

Daniel's Message to a Modern Man

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Ever since it was initially composed, the book of Daniel has fascinated historians, linguists, archaeologists, and clergy, as well as lay people. The book drew interest primarily because of its content wherein human history is outlined through apocalyptic prophecies. As such, it fascinates individuals of all ages and all generations. In addition to a panorama of political events related to Daniel's world, all prophecies seemed to be geared toward the needs and concerns of God's people whether in connection to their judgement or their liberation. It is as true for God's people in the Old Testament, who were represented by an ethnic entity, as it is presently for those in His Church who claim to be His children. In spite of the fact that God's chosen people, the Judeans, were sent into exile because of their atrocities and transgressions, God did not intend for them to perish, but to learn a valuable lesson which is: the final victory will be granted to those who remain faithful to God. Demonstrating His loving care for groups and individuals who remained true to Him, God never excluded those of Gentile descent from His care. He even revealed Himself to heathen kings who needed to know that God was completely in control of all aspects of this world.

Purpose of the Book

It appears that all prophecies were given and directed to satisfy the concerns and needs of His people.¹ Basically there are four visions in the

¹ Paul Z. Gregor, *Life and Visions of Daniel* (Mandeville: Northern Caribbean University, 2005), 7.

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book of Daniel, each of which was intended to answer an immediate concern or need of His exiled people. The first vision is recorded in chapter 2 and answers the question, “What will happen to the kingdom of Judah?” Without this kingdom they feared they would eventually lose their identity, be dispersed among other nations, and disappear from the face of the earth. The first vision answers this concern when God demonstrates to the king of Babylon that He is in control of all kingdoms and that His kingdom would finally be established one day and would last forever (2:44).

The second concern the exiles had was connected to the kingship of Judah. The last king of Judah had been captured, brought before king Nebuchadnezzar, blinded, and exiled to Babylon in chains (Jer 39:4-7). King Zedekiah was incapacitated to such an extent that there was no hope that he would ever be able to claim the throne in Jerusalem. It seemed that the promise God gave to David that his descendants would sit on his throne forever had been broken (2 Sam 7:14-16, 29). Nevertheless, the second vision given to Daniel in chapter 7 indicates that the royal power would be bestowed upon the Son of Man and His rule would be eternal (7:14).

Their third concern was related to their sanctuary. In addition to Jerusalem which represented their political and national identity, the people of Judah depended upon their temple. It was the house of their God and as long as the temple stood they were certain that God’s presence was with them. It also symbolized their spiritual identity and most certainly it was the pride of the entire nation. Without their capital and temple they would be lost and forgotten as a nation. The answer to this concern comes in the third vision recorded in chapter 8. The sanctuary would be restored to its rightful place (8:14). The fact that the text here does not address the earthly sanctuary² did not make any difference to them. They were satisfied to hear that the most holy structure would be restored again.

The last major concern that they had was related to their fate as God’s people. So far they had been His ambassadors to the neighboring nations. Their task and mission had been to reveal God’s character, goodness, love, and compassion, for those who love Him. Who would now fulfil this noble

² William Shea, *Daniel 7-12* (Boise: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1996), 109-116; J. Doukhan, *Daniel; The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1987), 25-31.

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mission? What was to happen to the promises God had made to Abraham about his descendants that they would never perish from this earth (Gen 17:7)? This final concern was answered by the last vision which was recorded in Daniel chapters 10-12. No matter how merciless the enemy was, God's people would be triumphant at the end of time. Even if death came first there would be a glorious morning of resurrection when those who had fallen asleep would rise again (12:2) and be part of His eternal kingdom.

