

## **APPENDIX TWELVE**

Studies In The Book Of Daniel (*R. Cottrell*)

from

Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly Senior Division,  
No. 287, First Quarter, 1967



## ***Studies In The Book Of Daniel (Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly)***

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Lessons 5 and 6 present a composite summary of all of the information Gabriel imparted to Daniel, without attempting (in these two lessons) to interpret it. Lessons 7 through 12 turn to the New Testament for the interpretation and application of the prophecies of Daniel given by Christ and the various New Testament writers.

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As with all of God's promises and warnings, the covenant blessings were conditional upon Israel's cooperation. Again and again we find the word "if" attached to the promised blessings. "It should be remembered that promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional." — *Evangelism*, p. 695.

### **Pages 6-7**

God purposed, after seventy years of exile, to restore His people to the Land of Promise, to renew His covenant, and to carry out His original plan for them. All that had been promised might yet come to pass if they learned the lesson that bitter experience was designed to teach.

"This promise of blessing should have met fulfilment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God's design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming." — *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 703, 704.

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**Study Aim:** To understand and appreciate God's purpose for the salvation of the world through the Jewish people during the restoration era that followed the Babylonian exile.

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**Introduction:** According to Daniel 9:24, RSV, seventy "weeks of years," or 490 years, dating from the restoration decree, were allotted the Jews in which to fulfil their appointed mission as the covenant people. This is known as the restoration era. As the inspired writers make abundantly clear, it was God's purpose that the good news of salvation should go to all the world during this period of time, and that Messiah should come, die for His people, rise again, and establish His eternal kingdom. What God is accomplishing through His church on earth today, He originally purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, during the restoration era. See *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 713, 714.

Much additional information about God's purpose for the returned exiles is provided by other Old Testament writers of the captivity-restoration era. Their perspective is helpful in understanding how, in the purpose of God, the prophecies of Daniel could — and would — have been fulfilled to literal Israel had her rulers and people proved faithful to their covenant privileges and responsibilities. This insight into what might have been, provides a firm basis for understanding the way in which Christ and the New Testament writers later interpreted and applied these same prophecies, once the Jewish nation had ceased to be God's chosen instrument for the conversion of the world.

The Hebrew word translated "weeks" is a derived form of the word for "seven," meaning a period of time made up of seven units or subdivisions, whether seven days or seven years — a hebdomad. In chapter 10:2 Daniel relates that he was in mourning for "three full weeks,"

literally, “three full hebdomads [weeks] of days.” Evidently, when Daniel intended a hebdomad of days he considered it necessary to add (according to the Hebrew text) the qualifying phrase “of days” to the word “hebdomad [week],” in order to make clear that these hebdomads were “weeks” of days and not years, as in chapter 9:24. In recognition of this fact, the RSV translates Daniel 9:24, “weeks of years.”

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4. *What was God’s purpose for the Jews as a nation following the exile? Ezek. 36:11, 24-28. See also Jer. 31:31-34.*

**Note.** — “This promise of blessing should have met fulfilment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God’s design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as today the way is preparing for His second coming.” — *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 703, 704.

Taken in their literary and historical context, all of the Old Testament promises looking forward to a future restoration were given with the return from Babylonian exile in view. All that had been promised by Moses and the prophets might yet have come to pass if leaders and people proved loyal to their covenant privileges and responsibilities. Their restoration and prosperity were to be conditional on a transformation of the heart.

### Pages 16-17

6. *What witness were the Jews to bear to the nations during the restoration era? Isa. 60:1-3. See also Isa. 49:3, 6; 56:6, 7.*

**Note.** — The glorious prophecies of Isaiah 40 to 66, which in their original setting applied specifically to this restoration era, provide a picture of what God purposed to accomplish in and through the Jewish nation during that time.

