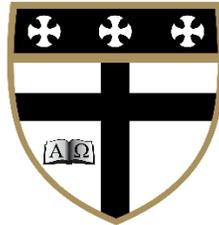


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A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“The Book of Daniel as Prologue for the New Testament”¹

by

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² Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).
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Introduction

Sir Isaac Newton (1643 - 1727) has said that the Book of Daniel is the foundation of the Christian religion, and that to reject the prophecies in that book is to reject Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.³

For the reasons set forth in the several chapters of this paper, I fully concur with Newton's assessment. Indeed, there is no clearer prophetic oracle in the Bible regarding the birth, ministry, and crucifixion of Christ than that within the prophecies of Daniel.

Some critics of the Book of Daniel have surmised and conjectured that it was not authored by an individual man named "Daniel" who lived during the 6th century; that it is unlikely that so precise prophetic predictions on the rise and fall of the Greek and Roman empires and the coming of the Messiah could have been made without redaction or editing during later centuries, after the events had already taken place; and that this work was likely constructed during the first two centuries BC, during the Hellenistic period of the Maccabees. These arguments, however, fail miserably when one considers that the Book of Daniel had already been interpreted into Koiné Greek and included in the Septuagint as early as the third century BC;⁴ and that, even if it had been modified during the period of the Maccabees, the prophetic predictions of the rise of the Roman empire and crucifixion of the Messiah could still not be explained.

Significantly, Jesus Christ identified himself as the same "Son of man" who is portrayed in the Book of Daniel. For example, the Book of Daniel speaks about "the *Son of man*" coming "with the clouds of heaven."⁵ And in the New Testament, Jesus Christ embraced this same description of himself, as "the *Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory";⁶ "the *Son of man* coming in the clouds with great power and glory";⁷ "the *Son of man* sitting on the right hand

³ Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), p. 16.

⁴ Source: https://www.conservapedia.com/Book_of_Daniel

⁵ Daniel 7:13.

⁶ Matthew 24:30.

⁷ Mark 13:26.

of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven”;⁸ and “the *Son of man* coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”⁹

Secondly, just as Christ’s ministry was transformative of provincial Judaism into a catholic Christian faith, the Book of Daniel’s emphasis upon coming of a Messiah the Prince who would establish an eternal kingdom that subdues all nations, thus shaping even the destinies of the ancient Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, predicts the global nature of Christ’s ministry and kingdom. In the Book of Daniel, we see that a grand stage is being set to introduce the Christ, who will reign as an eternal and global king of the entire world.

The Book of Daniel thus teaches us that all nations are subordinate to God and that they must obey God’s divine laws, or face God’s wrath and punishment. This means that Messiah the Prince shall come and exercise political dominion over all the nations through God’s *divine Providence*.

According to Reformed Theological doctrine, the churches of Jesus Christ— i.e., not one single church denomination of Christians— have the responsibility to teach, to preach, and to counsel the nations to heed God’s divine laws and divine Providence.¹⁰ In the Book of Daniel, the example set by the Prophet Daniel and the three Hebrew boys who were thrown into the fiery furnace, exemplify the methods and the means whereby the Christian church must exercise its prophetic mission to the nations.

For this reason, this prophetic Book of Daniel prefigures and signifies the New Testament Church’s prophetic mission to instruct the nations about equity, public policy, and social justice.

⁸ Mark 14:62.

⁹ Luke 21:27.

¹⁰ Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 142-143 (“In a word, human kingdoms are established by divine providence”); Ibid, p. 158 (“God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence.”)

Chapter One

“The Prophet Daniel and the Evangelization of the Gentiles (i.e., Babylonians and Persians)”

According to the commentary section of the Thomas Nelson King James Bible, “[the Prophet Daniel’s life and ministry bridge the entire seventy-year period of Babylonian captivity. Deported to Babylon at the age of sixteen, and handpicked for government service, Daniel becomes God’s prophetic mouthpiece to the gentile and Jewish world declaring God’s present and eternal purpose.”¹¹

The Prophet Daniel may have been the “first Christian” amongst the cosmopolitan Babylonian Jews of the late 7th and early 6th century B.C. who went into captivity.¹² As a Jew who lived in Babylonian and Persian captivity, the Prophet Daniel’s simple, virtuous, and godly life of civil disobedience exemplified Jesus Christ’s commandment to “*Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.*”¹³

Higher Law and Civil Disobedience in the Book of Daniel

Gentile Kings	Daniel and the Three Hebrew Boys
Babylonian/Persia Empire (State) ¹⁴	Jewish Religion (Church) ¹⁵
Unjust Laws and Brutal Government Policies	<u>Passive Resistance</u> : “Resist not Evil”; “Overcome Evil with Good”; Love enemies; Bless them that Curse you.