Further Evidence of God's Care

Additionally, God's care for His people was also evident through several details given in the third vision recorded in chapter 8. For some reason at this point in the text Babylon has become excluded from any symbolism, while the previous chapter (7) includes Babylon with the other kingdoms. The popular assumption that, at the time this vision was given (in chapter 8), Babylon was almost gone, is not entirely accurate since only three years had elapsed between these two visions. The vision in chapter 7 comes to Daniel during Belshazzar's first year of reign (553 BC), while the vision in chapter 8 came during the third year of the same ruler (550 BC). Therefore, both visions were given in close proximity to each other and both came more than a decade before Babylon's destruction (539 BC). Something must have happened during those three years that caused God's decision to exclude Babylon from the symbolism and its representation in the text. Whatever happened indicates clearly how much God was involved in the affairs and well-being of His people in Babylon.

To find the reason for Babylon's exclusion in chapter 8 one must go outside the realm of the Babylonian empire. A few years earlier Medo-Persia changed rulers. Cambyses I who ruled very briefly (560-559 BC) was replaced by Cyrus II who was also known as Cyrus the Great (559-530 BC).³ The exiles were familiar with this name since they had known about him from an earlier prophecy given by the prophet Isaiah two centuries earlier (Isa 44:28). He (Cyrus) was the promised one who would restore the temple in Jerusalem and return God's people from captivity. When the news reached the exiles in Babylon that Cyrus had become the new king in Medo-Persia, excitement, joy, and hope filled their hearts, especially those

³ E. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 71-72.

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who were longing to return back to Judea and continue to fulfill their role as God's remnant people.

The news about the growing power of Medo-Persia also reached the palace and king Belshazzar. Soon after, the Babylonians created an alliance with Lydia and Egypt⁴ to secure their borders and to make sure that Cyrus would not succeed in his plans to invade Babylon. The news about this alliance induced deep concerns to the exiled Judaeans. The hoped for fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy suddenly became uncertain. To show the exiles that the prophecy was true and that there should be no concern, God excludes Babylon totally from the vision in chapter 8, showing that Cyrus would be successful regardless of Babylon's new allies. In spite of the fact of Babylon's apparent strength, in God's mind Babylon was already finished. This proves that God cares and is merciful, sending a strong message to the Judaeans indicating that He is still in control and the prophecy of Isaiah will certainly come true.

God's mercies were not provided only for His exiled people in Babylon but were extended also to a heathen king. The king Nebuchadnezzar was brought to a humiliating level of mental illness (ch. 4) where he believed that he was an animal. God wanted to show this king who was really in control of all kingdoms and who rules over the entire Universe. Finally, the king realized how insignificant he was and at the same time how precious he was as person in God's eyes. Conclusively, he was able to testify and say "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of Heaven. All His acts are just and true, and he is able to humble those who are proud" (Dan 4:37).

God's interest in the affairs of the history of this world extends above and beyond the time and place in which Daniel and his contemporaries lived. Daniel was given a unique opportunity to recognize and understand that his people did not receive an indefinite time to fulfill their mission. In chapter 9 verse 24 Daniel received a revelation that his people will have only seventy weeks/years (490 years) to complete their mission as God's people.⁵ At the completion of 490 years, God will abandon the idea of

⁴ Ibid., 82; P. Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 35.

⁵ W. Shea, 61-80; J. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 140-155; S. R. Miller, *Daniel* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 267; Gregor, 145-150.

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choosing one ethnic group with the task to introduce and reveal His true nature and character to other nations (Deut 4:5-8). When the period of 490 years ended (34 AD) God selected a group beyond geographical and ethnic boundaries, His Church. From then on, the Christian church, its well-being, suffering, prosperity, growth, and downfall became God's primary focus and attention. This concern about the prospects of His Church is not so evident in the first (ch. 2) vision as much as in the second and third (ch. 7 and 8) visions.

The second vision is recorded in Daniel chapter 7 where the political history of the ancient world is outlined. It starts with the appearance of four winds which stirred up the surface of the Great Sea (v. 2). Soon after four beasts (lion, bear, leopard, and an unnamed one) moved from the sea one after the other. It was explained to Daniel that these four beasts represent four kingdoms (v. 17). He seemed satisfied with this explanation except that he required additional information regarding the fourth beast (v. 19) which he could not recognize at all. He was assured that even though this beast was different from the previous two, it represented the fourth kingdom. If the first three beasts represent Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece, then the fourth one stands for the ancient Roman Empire.⁶ Furthermore, the ten horns which are on the beast represent the partition of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms⁷ at the time when it crumbled.

