

MARK DAVIDSON

INTRODUCTION
TO
DANIEL
REVISITED

DISCOVERING THE FOUR MIDEAST SIGNS
LEADING TO THE ANTICHRIST

MARK DAVIDSON



DANIEL REVISITED

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INTRODUCTION

This book presents an entirely new look at end times Bible prophecy as recorded in the book of Daniel. If you have ever read Bible prophecy books before, you may be looking at this book and thinking, *Oh, no. Not another book that just recycles old theology and tries to make sense of what is going on in the end times.* On the contrary; the message of this book is truly different in ways that are absolutely astonishing.

This new look yields a fresh and compelling interpretation of the visions given in Daniel 7 and 8, telling of a remarkable series of major prophetic events to occur in the Middle East during the end times *prior* to the Tribulation. Through these events we are specifically warned about the step-by-step emergence of the Antichrist, and of the approach of the Tribulation, and we are pointed to the glorious return of Christ Himself. This new interpretation also shows us that a number of leaders will arise in the Middle East one after the other, and identifies for us which one indeed is the Antichrist to come.

Equally remarkable is that developments in the Middle East conclusively show us that the events this new interpretation predicts *have already started.* Exact prophetic events from Daniel 7 and 8 are being

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fulfilled right now. Not only that, but they have already happened in the Middle East in the past three decades. Therefore, we have compelling and startling evidence that we in 2013 are well into the end times. Of course, this new interpretation also runs contrary to the popular idea that the visions in Daniel 7 and 8 were fulfilled fully or partially in ancient times.

What kind of news events are we talking about? One was the democratization of Iraq. Another was the rule of Saddam Hussein, including his coup, his wars, and the question of his weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Another is the ongoing struggle and conversion of the secular governments in Egypt, Turkey and Libya into more Islamist governments. Yet another that is not as well reported is the growing power of Iran's Revolutionary Guard. Its power is now exceeding the power of Iran's supreme leader in some ways. Still another is the rising tide of hostility between Sunni and Shia Muslims in the Middle East that will develop into a full-blown war revealed in prophecy. The civil war in Syria, first with the Syrian rebels and then with Islamic State, is a manifestation of this growing hostility. This new interpretation of the prophecies in Daniel requires all these things to specifically happen to fulfill Scripture. I know all of this may sound amazing—it did to me when I discovered it—but if you continue to the end of this book I believe your thinking on end times Bible prophecy will be forever changed.

Have you ever wondered why the predictions of the emergence of the Antichrist in Europe aren't happening? Have you ever puzzled over the significance of fundamentalist Islam and the violence going on in the Middle East, and how it might relate to the end times? Have you ever questioned where or when the detailed and dynamic unfolding of Bible prophecy will happen in these last days? By looking at Bible prophecy from a different perspective than that of the popular theology today, your eyes will be opened as never before.

Prior to 2002, I had no idea where we were on the prophetic time-table. I knew we were somewhere between the return of Israel and the Tribulation. I arrived at this new view of prophecy just after the invasion

of Iraq and the ousting of Saddam Hussein in 2003. At that point, both recent and ongoing events in the Middle East took on new significance. I realized the events taking place were specific seasons—signs that Bible prophecy shows us are leading to the coming of the Antichrist. I saw right where we were in the unfolding of these events. At that moment of realization, the biblical significance of news events in the Middle East was no longer hidden.

BEWARE OF ASSUMPTIONS

To see this new interpretation requires a new, hard look at history, Scripture, and our assumptions. However, of these three, it is perhaps our assumptions that present us with the main hurdle to seeing these prophesied events when reading prophetic Scripture. The new interpretation presented in this book is the result of three stages of study.

The first is a serious study of ancient and medieval history that shines a light on Daniel. This enables the second stage, which is a change from old assumptions to new assumptions based on solid rationale. A study of real history demolishes the assumptions that have been built up over the centuries. Finally, with the new assumptions in mind based on real history, we undertake a careful reading, and pay attention to the exegesis of each and every verse in these chapters.

Now, one would think that a message presenting a more detailed study of history and Scripture pertaining to Daniel 7 and 8 should not be offensive to anyone. But, to arrive at this new interpretation, old assumptions must be challenged, and that is where offense may occur. These old assumptions create a mindset from which it is difficult to break free. But it is the cold, hard facts of documented history that allow us to think and see objectively. This allows us to read these passages in Daniel and plainly see what God is really trying to tell us. It may not seem intuitive, but is nevertheless true: we need to understand history to see what Daniel is telling us about the end times.