In Isaiah, as in Daniel and Zechariah, Messiah would come and die (ch. 53), the gospel would go to all the world (chs. 54 to 62); at His coming the Lord would destroy those who rejected His mercy (chs. 63 and 64), and establish His universal, eternal reign of righteousness (chs. 65 and 66).

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7. *By what figure did Ezekiel illustrate Israel’s postexilic mission to the nations following the exile? Ezek. 47:1-12.*

**Note.** — In a slightly different sequence, Ezekiel presents the same picture of the restoration era as Daniel, Zechariah, and Isaiah. Exile (Ezekiel 1 to 33) is followed by restoration (chs. 34 to 37). The nations will come against Jerusalem, but the Lord will fight for His people (chs. 38 and 39). The sanctuary will be re-established (chs. 40 to 46), Messiah the Prince will come (ch. 44:1-3), the gospel will go to the nations (ch. 47), and the Lord Himself will reign in Jerusalem (ch. 48).

8. *How would the nations respond to Israel’s appeal? Zech. 2:11; 8:20-23.*

**Note.** — “It was God’s purpose that by the revelation of His character through Israel men should be drawn unto Him. To ail the world the gospel invitation was to be given. Through the teachings of the sacrificial service Christ was to be uplifted before the nations, and all who would look unto Him should live. All who, like Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with

His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world.” — *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 290.

### Pages 17-18

12. *What was the ultimate goal of the restoration era following the exile? Dan. 9:24; Micah 4:1, 2, 7-10. See also Jer. 3:17.*

**Note.** — “If Jerusalem had known what it was her privilege to know, and had heeded the light which Heaven had sent her, she might have stood forth in the pride of prosperity, the queen of kingdoms, free in the strength of her God-given power. She might ... have been ... the mighty metropolis of the earth. From her walls the dove of peace would have gone forth to all nations. She would have been the world’s diadem of glory.” — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 577.

13. *How was the Messianic kingdom to be established? Zech. 14:1-4, 8, 9, 16. See also Mal. 4:1-6.*

**Note.** — Had Israel been faithful to God and fulfilled her assigned role during the restoration era as God intended, His eternal kingdom would have been established at Jerusalem in the long ago. The conditional prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah concerning Israel would have met their fulfilment, and Christ would have inaugurated His righteous reign as “king over all the earth.” But, as a nation, the people of Israel failed to achieve the high destiny marked out for them. They rejected the Messiah when He came, and God in turn rejected them from being His people.

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The fourth beast of chapter 7 and its little horn exist together to the close of time. They are judged and destroyed together, the fourth beast being punished for the “great words” its little horn speaks.

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12. *What promise of eventual deliverance from the oppressor’s power is given? Dan. 7:21, 22, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 12:1.*

**Note.** — There is a happy ending to the long reign of terror. When it seems that the great oppressor is on the point of triumph, God intervenes in the course of history to deliver His people, to destroy their wily foe, and to inaugurate His own righteous reign on earth. By the verdict of the supreme court of the Universe, those who have suffered at the hands of the great persecuting power will eventually be awarded eternal justice.

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Now that the transfer of the covenant promises and responsibilities to the nascent Christian church had been made, further information could be given concerning **when** and **how** Daniel’s prophecy would be fulfilled. It is worthy of special note that, on the very day the Jewish leaders officially rejected Jesus as the Messiah, He directed His disciples’ attention to the book of Daniel and told them that **now** those who read the prophecy should be able to understand (Matt. 24:15) what had previously been “closed up and sealed.” His great discourse on the signs of His coming (Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21), in answer to the disciples’ questions about when and how Daniel’s prophecy would come to pass, is His interpretation and application of that prophecy to the changed historical situation in which the church has become the new chosen instrument of God’s purpose on earth. Jesus here places

in our hands the master key for unlocking the mysteries of Daniel that had hitherto been “closed up and sealed.”