In spite of the fact that this fourth beast with its ten horns was the most terrifying, it seems that the appearance of the eleventh horn, also known as the Little Horn (v. 8) was the major concern of this vision. Its description, activities, and fate occupy a greater part of this chapter, and therefore is the main focus of the vision.

Description, Activities and Fate of the Little Horn

It seems that the Little Horn is not depicted as a positive power. It plays a very negative role and certainly does not enjoy favor in God's eyes. It is described as one which will blaspheme against the Most High God, try to change God's Law, and persecute the saints of God (v. 24). Because of its acts this power receives only a limited time (v. 25). Its atrocities

⁶ Miller, 201.

⁷ D. Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1987), 152, endnote 5.

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provoked God's judgment (vs. 9, 10, 26) and ultimately, at the end it would be destroyed (v. 26).

The text explains that this Little Horn represents another king or kingdom (v. 24). Obviously, all the previous kingdoms represented by different beasts and/or horns existed from much earlier times. At various points of time they became dominant powers in the ancient world. This must be assumed for the Little Horn as well. It does not represent a leading power which came into existence soon after the Roman Empire crumbled; rather it existed much earlier, only without dominance.

Evidently, chapter 8 mentions the Little Horn again. The appearance of the same power more than once is not unusual in the book. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome are represented by different symbols in previous chapters. It is unique that the symbolism for this new power does not change. The reason for this could be found in the fact that Daniel and his readers would have understand that both chapters (7 and 8) speak about the same power. In spite of the fact that most modern scholars do not recognize that the Little Horn in both chapters stands for the same entity, its appearance and activity are exactly the same. Apart from the same name their place of origin is the same. Both chapters clearly indicate that it came as a continuation of the previous political powers. In chapter 7, it is the fourth beast or Rome while in chapter 8 it is from one of the winds of heaven. Scholars seem to be confused regarding its origin, believing that the origin of the Little Horn in chapter 8 is one of the four horns. However, its only possible origin could be traced to the phrase "winds of heaven."⁸

The presence of winds is already established in chapter 7. There are four winds stirring up the Great Sea from which four beasts came out. The reason for the appearance of four winds could be seen as a parallelism to four beasts/kingdoms. In this case for every wind there was one beast/kingdom. The fact that the Little Horn in chapter 8 came out from one of the winds indicates that it came from an already existing kingdom. Babylon is not even included in this chapter, while the ram (Medo-Persia)

⁸ Previously suggested by J. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 123-125; Gregor, 130, 131; Z. Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise* (Nampa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2007), 300.

and he-goat (Greece) are already gone, so the only kingdom not mentioned yet which might have been represented by this one wind is the Roman Empire.

In addition to its origin, the Little Horn in both chapters has the same appearance. Chapter 7 describes it as one with eyes and mouth (v. 8) while chapter 8 explains that it had power to “understand riddles” (v. 23) and “by his cunning he shall make deceit” (v. 25). In both cases “eyes” and “understanding” indicate that the Little Horn will be intelligent, and “mouth” together with “cunning to make deceit” refers to the great influence it will have.

Little Horn's Transgressions

Furthermore, the Little Horn in both chapters behaves in the same way. There are three major levels of its transgression: first, it will “. . . speak words against the Most High. . .” (7:25); second, it will “. . . wear out the saints of the Most High,” (7:25); third, it will “. . . seek to change the times and the law. . .” (7:25). All three transgressions are present in chapter 8 as well. First, this power shall “. . . even rise up against the Prince of princes. . .” (8:25), second, it shall seek to “. . . destroy mighty men and the people of the saints” (8:24), and third, it shall make sure that “. . . the truth was cast down to the ground. . .” (8:12).