¹¹ King James Bible (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 2017), p. 1138.

¹² “Daniel (Prophet),” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_\(biblical_figure\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_(biblical_figure))

The Jewish rabbis of the first millennium CE reckoned Daniel to be the most distinguished member of the Babylonian diaspora, unsurpassed in piety and good deeds, firm in his adherence to the Law despite being surrounded by enemies who sought his ruin, and in the first few centuries CE they wrote down the legends that had grown up around his name.

¹³ Matthew 22: 21.

¹⁴ King Nebuchadnezzar; King Belshazzar; and King Darius.

¹⁵ Daniel 3:1-30 (“Three Hebrew Boys throw in Fiery Furnace”); Daniel 5:1-31 (“Violated the Golden and Silver Vessels from the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem”); and Daniel 6:1-28 (“Daniel thrown in the Lion’s Den”).

Indeed, the Prophet Daniel's official relations with King Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon) and King Darius (Persia) was that of high-level official service wherein Daniel served them in good faith but refused to violate the higher laws of the God of Israel (i.e., the God of Heaven).

Because of Daniel's righteous and prophetic example, Nebuchadnezzar was led to admit: "[o]f a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret"¹⁶ and "[n]ow I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."¹⁷

Likewise, King Darius of the Persian empire, who was deeply-moved when he saw that Daniel had not been devoured in the lion's den, commanded:

I make a decree, That **in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.**

He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.¹⁸

Similarly, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were all Hebrews, served the Gentile King Nebuchadnezzar in honesty, candor and good faith, but they too refused to violate the higher laws of God. And because of their righteous example and civil disobedience, they were able to convert Nebuchadnezzar into a firm believer in their God of righteousness, to wit:

Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

¹⁶ Daniel 2: 47.

¹⁷ Daniel 4: 37.

¹⁸ Daniel 6: 26-28.

Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.¹⁹

Thus, not only did the Prophet Daniel *passively resist* the false gods and unjust decrees of the ancient Gentiles (i.e., the Babylonians and Persians), but he also *ministered* to Gentile kings and emperors, by faithfully serving them as a high-level government administrator,²⁰ while simultaneously reminding them of the higher laws of the Almighty God of Heaven.²¹

As a consequence, we see a sort of merger of Judaism— or the principles of monotheism, the sovereignty of an almighty God, and universal justice— into the sovereign kings of Babylon and Persia.

In other words, these Gentile kingdoms were proselytized and, ultimately, persuaded not only to acknowledge the God of the Jews but also to enact decrees acknowledging the sovereignty of this God over the civil laws of those kingdoms.

For this reason, the Jews have referred to Cyrus the Great (Persian), who ended the Babylonian captivity, as the Lord’s “anointed.”²²

¹⁹ Daniel 3: 28-30.

²⁰ “Daniel (Prophet),” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_\(biblical_figure\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_(biblical_figure))

According to the Hebrew Bible, Daniel was a noble Jewish youth of Jerusalem taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, serving the king and his successors with loyalty and ability until the time of the Persian conqueror Cyrus, all the while remaining true to the God of Israel.

²¹ Daniel 4: 37.

²² Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.

Chapter Two

“The Prophetic Ministry of Daniel prefigured the Prophetic Ministry of the New Testament Church”

During the first century AD, after the Romans had replaced the Greeks as conquerors of ancient Judea, the early Christians adopted the same basic philosophy and methods of the Prophet Daniel (and the three Hebrew boys who were thrown into the fiery furnace) who lived in ancient Babylon and Persian.

The Apostle Peter’s admonition to the Early Church was to “Honor all men.... Fear God. Honour the king.”²³ And the Apostle Paul’s admonition was to “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”²⁴

Church and State in ancient Rome during the First Century

Caesar	Jesus
Roman Empire (State)	Christian Religion (Church)
Unjust Laws and Brutal Government Policies	<u>Passive Resistance</u> : “Resist not Evil”; “Overcome Evil with Good”; Love enemies; Bless them that Curse you.

