

THE
TIME
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OF THE
END

DON MANLEY



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DEDICATION



This book is dedicated with great appreciation and gratitude to a very special couple: James and Elaine Young. They are members of the church I pastor and are wonderful friends who have helped me do the work God so graciously called me to do. They have encouraged me, prayed for me, and have been a great blessing to me. I love them, and thank God for them.

CONTENTS



Acknowledgments	ix
Preface	xi
Introduction: Daniel—The Key to Understanding End-Time Prophecies	xiii

Section I

The History of Daniel the Prophet

Chapter One: The Sovereign God	21
Chapter Two: The Right Purpose	29

Section II

The Prophetic Plan for the Gentiles

Chapter Three: Two Nightmares and One Night Vision.	39
Chapter Four: The Nations, Destiny, and God.	49
Chapter Five: Three False Images	59
Chapter Six: The Testimony of Nebuchadnezzar	71
Chapter Seven: From Light to Darkness.	81
Chapter Eight: The God of the Ages is the God For All Ages	93

Chapter Nine: The Storm Before the Calm	105
Chapter Ten: The Coming World Leader	115

Section III

The Prophetic Plan for Israel

Chapter Eleven: The Vision of the Ram and the Goat	129
Chapter Twelve: The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks	139
Chapter Thirteen: The Invisible War	151
Chapter Fourteen: War, Wars and Still More Wars to Come.	161
Chapter Fifteen: No More War.	173
Chapter Sixteen: The Time of the End and the Events That Will Follow	183
 How to Be Sure You Are Going to Heaven.	 193
 Endnotes	 197

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PREFACE



This book was written for you.

Are you a skeptic? Perhaps you are a seeker? Then again, maybe you are a believer? Some books that are written target a certain specific audience and the rest of us are excluded. Isn't that true? But that's not the case with this book. This book was written for you. Each of us fits into one of these categories. The skeptic says, "I don't believe." The seeker thinks, *I don't know what to think, but I sense that there is a God-shaped vacuum within me, and I find myself seeking answers.* The believer says, *I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, and I'm grateful that He saved me. But, I want to know more about the Bible; and yes, I want to know more about where our world is headed.* No matter what category you are in, this book was written for you. I had you in mind as I studied, prayed, researched, and wrote this book.

Why is there a Bible? God gave us the Bible because He loves us, and wants us to know Him. He is our Creator. He loves His creation. He wants to have a personal relationship with each of us. So great is His love for us. God, Himself, tells us in the Bible how we can have a personal relationship with Him. More on that later.

"Why is there prophecy in the Bible?" The God of heaven knows the future. In Old Testament times He often told His people about

THE TIME OF THE END

important events that would take place sometime in the future. Later, these events took place. God told His people of these events before they happened. That is prophecy. Prophecy is history written before it happens. Only God can do that.

One reason why God put prophecy in the Bible is to get our attention. He wants us to know that He, the God of the Bible, is *the* true God. Why is that important to God? Because He loves us. He wants you and me, and everybody, to have a personal relationship with Him.

There is another reason why God put prophecy in the Bible. He wants His people, the believers, to know what is going to happen in the future. Many view the Bible as an old, outdated book that is full of errors, but this thinking is wrong. Friend, your Bible is as up to date as tomorrow's newspaper! This will become evident to you as we study the book of Daniel.

INTRODUCTION DANIEL—THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING END-TIME PROPHECIES

Understanding the prophecies of the Bible is more important today than ever before. Events in our world are moving quickly. Many of these events point us right back to the end-time prophecies of the Bible.

The key to understanding the prophecies of the Bible, including the book of Revelation, is the book of Daniel. The famed theologian, Dr. John F. Walvoord, of Dallas Theological Seminary, said:

In many respects, the book of Daniel is the most comprehensive prophetic revelation of the Old Testament, giving the only total view of world history from Babylon to the second advent of Christ and interrelating Gentile history and prophecy concerning Israel. Daniel provides the key to the overall interpretation of prophecy, is a major element in premillennialism, and is essential to the interpretation of the book of Revelation. Its revelation of the sovereignty and power of God has brought assurance to Jew and Gentile alike that God will fulfill His sovereign purposes in time and eternity.¹

Two Important Questions

There are two important questions that need to be answered as we begin our study of Daniel. The first question is, “What is meant by the phrase ‘the times of the Gentiles?’” The second question is, “What is

THE TIME OF THE END

meant by the phrase ‘the time of the end?’” The answer to these two questions will prepare you for this study and will help you to more quickly understand the writings of Daniel. As you read this book keep your Bible close at hand.