The first transgression in both chapters is directed against the Most High (ch. 7) and the Prince of princes (ch. 8). Both cases reflect the Little Horn's attitude toward the Supreme Being. In most instances the phrase “Most High” refers to God who is described in chapter 7 as “. . . one that was ancient of days. . .” (v. 23), while “Prince of princes” from chapter 8 refers to the Son of God. The word which was translated as “against” in chapter 7 is a compound word in the Aramaic language ܕܢܗܘܢܐ made of the preposition ܗܘܢܐ (to, toward, or belonging to), and the masculine noun ܢܗܘܢܐ (side). This combination is found only here and it does not necessarily indicate actions which are in opposition to God, but rather it refers to taking the side or place that belongs to the Most High. In the same way chapter 8 indicates a similar kind of attitude. This power shall rise up against the Prince of princes or the Son of God Himself. Here the Hebrew language uses the preposition ܐܠ (over, on, upon, against, in front of, down from), which indicates the position of the subject toward its object. In most cases the subject is raised to the same position or above its object. Obviously,

this power will seek to position itself on the same level or above the Prince of princes.

The second transgression is directed toward the saints of the Most High or His followers. The words “wear out” (ch. 7) and “destroy” (ch. 8) come from ܣܠܩ and ܦܫܘܢܐ respectively. ܣܠܩ is the Aramaic word and it refers to continual harassment. The action directed against the saints of the Most High will not be an occasional activity but rather a constant one. ܦܫܘܢܐ is used in the hiphil form and as such could be understood as “to spoil” or “to ruin.” The same form was used on numerous occasions and it may refer to a physical destruction or spoiling and ruining. It is applied to the destruction or spoiling of crops (Judg 6:4; Mal 3:11), trees (Deut 20:19, 20), vessels (2 Chr 36:19); houses (2 Chr 34:11), palaces (Jer 6:5; Isa 65:8; Lev 19:27), and persons (Prov 11:9). In addition, the word also may indicate corrupt action in general (Isa 1:4; 2 Chr 27:2; Judg 2:19; Ezek 16:47), and moral corruption in particular (Gen 6:12; Prov 6:32; Zeph 3:7; Ezek 23:11). Obviously, this power will seek to destroy or harass God’s people physically and it will also try to corrupt them continually.

While chapter 7 simply mentions that the Little Horn will direct its anger against the saints of the Most High, chapter 8 adds the term ܩܘܘܘܢܐ (mighty, numerous). This term was never applied to individuals who were great, famous, or who did some heroic deeds, but rather to indicate strength of a multitude (Isa 8:7). Among other things it may refer to people in general (Gen 18:18; Ex 1:9; Deut 4:38; Isa 60:2), and to locusts (Joel 1:6; 2:2, 5), waters (Isa 8:7), and transgressions (Amos 5:12), as well. Therefore, the Little Horn’s harassment, destruction, and corruption will not be directed only toward certain individuals, ethnic groups, or races but towards the multitude of those who are considered to be the saints of the Most High.

The third transgression is directed against God’s law (7:25). The text uses the Aramaic word ܦܪܩܐ which was used several times in Daniel and Ezra. It may refer to a serious decree where death was the result of failure, such as the interpretation of king Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan 2:13, 15), and to the unchangeable laws of the Medo-Persians (Dan 6:9, 13, 15). The same word is also used to indicate God’s law (Dan 6:2; Ezra 7:12, 14, 21, 26; 7:25). Furthermore, it is also applied to the king’s law when it is in agreement with God’s law (Ezra 7:26). In addition to God’s law, this power will also try to change the time. Daniel uses the Aramaic word ܕܡܢܐ

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here in its plural form. Apart from this occasion (7:25) the same form (plural) is used two more times in the book of Daniel (6:11, 14) and it always refers to repetition or short cycles of times.⁹ The words ܕܝܢܐ (time) and ܗܘܪܐ (law) are in the same context and therefore both should be understood in their relationship with each other. There is only one commandment in God's law which deals with time, the fourth one. It is the commandment which regulates the relationship between God and His people in respect to the day of worship.