This method of *passive resistance* to falsehood,²⁵ coupled with a genuine “agape” love towards one’s enemies (in this case, the ancient Romans) and a *willingness to accept martyrdom*²⁶— which the ministry of the prophet Daniel exemplified — unleashed the most potent political force in human history: the visible and invisible New Testament Christian Church.²⁷

²³ 1 Peter 2:17.

²⁴ Romans 13:1.

²⁵ See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Whittaker, 1905).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-92, describing the political methods of the Early Christian Church, as follows:

Jesus’s method of passive resistance is by far the most economical of life and treasure of any mode of warfare that man can adopt. We have seen how the active resistance of the Jews to the Roman power lead to the death of millions and to the misery of millions more.

Just as kings Nebuchadnezzar (Babylonian), Darius (Mede), and Cyrus (Persian) were ultimately persuaded of the truth and sovereignty of the Hebrew's God of Heaven, so too would the Roman Caesars, as prophesied in the Book of Daniel, eventually reach that same conclusion.

While the Jews were resisting actively, the Christians were resisting passively. The wickedness of the Roman power was far more hateful to the Christian than to the Jew. The Christian would not recognize the validity of that power by so much as casting a grain of incense upon an altar. But the Christian did not wish to kill the Roman; he wished to convert him; and so he manifested his hostility to the Roman system, not by fighting the Roman, but by preaching to the Roman that his system was evil, and, if he wished to escape from that evil, he must turn from the worship of Caesar to the worship of Christ.

And when the Roman was angry with him the Christian suffered the full consequence of that anger, and in so suffering revealed to the Roman a moral greatness which turned the anger of the Roman into admiration, love, and worship. And the loss of life in this warfare of the Christian against the Roman was an nothing when compared with the loss of the Jews.

More Jewish lives were lost in the one year of Coziba's insurrection, than Christian lives were lost in the three centuries of Christian persecution. And there was this radical difference,-- every Jew who died in arms made an enemy for the Jews. Every Christian who died unarmed made a friend for the Christians. So that it became a saying that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. The history of Jesus and the history of the establishment of Christianity give experimental proof of the soundness of His doctrine.

The method of Jesus is not only economical, but it is effective. If you wish to subdue a man to your will so that he may be your slave, you cannot do it by killing him, for a dead man is no man's servant. You cannot do it by chaining him, for a man in chains has all he can do to carry his shackles. The only way to subdue a man is to win him. If you want him for your very own you must conquer something beside his hands and his feet; you must storm the citadel of his heart, and, instead of making him fear to disobey, you must make him love to obey. Now you can never make a dog love you by beating him; still less a man. In all God's universe it is the law that like begets like,-- hate breeds hatred, and loving wins love. And Jesus, in the sublimity of His spiritual genius, gave expression by word and life to these very simple axiomatic principles, and by so doing put the world in the way of salvation.

As long as men hate one another and kill one another, so long will this world be a hell, and those who live in it, will not live at all, but all their days will be misery and death.

Chapter Three

“Daniel’s Prophecies are the Foundation of the Christian Religion”

According to famed scientist and mathematician Sir Isaac Newton, “Daniel was in the greatest credit amongst the Jews... and **to reject his Prophecies, is to reject the Christian religion. For this religion is founded upon his Prophecy concerning the Messiah.**”²⁸

The Prophet Daniel also foretold of the coming of a “Son of Man,”²⁹ a “Prince of princes,”³⁰ and a “Messiah the Prince,”³¹ whom the Christian church interpreted to be Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.³² Daniel’s prophecy involves four major kingdoms, which is retold in three different formats, as follows:

a) “The Great Image”³³

Daniel 2:32	“head of fine gold”	King of the Babylon
Daniel 2:32	“breast and arms of silver”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 2:32	“belly and thighs were brass”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
Daniel 2:33	“legs of iron and feet and toes of clay”	Kingdom of the Romans

²⁸ Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), p. 16.

²⁹ Daniel 7: 13.

³⁰ Daniel 8:25.

³¹ Daniel 9:25-26.

³² See, e.g., Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012).