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Like many Christians today, I was a staunch supporter of the idea of a Roman Antichrist before beginning this research. However, as I studied Roman and Islamic history, I could see that there was no good reason to hang on to these old assumptions. What assumptions am I talking about? There are two. The first, as I mentioned before, is that the Antichrist will be Roman or European. This assumption has been built upon for eighteen centuries going back to the writings of Hippolytus in AD 200. In this book I show compelling reasons, both historical and biblical, that the Antichrist is not only *not* European, but *cannot* be anything but a Muslim Arab.

The second assumption that needs to be changed is the idea that nothing more prophetically significant will happen until the Tribulation begins or the Rapture occurs. This idea has only been around for fifty years or so. Israel conquering Jerusalem and the Temple Mount in 1967 was hailed as a great fulfillment of prophecy, and it truly was. However, because people did not think that any other prophetic passage still needed to be fulfilled, except for the Tribulation or Rapture, this second assumption was born. But, if the interpretation given in this book is correct, then this assumption must fall by the wayside because it reveals a whole series of specific prophetic events leading right up to the Tribulation.

In other words, the next imminent prophetic event is not the Tribulation or the Rapture. This series of events that the Bible presents to us is essentially the changing of the seasons, as it were—the signs on the way to the Tribulation and the Antichrist.

Many Jews living in the time of Jesus had the wrong assumptions when reading prophecy. For example, some may have thought the Messiah came from Bethlehem only and could not also come from Galilee. The wrong assumption had a deleterious effect when the time came that this prophecy was relevant and being fulfilled. Likewise, we are coming into a time where our old assumptions will get in the way of our having a proper understanding of the times. Until thirty years ago, the rightness or wrongness of our assumptions didn't matter. Israel

became a nation in 1948 and then conquered the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in 1967. That was a fulfillment of some of the end time prophecies regarding Israel. The times that were to reveal the Antichrist had not yet arrived.

In the years since 1967, we have been insisting on watching Europe— which will tell us nothing biblically significant—instead of watching the Middle East and understanding what events are telling us. In addition, the idea that nothing more must happen until the Tribulation or Rapture occurs actually programs us to not watch for any biblically significant event except for the Tribulation or Rapture. This could get us into serious trouble if our view does not change!

Just as some of the Jews of Jesus' time needed a change of perspective and assumptions to see that Jesus was Messiah, so we need a change in perspective and assumptions so we can see the ever-unfolding events of the coming of the Antichrist. Hopefully we do not become unteachable. If we do, we miss out on the comfort and strength given to us by our loving Father through Bible prophecy.

MY JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

Discovery of this new interpretation was not my original intent. I didn't wake up one day and say, "I think I'll discover a whole new end-times interpretation of Daniel 7 and 8." Like most discoveries in human history, this was a complete surprise. It wasn't even on my radar. On the contrary; this discovery was merely the result of what started as a serendipitous quest for wisdom and an attempt to understand in some small measure what God was doing in these end times. Then the unexpected epiphany came when news events in the Middle East aligned with biblically significant events.

Many books have been written since the 1970s on the subject of Bible end-times prophecy. Probably one of the most popular of these books was Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*, first published back in 1970. Its end-time timeline said the Antichrist would come from

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the area of the old Roman Empire and would rule over a revived Roman Empire formed from ten nations. It talked about the Soviet Union (which we will now refer to as Russia) leading an attack with a coalition of the Arab countries on Israel. This popular picture in prophecy really bloomed after the Six-Day War in which Israel won a stunning victory over her Arab enemies in 1967 and took possession of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

My mother gave me a copy of *The Late Great Planet Earth* when I was ten. I found the book fascinating, and from an early age I watched world events. I was watching for the second coming, just as millions of Christians have for the last two thousand years.

As I got older, I saw the European Common Market grow toward ten members. It included Italy and France and received Great Britain, Denmark and Ireland as its seventh, eighth and ninth members in 1973. Greece joined in 1981 as its tenth. It seemed that the revived Roman Empire was at our doorstep. Israel grew in population and strength. The Arab countries became more virulent and united in their hatred of Israel. The Soviet Union continued to gain strength and influence through the 1970s and 80s. By the time I was in college in 1980, the Soviet Union had even invaded Afghanistan, a Muslim country.

