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SUMMARY: ANCIENT PAST OR NEAR FUTURE?

One of the main goals in this study was to show that the angel (Gabriel) who delivered those messages was speaking primarily about events to come in the near future - events which should not be relegated to the ancient past. Over the centuries, well-meaning scholars and teachers have tried - a little too hard perhaps - to view these Scriptures in the light of past events, rather than seeing them as prophetic insights into future events.

Today, with the benefit of more historical hindsight than was available in the past, it is easier to pinpoint more accurately the full meaning of Gabriel's prophetic messages. But because of the heavy weight of scholarly opinion from the past, the task of adjusting our understanding of these intriguing passages has developed into a major overhaul.

The accumulation of translations, commentaries, and various interpretations over the years have stifled the mystery and magic implicit in the words of God's archangel, Gabriel - a being whose mind possessed tremendous foresight, insight, and multi-levelled comprehension. There is a need then to re-capture the beauty and wonder of these words from the past... for we stand on the threshold of the End of the Age, and the matter of resolving these particular doctrinal issues is becoming more urgent.

If God's Truth lies buried under the rubble of mistranslation, misinterpretation, or cultural understanding of yesteryear, why should it remain so? And why should God's message through His angel Gabriel remain sidelined at a time when it is needful to grasp the full intent of what he was trying to say long ago about our present world situation?

So, as a final reminder and because of the need to supply an antidote or remedy against the well-meaning preconceptions of scholars from earlier times, following is a review of the reasons why the primary fulfillment of Gabriel's prophetic messages (especially verses 9:27 and 11:21-35 in the Book of Daniel) can be understood as coming in the near future... that brief tumultuous era prior to Christ's Return:

1) First of all, given the impressive introduction in chapter 10 - the appearance of Christ in His heavenly glory - it would seem quite a letdown and mismatch if the following revelation dealt mostly with the exploits of an obscure ancient king. Gabriel told Daniel, *"I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."* (10:14)

Not all translations are the same as this (NKJV), but anyway, the main idea seems to be that the vision was to stretch a long time into the future. It would seem more consistent with Gabriel's statement if his following message dealt with a *"many days yet to come"* scenario - namely, the historical events just prior to Christ's Second Coming in the *"latter days"*. (More information in [Post "Encounter with Christ-like Supernatural Being"](#))

2) In this chapter of Daniel 11, the nominal sentence in verse 22 - *"yea, [he is] also the prince of the covenant"* - takes us back to Daniel 9:27 about the same *"prince"* who *"shall confirm a covenant."*

After checking the original Hebrew wording, it seems best to understand this *"prince of the covenant"* phrase as a sort of link to Gabriel's message 3 or 4 years earlier, and also as a signpost to direct us forward from the ancient time into the modern era of End Time events. (To understand the linguistic technicalities here, refer to the [relevant section in Post 3A.](#))

This "connection" of Daniel 11:22 with the previous *70-weeks* revelation serves also to maintain the continuity between the two messages (in chapter 9 and chapter 11). And we would expect a certain amount of continuity since, judging by the introductions and context of them, both messages were delivered by the same angel Gabriel.

What this tells us: The *"vile person"* of the previous verse 21 (in chapter 11) would have been the ruthless king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but now Gabriel's discourse has in sight another king, similar in many

ways to the ancient king, but also very different; for this one *“shall confirm a covenant with many for one week”* (Daniel 9:27) - meaning his rule happens during the final 7 years of history.

The pattern here is similar to a previous revelation (Daniel 8). In it Daniel’s opening remarks suggest that the vision pertained to the activities of the ancient king who greatly troubled the Israeli nation in the 160’s B.C. But then Gabriel is sent, and he tells Daniel, *“Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.”* (8:17) Then to make it ultra-clear, he goes on to say, *“Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter end of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.”* (8:19) As far as Gabriel was concerned, the activities of the ancient king served only as a jumping-off point into the vision’s primary focus: the activities of a ruler who was not to come until the End of the Age.

