Umayyah. It is noteworthy that Muhammad had prophesied

Qur'an 27

82 We will bring forth to them a beast from the earth. It will speak to them, for mankind would not be convinced of our signs.

After the reign of the fourth beast, God the Father, the Ancient of Days is introduced, with 'robe as white as snow and with the hair of His head like the cleanest wool.' His white robe and hair signify His spotless spiritual attributes and great wisdom. God is shown sitting on a throne of great power, with 'wheels of blazing fire,' the same throne spoken of in Ezekiel 1 and in Revelation 4. The wheels of fire are an astrological symbol, describing the mechanism that ancient astronomers believed was used to move the firmament. A 'flowing river of fire' streams out from the throne, a river that destroys all who are judged and condemned for their wrongdoing. 'The court sat and the books were opened.' (Daniel 7:10)

⁹ Ref 9, p. 192

¹⁰ The first Turkish dynasty, the Seljuks, may have had ten horns also, but the last years of their caliphate were rather chaotic. The ten horns of the Seljuks were (possibly) Malik, Toghrul, Alp, Barkiyaroq, Mahommed, Sinjar, Mahmud, Masud, Sulayman, and Arslan.

¹¹ Ref 9, p. 217

God is then approached by ‘one like a man coming with the clouds of heaven.’ This Figure is that of Bahá’u’lláh, the King of Glory, Who is given everlasting sovereignty by God.¹² In later verses (Daniel 7:26-27), it is explained that kingly power and everlasting sovereignty will be given to the ‘saints of the Most high,’ a reference to the righteous who follow in the footsteps of the Lord of Hosts.

The Ancient of Days is one title of Bahá’u’lláh.¹³ After His reception of everlasting sovereignty, Bahá’u’lláh will sit on the throne beside the Father and govern in the Name of God.¹⁴

There are two dates in Daniel 7 that require closer reading. In verse 25, Daniel is informed that the saints shall be delivered into the power of the fourth beast ‘for a time, times and half a time.’ The three-and-one-half times are 1260 lunar years and define the date in the Muslim lunar calendar (1260 AH / 1844 AD) that terminated the spiritual sovereignty of the beast. This date has a double significance. Not only does it mark the Edict of Toleration; it also marks the Declaration of the Báb, which ended the Dispensation of Muhammad and terminated the spiritual sovereignty of the Muslim empire.

A less apparent date is given in verse 12:

Daniel 7

12 The rest of the beasts, though deprived of their sovereignty, were allowed to remain alive for a time and a season.

A season could be one fourth of a time or ninety years, making the time and a season equal to 450 years. If lunar years are intended, and if the ‘other beasts’ were also deprived of their spiritual sovereignty in 1844, then we might expect an end to the other beasts around the year 437 of the Bahá’í era.

Alas, it is far easier to explore the past than to augur the future! At the rate events are moving, the date 437 BE is not an unreasonable estimate for dating the end of the nations and the beginning of the Most Great Peace. But this fool prefers to leave such speculations to other fools.

Chapter Four

A LITTLE HORN

This vision, similar to that of the previous chapter, appeared to Daniel in the third year of King Belshazzar’s reign. He finds himself transported to the banks of the Ulai canal at Susa, an ancient citadel of Persia. The locale is appropriate to some of the events that are soon to be revealed to Daniel. He sees:

Daniel 8

3 ... a ram with two horns standing between me and the stream. The two horns were long, the one longer than the other, growing up behind.

4 I watched the ram butting west and north and south. No beasts could stand before it; no one could rescue from its power. It did what it liked, making a display of its strength.

5 While I pondered this, suddenly a he-goat came from the west skimming over the whole earth without touching the ground: it had a prominent horn between its eyes.

6 It approached the two-horned ram which I had seen standing between me and the stream and rushed at it with impetuous force.

7 I saw it advance on the ram, working itself into a fury against it, then strike the ram and break its two horns; the ram had no strength to resist. The he-goat flung it to the ground and trampled on it, and there was no one to save the ram.

8 Then the he-goat made a great display of its strength. Powerful as it was, its great horn snapped and in its place there sprang out towards the four quarters of heaven four prominent horns.

In later verses (Daniel 8:19-22), Daniel learns that the ram with two horns signifies Media-Persia. The he-goat signifies Greece, the prominent horn symbolizing its first great king. The four prominent horns that ‘sprang out towards the four quarters of heaven’ represent four kingdoms that will rise from the first.

The “dangerous Medes” were closely related to the Persians (the longer horn) to their east. For many years there were struggles between the Medes and the Persians that ultimately resulted in the accession of Cyrus “the Persian” to the Median throne in 550 BCE.

But instead of reducing the Medes to a position of humiliation, Cyrus treated the defeated Medes as equals. Thereafter, the empire had two names, Media and Persia. In later centuries, the two-named empire became known simply as Persia. Today, the remnant of the Medeo-Persian empire is known as Iran.

¹² ‘Man’ and ‘Son of Man’ were ancient titles for the Savior. The Savior always ‘comes on the clouds of heaven,’ not literally but figuratively. See References 1, 10, & 16.

¹³ It is also a fact that Bahá’u’lláh’s hair was literally snow white, although He followed local custom and had it dyed black.

¹⁴ See Revelation 3:21.

The prominent horn of the he-goat, of course, represents Alexander the Great. Upon his death, the empire was divided into four parts: north, south, east and west. These are discussed at more length in another chapter.

Daniel 8

9 Out of one of them issued one little horn,

10 Which made a prodigious show of strength south and east and toward the fairest of all lands.

11 It aspired to be as great as the Prince of the host, suppressed his regular offering and even threw down his sanctuary.

12 The heavenly hosts were delivered up, and it raised itself impiously against the regular offering and threw true religion to the ground; in all that it did, it succeeded.

Again, in a later verse (Daniel 8:23) Daniel learns more about the little horn: it refers to a king, 'harsh and grim, a master of stratagem,' who will appear in the last days of the four kingdoms, 'at the end of wrath,' for there is an 'end to the appointed time.' (Daniel 8:19)

Daniel 8

24 His power shall be great, he shall work havoc untold; he shall succeed in whatever he does. He shall work havoc among great nations and upon a holy people.

25 His mind shall be ever active, and he shall succeed in his crafty designs; he shall conjure up great plans, and, when they least expect it, work havoc on many. He shall challenge even the Prince of princes and be broken, but not by human hands."

These verses summarize quite accurately the character and actions of the infamous Antiochus IV Epiphanes, "the God Manifest," who will be discussed more fully in another chapter. The 'end to the appointed time' is stressed by this writer, because the same phrase is used at critical junctures in the text of Daniel to indicate a break in the historical narrative.

In verse 25 we learn that Antiochus is to be 'broken, but not by human hands.' Indeed, Antiochus was broken, and not by human hands. While involved in another one of his nefarious schemes at the Persian city of Tabae in 164 BCE, he went insane and died.

Daniel 8

13 I heard a holy one speaking and another holy one answering him, whoever he was. The one said, 'For how long will the period of this vision last? How long will the regular offering be suppressed, how long will impiety cause desolation, and both the Holy Place and the fairest of all lands be given to be trodden down?'

14 The answer came, 'For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings; then the Holy Place will emerge victorious.'

Daniel learns more in following verses:

15 ... I saw standing before me one with the semblance of a man;

16 At the same time, I heard a human voice calling to him across the bend of the Ulai, 'Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.'

17 He came up to where I was standing; ... (and) said to me, 'Understand, O man: the vision points to the time of the end.'

Who are these two angels? Daniel admits that he does not know who one of them is, while the other is called by the name Gabriel. The fact that they speak of the time of the end suggests that they come from the future. We can safely assume that they represent entities or personalities that are important to the future of Israel, and that they will be somehow associated with Persia, the locale where Daniel is standing. Also, the Figure from across the bend of the Ulai commands Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel; it seems unlikely that an angel of a lesser rank than Gabriel could give such a command.

We conclude that the other Figure is probably Michael, the Archangel of Glory, who will be introduced by name in later chapters. Michael is the archetype of the Victor, while Gabriel is the archetype of the Announcer.¹⁵ There are two Figures from Persia and the time of the end who will have these attributes; Michael must represent Bahá'u'lláh, the King of Glory, while Gabriel must represent the Báb, the Forerunner.

This revelation concerning the 'time of the end' is too much for Daniel. He goes into a trance and is revived by Gabriel, who now tells him of another epoch, 'the end of wrath.' The end of wrath refers to the destruction of Seleucid power in Palestine by the Maccabean revolt, when Antiochus will be 'broken but not by human hands.' We have already visited these verses, Daniel 8:23-26.

The 2300 evenings and mornings are 2300 exactly-completed years and refer to the time of the end. The end of what? It is to be the end of the spiritual desolation of the Holy Land, and the end of the time that the Holy Land will 'be given to be trodden down.' In these verses, Daniel is being told of another epoch and another time, far distant in the future – in fact, of an epoch exactly 2300 years away. But where is the point at which to begin the counting of years?

There is only one point in time to start the counting of years that generates a meaningful result: it is the same point in time that Gabriel gives to Daniel in his vision during the first year of the reign of Darius (Daniel 9):

¹⁵ See note 2 of Chapter 2.

Daniel 9

25 ... Know and understand from the time that the word went forth that Jerusalem should be restored and rebuilt

It will be shown in that chapter [chapter 5] that the starting date is the first day of the Jewish month of Nisan, 457 BCE. This gives the end of the 'desolation' at exactly

$$\begin{array}{r} 2300 \quad \text{Years (8:13)} \\ - 457 \quad \text{BCE, the first of Nisan} \\ + 1 \quad \text{a calendar correction}^{16} \\ \hline = 1844 \quad \text{CE, the first of Nisan} \end{array}$$

This is the exact date of the Edict of Toleration that permitted the Jewish people to resettle the Holy Land.

Chapter Five

GABRIEL'S CALENDAR

Gabriel's revelation to Daniel occurs in the first year of Darius the Mede, which would be about 521 BCE. The chapter begins with Daniel lamenting his sins and those of the people of Israel. Following a devout prayer for forgiveness, Gabriel appears to Daniel and announces:

Daniel 9

22 '... O Daniel, I have come out to give you wisdom and understanding.

23 At the beginning of your supplications a word went forth, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the word and understand the vision.'

What follows is a terse and profound prophecy that has bewildered readers for 25 centuries:

24 'Seventy Sevens are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint the most holy.

25 'Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven Sevens. Then for sixty-two Sevens it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two Sevens, an anointed one will be cut off, and shall have nothing;

26 'And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end will come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed.

27 'And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one Seven; and in the middle of the Seven, he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; And in the train of abominations shall come an author of desolation; then in the end, what has been decreed concerning the desolation will be poured out.'

The word "one" ahead of the Seven in verse 27 is important and is found in all the translations listed in the introduction to this book. But the interested reader would do well to visit all translations to compare the nuances of different translators.

As in the *New International Version* of the Bible, the original Hebrew word "shabua" has been translated as "Seven" for reasons that will become apparent. While most translations of Daniel substitute "a week of years" for the Hebrew "shabua," the literal translation is "seven."¹⁷ But in ancient number mysticism, seven decades, or seven centuries – indeed, any decadal successor of Seven has an archetype of Seven.¹⁸ The sliding time scale of the Seven is evident in various biblical texts: Jacob spent 7 years in servitude for Leah and 7 years more for Rachel¹⁹; the Ark of the Covenant was in the land of the Philistines for 7 months²⁰, and Jeremiah prophesied that the Israelites would be in bondage for 7 decades.²¹ Based upon II Chronicles 36:21, 7 decades is sometimes called a "sabbatic year."

¹⁶ When computing the time span between a date BCE and a date CE, it must be remembered that there is one year missing in the calendar. There is no year numbered zero in either the Christian or Muslim [or Bahá'í] calendars.