However, just as events in the 1980s were starting to look as if they were converging according to the popular view of prophecy, by 1990 the picture was falling apart. The world seemed to be diverging from the prophetic view of things that were *supposed* to happen. The European Union (EU) grew from ten to twenty-eight members. In addition, the socialist systems in many of the EU's member states left the European economy weak and governments in debt. The Soviet Union fell apart in 1991 and retreated from Afghanistan. Though Russia still had its nuclear weapons, it soon lost the conventional forces needed to lead an invasion of the Middle East. Not only that, but a major reason for Russia to invade the Middle East—for its oil—no longer existed, as Russia was now producing more oil than Saudi Arabia.

Then something not previously on the radar appeared. The

influence and threat of some Middle Eastern Muslim countries grew due to the funds provided by their petroleum resources. Terrorism loomed as a threat. Fundamentalist Islam began to rise, and the twin towers in New York City fell on September 11, 2001 as a result of a terrible terrorist attack.

In the months following September 11, it hit me how quiet it seemed in places like Europe in terms of incidents related to the prophecy picture. One could almost hear the crickets chirping there. Russia and Europe appeared to be out of the picture as the headlines were full of news about Iraq, suicide bombings, the ousting of Saddam Hussein, developments in Iran, and so on.

These thoughts nagged me. At that time it was thirty-five years after Israel took the Temple Mount, and we were even past the year 2000. Surely we were in the end times. Surely Jesus' return was now much closer. So wouldn't news events be of great significance relative to, or at least somewhat applicable to, prophetic scripture? When ecumenical meetings in Europe or developments with the euro were touted as prophetically significant, I had problems with the proposition. *Really?* I thought. *We are getting closer to Christ's return, and this is all anybody can come up with as significant events?*

On the other hand, in the Middle East there were suicide bombings, riots, revolutions, and even major wars; yet, I hadn't heard anything being specifically reported as prophetically significant there. These were all assigned to the "increasing wars and disasters" category. There seemed to be nothing in Scripture to connect ongoing Middle Eastern events to biblical end-times prophecy.

Something just didn't feel right. So I did what we as Christians are supposed to do; I sought the Lord's counsel and wisdom on the matter. Thankfully, the Lord saw fit to send me on a journey of discovery. Within days of beginning my quest for an answer, I found Joel Richardson's writings on Answering-Islam.org, a forum where Christians and Muslims discuss theology. His writings were later moved

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over to his own website at Joels-Trumpet.com. In his writings, he made arguments in support of a Muslim Antichrist. He later assembled his work into his landmark book, *Antichrist: Islam's Awaited Messiah* (republished by WND Books as *The Islamic Antichrist*), where he lays out his reasoning that the Antichrist and the false prophet are going to be Muslim. In his book he shows that the prophetic writings of the Bible (mostly from Revelation 13) and the eschatological writings of Islam talk about the same three figures. The three figures are (with biblical/Islamic names): the Antichrist/Mahdi, the false prophet/Isa, and Jesus Christ/Dajjal. It is incredible how parallel the two sets of writings are. The difference between the two, of course, is that Islam calls evil what the Bible calls good, and vice versa.

In essence, Richardson demonstrates that by having a proper and more complete knowledge of the religion of Islam and its writings, we need to watch for and anticipate a Muslim Antichrist. He proposed changing our expectation of a Roman Antichrist to that of a Muslim one.

The idea of a Muslim Antichrist was a big surprise to me, and it took a year or so to absorb and accept. I found myself somewhat offended by the idea; but I kept up the investigation because, as crazy or strange as this new concept seemed, it was a potential answer as to why Europe was quiet but the Middle East was chaotic.

As an ardent student of the Bible, I realized that I next had to reconcile the passages that argued for a Roman Antichrist. Passages like Daniel 2 and 9 support the argument for a particular Antichrist—a Roman one, or so I thought. I had to confront these arguments. No new concept can be accepted unless it is reconciled to Scripture.

Daniel 2, which contained the dream of the metal statue; and Daniel 9:26, which speaks of the prince to come from the people who destroyed the temple, both seemed to argue for a Roman Antichrist. I found that I needed an understanding of the documented ancient history and medieval history of both the Roman and Islamic empires in order to truly uncover what these passages are telling us. I discovered that these two passages were actually arguing for a Muslim Antichrist!