³³ Daniel 2:32-49.

b) “The Four Beasts”

Daniel 7:4 “the first beast”	Kingdom of Babylon
Daniel 7:5 “the second beast”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 7:6 “the third beast”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
Daniel 7:7 “the fourth beast”	Kingdom of the Romans

c) “The Ram and the He Goat”

Daniel 8:3 “ram with two horns”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 8:5 “he goat with horn between his eyes”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
Daniel 8:8 “the four notable horns”	Four divided Greek Provinces or Kingdoms
Daniel 8:9 “little horn, waxed exceeding great”	Kingdom of the Romans

Chapter Four

“The Great Image”

In the Book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which no one could ascertain or interpret except the prophet Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a great image of man that was made of four different metals and clay.

The *head* of the great image was made of gold.

The *breast* and *arms* of the great image were made of silver.

The *belly* and *thighs* of the great image were made of brass.

The *legs* of the great image were made of iron.

The *feet* and *toes* of the great image were made of clay.

Symbolically, these metals and clay represent the following kingdoms:

“The Great Image”³⁴

Daniel 2:32	“head of fine gold”	King of the Babylon
Daniel 2:32	“breast and arms of silver”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 2:32	“belly and thighs were brass”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
Daniel 2:33	“legs of iron and feet and toes of clay”	Kingdom of the Romans (and kingdoms arising therefrom after the fall of that empire)

In this same prophecy within the *Book of Daniel*, there is “**a stone**” that “was cut without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them:

³⁴ Daniel 2:32-49.

and the stone that smote the image became **a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**³⁵

Here, the Prophet Daniel is clear that when the stone shall strike the legs of iron and feet of clay, that “the God of heaven [shall] set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall for ever.”³⁶

Hence, the first coming of Christ is the ‘stone cut out of the mountain without hands,’³⁷ which broke into pieces the “iron” which prophetically symbolized the Roman empire.³⁸

That stone, who is Christ Jesus, “shall break in pieces and consume all... kingdoms, and [the stone] shall stand for ever.”³⁹

³⁵ Daniel 2:34-35.

³⁶ Daniel 2:44.

³⁷ Daniel 2:44-45.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

Chapter Five

“The Four Beasts”

The Prophet Daniel also tells of the prophecy of the “Four Beasts,” which is a restatement of the same prophecy of the “Great Image” and addresses the same kingdoms, as follows:

Daniel 7:4 “the first beast”	Kingdom of Babylon
Daniel 7:5 “the second beast”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 7:6 “the third beast”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
Daniel 7:7 “the fourth beast”	Kingdom of the Romans

Within this prophecy, the first beast was “like a lion, and had eagle’s wings.”⁴⁰

The second beast was “like to a bear... and it had three ribs in the mouth of it.”⁴¹

The third beast was “like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl... [and] four heads.”⁴²

The fourth beast was “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.”⁴³

Now the prophecy goes on to state: “[t]hese great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever”⁴⁴ and “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions shall serve and obey him.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Daniel 7:4.

⁴¹ Daniel 7:5.

⁴² Daniel 7:6.

⁴³ Daniel 7:7.

⁴⁴ Daniel 7:17-18.

⁴⁵ Daniel 7:27-28.

This fourth beast is the ancient Roman empire, and the ten kingdoms represent the legacy of Rome, including the several nations of Europe, Britain (and America), and western Asia and northern Africa. According to this prophecy, the life of this fourth beast shall be “prolonged for a season and a time.”⁴⁶

Finally, upon the “Ancient of days,” one who is “like the Son of man” shall come “with the clouds of heaven” and establish an “everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”⁴⁷

That Jesus of Nazareth identified himself as that “Son of Man” who is mentioned in the Book of Daniel is clear,⁴⁸ as where he says, “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.... There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Daniel 7:12.

⁴⁷ Daniel 7:13-14.

⁴⁸ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Son-of-Man.html> (“Jesus is referred to as the “Son of Man” 88 times in the New Testament. In fact, Son of Man is the primary title Jesus used when referring to Himself (e.g., Matthew 12:32; 13:37; Luke 12:8; John 1:51). The only use of Son of Man in a clear reference to Jesus, spoken by someone other than Jesus, came from the lips of Stephen as he was being martyred (Acts 7:56).”)

⁴⁹ Matthew 16:27-28.