And it is the same scenario here. As Gabriel stepped in dramatically to re-focus Daniel’s understanding about the vision (that it was meant for the End Time), so here in chapter 11, verse 22, Gabriel utters what amounts to a proclamation: “this ‘vile person’, he’s also the ‘prince of the covenant’!” So, “Fasten your seat belts! We’re zooming off now into the End of the Age!”... or something to that effect. Similar to how a railway track is shifted so an oncoming train can veer off into a new direction, so this verse 22 signals a change of direction in the prophetic train of thought.

3) Related to the above point is the word *“league”* in [Daniel 11:23](#). In keeping with the literary devices common in ancient Hebrew, *“league”* is simply another word for *“covenant”* from the previous verse. This is known as “parallel structure”. (See the [relevant section in Post 3A](#).)

What this tells us:

Firstly, the passage in verse 22 was mistranslated in most Bible versions, making it sound as if the *“prince of the covenant”* gets destroyed. This does not make sense, for in the very next verse we read that he is very much alive: *“after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully,”* etc. The reason for this mistranslation? Apparently, to make it easier to fit certain details of ancient history into this part of Gabriel’s message. (For details, see [here](#).)

Secondly, the word *“league”* was used for agreements between human beings. *“Covenant”* could be used the same way, or for

agreements between God and human beings. So to clarify which type of agreement is being referred to here, the word *“league”* establishes the fact that this is a down-to-earth, worldly agreement between warring groups of human beings. It has nothing to do with the ancient, sacred covenant made between God and the Hebrew nation.

It seems what’s happened here, Bible scholars of the past, not having witnessed the modern day return of Israel as a nation, tried to make Gabriel’s words fit in with the events of ancient history, not realizing that this portion of the prophecy is supposed to be about the future (a restored Israel) rather than about the past (a vanished Israel). It was not an already-fulfilled prophecy, as many of them thought.

And, of course, such thinking affected the way verse 22 was translated - in such a way that the link to the *“prince of the covenant”* and the final *“week”* of Daniel 9:27 was obscured.

4) The existence of the *“holy covenant”*: Back in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes’ reign, there was no record of a covenant made, much less one that dealt with religious issues - in verses 28 and 30 of Daniel 11 it is termed a *“holy covenant”*- nor one that marked the starting point of a crucial period of 7 years. Nor was there any such covenant made in the years after Christ’s execution.

The passage in chapter 11 goes on to relate that the *“king of the North”* would communicate with *“those who forsake the holy covenant”*, after which he would *“defile the sanctuary”* by allowing an *“abomination of desolation”* to enter it. (11:30-31) This passage expounds on that message of 3 or 4 years earlier (9:27) when Gabriel told Daniel about a *“covenant”* which had much to do with religious issues (*“sacrifice and offering”*) and desolating *“abominations”* that would lead to the break-up of the covenant. And it would mark the middle point in that final *“week”* (seven years) of a 70-week (490 years) timeline. (Learn more about this 70-weeks timeline in Posts [3](#), [4](#), [5](#) of the Daniel 9 series.)

While teaching His followers about His Second Coming and the End of the Age, Jesus singled out the *“abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet”* as an important sign that would come just before those final days. Since the *abomination of desolation* was linked to the covenant (in both passages of Daniel 9 and 11), and since Christ (in Matthew 24:15, 21) linked the abomination’s arrival to the *Great*

Tribulation that would precede His Return, there should be little doubt then that Gabriel, in Daniel 9 and 11, is speaking of an End Time (not ancient) *“covenant”*.

5) Consequently, the 7-year time span of this covenant (the final *“week”*) belongs in the End of the Age era - our modern day. So this final week has not yet arrived. There are several other points to consider here, which are outlined in [post 6 in the Daniel 9 series](#). But here is a brief summary:

Firstly, the conditions for the completion of the entire *70-week* (490 years) time span have not arrived. How can our world see *“an end of sins”* or *“everlasting righteousness”*, as outlined in Daniel 9:24, until Christ returns to establish His government in the Earth?