¹⁷ Ref 3, p. 18

¹⁸ Ref 1, p. 12

¹⁹ Genesis 29

²⁰ I Samuel 6:1

²¹ Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10

Jeremiah's prophecy of the 7 decades is most interesting because it is associated with the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. We note, also, Daniel's reference to Jeremiah's prophecy earlier in the same chapter that seems to give us a clue to the fundamental meter of cadence in these prophecies:

Daniel 9

2 ... I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years which, according to the word of Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely seventy years.

If we take the Seven as 7 years in verse 24, then the total time span of Gabriel's prophecy is 7 sabbatic years (490 calendar years). But in verse 25, Gabriel's convoluted prose seems to indicate that 7 sabbatic years is also equal to 7 times '62-and-7' or 483 calendar years, an obvious fallacy. The correct reading is to recognize that there is a Seven of years after the 69 Sevens of years that has already been decreed by the seventy Sevens of verse 24. It is during the implied last Seven of years, after the other 69, that the coming of an 'anointed one' and His 'cutting off' are to occur.

The 24th verse seems to have an apparent meaning: seven sabbatic years (490 calendar years) are allotted to the Jewish people to finish the transgression, to put an end to their sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to produce prophets and sealed prophecies, and to anoint their Messiah. The years are to be counted from 'the going forth of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.'

There were four 'words going forth' to restore and rebuild the Temple and/or Jerusalem. A 'word going forth' was a signed Proclamation, that is, a Decree (see Dan 6:8). These four Decrees were:

1. The Decree to rebuild the Temple, given by Cyrus, King of Persia, in 534 BCE. Recorded in the first Chapter of Ezra, this Decree was partially fulfilled.
2. The Decree to rebuild the Temple, given by Darius, King of Persia, in 519 BCE. Recorded in the sixth chapter of Ezra, this Decree was essentially fulfilled.
3. The Decree to finish and beautify the Temple, given in the seventh year of his reign in 457 BCE by Artaxerxes, King of Persia. Recorded in the seventh chapter of Ezra, this Decree was fulfilled and later added by the fourth Decree.
4. The Decree to rebuild the gates of Jerusalem and of the Temple, given by the same Artaxerxes in 444 BCE. Recorded in the second chapter of Nehemiah, this Decree was also fulfilled.

We shall soon see that using 457 BCE as the starting point in Gabriel's calendar produces results that are in close agreement with history. Admittedly, the precise dates of many ancient events have been debated by various authorities, but a variance of a year or two will not affect significantly the outcome of our investigation.

As to the words of Gabriel in verse 9:25, the 'going forth of the word,' the exact date of this event is given in Ezra:

Ezra 7

9 ... for on the first day of the first month he (Ezra) began to go up from Babylonia

This would be the first day of Nisan, 457 BCE.

Another matter to be addressed is the length of the year in verses 24-26. There seem to be only three plausible choices:

- (1) A solar year of 365.242 days, as measured by the time between equinoxes.
- (2) A lunar year of 354.367 days, as measured by 12 lunations.
- (3) A 'prophetic year' of 360 days, based upon a correlation of the dates given in Genesis 7:11,24 & 8:3.

It so happens that the use of solar years produces a good result, since it places the Crucifixion of the Messiah at about the right date:

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 70 \text{ Sevens of years} & = & 490 \text{ solar years} \\
 \text{Date of Artaxerxes' first Decree} & = & 457 \text{ BCE} \\
 \text{Difference} & = & \underline{\hspace{1.5cm}} \\
 & & 33 \text{ CE}
 \end{array}$$

But there is one year missing in the Christian solar calendar since Jesus was said to have been born at One instead of at Zero. (The concepts of zero and negative numbers are relatively modern and were unknown to the ancient world.) Adjusting for the missing year produces the date 34 CE for the Crucifixion.

Whether or not 34 CE is the correct date for the Crucifixion cannot be ascertained by historians at this time. Suffice it to say that it is well within the range of dates that have been proposed by various scholars. It will also be shown that this method of dating Gabriel's calendar generates reasonable numbers when other dates given in Daniel are introduced into the equation.

Returning to the last Seven of years in Daniel 9:25, this would then correspond to the period 27 CE to 34 CE. This would surely include the period of Jesus' ministry and the events surrounding it. For instance, in Luke 3:1-3 we find that 'the word of God came to John' the Baptist in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. This would be the year 29 CE. Luke 3:23 also tells us that Jesus was about 30 years old when He began His ministry.

Most authorities accept the account of Matthew 2 for setting the date of the Birth of Jesus which places it about 4 to 6 BCE. If we choose the probable date to be about 5 BCE, then we can estimate that He began His ministry about 26 or 27 CE. Indeed, 27 CE has been taken by some excellent biblical scholars²² to be a good estimate.

Another difficulty comes in the decision as to the length of Jesus' ministry. The synoptic Gospels seem to indicate that it was only about a year long, while John indicates that it was about three years long. Since we are again forced to admit that the historical date of the Crucifixion remains uncertain, the date 34 CE remains as good as any. If so, the entire ministry of Jesus would have been about seven years long, even though His fame may not have spread throughout Palestine until the latter part of it. He would have been 'not yet forty' when He died on the cross in 34 CE.

Now as to the meaning of the words of Gabriel:

Daniel 9

25 '... there shall be seven Sevens. Then for sixty-two Sevens it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time'

The seven Sevens of years are the time required to finish the rebuilding of Jerusalem, while the other sixty-two Sevens of years tell us how long the city will lie finished before the appearance of the Messiah.

The 'troubled time' followed a period of relative peace and security. Alexander's conquest of Persia in 334 BCE and his untimely death eleven years later produced several centuries of troubles for Judea and, indeed, for the whole Near East. The struggle between 'north and south,' that is the subject of Daniel 11, includes the troubled time and will be discussed in another chapter.

We are now in a position to fill in the details of this portion of Gabriel's highly abbreviated schedule of events:

GABRIEL'S CALENDAR FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

EVENT	SEVENS OF YEARS	CHRISTIAN RECKONING
Artaxerxes' Decree	0	457 BCE
Finishing of Jerusalem	0 thru 6	457 BCE thru 409 BCE
Jerusalem completed	7	408 BCE
Jerusalem lies completed	8 thru 68	407 BCE thru 26 CE
Messiah's ministry	69 to 70	27 CE to 34 CE
Messiah's Crucifixion	70	34 CE

Now reconsider the following verses:

Daniel 9

26 '... and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end will come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed.

27 'And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one Seven; and in the middle of the Seven, he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease;'

The temptation is to place the Seven of verse 27 after the 69 Sevens of verse 25 to round out the 70 Sevens of verse 24. However, there is no reason for doing so, since we have demonstrated that the 70th Seven has already been implied by the Decree in verse 24. The Seven of the strong covenant should not be confused with the 70 Sevens decreed for the Jews to 'finish the transgression,' etc., since the strong covenant concerns a period of time after the Messiah has been 'cut off' and left with nothing.

That the 'strong covenant with many for one Seven' is made by the Messiah can be deduced through an unprejudiced reading of the New Testament. For example, in John we find Jesus in the Temple speaking to the Jews who ask Him for a sign. Jesus replies with a cryptic promise:

²² E.g., Ref 7, p. 82

John 2

19 ‘... Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.’

The author of John goes on to say that later believers in the physical resurrection took the ‘temple’ to mean the ‘temple’ of Jesus’ body. Be that as it may, those present at the scene took it to mean the great Temple of Jerusalem where Jesus was speaking. In fact, there are other instances²³ where Jesus is quoted as saying that He was able to destroy the Temple of God and to rebuild it in three days. In yet other places, we find Jesus prophesying the literal destruction of the city and the Temple.²⁴ And even after the death of Jesus, Stephen is accused at the Temple before the council of elders:

Acts 6

13 “... This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law:

14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.”

Acts 7

1 And the high priest said, “Is this so?”

In the beautiful and well reported speech that he offers in his defense, Stephen denounces the priesthood but does not deny the charge:

Acts 7

48 “... the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; ...”

Stephen is subsequently executed by stoning.

Jesus often said that He had come to fulfill the prophets, and in this instance He must have been referring to the prophecy of Gabriel’s calendar. The “middle of the Seven” brings us to the middle of the fourth ‘day,’ and on this day the city, the sanctuary, the offering and the sacrifice are to be eliminated. But Jesus promises further that during the remaining ‘three days’ of the Seven, He will rebuild the Temple.

But how is Jesus the Messiah to accomplish the destruction of such a solid structure as the great Temple of Jerusalem? He gives us a clue:

Luke 19

43 “For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side,
44 And dash you to the ground”

It will be through the instruments of war that He will bring down the walls of Jerusalem and the Temple also. And what is to be the nature of the Temple that Jesus is to build? Jesus gives his Apostles a most succinct answer:

Matthew 16

18 “And I tell you, you are Peter (Petros), and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of earth shall not prevail against it.”

The “Temple” is to be none other than His Church. And the “rock” upon which He will build His Church will not be the sacred Rock Moriah on Mount Zion. (“... believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain or in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.”²⁵) Rather, it is to be upon the “rock” of His Apostle Peter, and by implication, upon the rest of His trusted Apostles that He will build His Church. Nor will it be built of stones and cedar, but of a matrix of loving, faithful followers and a new Law. Since He will destroy their beloved Temple, they will be cut off from the grain offering and the shewbread. Jesus gives them a substitute:

Matthew 26

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took the (Passover) bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”

The body of Jesus’ teachings and divine perfections is to be given to them as their heavenly Manna, and His followers can symbolize their assimilation of the offering by the simple act of breaking bread. But the Holy of Holies and its sacred blood sacrifice are also to be lost forever, the sacrifice that reconfirmed the Covenant and washed away their sins. Therefore, Jesus gives them a substitute for this:

²³ Matthew 26:61, 27:40

²⁴ E.g., Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:43-44, 21:8-36

²⁵ John 4:21

Matthew 26

27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it, all of you;
28 For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Indeed, their beloved Ark of the Covenant had already ceased to exist as a material artifact. Now, even their beloved Temple would soon be destroyed along with its Torah, the Holy of Holies, the offering, and the blood sacrifice. But the love of Jesus for his disciples, indeed for all humanity, compelled Him to offer his own life as the ultimate Sacrifice that could be re-enacted by the suppliant with nothing more than bread and wine.

Returning to Gabriel's prophecy, since we have assumed that a "Seven" means a span of time with an archetype of seven. The one Seven in 9:27 could be 7 decades (i.e., a "sabbatic year"). Indeed, we shall soon see that interpreting the one Seven here as 7 decades produces the only plausible result.

We have already seen that by letting a Seven equal 7 years, the seventy Sevens of verse 24 places the Crucifixion of Jesus at around 34 CE. Now, if the one Seven in verse 27 is taken as 7 decades, then 'one Seven half spent' is 35 years. The prophecy of verse 27 then says that after 35 years, He shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease. 35 years after the Crucifixion was 69 CE, and the following year was 70 CE.

This, then, is the 'strong covenant with many for one Seven' spoken of by the angel Gabriel in 9:27: Jesus promises to destroy and rebuild the Temple in "seven days" following His Crucifixion. In the interim, His followers are given handy substitutes for the sacred ceremonies that are to be destroyed after the "third day."

At this juncture, it is well to recall the ominous words of Jesus concerning some events to come:

Matthew 24

15 'So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),
16 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains;
17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house;
18 And let him who is in the field not turn back to take his mantle.'