Chapter Six

“The Ram and the He Goat”

Finally, the Prophet Daniel also tells of the prophecy of the “Ram and the He Goat,” which is a restatement of the same prophecy of the “Great Image,” but only addresses the last three kingdoms, as follows:

Daniel 8:3 “ram with two horns”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 8:5 “he goat with horn between his eyes”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
Daniel 8:8 “the four notable horns”	Four divided Greek Provinces or Kingdoms
Daniel 8:9 “little horn, waxed exceeding great”	Kingdom of the Romans

Now Gabriel the angel approaches Daniel in his vision and tells him the interpretation of this vision, saying, “[t]he ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the grate horn that is between his eyes is the first king.”⁵⁰

And so, the first king of the Greeks, who destroyed the Persian empire, was Alexander the Great. When Alexander the Great dies in 323 B.C., his kingdom was divided into four parts, and that is referenced in Daniel’s prophecy as the “four kingdoms” that “shall stand up out the nation, but not in his [i.e., Alexander the Great or the “first king’s”] power.”⁵¹

Afterwards, a “king of fierce countenance”⁵² shall emerge, and we conclude that this king symbolized the ancient Roman empire.

The prophecy goes on to describe this fierce king (i.e., the ancient Roman empire), as follows: “[a]nd his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall

⁵⁰ Daniel 8:20-21.

⁵¹ Daniel 8:22.

⁵² Daniel 8:23.

destroy many: he shall also stand up against **the Prince of princes**; but he shall be broken without hand.”⁵³

Here, the “Prince of princes” is Jesus Christ, who shall break—has broken—the power of this “fierce” king that is the ancient Roman empire.

⁵³ Daniel 8:24-25.

Chapter Seven

“Prophecy of the 70 Weeks”⁵⁴

In the ninth chapter of the Book of Daniel, the Prophet Daniel set his face unto God and prayed, seeking forgiveness for Israel for having transgressed the law of Moses.⁵⁵ As Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel, whom Daniel had seen in a vision, touched him and delivered the following message:

At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and **to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.**

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of **the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem** unto the **Messiah the Prince** shall be **seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks**: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

⁵⁴ In *The City of God*, supra, p. 641, Augustine of Hippo says, “Daniel even defined the time when Christ was to come and suffer by the exact date.”

⁵⁵ Daniel 9:3-19.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The commandment to restore and build the temple came through the decree of the Edict of Cyrus in 539 BC. But Cyrus' original decree was reinstated by special edict by Darius the Great (520 BC) and Artaxerxes I (444 BC).⁵⁶

Therefore, the prophecy of the 70 weeks begins at 444 BC.⁵⁷

Rebuilding of the Second Temple – 396 BC

Therefore, from 444 BC to the rebuilding of the Second Temple of Jerusalem is 7 weeks, or 49 prophetic years (or 48 solar years).⁵⁸ Therefore, Jerusalem was rebuilt by 396 BC.⁵⁹

Crucifixion of the Messiah- 33 AD

And from 444 BC to the execution of (“cutting off”) the Messiah the Prince is an additional 62 weeks, or an additional 434 prophetic years (476 solar years).

444 BC minus 476 solar years equals 33 AD.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Source: <http://helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12End/Daniel7and62Weeks.aspx>

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Messiah the Prince, in light of the angel Gabriel's message, arrives in 33 A.D. (444 B.C.) – (476 years). Note: there is no year that is numbered as zero. The year 1 B.C. is followed by the year 1 A.D.” Source: <http://helpmewithbiblestudy.org/12End/Daniel7and62Weeks.aspx>

The Call of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion- 40 AD

The last prophetic week, or the 70th week, is the seven-year period from the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ to the call of Cornelius, the Roman centurion in the *Book of Acts*.⁶¹ During one-half of this one-week period (i.e., 3 1/2 prophetic years), God allowed the sacrifices within the Second Temple, and the Old Covenant, to continue: as the Scriptures says, “[a]nd he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease....”⁶²

The remaining one-half of one week ends with the call of the Roman centurion Cornelius.⁶³ When this occurs, and the Holy Spirit is poured upon the Gentiles, and Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 weeks is completed.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Acts 10:1-48; 11: 1-30. NOTE: this is only one of several interpretations of the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy. This interpretation is taken from Isaac Newton’s *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, supra.

⁶² Daniel 9:27.

⁶³ Acts 10:1-48; 11: 1-30.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012).

Conclusion

As the general theme of the Book of Daniel plainly demonstrates not only that Messiah the Prince has already come to establish his eternal kingdom, but also that there is a Higher Law of God and that the authority of all earthly dominions is *limited* to meting out true and substantive justice that comports with the sovereign will of God.⁶⁵ To that end, the kings of Babylon and Mede-Persia who are mentioned throughout the Book of Daniel, frequently acknowledge God's sovereignty over the nations. After several tests or ordeals, the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God is clearly demonstrated throughout the Book of Daniel.

