

Chapter Six

Introducing Daniel's Synoptic Prophecies

This small chapter is a necessary slight diversion in preparation for the three chapters which follow.

When the Kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians, it propelled them on a completely separate path from the Kingdom of Israel. That path was plotted in three prophecies written by Daniel, one of which is known by some scholars as the longest and most detailed prophecy in the whole Bible, and another is known as the most important prophecy ever fulfilled. All three of these prophecies cover the period of time from the dominion of the Medes and Persians who conquered Babylon, through the reign of the Greek empires, right up to the time of the Romans and the Abomination of Desolation. Jesus especially referred to the **“abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” with the exhortation, “let the reader understand”**. He was speaking to His disciples and giving them information that was particularly important to them. Let us therefore also understand what Daniel had to say. **Later we will see how very relevant Jesus' comments were.**

To correctly understand these three prophecies which are found in Daniel Chapters 8-12, it is important to approach them synoptically, not as stand-alone proclamations. (Likewise with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke) As mentioned above, they all cover the same period of time. Incidentally, Daniel now reverts to writing these passages in Hebrew and the content of the prophecies is centred on the Kingdom of Judah even though much is said of the Gentile nations that afflict them.

In these passages we will find mention of the terms: latter days; appointed time; and time of the end. **There are over 400 instances where the phrase ‘the end’ is used in Scripture** and only on rare occasions does it refer to the end of the age. Therefore we must be careful to allow the context to declare just what **‘the end’ is actually the end of. Many times it is obvious: the end of all flesh; the end of forty days; etc.** When it is not so clear however, we must put aside the presumption that it always means the end of the age and allow for the context to reveal the intended meaning. What follows are examples of when the end is not the end but just an end.

Amos 8:2-3

And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the Lord unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more. 3 And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.

The context of the above is found at the beginning of the Book of Amos.

Amos 1:1

The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

The situation is during the time when there were two kingdoms in the Promised Land: the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel. Amos was prophesying concerning the imminent invasion by the Assyrians who would conquer and take captive the whole of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The term 'the end' used by Amos has nothing to do with the end of the age but everything to do with the end of Israel's presence in the Land. Here is another example:

Ezekiel 7:1-9

Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 2 Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. 3 Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. 4 And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. 5 Thus saith the Lord God; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. 6 An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. 7 The morning is come unto thee, O thou that dwellest in the land: the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains. 8 Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations. 9 And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth.

Ezekiel is prophesying to the Kingdom of Judah prior to the final destruction by the Babylonians, the **end of Solomon's Temple and the first desolation of Jerusalem** that was to last seventy years.

Having examined these examples from the Word, let us proceed with our study of Daniel's **Synoptic** Prophecies, keeping in mind that the end mentioned is not the end of the age.