There were several sacrileges standing in the holy place before a tragic uprising of the Jews. This was not the first time that a sacrilege would stand in the holy place. The reader is to understand that the desolating sacrilege prophesied by Jesus will have signs that parallel those that had already occurred about 200 years before under the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. In fact, a "graven image" – the conquering eagle of Rome – would stand over the principal gate of the Temple²⁶; the "mad emperor" Caligula would order that a statue be built of his "Divine self" and worshipped inside the Temple sanctuary (an order that, fortunately, was rescinded)²⁷; Herod, while sitting upon his throne, would make an impious assertion of his own divinity²⁸; Roman soldiers would make obscene gestures near the Temple during the Passover festival²⁹; Zealots would murder the High Priest Jonathan within the hallowed precincts of the Temple.³⁰

But there was one particular sacrilege that precipitated the desolation of Judea. Shortly after the completion of the Temple in 66 CE, a sacrilege occurred that would soon plunge Judea into a blood bath – the Roman procurator, Gessius Florus, looted the sacred treasury of the Temple of the very considerable sum of seventeen talents. Since the treasury deposited in the Temple was always considered inviolate to the secular administration, the act infuriated the people of Judea and was the primary cause of a riot in Jerusalem and the entire region. It was the beginning of a holocaust that even caused the Roman historian Tacitus to bear witness to the omens that had forewarned of it: the famine, the earthquake, the prodigies, and the awful signs in the heavens that heralded the Fall of Jerusalem.

Eusebius tells us that the early Christians residing in and around Jerusalem did, indeed, 'fly to the mountains,' not at the sight of these sacrileges, but at a later sight. In April, 70 CE, Titus, who was later to become emperor of Rome, marched his four legions ('the people of the prince to come') to the walls of Jerusalem. [Daniel 9:26] It was at this more tangible sign that the local Christians fled to the Gentile town of Pella east of the Jordan River, where some say that they survived until the fifth century. The Ebionites, the early Christian sect brought into Christianity directly by Jesus and the Apostles, were among those emigrants.³¹

When Titus arrived, a civil war had been going on in Jerusalem for some time, even within the sacred precincts of the Temple. The original belligerents were two factions of Zealots led by Simon ben Gioras and John of Giscala.³² By 70 CE, the civil dissensions in Jerusalem had gone from bad to worse with three factions of Zealots now fighting for supremacy.

²⁶ Ref 6, p. 150

²⁷ Ref 4, p. 166

²⁸ Acts 12:21-23

²⁹ Ref 4, p. 168

³⁰ Ref 4, p. 170

³¹ Ref 12, p. 25n; Ref 13, p. 415

³² Ref 4, p. 100ff

Titus erected a wall of circumvallation around Jerusalem and established a strict blockade. Towers and siege engines were brought to bear against Jerusalem, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus:

Luke 19

43 'For the days shall come upon you (Jerusalem), when your enemies will cast a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side'

It is difficult to believe that the sacred sacrifice and offering could properly exist under such circumstances. However, the sacrifice and offering were not technically ended until the 17th of Tammuz (midsummer), 70 CE. By that time, the streets were running with blood, and the sufferings of the masses of people within the city have been rarely if ever matched in the annals of history. The crazed Zealots murdered men, women, and children for morsels of food, even those who were in the very act of swallowing. The wretched inhabitants, creeping out of the city by night to search for food for their wives and children, were usually caught and crucified by Titus' soldiers or were robbed by the zealot sentinels on their return to the gates.

In spite of temporary coalitions of the fragmented Zealot parties against the Roman legions, it took only a few months for the well-disciplined forces of Titus to take the city. The end came 'with a flood' of armed soldiers. On the ninth of Ab, indeed on the VERY ANNIVERSARY of the burning of the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the apartment next to the sanctuary was set afire by the Roman soldiers. The Jews, thinking that God had, indeed, abandoned His sanctuary, rushed with frantic cries to the spot and threw themselves into the flames in an attempt to save the Holy of Holies. Even Titus himself rushed to the scene with his personal staff of officers and men in a futile attempt to rescue a part of the holy precinct. But with the sudden and unexpected turn of events in their favor, the Roman soldiers behaved like savages. Josephus³³, an eyewitness, describes what followed:

One would have thought that the hill on which the Temple stood was seething hot, full of fire in every part, that the blood was greater in quantity than the fire, and that those who were slain were more numerous than those who slew them. The ground was nowhere visible because of the dead bodies that lay upon it, and the soldiers were forced to go over heaps of bodies as they ran after those who fled before them.

With the final collapse, the Romans rushed throughout the Temple and the city, butchering young and old alike. At last, becoming satiated with blood, the Roman soldiers attempted to plunder the homes of the citizens of Jerusalem, but the putrefying corpses were so sickening that they were forced to abandon the project. Those few Jews who escaped immediate death were captured to spend their lives as slaves in the mines or as gladiators in Roman arenas.

Thus was fulfilled the remainder of the prophecy of Jesus:

Luke 19

44 '... and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you; because you did not know the time of your visitation.'

After the ninth of Ab, 70 CE, the city of Jerusalem was no longer the center of Jewish life. Deprived of their beloved Temple and the City, the Jews were forced to give up the offering, the daily sacrifice, and even pilgrimages to the Temple. Through a program fashioned by the great rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, the Jews in exile learned to substitute prayer, works of piety, and study of the Holy Scripture. Thus the awesome spiritual forces unleashed by Jesus the Messiah produced the result that the Jewish priests would not willingly accept at their 'time of visitation': the house of the Lord ceased to be a den of thieves.

The ninth of Ab became, and remains, a day of fasting. To this day, the Jewish wedding ceremony commemorates the destruction of the Temple each time the groom crushes the nuptial cup.

And what of the "Temple" that Jesus had promised to build? We recall that with the Crucifixion, the Messiah was cut off and left with nothing. Jesus was indeed left with nothing, without a Church, without even a Book. In the "three days" (3 decades) following the collapse of Jerusalem, Jesus built His "Temple." By about 90 CE, after two days, the Gospels and numerous other Christian works had been written, and the Christians were thereby given a "foundation." By about 100 CE, three days after the Fall of Jerusalem, the primitive Church had become solidly "constructed" in numerous cities throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Jesus then "dedicated" His Church by delivering a prophetic Book to John, His favorite disciple. That Book, the Apocalypse [aka Revelation], is the only one that purports to be a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. To the best of our knowledge, the Apocalypse was "delivered" to John about 104 CE, the three-and-a-half-day point after the

³³ Josephus vi., v., 1

elimination of the daily sacrifice.³⁴ Thereby, Jesus the Messiah fulfilled His ‘strong covenant with many for one Seven.’
Recall

John 2

19 ‘... Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.’

The delivery of the Apocalypse to John, after so many years had passed and after almost everyone had died who had seen Jesus at first hand, explains the enigmatic remark of Jesus near the end of the fourth Gospel:

John 21

21 When Peter turned and saw (the young disciple John following them), he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?”

22 Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!”

Even after the Fall of Jerusalem, there were more horrors to follow. In 118, only fourteen years after the completion of Messiah’s Temple, another insurrection arose against Rome by the Jews in exile. It reached Judea in 132, where it was led by the false Messiah Simon bar Cocheba, commanding an army of four hundred thousand men. Bar Cocheba was able to destroy two armies dispatched by Rome before the emperor Hadrian sent a third army under his ablest general Julius Severus to quell the rebellion. Severus ultimately defeated Bar Cocheba at Bethar in 135, killing a half million Jews in the process. Thousands of women and children were again carted off into slavery, and, for two hundred years, no Jew was allowed in Judea.

Simon bar Cocheba thereby became the ‘author of desolation’ in the last sentence of Gabriel’s calendar:

Daniel 9

27 ‘... And in the train of abominations shall come an author of desolation; then in the end, what has been decreed concerning the desolation will be poured out.

After this last disaster, Jerusalem lay a desolate ruin. It was given a Latin name, a new temple was erected to Jupiter, and a statue of Hadrian – a final abomination, was set up over the Rock Moriah.

So bitter was the victory over the Jews that Hadrian did not pronounce the customary congratulatory phrase before the Roman Senate. A toast became common at Roman feasts: “Hierosolyma Est Perdida!” (“Jerusalem is destroyed!”), immediately answered by the guests shouting “Hurrah!” The initial letters of the toast (H.E.P.) soon replaced the phrase, and has come down to us as the traditional cheer “Hep! Hep! Hurrah!”

There were many more abominations and sacrileges following the Fall of Jerusalem that are almost too disgusting to relate. The persecutions over the next 500 years committed by the Gentiles against Christians and Jews are well known. But also, there were wars, abominations and sacrileges committed against one another in the name of God by both Jew and Christian alike. Churches and synagogues were burned and desecrated, people were tortured and murdered. Sometimes the swing of destiny seemed to favor the Jews, sometimes the Christians.

Even after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity, the struggle was not over. The later accession of Julian the Apostate to the throne of Rome resulted in the abolition of Christianity as the official faith of the realm, and the Jews were invited to rebuild their Temple. The Jews, believing that the restoration of Israel was at hand, donated money and labor from all over the empire. But, whether due to human or divine agencies, no sooner had the work begun when fires and terrifying explosions rocked the site of the restoration on the Temple Mount. Christians and other enemies of the Jews took these events as proof of divine displeasure, and the circumstances were repeated with exaggerated details and supernatural embellishments.

Ironically, the strife between Christians and Jews in the Holy Land mostly came to an end when Umar I, the renowned second and “rightly guided” Caliph of Islam, took Jerusalem in 637. Umar brought order to the area and treated both Christians and Jews with respect in accordance with the command of Muhammad that ‘the people of the book’ should not be harmed. Nevertheless, there were several curious events surrounding the takeover of Jerusalem that have had long-enduring effects.

In the first place, Sophronius, the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem at the time, invited Umar to take over the city without bloodshed. But Sophronius stipulated a proviso that Umar must strictly prohibit the Jews from dwelling in Jerusalem. Umar apparently accepted this condition.³⁵ Although some Jews (about seventy families) were allowed to live there under succeeding Caliphs, the city ceased to be either a Jewish or a Christian city (except for a brief time during the Crusades) for the next twelve centuries. In fact, the repeal of the contract between Umar and Sophronius did not officially occur until the first of Nisan, 1844. On that date, the Ottomans signed the Edict of Toleration that lifted the ban on Jewish immigration to the area, which inadvertently laid the groundwork for the creation of the modern state of Israel. The first of Nisan, 1844, as

³⁴ The first chapter of Revelation that describes future events for Christendom is Chapter 8. It explains that there will be about “half-an-hour of silence” before the start of the Great Persecutions of the Christians that will begin about 110 CE, shortly after the delivery of the Apocalypse to John. Thus the Apocalypse (Revelation) dovetails with and expatiates on many of the prophecies that are given by Daniel.

³⁵ Ref 6, p. 228

has been said elsewhere, was exactly 2300 years after the day that Ezra left Babylonia to rebuild the Temple in compliance with the first Decree of Artaxerxes. The Edict of Toleration marks the end of the ‘transgression that makes desolate.’

Soon after Umar’s takeover of Jerusalem, Umar began a search for the site of the sacred sanctuary of the ancient Temple site. This, of course, was the Rock Moriah, the altar location where Abraham had attempted unsuccessfully to sacrifice his son. Arabs being descendants of Abraham, the site played an important part in Muslim tradition just as it did for the Jews. It was at this site that Muhammad was reputed to have taken His mystical night journey to the seventh heaven and to have sat at the right hand of God. Umar found the site, by then desecrated beyond recognition by centuries of abuse by Christians. In fact, the Christians had covered the Rock with dung and other refuse.³⁶ The Orthodox Church had not built a church over the site because of the prophecy of Jesus:

Luke 13

35 ‘Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate.’

Umar cleaned and purified the site, and built a temporary wooden shrine over it. Under a later Caliph, the shrine was rebuilt into a permanent and magnificent mosque that ultimately became known as the ‘Dome of the Rock.’