Question #1—What is meant by the phrase “the times of the Gentiles?”

Christ used this phrase one day while sitting on the Mount of Olives with His disciples. Speaking to the disciples about future events (prophecy) He said. “Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24).

History tells us that the once proud, divinely blessed city of Jerusalem was “trodden down” by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon around 605 BC. You can read about that Babylonian invasion in 2 Chronicles 36:1-21.

Since Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion (605 BC), Jerusalem has been “trodden down” by the Gentiles. When Christ sat and taught His disciples that day 2,000 years ago, who was the authority in Jerusalem? Well, it wasn’t the Jews. It was the Gentiles. Rome. Let’s fast-forward 2,000 years. Who controls Jerusalem today? It’s not the Jews. Gentiles, namely the Middle East “quartet” of the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia make any major decision about Jerusalem today. Gentiles decide what the Jews can and cannot do in that troubled, divided city.

As we study the book of Daniel we will see that the city of Jerusalem will continue to be trampled on by the Gentiles until Jesus Christ returns from heaven and sets up His 1,000-year, worldwide kingdom. Guess where the capitol of Christ’s kingdom will be? You guessed it— Jerusalem.

So the times of the Gentiles will not end until Jesus Christ returns. Who will be in control of Jerusalem then? Not Gentiles. Jesus Christ and the Jews!

INTRODUCTION

Summary:

“The times of the Gentiles” began with the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem (605 BC) and will continue until the return of Jesus Christ.

Question #2—What is meant by the phrase, “the time of the end?”

There is a lot of interest today in the subject of “the time of the end.” People everywhere are wondering, “What is happening to our country and our world?” It seems everything is in a state of crisis. There is turmoil and chaos at every turn. We see it in the governments of the world; we see it in our economic systems, in our institutions, and in our families.

There is a sense of gloom, of some unknown impending danger. There is the feeling that something is about to happen—but, what? Many people have given up watching the news or reading the newspaper. Some are saying things like, “I get depressed when I watch the news” or “I can’t think about these things; it ruins my day,” or “I wish I could just run away, but where would I go? There is no place to go.” That is true. We simply cannot escape the problems of this world by a move from one location to another. Many have an ominous feeling that something big, something unknown is about to happen. Soon!

Is the “end” imminent? What is the meaning of that phrase in Daniel, “the time of the end?” That’s a question that God wants to answer for you. The God of heaven is intensely personal! He loves each person as if that person were the only one to love. He gave us the Bible to tell us of His love. The Bible is a love letter written to you by someone who loves you a thousand times more than you and I can comprehend.

This personal, loving God wants you to know what is happening, why it’s happening, and what is going to happen in the future.

The “Time of the End” is Not the End of Human History

The book of Revelation does deal with the end of time. That is why I entitled the book that I wrote on Revelation, *The End of Human*

THE TIME OF THE END

History. The book of Daniel does not, however, deal with the end of this world. The “time of the end” in the book of Daniel is not the end of the world, it is the end of the age, referred to by Christ as “the times of the Gentiles.”

The “time of the end” will last three-and-a-half years. It will end when Christ returns from heaven and sets up His kingdom here on earth (Dan. 7:25, 12:7; Rev. 13:5, 19:19-20). The “time of the end” is also called, “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7) and “the great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21). It will be “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (Dan. 12:1).

Cheer Up! Good News!

You could probably use some good news at this point, right? Here’s the good news: if you have accepted, or will accept Christ as your Savior, before this soon-to-come “time of the end,” you will escape all of the horrible trouble that is coming. Christ will take all believers out of the way before this awful time of trouble. One day soon He is going to appear in the sky, and call us up. We will rise to meet Him in the air! He will then take us safely to that place that He has prepared for us in heaven (John 14:1-6; 1 Thess. 4:13-17)! Then, the time of the end will come to the people left on earth.

Friend, I have majored on the prophecies of the Bible. If I knew what I know but did not have Christ as my Savior, I would be terrified at the things that are coming upon this earth.