I then went back again to reread prophetic passages to see if the new assumption of an Islamic Antichrist changed the interpretation of prophetic scripture.

This is when I found the most astonishing thing: additional prophetic passages such as Daniel 7 and 8 were unlocked and unveiled. With Daniel 7 and 8 unveiled, I discovered also that the four horsemen of Revelation 6 were inextricably linked to those two chapters in Daniel. These three passages revealed an end-time fulfillment of events leading to the Tribulation and the emergence of the Antichrist. I didn't realize it at the time, but when I saw the awesome set of events in Daniel 7 and 8 being revealed with the horsemen of Revelation 6, I had discovered that the book of Daniel was beginning to be unsealed. The Lamb of God had already broken the first seal.

Now, if we expect the Antichrist to rise from a revived Roman Empire, no one *needs* to understand Islam or the history of Islam throughout the centuries. According to the mainstream picture of the end times, Islamists are just a bunch of religious zealots who get fooled by Mother Russia and are merely pawns. The popular belief is that the invasions of the Holy Land will be led by either Russian or European powers, with the Muslim countries surrounding Israel joining in at the last minute or even remaining bystanders. But, as we will see in this book, this couldn't be further from the truth. Islam is the major player in the end times. It is Europe that is the pawn or the bystander.

Our perceptions, limited education (particularly in the knowledge of Islam and history), and reliance on centuries-old commentaries that are really only suppositions and assumptions have kept us from seeing both where the Antichrist will arise and the events that warn us of his coming. These prophetic events are the end-times signs involving specific countries and developments in the Middle East. Don't worry, though, about the potential complexity of history, for in this book I take the reader by the hand and go through each concept one by one.

When I made these discoveries, it was 2003. Iraq had been invaded

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and Saddam Hussein had just been ousted and captured. For many who had the old assumptions of popular prophetic theology, this was just a side event in the Middle East. For me, it transformed in a flash to become the main event, front and center, in Bible prophecy. The blinders had fallen from my eyes!

It has been very comforting to see the Lord's plan in these end times unfolding like a script. Today, I don't wonder anymore about why something is happening in one country or the other in the Middle East. I don't bother worrying about what is going to happen next in a particular country. Mindful of God's Word and His plan as revealed in Daniel 7 and 8, I now wait expectantly for the next major prophetic event to occur involving a particular country, or for a major trend to converge with prophecy. Of course, I knew before that He is in control, but now I see plainly and tangibly Christ's coming through the events in the Middle East. I urge you to join me in this voyage of discovery.

At this point, you may be wondering how we could have missed all this until now. How could we as the church miss this new interpretation, and only now wake up to see what is truly happening both in Scripture and in the world? The only answer I keep coming back to is that Daniel was a sealed book—sealed, that is, until the end times.

Also, certain world events needed to occur before people could realize that events were fulfilling prophecy in any particular interpretation of Daniel. I believe the sealing of the book of Daniel is directly responsible for the initial and erroneous suppositions that started us down the wrong path over many centuries. The sealing of Daniel was also responsible for these suppositions becoming common knowledge, and then being raised to canonical status, so that today's theological culture blocks anything that would cross these popular assumptions.

In the next sections I explain the sealing of Daniel, and how wrong assumptions further contributed to that sealing. Today Daniel is being unsealed.

DANIEL SEALED

Twice in the book of Daniel (Dan. 8:26 and 12:4), Daniel was told to seal or shut up the words of visions and messages he had received from God. The first time Daniel was told to seal up the words was when he received the vision of the ram and goat in Daniel 8. At that time Gabriel also told Daniel, “*seal up* the vision, for it concerns the distant future” (Dan. 8:26, author emphasis). The second time Daniel was told to seal up words was after he had just received a long and important message as recorded in Daniel chapters 10 and 11. “But you, Daniel, *shut up* the words, and seal the book until the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4 NKJV, emphasis added).

The word that Daniel used for “seal up” pertaining to the vision in Daniel 8:26 and for “shut up” pertaining to the message in Daniel 12:4 was *catham* (Strong’s #5640, pronounced *saw-tham*’). *Catham* means to stop up or to shut up a message, or to keep it a secret. The words themselves could be read, but they would have no meaning that man could discern correctly. It was as if the passage were written in code. He was also told in Daniel 8:17 that the vision of the ram and goat concerned the “time of the end.” So how long were these words to be kept a mystery and shut up? We have our answer in Daniel 12:4.