The golden Dome is the most conspicuous landmark in Jerusalem. To the Muslims, the Dome of the Rock has symbolized their political and spiritual authority over both the Jews and the Christians. It stands over the Holy Place and represents the ultimate insult to the Jewish people. It has served for over thirteen centuries as a tangible barrier between them and their Holy of Holies. Whether the Dome will ever be taken down and the Jewish Temple rebuilt may be an irrelevant question. The human psyche seems to have evolved forever beyond the idea of a living animal sacrifice being offered to a benevolent God within a foul, bloody, flyblown “holy” chamber.

We are now in a position to fill in the remainder of Gabriel’s calendar:

EVENT	SABBATIC YEARS AFTER ARTAXERXES’ DECREE	CHRISTIAN RECKONING (CE)
Messiah’s Crucifixion	7	34
Offering and blood sacrifice terminated	7 1/2	69-70
Messiah’s “Temple” is completed	8	104
Author of desolation		132

The Author of Desolation appeared 84 Sevens of years after Artaxerxe’s Decree.

The illegitimate caliphate came to power 666 years after the probable date of the Birth of Jesus. (666 is the “number of blasphemy” in Revelation 13.) It was abolished thirty-four sabbatic years after Artaxerxe’s Decree and twenty-seven sabbatic years after the Crucifixion.

Chapter Six

THE TWENTY-ONE DAYS

In this vision, Daniel finds himself on the bank of the Tigris, thereby connecting the locale to some future events to be witnessed in Daniel 12. He sees

Daniel 10

5 ... a man clothed in linen with a belt of gold from Ophir around his waist,

6 His body gleamed like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes flamed like torches, his arms and feet sparkled like a disc of bronze; and when he spoke his voice sounded like the voice of a multitude.

The Figure is seen as a Manifestation of God. His glory is invisible to those who are blinded by the contingent world, but is apparent to those with spiritual eyes. His belt of finest gold (a “golden girdle”) symbolizes a Faith; He speaks as a nation since He is their Leader and Savior.

That the Figure is the Báb becomes apparent in the following verses:

³⁶ There is no footnote for this reference in the text labeled <41>.

- 12 'Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the very first day you applied your mind to understand and to mortify yourself before your God, your prayers have been heard, and I have come in answer to them.
- 13 'But the angel prince of the kingdom of Persia resisted me for twenty-one days, and then, seeing that I had held out there, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me against the prince of the kingdom of Persia.
- 14 'And I have come to explain to you what will happen to you people in days to come; for this too is a vision for those days.'

The 'prince of the kingdom of Persia' is described as an 'angel,' not because the prince is righteous, but because he exists in a future time and has not yet materialized in the physical realm. Michael is described as 'one of the chief princes,' presumably of Persia, and refers to the status of Bahá'u'lláh as a high-ranking member of the ruling class of Persia in the days of the events the Báb is revealing.

The 'twenty-one days' of Daniel's vision is interesting. We recall that a day of prophecy equals a year of the calendar. The twenty-one years is the span of time between some very important parallel events in the history of the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths:

In April of 1847, the Báb received a letter from Muhammad Shah of Persia that ordered Him into captivity at the remote mountain fortress of Mah-ku. He arrived there and was incarcerated around August of 1847. He was to remain a prisoner for the rest of His life. Twenty-one years later, in July of 1868, Bahá'u'lláh was ordered into captivity at the desolate prison-fortress of Akka. He arrived at Akka and was incarcerated in August of 1868. Officially, He, too, was to remain a prisoner for the rest of His life.

We must remember that the power of the Manifestation is in His Word, not in His sword. While a prisoner, the Báb revealed many Tablets asserting the end of the Muslim Dispensation and the independence of His own Revelation. He penned a stern Tablet called the Khuthiy-i-Qahriyyih (Sermon of Wrath), addressed to the evil Grand Vizier, Haji Mirza Aqasi, unsparing in its condemnation of the Shah's regime and those who had persecuted the Bábís. The Shah died about a year later,³⁷ while the Grand Vizier soon fell from power, was deprived of his riches, acquired a disease, and died in poverty and disgrace.³⁸

While Bahá'u'lláh was still at Adrianople and shortly before His imprisonment at Akka, He penned His own unsparing attack on the Shah called the Lawh-i-Sultan (Tablet to Nasiri'd-Din Shah). The Tablet, among other things, condemned those who persecuted the Bábís, and pronounced the independence of His own Revelation. At another time, Bahá'u'lláh denounced Nasiri'd-Din Shah as the 'Prince of the Oppressors.'³⁹ His attacks on the Shah lasted for many years. Ultimately, the Shah was dramatically assassinated on the eve of his jubilee. Shortly thereafter, his dynasty, the Qajar, was removed from power.

In later verses (10:15-21), the gleaming Figure of the Báb is transformed into 'one like a man' in order to bely the fear of Daniel of the vision of the Báb in His true magnificence. In this less frightening guise, the Báb goes on to tell Daniel that He must return to the future to continue his struggle with the prince of Persia, and that He has no one at His side except 'Michael your prince' (Bahá'u'lláh). The Báb also warns Daniel that as soon as He leaves to return to the future, the 'prince of Greece' (Alexander) will appear.

Chapter Seven

FROM CYRUS TO PHILOPATER

Daniel 11 describes the time of troubles that will beset Palestine as a consequence of the invasion of Persia by Alexander. The struggles between the North and South are included in this chapter. Most of the details can be found in references 5 and 8.

The Báb continues:

Daniel 10

21 'I have no ally on my side to help and support me except Michael your prince. However I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. Here and now I will tell you what is true:

Daniel 11

2 Three more kings will appear in Persia, and the fourth will far surpass all the others in wealth; and when he has extended his power through his wealth, he will rouse the whole world against the kingdom of Greece.

3 Then there will appear a warrior king. He will rule a vast kingdom and will do what he chooses.

³⁷ Ref 18, p. 147

³⁸ Ref 17, p. 82

³⁹ Ref 17, p. 197

4 But as soon as he is established, his kingdom will be shattered and split up north, south, east, and west. It will not pass to his descendants, nor will any of his successors have an empire like his; his kingdom will be torn up by the roots and given to other as well as to them.”

The speaker is still ‘Ali Muhammad, the Báb, while ‘Michael your prince’ refers to Husayn ‘Ali, Bahá’u’lláh. As the King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts, the Speaker on Sinai, and the Voice from the Burning Bush, Bahá’u’lláh is also the latter-day “Prince (Messiah) of the Jewish nation.”

We recall that the first verse of Daniel 10 places the date of the prophecy in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia (not in the first year of Darius the Mede as implied by some, probably spurious, versions of Daniel 11). The four Medeo-Persian kings that followed Cyrus were Cambyses (530-522 BCE), Gaumata (522 BCE), Darius I Hystaspes (521-486 BCE), and Xerxes (486-465 BCE).

Xerxes was the extremely rich and most powerful monarch of Persia who ‘raised the whole world against Greece.’ He invaded Greece from 481 to 479 BCE with a vast army gathered from all over his known-world empire that included Medes, Persians, Assyrians, Moschians, Ethiopians, Indians, Scythians, and Thracians. Xerxes’ army, numbered in the hundreds of thousands, was attended by an equally impressive navy of hundreds of ships.

Xerxes, no doubt, wished to avenge the humiliation of his father, who was defeated by the Greeks at Marathon about a decade earlier. And although Xerxes was much more successful than Darius, his army eventually suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the heroic Greeks at Plataea (479 BCE) while his navy suffered the same fate at Salamis. The stories of these amazing victories against overwhelming odds were chronicled by the Greek historian Herodotus and have inspired Graecophiles for many centuries. Indeed, the modern ‘Marathon races’ commemorate the anonymous Greek warrior who ran the 22 miles from Marathon to Athens, gasped out the news of the victory over Darius, and then dropped dead.

Following the defeat and withdrawal of the Persians from Greece, and after periods of peace and internecine war in Greece, the control of Greece fell to Philip of Macedonia. The young son of Philip, the “warrior king” Alexander the Great, assumed power over Greece upon his father’s death and undertook the conquest of the Persian empire in 334 BCE. Without doubt, Alexander was one of the great hero-warriors of history – strong, intelligent, dashing, courageous, loyal, generous, His inspired leadership led the magnificent Greek army to victory over the Persians in about three years, but Alexander died of fever at Babylon in 323 BCE while still a young man of only 33.

Although Alexander had left a legitimate heir, the infant son Alexander IV by the Persian princess Roxanna, the child was placed in the custody of Cassander, one of Alexander’s generals. The infant Alexander was murdered in 311 BCE. Another son, Hercules, was murdered also, and so was a weak-minded half-brother Aridaeus. The empire became divided among the Diodochi (Successors), commanders under the deceased Alexander, who managed to engineer the partition of the empire.

One of the successors was Cassander, who gained control of Macedonia and Greece (‘west’); Lysimachus gained control of Thrace and parts of Asia Minor (‘north’); Ptolemy gained control of Egypt and Libya (‘south’); Seleucus gained control of northern Syria and Mesopotamia (‘east’).

Daniel 11

5 Then the King of the South will become strong; but another of the captains will surpass him in strength and win a greater kingdom.

The King of the South, Ptolemy I, who became known as Soter (“the Preserver”), ruled c. 323-285 BCE. Given control of Egypt and Libya on the death of Alexander, he quickly gained control of “Hollow Syria” (Palestine), southern Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Cyrene. The southern empire under Ptolemy Soter became the leading and most powerful of the four states after the breakup of Alexander’s empire.

Following the period of conflict between the remaining rivals for Alexander’s empire, the eastern portion fell under Seleucus, who, with the second partition of Alexander’s empire, also obtained Babylonia. Later, he conquered Susiana and Media, and extended his power to the Oxus and Indus rivers. In 301 BCE, Seleucus joined a successful confederacy against Antigonus I, the newest King of Macedonia, and as a reward, Seleucus was granted a large part of Asia Minor and the whole of Syria. Toward the close of his reign, he conquered the rest of Asia Minor and proclaimed himself King of Macedonia. With the eclipse of Macedonia, Seleucus became the undisputed “King of the North,” Seleucus I Nicator (ruled 312-281 BCE). His empire was much vaster in extent than that of Ptolemy I Soter, the undisputed “King of the South.”

The award to Seleucus preempted Ptolemy’s claim to Palestine and resulted in a series of wars that lasted for over a century to determine the future of Palestine. During the course of these wars, Palestine was crossed and recrossed from north and south several times by would-be conquerors.

For Egypt to achieve strength and prosperity, she had to obtain timber from Lebanon for her ships. Furthermore, the line of commercial traffic that went along the Nile to and from Alexandria, had a rival in the line of trade that went from the Persian Gulf across Arabia to Gaza, and it was to the advantage of the King of the South to control both. In the first war of the series described in Daniel 11, Ptolemy Soter took Palestine in 320-318 BCE.

Daniel 11

6 In due course the two will enter into a friendly alliance; to redress the balance, the daughter of the King of the South will be given in marriage to the King of the North, but she will not maintain her influence and their line will not last. She and her escort, her child, and also her lord and master, will be the victims of foul play.

This concerns an arrangement made between Ptolemy II Philadelphus (“the Brotherly,” reigned 285-246 BCE) the King of the South, and Antiochus II Theos (“God,” reigned 262-246 BCE), the King of the North. Laodice, the former wife of Antiochus, was to be left in a secondary position in Asia Minor, while Berenice, Ptolemy’s daughter, was to reign at Antioch and bear children for the Seleucid inheritance. But both Laodice and Berenice were Macedonian princesses true to type. Laodice induced Antiochus to come back to her at Ephesus. Antiochus subsequently died under mysterious circumstances, with some suspicion falling on Laodice. Laodice then sent assassins to Antioch to murder Berenice and her infant son. The ploy was successful, and Laodice’s son Seleucus II Callinicus (reigned c. 246-226 BCE) became the new King of the North.