Secondly, there is an implied *“gap”* in the *“70 weeks”* time schedule between the 69th week (the end of Christ’s ministry) and the 70th week (before His Return to bring in *“everlasting righteousness”*.) (See [“Grammatical Dividers Appendix”](#) for more information.)

This is not as unusual as we might think. Each revelation in the Book of Daniel starts with an ancient historical scenario, which then acts as a catapult to shoot the revelation across the wide gap of centuries into our modern day and the End of the Age.

It helps also to understand here that Gabriel’s message about the *70 weeks* was linked to the fate of the nation of Israel. This was Daniel’s concern - the fate of his own people and nation. So although the angel is outlining the timing for the redemption of the entire world, nevertheless, that timing is still linked to the history of the particular nation Daniel was concerned about - Israel.

Remarkably, Israel’s history has also seen a *“gap”* - similar to the division between the 69 weeks and 70th week of the prophetic message in Daniel 9. After the Roman armies dismantled it, Israel ceased to exist as a nation for almost 2,000 years. But only now in modern times has it been restored. Such a return to nationhood is unprecedented in world history; and it stands out as a clear sign of God’s hand at work behind the scenes of human history.

Israel has no more right than any other nation to be called *“God’s people”*; that honor has gone now to the followers of the Light of Christ in every nation of the world. Nevertheless, Israel’s existence and restoration as a nation, with the same race of people in it, serves now

as a “sign”. Amazingly, the historical setting from ancient times has re-emerged. The time is ripe now for the resumption of the final 70th “week” - that 7-years countdown before the end of our present Age.

With these major points in mind about where Gabriel’s prophetic message is heading after verse 21 in chapter 11 of the Book of Daniel, we can more easily view other facets of Daniel 11:21-35 in a different light.

6) **“Not give the honor of royalty” (Daniel 11:21)** In 198 B.C. the Seleucid king conquered Israel (*“glorious land”* in 11:16). This man was followed by another ruler (Antiochus Epiphanes) who stole the throne from the legitimate heir and later raised persecution against the Jewish people. But since Gabriel’s prophetic message at this point is about to veer into the modern age, the phrase could apply on another level to that oppressive ruler in the End of the Age who will overrun the land of Israel.

Throughout history, rulers have usurped power by intrigue. And since the passage seems to lay particular emphasis on the absence of the pomp and ceremony of royal coronation, this could be a veiled reference to modern times - when old-style monarchies have been replaced by republican government. Nowadays, any would-be ruler, sneaking into the halls of government in order to grab the reins of power, is more likely than ever to have to forego *“the honor of royalty”*.

7) The use of *“flatteries”* (meaning smooth, slippery persuasiveness) in verse 21 is another commonly used tactic of modern political leaders who, using the media, can fool the people with false promises just long enough to get themselves voted into power. This, by the way, resembles the methods by which Hitler rose to power - through crafty manipulation of the media and the voting system. As noted already, would-be rulers nowadays do not inherit their power with *“the honor of royalty”* as did the kings and queens of old. Instead, they must seize power by getting themselves voted in, and to do this, they must *“obtain the kingdom by flatteries”* (slippery smoothness of false promises: see [definition](#)).

8) The phrases *“come in peaceably”* (11:21) and *“enter peaceably”* (11:24) are more characteristic of modern means of gaining power - through voting or through media and financial manipulation - which do

not require the use of military force. In the section dealing with the [wars of ancient history \(11:2-20\)](#), no mention is made of this peculiar “peaceable entry” strategy. (Points 6-8 are covered in Posts [“Vile Person Arrives”](#) and [“Rise to Power”](#).)