In this lesson we consider Christ’s interpretation and application of Daniel’s prophecy. In Lessons 8 to 12 we will explore what the various New Testament writers have to say on the matter. By thus letting the New Testament interpret the Old for us, we shall have an inspired authoritative commentary on the book of Daniel as it applies to the Christian church, and thus to our time,

1. *What does Malachi say of Israel’s spiritual state a century after the return from exile, four centuries before the coming of Christ? Mal. 1:6, 7, 12, 13; 2:8, 13, 14, 17; 3:8, 9, 13, 14.*

**Note.** — “Under the leadership of Zerubbabel, of Ezra, and of Nehemiah they [the returned exiles] repeatedly covenanted to keep all the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah. The seasons of prosperity that followed, gave ample evidence of God’s willingness to accept and forgive; and yet, with fatal short-sightedness, they turned again and again from their glorious destiny, and selfishly appropriated to themselves that which would have brought healing and spiritual life to countless multitudes.

“This failure to fulfil the divine purpose was very apparent in Malachi’s day.” — *Prophets and Kings*, p. 705.

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**Note.** — “Not by any temporary failure of Israel, however, was the plan of the ages for the redemption of mankind to be frustrated. Those to whom the prophet was speaking might not heed the message given, but the purposes of Jehovah were nevertheless to move steadily forward to their complete fulfilment.” — *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 705, 706.

God’s ultimate purpose never changes; but when those who have been called refuse persistently to cooperate, He changes the manner in which He will eventually carry His purpose forward to success, the precise time of its culmination, and the human instruments He will use. The Bible record is replete with instances of the reversal of promised blessings and threatened judgments, involving both nations and individuals.

The Christian church became God’s chosen instrument for the salvation of the human race. Though the basic features of God’s plan for the world remained unchanged, this transition from literal Israel to spiritual Israel involved also **a profound change in the manner in which some aspects of the plan would now have to be worked out in history.**

“That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today.” — *Prophets and Kings*, p. 713.

### Pages 29-30

How the sealed portion of the prophecy of Daniel might have been fulfilled in history, had the Jews remained loyal to their covenant privileges and responsibilities, is beyond our ken. Nor is it important for us to know. With the transition from literal Israel to the Christian church, however, the latter fell heir to the covenant promises, privileges, and the responsibilities that formerly belonged to the literal descendants of Abraham.

Christ and the New Testament writers present a preview of how these aspects of Daniel’s prophecy were yet to work out in history, between the first and second advents of Christ, as

Satan went forth in anger to make war on those who should choose to remain loyal to God. Christ and the apostles often use the very words, expressions, or ideas of Daniel as they draw this picture of coming events. Christ specifically declared His delineation of the future to be an outline of how Daniel's prophecy is to be fulfilled, with His followers as heirs to the covenant promises, privileges, and responsibilities.

### Pages 33-34

Bible prophecy is a declaration of God's purpose, and its fulfilment in any particular historical context is contingent upon the cooperation of His church on earth.

Now, instead of a literal nation composed of the literal descendants of Abraham, the chosen people would henceforth be an international body, the church universal, a spiritual "nation" called out of all nations. The world replaced the land of Palestine as the stage for God's efforts in behalf of the human race, and the New Jerusalem in heaven replaced literal Jerusalem as the focal centre of the believer's hope. A new covenant replaced the old, and a new revelation of the divine purpose was given, adapting the former revelation to the new historical situation.

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The **Old Testament prophecies are still to be fulfilled in principle, though not necessarily in every detail**, owing to the fact that many details were dependent on Israel as a literal nation situated in the land of Palestine. Obviously such details could not in any literal sense apply to a spiritual "nation" scattered all over the world. Thus, only when the New Testament makes a clear application, or reinterpretation, of such an Old Testament passage, to the new situation with the church as God's chosen instrument, do we have infallible guidance as to its import for us.

Consequently, we should first examine such an Old Testament prophecy in terms of its original, historical application to literal Israel before going to the New Testament to discover its application to spiritual Israel.