Daniel 11

7 Then another shoot from the same stock as hers will appear in his father’s place, will penetrate the defenses of the King of the North and enter his fortress, and will win a decisive victory over his people.

8 He will take back as booty to Egypt even the images of their gods cast in metal and their precious vessels of silver and gold

Ptolemy III Euergetes (“the Benefactor,” reigned c. 246-221 BCE), the son of Ptolemy II, took over from his father and was determined to avenge the death of his half-sister Berenice. The invasion of Syria by Ptolemy III Euergetes was called the “Laodicean War,” that is, the “war against the murderess Laodice.” Ptolemy was successful, and, according to Saint Jerome, “he plundered the kingdom of Seleucus and carried away 40,000 talents of silver, and 2500 precious cups and images of the gods, among which were those also which Cambyses, when he took Egypt, had brought to the country of the Persians. Finally, the Egyptian race, being given to idolatry, because he had brought back their gods after many years, called him Euergetes – “the Benefactor.”

Daniel 11

8 ... Then for some years he will refrain from attacking the King of the North.

9 After that, the King of the North will come into the realm of the southern kingdom but will retreat to his own land.

After Ptolemy returned to Egypt, the war went on. Seleucus recovered most of northern Syria. In 242-241 BCE, Seleucus was able to deliver Damascus and Orthosia on the Phoenician coast, that were being besieged by the Egyptians. But an attempt of Seleucus to penetrate farther south into Palestine led to a disastrous defeat. Soon after this, c. 240 BCE, the two powers signed a peace treaty.

Daniel 11

10 His sons will press on to assemble a great horde. One of them will sweep on and on like an irresistible flood. And after that he will press on as far as his enemy’s stronghold.

11 The King of the South, his anger aroused, will march out to do battle with the king of the North who, in turn, will raise a great horde, but it will be delivered into the hands of his enemy.

12 And when this horde has been captured, the victor will be elated and will slaughter tens of thousands, yet he will not maintain his advantage.

Ptolemy III Euergetes was succeeded by his young son, the corrupt and dissolute Ptolemy IV Philopater (“Lover of his Fatherland,” reigned c. 221-204 BCE). The throne of the Kingdom of the North had recently fallen to the highly competent Antiochus III (“the Great,” reigned c. 223-187 BCE), the brother of Seleucus II. Within a few years, Antiochus turned to a systematic conquest of Palestine. His chief seaport, Seleucia, now in the hands of Egypt, was regained, and he turned south.

Following various fortunes, a wearisome negotiation was entered into by the two kings. The successes of the King of the North in Palestine overcame the notorious inertia of the King of the South. A lull in the warfare gave the King of the South time to build up his forces. At Alexandria, the season was one of intense secret preparations. Experienced Greek officers drilled fresh mercenaries from overseas, while war materiel was being manufactured and prepared. Even the native fellahin peasants, Libyans and natives of Cyrene were enrolled, trained and armed like Macedonians.

The peace negotiation, as orchestrated by Egypt, failed in its purpose and gave way to further warfare. In 217 BCE came the decisive battle of Raphia, a little south of Gaza. Ptolemy achieved a great victory, and Antiochus again withdrew to Syria.

In later years, Antiochus renewed the conquest of Palestine and was ultimately successful. The story of his successful campaign is told in verses 11:13-19.

Daniel 11

13 Then the King of the North will once again raise a horde even greater than the last and, when the years come around, will advance with a great army and a large baggage train.

14 During these times many will resist the King of the South, but some hotheads among your own people will rashly attempt to give substance to a vision and will come to disaster.

Shortly after the death of Ptolemy IV Philopater, Antiochus renewed his conquest in earnest and started taking Egyptian possessions in Asia Minor and Palestine. As his successes mounted, many Jews hailed Antiochus as a liberator. Antiochus treated the Jews kindly, and he appeared to be most scrupulous in his observance of the Jewish law. Also, there was an inflammatory but questionable story that had circulated after the battle of Raphia: it was said that Ptolemy had attempted to push his way into the Holy of Holies, but was stricken by an unaccountable terror and was carried out in an almost lifeless condition. Even if true, history was to demonstrate that the party of Jews favoring the King of the North was misled, and the tolerant policy of Antiochus the Great was soon to be superseded by a harsh policy of Hellenization and suppression of Jewish culture.

Daniel 11

15 Then the King of the North will come and throw up siege ramps and capture a fortified town, and the forces of the south will not be able to hold their ground.

16 And so his adversary will do as he pleases and meet no opposition. He will establish himself in the fairest of all lands and it will come wholly into his power.

Scopas, Ptolemy's general in Egypt, managed to recapture a number of places in Palestine, including Jerusalem. Scopas stationed garrisons there and elsewhere. Nevertheless, Antiochus was again able to take Palestine. This time, Antiochus achieved a decisive victory at Panium (198 BCE) near the headwaters of the Jordan, later to be the site of Caesarea Philippi. Scopas subsequently was besieged at Sidon but was allowed to retreat into Egypt. Gaza, found naturally on the opposite side of Jerusalem, held out to the last for Ptolemy, but eventually fell. Palestine passed into the hands of the King of the North.

Daniel 11

17 He will resolve to subjugate all the dominions of the King of the South and he will come to fair terms with him. He will give him a young woman in marriage, for the destruction of the kingdom; but she will not persist nor serve his purpose.

Probably as a part of the peace treaty between Syria and Egypt, Antiochus gave his daughter Cleopatra I (not the famous Cleopatra VI of later imperial Roman history) in marriage to the young Ptolemy V Epiphanes ("the Illustrious," reigned c. 204-181 BCE), who had succeeded his father after the Battle of Raphia. The betrothal of his young daughter to the King of the South was a part of a long-range strategy of Antiochus to dominate Egypt. Nevertheless, Cleopatra consistently dedicated her loyalty to Egypt and her young husband Ptolemy rather than to her father Antiochus. Cleopatra became a loyal and competent regent of Egypt following her husband's early death.

Daniel 11

18 Then he will turn to the coasts and take many prisoners, but a foreign commander will put an end to his challenge and will throw back his challenge on to him.

19 He will fall back upon his own strongholds; there he will come to disaster and be seen no more.

While Antiochus III was becoming "great," a new power to the west, Rome, was becoming strong. Antiochus invaded Greece in the spring of 191 BCE, but was driven out by the Romans a year later. A decisive battle was won by Scipio, the general from Rome, over Antiochus at Magnesia (190 BCE). Thereby Rome became a power in the eastern Mediterranean. The Romans took the Seleucid territories north of the Taurus and gave them to their friend, the king of Pergamon. Also, as another part of the treaty, twenty prominent hostages were to be sent to Rome, among them Antiochus, a younger son of the King who was destined one day to become the infamous Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Antiochus the Great, hurled back from Asia Minor, turned his thoughts once more to the field of old glories, the East. As soon as peace had been made with Rome, Antiochus left his second son Seleucus in Syria as joint-king and plunged eastward. The tidings eventually came back to the capital at Antioch that he had adventured himself with a body of troops into the Elymaean hills in quest of spoils and had been overwhelmed by fierce tribesmen.

Daniel 11

20 He will be succeeded by one who will send out an officer with a royal escort to extort tribute; after a short time this king too will meet his end, yet neither openly nor in battle.

Seleucus IV Philopater ("Lover of his Father," ruled c. 187-176 BCE) became the King of the North after his father disappeared in the East. A retiring man who was not prone to battle, Seleucus was nonetheless a great extractor of taxes from his subjects and managed to replenish the royal treasury after the disaster at Magnesia. The 'officer with royal escort' was his chief minister Heliodorus, who was given the job and was accompanied on money gathering missions by royal bodyguards.

The power granted Heliodorus tempted him to aspire higher. Heliodorus formed a conspiracy against the King, and in a time of peace, Seleucus Philopater was suddenly murdered.

Chapter Eight

ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES, “THE GOD MANIFEST”

Daniel 11

21 A contemptible creature will succeed but will not be given recognition as king; yet he will seize the kingdom by dissimulation and intrigue in time of peace.

After his murder of Seleucus Philopater, Heliodorus proclaimed the infant son of Seleucus to be the new King. This was an obvious ruse to control the royal power himself. The rightful heir to the throne was Demetrius, the elder son of Seleucus Philopater. Unfortunately, Demetrius had been sent to Rome as a replacement hostage for his father’s younger brother, Antiochus. Antiochus had become enamored of Greek culture and was in Athens at the time of the machinations of Heliodorus. Antiochus, seizing the opportunity, rushed to Antioch with an armed force. Heliodorus fled and disappeared from history while the new imposter ascended the throne as Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ruled 175-163 BCE).

To consolidate his position, Antiochus resorted to mixed stratagems of calculated mildness and bloodshed. Prominent competitors for power were induced to “disappear” or to commit suicide. The infant son of Seleucus was murdered by Andronicus, an agent of Antiochus. Following the assassination, Antiochus disowned his own agent and, in turn had him put to death.

The character of Antiochus IV was notorious. While being an astute politician and clever trickster, he was a “playboy emperor” devoted to practical jokes and theatrical absurdities. While professing a love for Hellenism, he lacked the depth of understanding to appreciate its true cultural values. He was probably the most despised of the Seleucid regents. Some nameless wit in his court parodied his title Epiphanes (“the Illustrious”) into the more appropriate Epimanes (“the Madman”).

Daniel 11

22 He will sweep away all forces of opposition as he advances, and even the Prince of the Covenant will be broken.

23 He will enter into fraudulent alliances and, although the people behind him are few,

24 He will rise to power and establish himself in time of peace. He will overrun the richest districts of the province and succeed in doing what his fathers and forefathers failed to do, distributing spoil, booty, and property to his followers. He will lay plans against fortresses, but only for a time.

Whereas his predecessor Seleucus IV had been an avid collector of taxes, Antiochus IV was an avid spender of assets. He lavished the riches of Syria and political privileges upon his Hellenist friends. He bestowed magnificent presents upon the old seats of Hellenism in Asia Minor and Greece, and threw open to their craftsmen and artists lucrative employment in Syria. His chief counsellors were two youths, brothers, Heraclides and Timarchus of Miletus, who had obtained the favor of Antiochus through the vilest of ways. One was made minister of finance; the other was made governor of the eastern provinces. The principal cities of Cilicia, Tarsus, and Mallus were given to his mistress, Antiochis.

Antiochus, in spite of his admiration of Hellenism, was no true friend of Rome. An anti-Roman movement was centered around Perseus of Macedonia, and Antiochus was a party to the movement. He carried on a clandestine correspondence with Perseus, and proceeded to rebuild his navy and other forces in violation of the treaty following Magnesia. Even so, his thoughts soon turned away from Rome and south to Egypt.

The “Prince of the Covenant” is Jehovah. How Antiochus replaced Jehovah in the Great Temple at Jerusalem will be told in later paragraphs.

Daniel 11

25 He will rouse himself in all his strength and lead a great army against the King of the South, but the King of the South will press the campaign against him with a very great and numerous army; yet the King of the South will not persist, for traitors will lay their plots.

26 Those who eat at his board will be his undoing; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in the field of battle.

27 The two kings will be bent on mischief and, sitting at the same table, they will lie to each other with advantage to neither. Yet there will be an end to the appointed time.

When his sister Cleopatra I of Egypt died c. 172 BCE, Antiochus heard that Egypt might be on the verge of invading Syria. Antiochus advanced promptly with a force as far as Joppa to repel a possible invasion. After satisfying himself that things were safe for the moment, he returned north. Nevertheless, old quarrels concerning the ownership of Palestine were still unresolved, and Antiochus was sure that it would be only a matter of time before Egypt would again try to recover it.

Indeed, in 170 BCE, Egypt went on the offensive to recover Palestine. The army was under the command of two joint regents, Eulaeus and Lenaeus, who had seized control of Egypt following the unexpected death of the young Cleopatra. The

legal heir to the southern kingdom, Ptolemy, son of Cleopatra and Ptolemy Epiphanes, was only fifteen years old at the time of his mother's death.