9) Nor does the expression “*fathers... forefathers*” (11:24) appear in that part of the message that dealt exclusively with ancient history (11:2-20). In the ancient language, it was a way of projecting into the distant future to explain that the activities of this distant-future “king” (the Antichrist) would be strangely different to how things were done in ages past - especially in the realms of war technology and religion.

10) The use of special, complex, computerized “*devices*” in warfare (11:24-25, KJV) is a feature peculiar to modern times. (Points 9-10 are covered [here in this Post](#)).

11) In the phrase “*he shall honor the god of forces*” in Daniel 11:38, we note the use of the word “*honor*” here rather than the word “*worship*”. “*Honor*” is more characteristic of the distant relationship that the scientifically-oriented people of modern times have towards the supernatural realm. Had the setting been in ancient times, the word “*worship*” would have been more appropriate. But instead, the word “*honor*” is used because it better reflects the prophecy’s setting in modern times.

12) “*For ships from Cyprus shall come against him.*” This statement in Daniel 11:30 applies nicely to the modern situation. Britain occupies two huge military bases in Cyprus. (See [map](#).) As a result Cyprus has become a military stronghold for the powers of the West, mainly the U.S. and Britain. The bases were used in the Iraq and Afghan wars and will probably be used again to oppose the rise of the Antichrist. He and his forces will be confronted in war by these battleships (and “air ships” too most likely). In ancient times Antiochus Epiphanes was confronted by the Roman envoy, whose ships may have passed through Cyprus; however, it was a diplomatic confrontation, not a real war engagement. The ultimate fulfillment is yet to come.

13) The “*abomination that makes desolate*” does not refer to some [ancient](#) form of idol worship, but a thorough study of this phrase brings

to light its hidden meaning as a cryptic reference, in the ancient language, to a modern vehicle of war entering the “temple”. (Daniel 11:31, ESV) (Refer to the posts in [Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination](#) for more information.)

14) The phrases “*at the appointed time*” and “*time of the end*” (11: 27, 29, 35, 40) are referring to that momentous event of Christ’s return. It is the fixed destination of human history, over which the other events taking place around that time in history are “*appointed*” and will have no power either to hasten or delay. These phrases should indicate clearly enough that the passages where they are found are not dealing with past events, but with events that will happen just prior to Christ’s return.

Nevertheless, the passages in verses 27 and 35 about peace treaties and persecution convey the idea that these things have been going on throughout history, which is certainly true. (See “[History Repeats Itself](#)” Appendix.) Yet the passages zero in on that version of those events that will happen in the very End. But it is easy to mistake some similar event in the past as the fulfillment of these words. There have been intermediate fulfillments, true enough, but there is only one ultimate, final fulfillment.

15) Finally, Gabriel concludes his message, saying, “*But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*” (12:4) Here again is another indication that the major thrust of Gabriel’s message was intended, not for Daniel nor for ancient times, but rather, for “*the time of the end*” - a phrase which is used again in verse 9.

And validating this point is Gabriel’s mention of two peculiar features of our modern era: “*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.*” (12:4) Travel (many running “*to and fro*”) and scientific “*knowledge*” have mushroomed in the past one or two centuries. When compared with the slow pace of travel and the rudimentary knowledge of yesteryear, humanity’s recent progress in these areas is unique and outstanding. Gabriel foresaw these unusual features 2,500+ years in advance; and his mention of them here in the conclusion of his message drives home the point that the closing era of history was indeed the main subject of his discourse with Daniel.

As a result there was no point in Daniel trying figure out how the prophetic message might apply to the people of his time. All he can do is “*shut up the words, and seal the book*” since it would never make proper sense “*until the time of the end*”. (12:4)

Because history tends to repeat itself, past events can resemble future ones. This explains why scholars became convinced that the events predicted in Daniel 9 and 11 had already happened. Prophetic messages often have a shadowy, intermediate fulfillment before the ultimate fulfillment of them comes to pass. In the business of prophetic interpretation, therefore, it is important not to confuse an intermediate fulfillment with a prophecy’s distant-future, final and ultimate fulfillment.

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