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Three basic prophetic time periods are brought to view in the prophetic portion of the book of Daniel — "a time and times and the dividing of time" (ch. 7:25; 12:7), "two thousand and three hundred days" (ch. 8:14), and "seventy weeks" (ch. 9:24). The first marks the tyrant's defiance of God, his persecution of the saints, and his attempt to obliterate a knowledge of God's revealed will and the worship of God. **The second is the period of time during which the little horn of Daniel 8 would desolate the sanctuary, interrupt its services, and substitute in their place his own apostate form of worship.** The third is the period of time allotted the Jews as a nation in which to fulfil their covenant obligations. Each of these three time periods is clarified by comparison with the others, and by Christ and the New Testament writers. A correct understanding of them is basic to a valid interpretation of Daniel.

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5. *For how long was the sanctuary to suffer under the tyrant's heel? Dan. 8:13, 14.*

**Note.** — At the end of 1260 "days" God's people were to be delivered from the tyrant's hand; but at the end of 2300 "days" the sanctuary was to be "cleansed." Lesson 11 considers what was to take place at the close of the 2300 "days;" here we are concerned only with the period of time itself, and its correlation with the events of history.

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In Lesson 9 we found that while the great tyrant of prophecy could not directly influence the sanctuary in heaven, he could, and did, succeed in depriving countless millions of people of a knowledge of the saving ministry of our great High Priest there. For them, the effect was the complete desolation of the sanctuary in heaven. **The context of Daniel 8:14 requires that this cleansing include a restoration of the damage done by the little horn in desolating the sanctuary. At the end of the 2300 prophetic days, or years, a knowledge of the full ministry of Christ there, and access to His ministry, was to be restored.**

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By “the judgment,” in this lesson, we refer to the entire process by which God intervenes to bring the course of this world’s history to a halt, to separate the righteous from the wicked, and to mete out to each group the reward for which it has qualified. **To be sure, God needs no judicial procedure by which to determine a person’s eligibility for eternal life.** The Bible writers make use of the human judicial process to illustrate the fact that God is not arbitrary in deciding individual destiny, but infinitely fair and just. God’s own people stand before His judgment bar that their right to eternal life may be authenticated — the wicked, that God may demonstrate their characters to be irreformably out of harmony with the principles of heaven.

**Note.** — In the judgment scene presented in Daniel 7 **the fourth beast and the little horn are arraigned before the bar of divine justice, charged with defiance of God and with the persecution of His people on earth.** The Judge of the universe wrests the kingdom of this world from their power and awards it to the Son of God and to His faithful people. **Seventh-day Adventists have also thought of this scene as a portrayal of the judgment of individuals, as well as of organized human opposition to God and the saints.**

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5. *In what various ways does Daniel refer to the judgment of the great tyrant of prophecy? Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:11, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45. Compare Dan. 12:1.*

**Note.** — These descriptions all reflect: (1) an act of judgment that is supernatural, for no human hand is lifted in defence of the guilty, nor is any needed to execute the sentence; (2) an act of judgment that is universal; it eliminates all earthly opposition to God and to His people; (3) an act of judgment that takes place at the close of human history, and inaugurates God’s eternal, righteous reign on earth.

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10. *What solemn proclamation immediately precedes the day of judgment? Rev. 14:6-11.*

**Note.** — God has entrusted to His remnant church the responsibility for proclaiming His judgment-hour message. The first angel of the heavenly trio announces that the hour of God’s judgment has come. The second introduces the villain who is to be judged — Babylon the Great. The third issues the indictment of those who are to suffer divine wrath: They have espoused the cause of antichrist, and so must perish with him. For this reason God summons His people still in Babylon to “come out of her” in order to avoid participation in her sins and in the “plagues” meted out to her. Rev. 18:4.

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Each of the great lines of prophecy presented in the book of Daniel closes with the annihilation of the forces of evil and with the establishment of the universal, righteous kingdom of God on earth. Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14; 8:25; 9:24, 27; 11:45 to 12:3.