Eulaeus and Linaeus were unlikely creatures of the palace. Both had been slaves. Eulaeus was a eunuch and possibly a native of Khuzistan; Linaeus was a Syrian. Before their invasion of Syria, they had made boastful speeches to the populace, and had attempted to justify several wagon loads of bullion, gold and silver plate, jewels, rich feminine attire, and even furniture from the palace, that would accompany them on the invasion.

Antiochus met the invaders before they had crossed the desert and won an enormous victory. Then, by some ruse, probably through treachery, Antiochus seized Pelusium. The young King Ptolemy was given bad advice, probably again by traitors, and was packed aboard a ship to escape from Egypt. The ship was intercepted by the Syrian fleet, and Ptolemy Philomater became the prisoner of Antiochus!

Following the defection and capture of their young King, the citizens of Alexandria revolted against their incompetent regents Eulaeus and Linaeus, brought the younger brother of Philomater to the throne, and gave him the auspicious title of Ptolemy Euergetes II, in imitation of his successful great-grandfather. Antiochus continued his invasion of Egypt and moved up the Nile to Memphis. Lower Egypt, except for Alexandria, was soon entirely in the hands of Antiochus. For the first time since Alexander the Great, Egypt had been successfully invaded from Palestine!

After his nearly total takeover of Egypt, Antiochus installed his young prisoner Ptolemy Philomater ("lover of his Mother") as a rival King at Memphis.

Daniel 11

28 Then he will return home with a long baggage train, and with anger in his heart against the Holy Covenant; he will work his will and return to his own land.

Having created havoc on the Egyptian political scene, Antiochus retired from Egypt laden with spoils.

While Antiochus was making war in Egypt, a false report was spread in Palestine that Antiochus had been killed. Jason, a former High Priest of the Temple in Jerusalem, who had been outbid for the position by his brother Menelaus, seized the occasion by raising a small army and inflicted severe chastisement upon the partisans of Menelaus. Antiochus, on hearing of the rejoicings which had been manifested on the occasion of his supposed death, hastened to Jerusalem and gave up the city to be sacked and pillaged by his soldiers for three consecutive days. About 40,000 citizens of Jerusalem were massacred and about 40,000 more were sold into slavery. The traitor Menelaus aided and abetted Antiochus in his outrages, assisted in the desecration of the Temple and the robbery of its treasury. Jason himself fled at the approach of Antiochus and died miserably in exile.⁴⁰

Daniel 11

29 At the appointed time he will once more overrun the south, but he will not succeed as he did before.
30 Ships from Kittim will sail against him, and he will receive a rebuff.

After a lengthy negotiation between Alexandria and Memphis, it was agreed that Ptolemy Philomater and Ptolemy Euergetes II would rule as joint kings in Egypt. This embarrassing setback for the plans of Antiochus precipitated a second successful invasion of Egypt from the north in 168 BCE. This time, however, Rome (identified by Bevan as "Kittim"⁴¹) was now free to exercise her authority over the Near East, having just recently conquered Macedonia at the battle of Pydna (June, 168 BCE).

Immediately, Rome sent from Delos her ambassador Popillius, who met Antiochus somewhere in the desert east of Alexandria. Antiochus had known Popillius in Rome and extended his hand in a friendly greeting. Much to the chagrin of Antiochus, his warm greeting was met with a cold rebuff. Antiochus was ordered to leave Egypt completely. Antiochus answered with one of those diplomatic phrases that came so easily to him, but the Roman was determined that he should not wriggle free. To everyone's amazement, with his cane, Popillius drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and demanded a Yes or No answer before he stepped outside it. Antiochus collapsed. When he regained his voice, he agreed to everything. The next moment found the Romans shaking his hand and enquiring about how he had been.

Daniel 11

30 ... He will turn and vent his fury against the Holy covenant;
31 On his way back he will desecrate the Sanctuary and the Citadel and do away with the regular offering. And there he will set up "the abominable thing that causes desolation."

After his rebuff from the Roman ambassadors, Antiochus withdrew completely from Egypt, "groaning and in bitterness of heart." Now, since he could no longer protect Palestine by holding any Egyptian territory, it was imperative that he consolidate Palestine. The weak spot was Jerusalem, which had resisted all efforts to amalgamate into the general Hellenistic

⁴⁰ Ref 4, p. 141ff

⁴¹ Ref 8, p. 145

system that he had envisioned for Syria. He was determined to abolish the religion of Jehovah, even if it required the extermination of recalcitrant Jewish residents and their replacement by Greek colonists.

Appolonius, the commander of the Mysian mercenaries, was sent to occupy Jerusalem with a strong military force. A fresh massacre occurred, probably led by the traitorous High Priest Menelaus, and cleared Jerusalem of the obnoxious element. A new fortress was built on the Temple Mount, and a body of royal troops, "Macedonians," was established in it to dominate the city.

Following the military occupation, a Greek altar to Zeus was erected upon the Rock Moriah, and swine sacrificed upon it. To partake of the "broth of abominable things" became a test of allegiance to the King, and Menelaus was one of the participants of the new sacrificial feast. The Temple sanctuary was smeared with blood, and in the ensuing riot, soldiers committed the grossest indecencies in the revered courts.

Antiochus had already declared himself to be the manifestation of Zeus on earth, and the day of the King's birth became a holy day to be celebrated every month. A Dionysian festival was introduced in which the citizens of Jerusalem, crowned with ivy, were coerced to participate in the procession. The triumph of Antiochus over the "Prince of the Covenant" seemed complete.

This was not to be the last time that sacrileges and an "abominable thing" would stand in the holy place. We recall once again the warning of Jesus in Matthew 24:15: 'So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),'

Daniel 11

32 He will win over by plausible promises those who are ready to condemn the covenant, but the people who are faithful to their God will hold firm and fight back.

33 Wise leaders will give guidance to the common people; yet for a while they will fall victims to fire and sword, to captivity and pillage.

34 But these victims will not want for help, though small, even if many who join are insincere.

35 Some of these elders will themselves fall victims for a time so that they may be tested, refined and made shining white.

The acts of Antiochus were to precipitate the Maccabean Revolt (c. 164-142 BCE), recorded in the Books of the Maccabees. It will not be our objective to discuss this very complex period of Jewish history. We shall content ourselves with recalling that the Jews eventually succeeded in winning national independence after a bitter but heroic struggle that lasted over two decades. The success of the Maccabean Revolt is commemorated by the Jewish Feast of Lights (Hanukkah). One of the most popular heroes to emerge from the conflict was Judas, son of Mattathiah.

Chapter Nine

NAPOLEON, "THE SULTAN KABIR"

At this point in Daniel's eleventh chapter, the Báb introduces a new element:⁴²

Daniel 11

35 Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

indicating that the verses to follow apply to a different time – the 'time of the end,' just as similar expressions do at other places in Daniel. Also, a careful reading of the verses following 11:35 will show that the King of the North referred to in verse 11:36 is none other than the same King referred to in verse 11:40. That same King of the North will do battle with the King of the South at the 'time of the end' (11:40).

It will become obvious in following verses that the latter-day King of the North is that great villain of history, Napoleon Bonaparte.

But how can we say that Napoleon was the King of the North after so many centuries had elapsed and after the Seleucid Empire no longer existed? The answer is quite simply that the "northern kingdom" is always one that invades Palestine from the north, while the "southern kingdom" is always one that invades Palestine from the south.

By the time of Napoleon, much had happened to alter the political groupings. The Seleucids had been replaced by Rome as the masters of Palestine, in turn to be replaced by Islam in the Seventh Century. But the Muslim invasions came from the

⁴² One possible cause of exegetic confusion is that the description of the villainous character of the King of the North in verses 11:36 through 11:39 could apply quite well to Antiochus Epiphanes. The fact is, however, that another villain of history had a character with the same description, namely Napoleon Bonaparte. It is simply a matter of recognizing that many persons may manifest the same attributes of character and personality, whether good or bad, and at different times and places.

south by way of the peninsula of Arabia. Thus, Islam became the southern kingdom, with the reigning Caliph or Sultan becoming the King of the South.

Then, during the Crusades, Palestine had another temporary master – Christendom (i.e., the “Frankish kingdoms”). This group invaded Palestine from the north by way of Constantinople, an invasion that resulted in another massacre of Jews, this time by Christians. Thus Christendom became the northern kingdom, and, as far as Palestine was concerned, so it remained until the time of Napoleon. Indeed, a look at a world map will show that Christendom is essentially a northern “kingdom,” while Islam is essentially a southern “kingdom.”

The Kings of the North and South had complex histories following Antiochus Epiphanes and Ptolemy Euergetes II that are too lengthy to be discussed here. But of some interest to our essay is an event surrounding the crowning of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III in 800 CE. Many historians believe that Charlemagne had intended to seize the crown from Leo III and to crown himself emperor. However, Charlemagne was foiled in his attempt, and the Empire of the West was thereby officially initiated under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church as the “Holy Roman Empire.”

After the fall of Constantinople and Eastern Christendom to Islam in 1453 CE, there was no longer a serious rival for the political leadership of Christendom outside of Western Europe. It is also a fact that, after 1453, the political role of the Pope became less and less important. The King of the North became, simply, the political ruler that happened to be dominant in the Christian lands.

A similar evolution of power occurred in the Muslim countries. By the time of Napoleon, the caliphate had lost its political power, and the King of the South had become the ruling Ottoman Sultan, Salim III.

Daniel 11

36 The king [of the north] will do what he chooses. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and against the God of gods he will utter monstrous blasphemies. All will go well for him until the time of wrath comes, for what is determined must be done.

37 He will ignore the God of his fathers, and the one beloved by women; to no god will he play heed but will exalt himself above them all.

38 Instead, he will honor the god of forces, a god unknown to his ancestors, with gold and silver, gems and costly gifts.

39 He will garrison his strongest forces with aliens, the people of a foreign god. Those whom he favors he will load with honor, putting them in office over the common people and distributing land at a price.

Napoleon Bonaparte, the “Corsican Adventurer,” was the supreme example of egotism, ambition, hypocrisy, and arrogance. Even at the youthful age of nineteen, while he still had literary ambitions, he indicated his cynical attitude toward religious belief by writing a short story called ‘The Masked Prophet.’ In the story, based upon the life of an eighth-century sincere but misdirected Mahdi (Savior) named Hakim, Napoleon ascribes Hakim’s fanatic attempts to overcome the Caliph as “an incredible example of the extremes to which the mania for fame can push a man.”

Later, as a member of the radical Jacobin party, he cynically denounced religion as a means for keeping the people quiet (harbinger of the later dictum of the Bolsheviks that “religion is the opiate of the masses”). The Jacobins, we should remember, were the instigators of the Reign of Terror that was so disastrous to the Church and other established institutions of France.

While Napoleon Bonaparte may be rightly called the “arch-hypocrite,” he also had a profound sense of destiny and of his part to be played in history. He, as have many conquerors, claimed to be fulfilling the dictates of prophecy. Well versed in the Qur’an and familiar with Muslim traditions, in order to carry out his designs during his command of the invasion of Egypt, Napoleon pretended to be a Muslim and participated in local customs and holy days. Following his victory over the Sultan’s forces at Abukir, he informed the disappointed sheiks⁴³ that he was a “true Muslim,” that he hated the Christians whose altars and crosses he had overthrown, and that he had abjured his former faith. Furthermore, he ascribed his military successes to being the chosen instrument of Allah, the Creator of the Universe.

Witness this proclamation by Napoleon after the quelling of an insurrection at Cairo:

Sherifs, ulamas, preachers in the mosques, be sure to tell the people that those who, with a light heart, take sides against us shall find no refuge in either this world or the next. Is there a man so blind as not to see that destiny itself guides all my operations? ...