This transgression is also evident in chapter 8. The same power will throw the truth to the ground (v. 12). In this context the word ܗܘܪܐ (truth) is synonymous with God's law (Ps 43:3; 119:43).¹⁰ Casting the truth or God's law to the ground indicates the ability, willingness and arrogance of the Little Horn in its desire to show its ultimate power on earth and even in heaven.

Time and its Identity

This power will not have an indefinite time to operate. While chapter 8 is silent in respect to the time limit of the Little Horn, chapter 7 specifies that the horn will have “. . . a time, two times, and half a time” (v. 25). Earlier, Daniel used the word “time” (ܕܝܢܐ) in the context of the Little Horn's activities, but here he uses a different Aramaic word ܕܝܢܐ which refers to a cycle of definite time covering four seasons. The same word was used in connection with the prophecy given to king Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 when he was given seven times to understand that the Sovereign God of Daniel is in command of all the Universe. In both cases “time” refers to a length of one calendar year. It seems that Little Horn will have dominion and power to act for three and a half years which translates into 1260 days. Consequently, as one prophetic day is equal to one year (Dan 9:24; Ezek 4:6; Num 13:34), the Horn is given a time of 1260 years to accomplish its activities and after this time it will lose its power and dominion.

⁹ Shea, 173.

¹⁰ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 124; E. Jenni, E and C. Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* vol. 1 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 156.

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The description of the Little Horn in both chapters indicates that the entity it represents is different from any previous powers. Unlike other horns, whether coming as a continuation of the fourth beast (Roman Empire) in chapter 7, or the five horns appearing on the head of he-goat (Greece) in chapter 8 which clearly represent political entities, this Little Horn is different in both chapters. None of the previous horns have a mouth and eyes or have a deceitful influence like the Little Horn. Obviously, it must portray a different entity than the previous horns or beasts which represent mere political powers. The only recognizable entity which could be represented by the Little Horn must be a system which comes after the fall of the Roman Empire, and according to Daniel it will be a combination of political as well as religious powers. Furthermore, the mixture of political and religious powers is also evident in the first vision in chapter 2. Here, all the kingdoms are represented by metal while the feet, as a continuation of the fourth kingdom (Rome), were composed of metal and clay.¹¹

During the first few centuries of its existence the Christian Church followed its mission given by Jesus Christ. However, it did not have a clear structure under one unified authority. After the conversion of Constantine during the first part of the 4th century the Christian Church became a state church. At that time the entire Roman Empire was subdivided into more than one hundred provinces governed by provincial governors. On the same basis, the bishop of the capital in each province became a metropolitan bishop whose major responsibility was “to resolve disputes between bishops, or between a bishop and his clergy, or his congregation.”¹² During the following few centuries, several metropolitan bishops emerged to become dominant based on their location. Thus Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, took charge of the entirety of Egypt and tried to maintain his control through the distribution of over a thousand pounds of gold to members of the court at Constantinople at the time of the Council of Ephesus in 431. In addition, the bishop of Antioch extended his authority over all of Syria-Palestine, while the bishop of Constantinople became dominant in Greece and Asia Minor. However, at the end of the 4th

¹¹ Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 34.

¹² R. Van Dam, “Bishops and Society,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2:350.

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and beginning of the 5th century the bishop of Constantinople “. . . limited the authority of the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch.”¹³

Similarly, the metropolitan bishops of Rome were without rivals in western Europe but claimed supremacy even over the bishops of Constantinople. This was based upon the tradition that Peter and Paul had established the church in Rome. Scriptural evidence does exist to support the claim concerning the Paul's presence in Rome. However, there is no evidence that Peter ever visited Rome in spite of the fact that he is listed as the first bishop of the church in Rome.¹⁴ Furthermore, the supremacy of Rome's bishops is not based upon regional and political importance of the city itself but rather on the assumption that they are the full heirs of St. Peter. As such Rome's bishops claimed supreme authority over the entire western European Christian Church but not without opposition even as late as the 5th century.¹⁵