The Great Stage of History

One of the most popular Bible teachers of the twentieth century was Theodore Epp. He was the featured speaker on the *Back To the Bible* broadcast. Here is what he said on our subject:

We might compare the present time in world history to a great stage on which most of a play has already been acted out—only the last act

INTRODUCTION

is yet to come. The curtain is still down, but behind it can be heard rumblings and movements as the stage props are being prepared for the last great, dramatic and climactic scene. The wars and rumors of wars, the peace talks and the plans for human survival are all part of the noises we hear, while at the same time the clouds of judgment are gathering. When will the last curtain rise? We are not sure, but Daniel takes us behind that curtain so that we need not be ignorant of what is coming. The world can only guess and wonder at what is taking place at the present time, and the best that anyone can do is plan for the present and the future. It is the privilege, however, of the Bible-believing student of prophecy to know what events are coming and what the outcome will be.²

Again, friend, God is intensely personal. He loves you. He wants you to love Him; and if you will, He will bless your life abundantly. He has told us in the Bible about major things that will happen so after these things happen, we will know that He is the true God. Why would He do that? Because He loves you.

The Ride of a Lifetime

In Disney World there is a roller coaster ride called “Space Mountain.” People, especially kids, love it. Many have called it, “the ride of my life.” As we are about to start our journey through the book of Daniel, a word of caution—hang on to your hat! This might be *the* spiritual ride of a lifetime!

SECTION I

**THE HISTORY OF DANIEL
THE PROPHET**

THE SOVEREIGN GOD

Daniel 1:1-6

Do the things that happen to an individual, or to a family, or to a nation, happen just by chance? Is the God of heaven merely a spectator of this vast stadium called earth? Some would argue for the “God is a spectator” theory, but they would be in the minority. A large percentage of people would come up with an answer similar to this: “In some unknown way, God is working in our world. Just how He is working I do not know, but I truly believe that He is.”

At the constitutional convention in Philadelphia in 1787, Benjamin Franklin stood and addressed the president of the convention, George Washington. He said, “I have lived sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men.”³

For the past forty-five years, I have studied the Bible seriously, and have also studied history. One thing that has been clear to me all through the years is this: the unseen hand of the almighty God has been active in the affairs of men from the very beginning and will continue to orchestrate the events of our world until time shall be no more.

THE TIME OF THE END

In the final analysis, history is His story. The great pastor and Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe said:

So wise and powerful is our God that He can permit men and women to make personal choices and still accomplish His purposes in the world. When He isn't permitted to rule, He will overrule, but His will shall ultimately be done and His name glorified. We worship and serve a Sovereign God who is never caught by surprise. No matter what our circumstances may be, we can always say with confidence, "Alleluia! . . . the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

(Rev. 19:6 NKJV)⁴

The Invasion of Israel

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

(Dan. 1:1)

Jerusalem under attack? Jerusalem was God's special city, and these were His people! Why would God allow His city and His people to undergo an invasion by a pagan king?

The Reason for the Invasion

God allowed Jerusalem to be invaded because of the awful sins of His people, despite all the warnings that He had given them. God had His prophet, Jeremiah, warn them, but they would not listen. God also had His prophet Ezekiel warn them, but they refused to listen to him as well.

Warnings From Moses

Centuries earlier God told His people through His servant Moses, that they would be subject to discipline if they didn't live right. God said that if He disciplined them and yet they still failed to turn back

THE SOVEREIGN GOD

to Him and correct their sinful ways, He would send another cycle of discipline, followed by a third cycle. If they still didn't repent, then He said there would be a fourth cycle of discipline, and finally a fifth cycle. These five cycles of discipline are outlined in Leviticus 26.

Hal Lindsey did an excellent job of breaking down these warnings from God to Moses. He referred to these warnings as “the doctrine of the five cycles of Divine discipline.”⁵

The First Cycle of Discipline—Leviticus 26:14-17

In the first cycle of discipline there would be an increase of sickness and disease. Their economy would be disrupted by enemies. Their military would be involved in some limited wars, and they would lose. They would begin to lose some of their sovereignty to foreign powers.

The Second Cycle of Discipline—Leviticus 26:18-20

In this cycle of discipline, the nation would experience a power drain. Other nations would become more powerful. Changing weather patterns would destroy their agriculture, and hurt their economy. That would cause poverty, and shortage of food.

The Third Cycle of Discipline—Leviticus 26:21-22

In this cycle, the calamities would multiply. God said great numbers of their children would be killed. God also said He would bring yet another hard blow on their economy.