For this reason, the Book of Daniel stands for the proposition that God will eventually punish national sin and crush disobedient kingdoms and dominions. And perhaps, most significantly, this book purports that God's Messiah the Prince shall establish an everlasting kingdom and shall reign both upon the earth and in heaven, within a definite time period (i.e., the prophecy of the 70 weeks).

Accordingly, Reformed Protestant theology holds that Christ's reign and kingdom were initiated in 33 A.D., upon his crucifixion and resurrection, as recounted in the prophecy of Daniel. And to the mind of the Reformed Puritan, the "kingdom of God" is manifested through his *Divine Providence*, which certainly supersedes the temporal or spiritual "Church and State," within the conventional definitions of those terms.⁶⁶ "In a word," explained Augustine of Hippo, "human kingdoms are established by divine providence,"⁶⁷ and "God can never be believed

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Daniel 4:34-37 (explaining how Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, confessed and acknowledged the sovereignty of the Lord of Heaven):

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

⁶⁶ David J. Engelsma, "The Kingdom of God," source: <http://www.prc.org/resources/publications/pamphlets/item/3943-the-kingdom-of-god>

⁶⁷ Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 142-143.

to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence.”⁶⁸

The Book of Daniel teaches us that human rulers and governors must obey God by making laws that comport with the divine will. Some call this natural law or natural justice,⁶⁹ but it is an acknowledgement of *divine Providence*— an

⁶⁸ Ibid., p, 158.

⁶⁹ See, e.g., William Blackstone, “Of the Nature of Laws in General,” *Commentaries on The Laws of England* (New York, N.Y.: W.E. Dean Pub., 1840), pp. 25-28, stating:

Law, in its most general and comprehensive sense, signifies a rule of action; and is applied indiscriminately to all kinds of action, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational. Thus we say, the laws of motion, of gravitation, of optics, or mechanics, as well as the laws of nature and of nations. And it is that rule of action which is prescribed by some superior, and which the inferior is bound to obey.

Thus, when the Supreme Being formed the universe, and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be. When he put that matter into motion, he established certain laws of motion, to which all moveable bodies must conform. And, to descend from the greatest operations to the smallest, when a workman forms a clock, or other piece of mechanism, he establishes, at his own pleasure, certain arbitrary laws for its direction,— as that the hand shall describe a given space in a given time, to which law as long as the work conforms, so long it continues in perfection, and answers the end of its formation....

The whole progress of plants, from the seed to the root, and from thence to the seed again; the method of animal nutrition, digestion, secretion, and all other branches of vital economy; are not left to chance, or the will of the creature itself, but are performed in a wondrous involuntary manner, and guided by unerring rules laid down by the great Creator.

This, then is the general signification of law, a rule of action dictated by some superior being.... Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being.... This will of his Maker is called the law of nature. For as God, when he created matter, and endued it with a principle of mobility, established certain rules for the perpetual direction of that motion, so, when he created man, and endued him with freewill to conduct himself in all parts of life, he laid down certain immutable laws of human nature, whereby that freewill is in some degree regulated and restrained, and gave him also the faculty of reason to discover the purport of those laws.

Considering the Creator only as a being of infinite power, he was able unquestionably to have prescribed whatever laws he pleased to his creature, man, however unjust or severe. But, as he is also a being of infinite wisdom, he has laid down only such laws as were founded in those relations of justice that existed in the nature of things antecedent to any positive precept. These are the eternal immutable laws of good and evil, to which the Creator himself, in all his dispensations, conforms; and which he has enabled human reason to discover, so far as they are necessary for the conduct of human actions. Such, among others, are these principles: that we should live honestly (2), should hurt nobody, and should render to every one his due; to which three general precepts Justinian (a) has reduced the whole doctrine of law....

The law of nature, being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior to obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no

acknowledgment which has been incorporated into American constitutional jurisprudence through the English common law,⁷⁰ as well as the Declaration of Independence.⁷¹

THE END

human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this (3); and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.

But, in order to apply this to the particular exigencies of each individua, it is still necessary to have recourse to reason, whose office it is to discover, as was before observed, what the law of nature directs in every circumstance of life.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Declaration of Independence (1776) (“And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”)