Let the people know that, from the creation of the world, it is written that after destroying the enemies of Islam and beating down the cross, I was to come from the confines of the Occident to accomplish my appointed task. Show the people that in more than twenty passages of the holy Qur’an, what has happened has been foretold, and what shall happen has been explained. If I chose, I could call each of you to account for the most hidden feelings of his heart, for I know everything, even what you have told to no one. But the day will come when all men shall see beyond all doubt that I am guided by orders from above and that all human efforts avail nought against me. Blessed are they who, in good faith, are the first to choose my side.

In Egypt, Jews and Christian Copts were retained as security guards and tax gatherers, while Napoleon garrisoned his Citadel and strongest fortresses with Janissary companies composed predominantly of alien Christian Greeks, a source of aggravation to the native Egyptians and Arabs. Especially annoying to the Egyptians was Barthelmy and his band of ruffians.

⁴³ Ref 11, p. 321

Barthelmy, the Lieutenant of Police for Cairo, was an alien Greek of herculean stature and spine-chilling appearance. Besides various weapons, he wore a colorful but bizarre combination of local and Greek costume when he and his goon squad sallied forth to find heads to lop off. Often, his Amazon-statured wife would ride at his side.

Napoleon, on his return to France, created a “Mamluk Corps” composed of Mamluks, Copts, and Syrians who had joined his train. (As we shall see, the Mamluks, although Muslim by faith, were actually aliens in Egypt.) Also, back in Europe, Napoleon made his brothers, sisters, and in-laws the rulers of entire nations. And like all of his gifts to his self-seeking favorites, the price to be paid for his awards was unquestioned loyalty to the promotion of his ambitions.

Later, as the head of the French government, Napoleon reinstated the Catholic Church in France but not for altruistic purposes. He worked out a conciliation with the Roman Church, but Rome was to support him in return for this Concordat. Napoleon had in mind the restoration of a monarchy with himself as the Supreme Monarch. In his own words:⁴⁴

How can you have order in a state without religion? Society cannot exist without inequality of fortunes, which cannot endure apart from religion. When one man is dying of hunger near another who is ill of surfeit, he cannot resign himself to this difference, unless there is an authority which declares, “God wills it thus: there must be poor and rich in the world: but hereafter and during all eternity, the division of things will take place differently.”

Also, Napoleon wished to re-establish missionaries, but not for the spread of the Gospel:⁴⁵

It is my wish to re-establish the institution of foreign missions; for the religious missionaries may be useful to me in Asia, Africa and America, as I shall make them reconnoitre all the lands they visit. The sanctity of their dress will not only protect them, but serve to conceal their political and commercial investigations. The head of the missionary establishment will reside no longer in Rome but in Paris.

Jesus of Nazareth may be rightly called “the One beloved by women,” since He re-established the sanctity of marriage and forbade the degradation of women. But as for Bonaparte of Corsica,⁴⁶

I do not think that we need trouble ourselves with any plan for instruction of young females; they cannot be better brought up than by their mothers. Public education is not suitable for them, because they are never called upon to act in public.

Under the Code of Napoleon, a system of laws largely due to his efforts that still lingers in several regions of the world, women lost control over their property and were relegated to the status of inferior beings.

To what ‘forces,’ if any, did Napoleon feel beholden? In his own words⁴⁷, Napoleon informed the “Council of Ancients” at the Chateau Saint-Cloud following his return from the Egyptian campaign, that “the god of war and the god of luck are marching alongside me!” Renaming the Louvre after himself, he stocked it with the riches he had stolen from other lands and peoples in the name of “war and luck.”

Daniel 11

40 At the time of the end, he and the king of the south will make feints at one another. The king of the north will come storming against the king of the south with chariots, cavalry and many ships. The king of the north will overrun land after land, sweeping over them like a flood,

41 Amongst them the fairest of all lands, and tens of thousands will fall victims. Yet all these lands (including Edom and Moab and the remnant of the Ammonites) will survive the attack.

42 The king of the north will reach out to land after land, and Egypt will not escape.

43 He will gain control of her hidden stores of gold, silver and all of her treasures; Libyans and Cushites will follow in his train.

44 Then rumors from east and north will alarm him, and he will depart in a rage to destroy and to exterminate many.

45 He will pitch his royal pavilion between the sea and the holy hill, the fairest of all hills, and he will meet his end with no one to help him.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, there were several thrusts and counter-thrusts between Christendom and Islam. The Moors were driven out of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella in the late fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, Sulayman the Magnificent besieged Rhodes and Sulayman II attacked Malta. In the seventeenth century, Italy invaded Greece, then a part of the Ottoman empire, but was driven out again about half a century later.

By the late Eighteenth Century, the Ottoman Empire, the “Sick Man of the East,” was perceived to be in a decrepit condition by the European powers. In particular, Egypt seemed to be a plum ripe for the picking. In 1798, the Directory of the newly-formed French Republic decided to send General Bonaparte, the hero of the Italian campaign, with an army into Egypt to pick the plum.

⁴⁴ Ref 2, p. 1048

⁴⁵ Ref 2, p. 1049

⁴⁶ Ref 2, p. 1049

⁴⁷ Ref 11, p. 312

There were several overt arguments proffered for the enterprise, among them being the grand strategy of using Egypt as a base for the invasion of India and thereby striking at the heart of the British Empire. At the very least, the control of Egypt, and hopefully Syria as well, would seriously hamper the flow of trade and communications between India and England. But the covert argument was based on simple greed and the thirst for power. Egypt, although in a backward economic condition in 1798, had the potential of becoming a fertile breadbasket for the French Empire, just as it had been for the Roman Empire and other invaders of the past.

In May of 1798, a spectacular convoy sailed from Toulon bound for Malta. The convoy would soon swell to almost 400 sailing ships and would carry 55,000 citizens of France, among them an army of 25,000 men, cavalry, transport vehicles, artillery, and the full accouterments of war. The plan was first to take Malta from the obsolete and quixotic Knights Hospitalier of Saint John of Jerusalem that had held the island since the Crusades, and then to use Malta as a base for the invasion of Egypt. There ensued a ludicrous game of blind-man's bluff following Napoleon's departure from Toulon in which Napoleon's convoy, under the command of Vice-admiral Brueys, was chased by the British battle fleet, under the command of Admiral Horatio Nelson, all over the eastern Mediterranean. Had Nelson been able to intercept Brueys, the whole course of modern history might have taken a drastic turn. As it was, Napoleon was able to take Malta and sail on to Alexandria.

The siege of Alexandria and other minor engagements led to the celebrated Battle of the Pyramids near Cairo. It was there that Napoleon achieved a spectacular victory over the Mamluks under the command of Murad Bey. The desert regions of Egypt were under the control of the Bedouin sheiks, but the Mamluks were the de facto rulers of the populated parts of Egypt. While the Mamluks were theoretically subjects of Sultan Selim III, owing to the sorry condition of the Ottoman realm, they were actually a semi-autonomous warrior class that had managed to bully the powerless and impoverished fellahin peasants of Egypt for five and a half centuries.

The Mamluks were an historical anomaly. The word 'Mamluk' means a 'bought man' in Arabic. But the Mamluks were not slaves in the usual sense of the word. They had their origins in the mid-thirteenth century when the Ayyubite Sultan brought about 12,000 youths from the Caucasus mountains to Egypt to form the elite corps of his army. The Mamluks, mostly of Circassian and Georgian stock, soon took over the land, killed Sultan Ashraf Moussa in 1252, and formed their own dynasty. Even after the Turkish conquest of Egypt in 1517, the Mamluks retained the essential control of populated Egypt, their only real subservience to the Sultan being in the act of collecting and delivering taxes from the fellahin. Even though the Mamluks filled their harems with Egyptian, Abyssinian, and Nubian women, they renewed their numbers with fresh imports of young fair-skinned boys from the Caucasus whom they bought and trained as warriors.

Shortly after Napoleon's victory over the Mamluks at the pyramids, a naval battle occurred that changed the character of the war: Admiral Nelson finally caught up with the French fleet at Abukir about ten miles east of Alexandria. The bloody "Battle of the Nile" that ensued resulted in the destruction of the French fleet and the death of Admiral Brueys. Thereafter, isolated and ignored by the Directory of the Republic, Napoleon and the 'Army of the Orient' were left to fend for themselves in a strange and exotic land.

In 1798, Egypt was still a land of mystery that had been visited by relatively few Europeans. Since colonization was the covert reason for the invasion of Egypt in the first place, Napoleon had brought along a remarkable group of civilian savants in his train, who will be recognized by modern savants in each of their fields: the chemist Berthollet, the geometer Monge, the orientalist Jean-Michel de Venture, the artists Denon and Duterte, the architect Balzac, the mathematician Fourier, the zoologist Saint-Hilaire, the inventor Conte, the adventurist-minerologist Gratet de Dolomieu, and the physicist Malus, among others. Together, these distinguished scientists and humanists initiated the science of Egyptology and disclosed the wonders of ancient Egypt to modern eyes. This 'Scientific and Artistic Commission of Egypt' was responsible for the discovery of the Rosetta Stone (sculpted in honor of Ptolemy V Epiphanes in 195 BCE) that made it possible to decipher the written languages of ancient Egypt.

Soon after the destruction of the French fleet by Admiral Nelson, Napoleon sent the dashing and heroic General Desaix with an army of about 3,000 men in pursuit of the clever and equally heroic Murad Bey and his Mamluks. For many months, there were thrusts and counter-thrusts between the forces of Desaix and Murad Bey all the way from Cairo to the cataracts of the Nile and back again, a distance of about 3,000 miles. Along the way, the artist Denon was able to record many of the famous sights as the pursuit passed through such spectacular ruins as Karnak and Luxor.

Finally, some semblance of victory was achieved by Desaix, and Egypt became a temporary colony of the French Empire. Cairo even acquired some of the gaieties and amenities of Paris. Since the Army of the Orient was isolated and abandoned by the French government, it was necessary to pay, clothe, and feed the Army with local confiscations and oppressive taxation policies. Besides the collections of gold and silver, Napoleon's army and the savants collected an astonishing booty of ancient treasures, much of which had been stolen from the tombs of pharaohs by grave robbers, and much of which, as was said before, now rests in the Louvre.

While Desaix was engaged in the chase, Napoleon set off on another adventure, probably the one closest to his heart but one that was doomed to failure. Napoleon had often confided to friends that he admired Alexander the Great, and evidence suggests that he actually tried to emulate that ancient Greek conqueror. Napoleon had visions of becoming a spreader of French culture throughout the Orient and of, once again, unifying the Occident and the Orient. In imitation of Alexander, he

took on many of the trappings of the East and chose the title of Sultan Kebir, the “Great Sultan.” Indeed, Bedouin tribes believed Napoleon to be Alexander reincarnated. They would have been more correct if they had likened him to Antiochus Epiphanes.

In the light of his dreams and convictions, we should not be too surprised to find Napoleon undertaking the invasion of Syria at a time when the situation of Egypt was, at best, precarious and the hopes of receiving substantial assistance from France to be virtually nil. But more than that, he had ambitions for Europe as well as for the Orient. The ‘news from the north and from the east’ that put ‘rage’ into his heart was delivered by Hamelin, a French merchant who had just arrived from Trieste⁴⁸ a few days before his departure from Cairo for Syria. The news was the renewal of the war in Italy, the Russo-Turkish blockade of Corfu, and the declaration of war by Turkey against France. It seemed certain to Napoleon that a resumption of general hostilities involving most of the European powers was imminent. Egypt and Asia offered no more opportunities to Napoleon, and Europe beckoned him to even greater glory. Syria had to be invaded and conquered quickly if he was to seize the steed of fortune.