A Pause For Consideration

Do you see any similarities to these cycles of discipline and what is happening in the United States? The nation Israel was the people of God in the Old Testament. They were blessed with the light of God's Word. When they lived right and let their light shine to the other nations as a testimony to God, He blessed them. When they turned away from

THE TIME OF THE END

Him, He disciplined them. If they proceeded to disobey, He proceeded to the next cycle of discipline, and so on.

America has been a nation blessed of God. He has blessed America with the light of His Word. But, how is America doing today? Consider the following: we are declining as a power rapidly. We are losing our kids to drugs, alcohol, crime, and all kinds of violence. We are experiencing much disease, in spite of our advances in medicines. Every time we think that we are going to eradicate disease, some new ones pop up.

America has had some limited wars, and we are beginning to lose. Consider these: Korea, Vietnam, and Afghanistan.

Israel had experienced all these things before the time we read about in Daniel 1:1.

The Fourth Cycle of Discipline—Leviticus 26:23-26

In this cycle of discipline there is a breakdown of government and of the nation's borders. Foreigners invade. There is famine. Godless foreigners rule the nation.

The Fifth Cycle of Discipline—Leviticus 26:27-39

In this cycle there is famine so bad there is actually cannibalism—parents eating their own children. There is the destruction of the nation, including its cities, and its worship places.

The Intrusion of the Temple—Daniel 1:2

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

In verse two we see the *intrusion* of the temple, the Old Testament house of God. Nebuchadnezzar took some of these special vessels made out of silver and gold and carried them back to Babylon, and put them

THE SOVEREIGN GOD

into the house of his false god. The subject of these vessels taken from the house of God will come up again later in the book of Daniel.

Notice in this verse, these vessels from the true house of God were taken, “into the land of Shinar.” Shinar is the place where the Tower of Babel was built (Gen. 11:1-9). This was the fountainhead where all false religion started and then spread all over the earth.

So the vessels from God’s house went into the house of a false god. Do you think there might have been an unseen spiritual war in progress here?

The land of Shinar (Babylon) is located in modern day Iraq. The people of Iraq are apparently proud of their ancient tower, Babel, as it has even been illustrated on some of their currency. What god do the Iraqis worship today? The Muslim god, Allah. Just a moment prior to the jet planes crashing into our Twin Towers on September 11th, what god did those foreign Muslim terrorists call on? Allah!

I submit to you my friend, that there is an unseen spiritual battle going on in our world today. Here in America it is a battle for the soul of our beloved nation.

The Indoctrination of a Jewish Teenager

Before heading back to Babylon, the Chaldeans rounded up several thousand Jews to take with them as captives. Among these captives were four teenage boys.

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

THE TIME OF THE END

Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

(Dan. 1:3-6)

These four teenage boys would be brainwashed and reeducated. Every effort would be made to get them to forget their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to embrace the gods of the Chaldeans. God, however, was at work behind the scenes, as He always is. God had a plan for these young men. What a shock it must have been for those boys. They were simply plucked from their homes, their country, and everything they knew and loved, and then forced to travel 900 miles east to a strange place called Babylon. Their faith, no doubt, was challenged with all of these events. Reading between the lines, I can see that God was with them, and I am convinced that He let them know that they were not to fear what men might do to them.

God always has a plan for those who are willing to give Him their all, and that includes those in the uncertain days in which we live. God wants His children to follow Him, no matter what. The unseen hand of God has been active in the affairs of man from the beginning and will continue to be until time shall be no more. Aren't you glad you are on His side? I want to encourage you to pray this prayer, or something similar: "Lord, no matter what, if you will lead me, and stay by my side, I will follow You."

Maybe you don't really know God. Maybe He's been doing things in your life to get your attention. Why would He do that? Because He loves you and wants to have a relationship with you. I don't know your story, and each story is different. But I believe He has been trying to get your attention. Why not reach out to Him in faith today?

THE SOVEREIGN GOD

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Study Emphasis

1. What has the sovereign God been up to in your life recently?
2. What do you think God is up to—
 - In our country?
 - In our world?
3. Describe the changes that have taken place in our country since your childhood.
4. What do you think God expects from His people (Christians) during a time of national moral and spiritual decay?

5. In your opinion, what is the greatest danger that America faces today?

6. Make a list of some things that we should be doing for God.