In addition to keeping the meanings of Daniel 8, 10 and 11 secret, Gabriel also told Daniel to “seal the book until the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4 NKJV, author emphasis). The word recorded here for “seal” is *chatham* (Strong’s #2856, pronounced *khaw-tham*’). Where *catham* (*saw-tham*’) was used to convey the idea of keeping a message secret, *chatham* (*khaw-tham*’) conveys the idea of physically sealing a book or scroll. Note that the book is to be sealed until the end times.

Now, if there is any doubt about the legibility of a sealed scroll or book, Isaiah 29:11 specifically teaches us that a scroll that is sealed cannot be read. It says, “For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read,

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and say to him, ‘Read this, please,’ he will answer, ‘I can’t; it is *sealed*’ ” (emphasis added).

God gave Judah a prophecy through Isaiah that was to be sealed. The word for *sealed*, used twice here in this verse, is the same used in Daniel 12:4: *chatham* (khaw-tham’). God was telling the people through Isaiah that if anyone tries to read a scroll that is sealed, the reader couldn’t read it! Likewise, though the words in Daniel can be read, they cannot be understood. Not only that, but they cannot be understood until the end times.

Just as God shuts doors that no one can open, so too if the meaning of a vision is sealed until the end times, then why do we believe a sealed prophecy can be read and understood prior to the end times? Why do we give such weight to men’s suppositions and assumptions that were made in centuries past? Great men of God, including the church fathers, have rightly interpreted God’s Word except for that small portion that is sealed until the end times. Why should we be surprised at this? It is alright to guess and conjecture, as long as we the church recognize that this is what we are doing. But these guesses have received a status of being much more than what they are.

THE UNYIELDING VERSES OF DANIEL

Obviously, we can open a Bible and read from Daniel plainly, even the parts that are explicitly “sealed.” However, the meaning has been hidden. How could the meaning of Daniel’s visions be hidden? I believe God purposely used what I call the unyielding, or hard verses of Daniel. In my research I have come across a few verses in Daniel that are key to understanding the various visions and messages, but they have not yielded to pre-end-time attempts to properly interpret them. These verses are Daniel 2:40, 7:17, 8:17, 8:19 and 9:26. These verses will be thoroughly explained in this book.

To fully understand a passage in Scripture, every verse of that passage needs to be properly understood. If one verse is misunderstood, it can steer the interpretation of a whole passage away from truth. This concept seems straightforward enough.

These unyielding verses of Daniel in particular—as far as I can tell—have never been properly explained in any commentary over the centuries. This could be due to a number of reasons. One reason is the obvious meaning of a single verse ran counter to the popular interpretation of the whole chapter and so the verse was ignored (as is the case with 7:17 and 8:17, 19). Another is that a study of history is necessary to understand it correctly (as in the case of 2:40 and 9:26). Improper interpretation of these single verses has stood in the way of our truly arriving at a correct understanding of these visions.

This whole idea of some verses never being interpreted correctly may sound outrageous, but is true nonetheless. In this book I will attempt to prove to the reader that this is the case.

Probably the best way to understand an evolving consensus on the interpretation of a verse is to see the history of its commentaries.

As an example of what I am saying about these unyielding verses, we will look at one in particular, Daniel 2:40. This verse will be discussed thoroughly in chapter 1, but for now we will look at its commentary. Also, the purpose of this discussion of commentaries of a verse in Daniel is not to argue the proper interpretation itself—that is reserved for chapter 1. The purpose is to show how the commentaries themselves started the wrong assumptions, helped them evolve, and elevated them to the level of canon, and so actually contributed to cementing the sealing of Daniel.

We begin by looking at Daniel 2:40 itself. It says,

Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others.

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This verse is part of the text in Daniel 2 that gives us the interpretation of the dream of the metal statue. Daniel 2:40 tells us that the empire represented by the iron legs must crush and break into pieces “all the others,” that is, all the preceding empires in the statue which were Babylon, Persia, and Greece—the gold head, silver chest, and bronze belly and thighs, respectively. This much is generally agreed.

Later in chapter 1 we will see the full explanation of how an empire can crush and break another empire, and which empire did so. Suffice it to say for now, at the very least, the empire that does the crushing must completely conquer the empire that is to be crushed. Conquest would include occupation of the enemy capital city; capture, exile, or death of the ruling dynasty of the conquered empire; and conquest of most of the enemy empire’s land area and its population.