After Constantine, the Church enjoyed a freedom that was guaranteed by the state. As such, it is to be expected that it influenced secular administration to some degree. However, its influence was very limited while the state interfered in the church's affairs regularly. Emperor Justinian was the one who decided and appointed the number of priests, clerics, deacons, and subdeacons at Constantinople. Occasionally, state officials were bribed by bishops to act for their benefit. Furthermore, secular administrators were even expected to approve the distribution of the priesthood under their jurisdiction.¹⁶

Uprooting of the Three Horns

By the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 a vacuum in political power and authority was created in Rome. This was the perfect time for its metropolitan bishop to step in and to assume a political role as well. Soon afterward, he used his political influence to settle religious matters with heretic tribes who accepted Arianism. For example, Clovis, the king of the Franks, was used by the bishop of Rome to get rid of Arian Visigoths in

¹³ Ibid., 354, 355.

¹⁴ R. M. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 313-315; M. M. Mitchell and F. M. Young, *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xxii.

¹⁵ Van Dam, 356, 357.

¹⁶ Ibid., 352-356.

508. Later in 533, the last king of the Vandals, Gelimer suffered the same fate by general Belisarius,¹⁷ and finally the Ostrogoths were defeated in 538 by the same general.¹⁸ Through such methods, the church leadership with the metropolitan bishop of Rome at its head fulfilled the first part of the description associated with the Little Horn in chapter 7 uprooting the three existing horns.

Transgressions of a Religious Nature

The second part of the Little Horn's activity was more or less related to its religious actions (assuming titles which belong only to God, persecuting the saints of God, and changing God's law). These acts are also recognizable in the conduct of the leadership in the church of Rome from the 6th century onward.

The leadership of the Christian Church in Rome blasphemed against the Most High in two different ways. First, the assumption of God's prerogatives could be summarized by the following statement provided by Farrar, ". . . (the bishop of Rome) is so great dignity and excellence, that he is not merely man, but God, and vicar of God . . . is called the most holy . . . divine monarch, and supreme emperor, and king of kings . . . is of so great dignity and power that he constitutes one and the same tribunal with Christ. . . ." ¹⁹ Second, the Church leadership of Rome accepted and promoted the Alexandrian School of thought. According to this school the Scripture is purely allegorical in character.²⁰ This means that individuals and events described in the Bible are not real but used in symbolic ways to provide deeper spiritual lessons and meaning. Thus, the interpretation of Scripture is hidden to ordinary persons and could be provided only by clergy. By accepting this theology the Church in Rome placed itself on the

¹⁷ R. W. Mathisen, "Vandals," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1997) 2: 1156-1158; A. Leone, "Christianity and Paganism, IV: North Africa," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2: 241.

¹⁸ Shea, 167.

¹⁹ J. Farrar, *An Ecclesiastical Dictionary: Explanatory of the History, Antiquities, Heresies, Sects, and Religious Denominations of the Christian Church* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1864).

²⁰ R. M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1957), 88; G. Hasel, *Biblical Interpretation Today* (Lincoln: College View Printers, 1985), 2.

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same level with God by taking away the Bible from the people and replacing it with tradition. In this way the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture to be written in such a way that it changes the lives of people upon reading it, by influencing their hearts, was excluded and replaced by the Church.