Napoleon had, for some time, realized that the success of the Army of the Orient depended upon getting new recruits from the native population. To that end, he had purchased blacks from Abyssinia (ancient Cush), and had acquired Bedouin forces from Tur.⁴⁹ When Napoleon invaded Syria, he had about 13,000 men and some women in his train, including among them, Arab and Egyptian personnel attached to his army – servants, camel drivers, interpreters, laborers, etc.. A vast amount of baggage was carried, including beds, mattresses, carpets, and tents. Apparently, Napoleon intended to leave a permanent garrison in Syria. In addition to his standard retinue of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, Napoleon’s army contained a newly-formed Dromedary troop modeled after the Bedouin forces of the Lybian desert.

Napoleon pitched ‘his royal pavilion between the holy hill (Carmel) and the sea’ before the fortress of Akka, the ancient Crusaders’ citadel of Saint Jean de Acre. Opposed to Napoleon and fortified behind the walls of Akka were the combined forces of Ahmad Pasha Djezzar of Akka, Commodore Sidney Smith of England, and the expatriate Colonel Phelipeaux of France. Napoleon failed in his siege of the fortress-city after much blood had been shed on both sides. Although there were a number of other bloody engagements in the Holy Land (notably the Battles of Mount Tabor and Jaffa), Palestine – the ‘fairest of all lands’ – survived the attack. So did the ancient lands of Moab, Edom, and the Ammonites, although the ancient territories of Moab and the Ammonites (modern Jordan) were temporarily invaded by some of Napoleon’s forces dispatched under General Murat. Edom, the Mount Seir region between modern south Palestine and the Gulf of Aqaba, also escaped Napoleon’s wrath.

The disaster at Akka was a humiliating disappointment for Napoleon. Shortly after his retreat to Egypt, Napoleon received further news of the developments in the north and the east. He immediately abandoned his grandiose plans to repeat Alexander’s triumphs and deserted Egypt. He left command of the Army of the Orient to the aging but competent General Klebar, who held out in Egypt until 1801. Returning to France, Napoleon was able to gain control of the French Directory by subterfuge and deceit. He went on to many victories in Europe, ‘overrunning land after land.’ In 1804, he called Pope Pius VII to Paris to have himself crowned Emperor of Western Christendom. Surmounting the failed attempt of Charlemagne a thousand years earlier, the Corsican Adventurer seized the crown, waved the Pope aside, and crowned himself. Thereby, Western Christendom became simply the secular empire of France. The Holy Roman Empire was officially terminated as an entity about a year later.

Ultimately, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, exiled to the tiny island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic, and met a lonely and bitter end “with no one to help him.”

Chapter Ten

ISRAEL DELIVERED

Napoleon was exiled to Saint Helena in 1815 and died there six years later in 1821. It was during that period that Bahá’u’lláh was born (1817).⁵⁰ The Báb accurately specifies the birth date of ‘Michael’:

Daniel 12

1 At that moment Michael will appear, Michael the great captain, who stands guard over your fellow countrymen;

But the Báb also portends great troubles to follow for the Jewish people:

And there will be a time of distress such as has never been since they became a nation till that moment.

⁴⁸ Ref 11, p. 221

⁴⁹ There is no footnote for this reference in the text labeled <8>.

⁵⁰ Indeed, the Báb was born during that same period (1819).

The 'time of distress' clearly refers to the "holocaust" under Nazi Germany during which some six million Jews perished. The Báb goes on to say that deliverance will follow shortly:

But at that moment your people will be delivered, every one who is written in the book:

- 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake, some to everlasting life and some to the reproach of eternal abhorrence.
- 3 The wise leaders shall shine like the bright vault of heaven, and those who have guided the people in the true path shall be like the stars for ever and ever.

Here we have not only the resurrection of the worthy, but also those who will be reproached throughout eternity. But, of course, the 'resurrection' is to be a spiritual one, not physical, as explained by Jesus in Matthew 23:31-32. The wise leaders of Judaism, like Daniel, Ezekiel, and rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, are to be the stars of the new Jewish firmament. And we are watching with our own eyes their deliverance with the restoration of Israel as a nation following nineteen centuries of exile and suffering.

In verse 3, Daniel sees a new and final vision, two other holy figures standing on opposite banks of the Tigris River (10:4). They remind us of the two holy trees on opposite banks of the 'river of the water of life' in Revelation 22. These two figures represent the Twin Holy Trees, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. That they stand on opposite banks of the Tigris reminds us that the Báb's community of exiled believers was on the eastern bank of the Tigris at Baghdad, and that Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to the opposite bank of the Tigris by decree of the Sultan.⁵¹

It is to the Figure 'clothed in linen' on the opposite bank – to Bahá'u'lláh – that Daniel addresses his question (12:6): 'How long will it be before these portents cease?' Bahá'u'lláh replies with the cryptic answer

Daniel 12

- 7 "It shall be for a time, times, and a half. When the power of the holy people ceases to be dispersed, all these things shall come to an end."

The period of three-and-a-half 'times' is 1260 years, and, as explained elsewhere, represents the date in the Muslim lunar calendar of the Edict of Toleration. But Daniel is not satisfied by this perplexing answer and asks again. Bahá'u'lláh answers a second time with an equally cryptic answer

Daniel 12

- 9 "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are kept secret and sealed till the time of the end. ..."
- 11 From the time when the regular offering is abolished and 'the abomination of desolation' is set up, there shall be an interval of one thousand two hundred and ninety days.
- 12 Happy the man who waits and lives to see the completion of the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days."

The meanings of the dates are not to become evident until the end of the Age of Prophecy. It is 'Abdu'l-Bahá who explains these dates to us: The 1290 'days' is the span of time from the First Public Declaration of Muhammad in 613 [CE] until the First Public Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in 1863, a period of 1290 lunar years. The 1335 'days' is the span of time from the Firm Founding of the Muslim Faith until the Firm Founding of the Bahá'í Faith.

These explanations deserve closer reading. In verse 11 we read of the "time when the regular offering is abolished and 'the abomination of desolation' is set up" We know from history that the regular offering at the Great Temple of Jerusalem was abolished in 70 CE. This was followed by about 600 years of abominations between Jews and Christians, as decreed in Daniel 9:26, 27. The abominations left the Temple and the Holy Land both physically and spiritually desolate. Muhammad, The Comforter, decreed an end to these abominations. Thus, the time (Era) of these events ended with Muhammad's Declaration, marking the beginning of a new Era and a meaningful reference point for the counting of years. (See Dan 7:25)

It was one of the great tragedies of history that 'Ali was not permitted to assume the caliphate. In less than thirty years, the caliphate had been usurped by the enemies of Muhammad, and the true meaning of Islam was beclouded forever. As one consequence of these actions, the Holy Land remained spiritually desolate. The 'abomination of desolation' did not come to its end until the Declaration of the Báb on May 23rd, 1844, about two months after the Edict of Toleration.

The 1335 'days' is the number of solar years that must elapse between the Firm Founding of the Muslim Faith and the Firm Founding of the Bahá'í Faith. This period terminated some time between 1957 and 1963, and is discussed in more detail in the Appendix.

In the last verse, Bahá'u'lláh exhorts Daniel:

Daniel 12

- 13 ... But go your way to the end and rest, and you shall arise to your destiny at the end of the age.

⁵¹ Ref 17, p. 149

Appendix

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S EXPLANATION OF THE 1335 DAYS

From reference 20, p. 51ff:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that the 1335 years are counted in solar rather than lunar years, because a century must elapse between the Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh and the firm establishment of “the teachings of God ... upon the earth.” Apparently, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was referring to some prophecy in sacred writings. Also, Shoghi Effendi explains that the 1335 years end at the year 1963 CE, the date of the Foundation of the Universal House of Justice.

Unfortunately, neither ‘Abdu’l-Bahá nor Shoghi Effendi shed enough light in their brief explanations for this writer to determine the exact method of computation. In *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, Appendix B, it was suggested that the beginning point for the 1335 years could be the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah in 628 CE. This would result in the year 1963 CE as the end date of the 1335 solar years. After further research I have decided that there are actually two dates that are important in the Firm Founding of Islam: 622 which marked the end of Muhammad’s ministry in Mecca (the Hegira), and the Truce of al-Hudaybiyyah in 628. The Firm Founding of Islam was a six-year process lasting from 622 to 628. Adding 1335 to the first date produces 1957, the end date of the Bahá’í ministry and the Ascension of Shoghi Effendi. Adding 1335 to the second date produces 1963, the date of the Foundation of the Universal House of Justice. Like the Firm Founding of Islam, the Firm Founding of the Bahá’í Faith was also a six-year process lasting from 1957 to 1963.

It is interesting that the Ascension of Shoghi Effendi in 1957 may be one specific meaning of Dan 12:12. The version of the *New English Bible* reads: “Happy the man who waits and lives to see the completion of the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days!”

Actually, different interpretations and methods of reckoning have little effect on the result. Regardless of what assumptions are made, it is certainly true that the man would be happy who waited and lived to see the completion of one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

It is also worth noting that even Jesus Christ did not claim to know the date of the foundation of the Kingdom of God:

“Yet about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son; no one but the Father alone.” – Matthew 24.36 (*Revised English Bible*)

THE TWO LAMBS OF THE BAHÁ’Í DISPENSATION

In *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, (ref. 1) chapter 5, this writer named the two Lambs of the Bahá’í Dispensation as the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. At that time, Volume Three of Adib Taherzadeh’s magnificent work, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, was not available. It is now clear that Bahá’u’lláh considered Mírzá Mihdí, The Purest Branch, to be a Lamb of the Bahá’í Dispensation. This can be inferred by referring to Taherzadeh’s book (ref. 19), Chapter 10, in which we read that the “death of the Purest Branch must be viewed as Bahá’u’lláh’s own sacrifice, a sacrifice on the same level as the crucifixion of Christ and the martyrdom of the Báb.”

Since Bahá’u’lláh’s Dispensation has two Lambs instead of the usual one, this writer has now concluded that the two Lambs are probably Mirza Mihdí and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The Báb would then be the Lamb of His own Dispensation.

THE BEAST THAT WAS, IS NOT, YET IS

In chapter 17 of the Apocalypse, there is a riddle concerning a “beast that was, is not, yet is.” In *The Apocalypse Unsealed*, this writer gave the answer to the riddle as the empire of Alexander, since it seemed to come into existence a second time under the Umayyad dynasty.

In researching for I, Daniel, this writer studied some of the work of great historian Arnold J. Toynbee. Professor Toynbee points out that the empire of Alexander did not produce a permanent change in the civilization introduced to the region under the Persian empire. When Islam reconquered the region, the civilization introduced under Islam more closely resembled the former Persian civilization rather than the more recent Hellenistic civilization.

That being so, the answer to the riddle is probably as follows:

The beast that was: the Medeo-Persian empire;

is not: the empire of Alexander;
yet is: the Umayyad dynasty.

THE FOUR DECREES TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

The extent to which the various Edicts were fulfilled can be inferred from a careful reading of Chapters 1, 6, and 7 of Ezra. The assessments of their fulfillment given in Appendix B of *The Apocalypse Unsealed* are less explicit.

Some have suggested that the use of the word “rebuild” in Nehemiah 2:5 justifies 444 BCE as the date of the Edict. However, a “word going forth” was an Edict, a Proclamation signed by the king. Daniel was kind enough to remind us of this fact in verse 6:8. Nehemiah received a private verbal grant to assist in the “rebuilding” of Jerusalem. The only signed document Nehemiah received was for the acquisition of timber for the gates of the citadel, the city wall, and for the “temple which is the object of my journey” (Nehemiah 2:8, *The Revised English Bible*)

The Great Temple was, in fact, the main purpose for the city’s existence. To build the Temple, to house and supply the thousands of workers and pilgrims, and to maintain the Temple priesthood, implied that a sizeable infrastructure also had to be built. That infrastructure was the de facto city of Jerusalem.

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