The identity of the iron-leg empire is the question. Depending on which empire it is, it completely changes the picture of end-times prophecy. It is generally agreed that the Antichrist to come will emerge from a revived version of whichever empire is represented by the iron legs. Almost all commentators say the empire is Rome and that it crushed all three preceding empires.

However, running counter to all the arguments of the popular view of a Roman Antichrist is the hard but ignored fact of ancient and medieval world history that Rome *never* conquered Persia. They were archenemies who were at war with each other on and off for six centuries, with neither empire able to conquer the other. Rome would conquer a few outlying provinces of Persia, and Persia of Rome, but that is as far as it went. Nevertheless, the popular view of theology says that the iron-leg empire is Rome. Past commentaries of Daniel 2:40 are probably the main single reason that this opinion has prevailed over the centuries.

In the next section we will look briefly at the major developments in the commentaries of Daniel 2:40 and draw some conclusions. For the sake of brevity in this introduction, some conclusions may seem

unsubstantiated to the reader. This history is explained more thoroughly and the conclusions are substantiated in appendix A.

COMMENTARIES: FROM SUPPOSITION TO CANON

Before going down this path, please do not misunderstand what I am about to say here. Many great men of God have written commentaries on the entire Bible that are invaluable and have helped untold multitudes of the saints over the centuries. They have helped me immensely. These men were intelligent and God-fearing men who rightly interpreted the unsealed portion of Scripture. Therefore, I do not write lightly about this subject and these great men. But, we must open our eyes and realize that even the smartest and most saintly of men cannot properly read a passage if God has said it is to be sealed, until it is to be opened.

We will now see how this notion of Rome as the iron empire started as a supposition and in the end became canon. In this history, the first Christian commentary of Daniel 2:40 comes from Hippolytus, a bishop of Rome in about AD 200. He stated that the Empire of Iron had to be Rome.¹ He wrote elsewhere that Christ would return in AD 500 and that Rome would be the world power up until that time.² In addition, Roman historians from ninety years earlier faithfully recorded Trajan's exaggerated achievements that he had conquered Persia. Therefore, Hippolytus' position was a *supposition*; he arrived at a position based on his own presumptions on one hand, and false historical evidence on the other.

The next commentary comes from Jerome, the translator of the Bible into the Latin Vulgate. He wrote in AD 408 that the Empire of Iron was "clearly . . . the Romans."³ A clue to his thinking behind this is found in a letter he wrote five years later, regarding the sacking of Rome in AD 410 where he wrote, "the city which had taken the whole world was itself taken."⁴ If he thought Rome "had taken the whole world," it wouldn't be unreasonable to say he believed that additional historians' writings and Hippolytus' position were all correct. Jerome seemed to take for

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granted that Rome indeed did conquer all, including Persia. This was an *assumption*.

Going forward over eleven centuries we arrive at the time of the great and influential theologian John Calvin, during the Reformation. During those eleven centuries between Jerome and Calvin, Rome and Persia were at a standoff for over half that time until Islam came along and conquered Persia thoroughly. Over the remaining centuries Islam changed Persia's religion, culture, alphabet, and laws. Just a century before Calvin came along, Islam completed the conquest of the Eastern Roman Empire as well.

Like Jerome, Calvin also assumed Rome fulfilled the empire of the iron legs in Daniel 2:40. He argued that Rome's conquest of the four successors of Alexander, who all made up the bronze part of the statue in Daniel 2, counted as the conquest and crushing of the three preceding empires— Babylon the gold, Persia the silver, and Greece the bronze— when in fact it only covered the bronze.⁵ The argument boils down to Rome's conquest of Syria and Babylon equaling a conquest of Persia. In 1715, a century and a half after Calvin, Matthew Henry wrote in the great commentary that bears his name that Rome held "prevalency against all that contended against it."⁶ The assumption continued with Henry, for Rome did not prevail against Persia, but only made some short-lived gains after which Persia could have been said to prevail right back against Rome.

Forty years after Henry, the theologian John Gill strengthened the assumption. He featured in his text a list of peoples that Rome had conquered which actually included the Persians by name.⁷ This statement simply goes against historical fact. History shows us that such a statement would be equivalent to saying that a military power conquered the Americans by conquering Florida. At this point, the long-lived idea that Rome as the iron legs fulfilled Daniel 2:40 was becoming such a strong assumption that a statement was made that history plainly does not back up.