In addition to the assumption of titles, the second activity of the Little Horn is related to the persecution of the saints of the Most High. Religious intolerance against fellow human beings and especially those who followed their conscience in serving God was fully exercised when the leadership of the Church in Rome accepted and/or was able to influence political powers to act on their behalf. Not only did the church leadership use their influence to remove several Arian tribes (as seen earlier) but it continued to use the same power in centuries to come to get rid of all who disagreed with its doctrines. These kind of activities could be summarized with the following quote:

After the signal of open martyrdom had been given in the Canons of Orleans, there followed the extirpation of the Albigenses under the form of a crusade, the establishment of the Inquisition, the cruel attempts to extinguish the Waldenses, the martyrdoms of the Lollards, the cruel wars to exterminate the Bohemians, the burning of Huss and Jerome, and multitudes of other confessors, before the Reformation; and afterwards, the ferocious cruelties practiced in the Netherlands, the martyrdoms of queen Mary's reign, the extinction by the fire and sword of the Reformation in Spain and Italy, by fraud and opened persecution in Poland, the Massacre of Bartholomew, the persecution of the Huguenots by the League, the extirpation of the Vaudois, and all the cruelties and prejudices connected with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. These are the more opened and conspicuous facts which explain the prophecy, besides the slow and secret murders of the holy tribunal of the Inquisition."²¹

The third act of the church leadership in Rome which identified them with the Little Horn was an attempt to change God's law and the day of worship. Sabbath as the seventh day of worship was celebrated by Jews

²¹ T. R. Birks, *The First Two Visions of Daniel* (London: William Edward Painter, 1843), 248, 249.

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and Christians alike during the early Church. Due to the fact that Jews were persecuted and despised for their circumcision and Sabbath keeping, anti-Semitic feeling was evident among Roman writers as early as Seneca (died A.D. 65). The same attitude was evident among the Christian writers as early as the middle of the second century when Justin Martyr presented “. . . a most devastating and systematic condemnation of the Sabbath, as well as giving the earliest explicit account of Christian Sunday worship services.”²² That the change from Sabbath to Sunday was not based on any Scriptural evidence is attested and summarized by John O’Brian, a prominent Catholic professor at Notre Dame University, “You believe that the Bible alone is a safe guide in religious matters. You also believe that one of the fundamental duties enjoyed upon you by your Christian faith is that of Sunday observance. But where does the Bible speak of such obligation? I have read the Bible from the first verse in Genesis to the last verse of Revelation, and have found no reference to the duty of sanctifying the Sunday. The day mentioned in the Bible is not the Sunday, the first day of the week but the Saturday, the last day of the week. It was the . . . Church which. . . changed the observance to the Sunday. . . . The word ‘Sabbath’ means rest and is Saturday the seventh day of the week.”²³

Because of all the atrocities against God and His people the Little Horn represents fallen Christianity with its leadership who was given a definite time to function. A specific time of 1260 years was designated for the fallen Christian church to operate. This period began in 538 when it eliminated the competition of the Arian tribes and became the only power to conduct its activities in the western hemisphere and it ended in 1798 when it lost its political influence.

Concluding Remarks

As noted in the beginning, the book of Daniel represents the struggles of God’s people from the time of the Exile, up to the time of the establishment of His church. The Church started well during the first few

²² S. Bacchiocchi, “The Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 132-150.

²³ J. O’Brian, *The Faith of Millions: The Credentials of Catholic Religion* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1963), 138, 139, 406.

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centuries of its existence when it followed Christ's mandate. Through the centuries its leadership used political influence and power to accomplish its goals which were not in accordance to the mandate given by Jesus Christ and thus it became the Little Horn. By placing themselves on the same level or above God, disrespecting God's unchangeable moral law, and disregarding human lives for which Jesus gave His life, they became fallen Christianity. The church leadership forgot the grim warning given by Paul when he wrote his letter to the church in Rome saying, "For if God did not spare the natural branches (Jews), neither will he spare you" (Rom 11:21).

Thus, the book of Daniel tells a story of God's people; their tragedies and triumphs, struggles, pitfalls, and vindications. It speaks about those who stood tall when persecution, either from pagan powers or from their fellow Christians, was inflicted upon them. Many were crucified, cast before wild beasts, burnt at the stakes, died from torture in medieval dungeons, only because they wanted to remain faithful to God. The book of Daniel further testifies that even if they felt abandoned they shall be reunited with God again and ". . . shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Dan 12:3). It was promised to Daniel that they will stand one day in their allotted places before the living God throughout eternity.

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