By the time Barnes came along with his commentary in the 1860s, the assumption had become *common knowledge*. Edward Gibbon, the

famed historian who in the 1770s authored *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, took the role of theologian when he wrote that iron Rome had conquered the other empires of gold, silver and bronze.⁸ Barnes then wrote in his commentary that it was “scarcely necessary” to mention that the empire was Rome, and then he quoted Gibbon’s aforementioned work.⁹ The assumption became “common knowledge,” for it was now in a respected work of history. Barnes quoted Gibbon regarding the gold, silver and bronze, but ignored what Gibbon wrote in a later chapter titled “Troubles in Persia.”¹⁰ In that chapter Gibbon mentions specifically that neither Rome nor Persia could conquer each other in all the centuries they contended with each other.¹¹ Gibbon unwittingly contradicted himself in his volume, and Barnes took the side of the contradiction that supported his assumption. Here we see that where “common knowledge” is involved, facts are not delved into too deeply.

A century after Barnes, this “common knowledge” found its way into canon. The translators of the Amplified Bible in 1962 added “Rome” in brackets directly to the scriptural text. Daniel 2:40 was then translated as, “And the fourth kingdom [Rome] shall be strong as iron, since iron breaks to pieces and subdues all things; and like iron which crushes, it shall break and crush all these” (AMP). The meaning of the verse itself was changed at this point. (Please do not take this as an attack against the Amplified Bible. I believe that almost all translations, including the Amplified, provide us with a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I am simply following a history here.)

Confirming this new canon, Hal Lindsey, the famous prophecy expert of the last four decades and staunch supporter of the centuries-old Roman Antichrist theory, quoted this very verse from the Amplified translation to argue his position in his 1970 book *The Late Great Planet Earth*.¹² The quote made his position more persuasive. Lindsey’s book essentially provided the foundation for the popular prophetic theology of the day, since it was published just three years after Israel conquered all of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

So, across the span of eighteen centuries the first suppositions

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became assumptions, assumptions became common knowledge, and finally common knowledge became canon. This went on while, in fact, during those many centuries, Daniel was sealed until the end times.

The multi-century history of these commentaries stands as a witness to the fact that parts of Daniel are indeed sealed. Those who insist that Daniel 2:40 refers to Rome are merely repeating what has been repeated for centuries, without doing their homework in history. Unfortunately, since no one has really said anything different over the centuries, much momentum in church thought and culture must be overcome.

False histories, presumption, and misunderstandings all conspired to seal up the words of Daniel. God expressed His Word in such a way as to confound the wisdom of man, so man himself contributed to the sealing. If you doubt what I say about man contributing to the sealing of Daniel, just argue the point with others about the iron empire being Islam and see how many prophecy teachers vigorously defend the truly unfounded notion of Rome as the iron empire. There is your seal.

CANON BECOMES A RED HERRING

If indeed this book's new interpretation of Daniel 7 and 8 is correct—and the Antichrist will come out of the Islamic Realm (I will explain in chapter 1 why I refer to Islamic Realm with a capital "R") during the biblical events preceding the arrival of the Antichrist—then here in the end times the old assumption of the Roman Empire has become a red herring, a distraction. For those not familiar with this figure of speech, a red herring was a very strong-smelling smoked fish that was red in color. It was placed in the path of hunting dogs to purposely get them to veer off the path that would lead them to their prey. Today what we call a red herring is a logical fallacy that detracts from the real and important issue. This describes the situation perfectly.

The centuries-old assumption of a revived Roman Empire being the base of the Antichrist acts as a red herring, keeping untold millions

of Christians from seeing what they truly need to see—the Antichrist emerging from the nations of the Middle East. Europe is under a microscope, while the Middle East is seen as an area of chaos until the Arabs form an alliance with Russia or Europe and they all attack Israel. The old assumption of a revived Roman Empire is keeping us from seeing that the chaos in the Middle East *is* the ongoing fulfillment of prophecy directly leading to the Antichrist. Until we shed this old notion, understand what history is telling us, and take a fresh look at Daniel, we will continue to look to Rome in vain for the Antichrist.

DANIEL IS NOW UNSEALING

How do we know that we are finally in the end times and that Daniel is unsealing? Two points to the argument come to mind. First, the chapters of this book will show the complete, step-by-step rationale of history shining a light on our understanding of Daniel 2 and 9. The arguments will show that the Antichrist cannot be European but must be Arab, and that the revived empire cannot be Rome but must be Islam.

Second, we will see in detail that events in the Middle East in the last thirty years, including those of today, are not just somewhat similar to what prophecy says, but are exactly fulfilling prophecy. Proof can be seen in actual news events. Therefore, history sheds light on Scripture to give us a new interpretation. Current events are fulfilling the prophecies displayed by this same new interpretation—to the letter. This has never happened before with the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8. An integral part of this new interpretation stems from the four horsemen of Revelation 6. Four predicted events can be plainly seen from both Daniel 7 and 8 *and* Revelation 6.

Additionally, the actions recorded in Revelation 6 caused something to dawn on me. The only book or scroll to be sealed in the Bible was Daniel. In Isaiah 29:11 there was a scroll containing a single prophecy, but Daniel is the only whole book or scroll to be sealed. Might this

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suggest that somewhere in the Bible, a scroll would be *unsealed*? What is the most famous book or scroll in the Bible to be unsealed? That's right; it is the book (or scroll) handed to the Lamb of God in Revelation 5, the scroll which the Lamb unseals, seal by seal, starting in Revelation 6:1.

The four beasts of Daniel and the four horsemen of Revelation work in tandem. This is testimony to the fact that the breaking of the first four seals that releases the four horsemen is in reality the portion-by-portion unsealing of the book of Daniel, and involves the four beasts of Daniel 7. I suggest that the scroll held and unsealed by the Lamb is the book of Daniel.

As I show in this book, the first seal has already been broken, so the first horseman has been released—and so the first of the four events has already occurred. Incredibly, events in Iraq over the last thirty years have fulfilled the prophecy of the first horseman in exquisite and spine-chilling detail. Equally compelling is that all the signs are in place in Iran for the second seal to be broken, releasing the second horseman. Time is short.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapters in this book are laid out in a sequence that roughly parallels my journey of discovery.

As I mentioned before, the first step in my research was proving that Daniel 2 and 9 argue for a Muslim Arab Antichrist. In chapters 1 and 2 we will explore these passages of the Bible that provide two of the strongest arguments the popular theological community uses to “prove” a Roman Antichrist and a revived Roman Empire. By reviewing the history of both the Roman and Islamic empires we will see plainly that the Daniel passages actually overwhelmingly support a Muslim Antichrist with Islam as his kingdom. These two passages show us the real empire and the true people of the Antichrist.

After showing that indeed Daniel 2 and 9 *cannot* argue for a Roman

Antichrist but actually support a Muslim Antichrist, I wondered what made Islam unique. Why would Islam match so well with the Antichrist? In chapter 3 we will see a little of why Islam fits the profile for the Antichrist's religion. The Antichrist's religion contains elements of the themes in the Bible that display Satan's ongoing warfare with mankind.

Once I was able to accept the idea of a Muslim Antichrist with Islam as his empire, I was able to get beyond examining Scripture passages for "proof" of the nature of Antichrist, and I was able to study passages of Scripture simply for their content, using the new assumption that the Antichrist was to be an Arab Muslim. In chapters 4 through 8 of this book, we will see why our old and popular interpretations of these passages must change. Daniel 7 and 8 are popularly viewed as being fulfilled centuries ago. With our new paradigm of an Islamic rather than a Roman Empire, and by paying close attention to key verses in Daniel 7 and 8, these passages open up to show us the four sets of events to occur prior to the Tribulation.

Finally, in chapters 9 through 12 of this book I present the four events yielded from this new interpretation, in what I call the Four Signposts. In these chapters we will look at what happened in the Middle East to fulfill the First Signpost, the events going on now in preparation for the Second Signpost, and the trends and conditions leading to the Third and Fourth Signposts.

So, if you are ready, let us begin!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Davidson (a pen name) is a follower of Jesus Christ. He is a graduate-degreed Aerospace Engineer having worked thirty years in the defense and space industries. He and his wife live in Colorado.

Being a life-long student of the Bible, eschatology, world history, and geopolitics, he has connected the dots yielding a new interpretation of Daniel which is being proven by current events.

The author may be contacted at:
mark.davidson.1234@gmail.com

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