

A Broad Approach and Guideline for End Times Interpretation

In our "Revelation" series of talks and diagrams, we have given our understanding of "end-times" events and timings, moving through the whole book of Revelation systematically, and showing how the bulk of the book - Chapters 6 to 19 - describe the 7 year tribulation period from different angles and perspectives -

- Ch 6-7 - the Seven "Seals"
- Ch 8-11 - the Seven "Trumpets"
- Ch 12-14 - the "Beast"
- Ch 15-16 - the Seven "Bowls"
- Ch 17-19 - "Babylon"

The background to this approach is outlined below.

For reference we have used many commentators' and scholars' work. I would like to highlight the following 2 as main influences, although I do not follow all of their views:

Dan Greenup - <https://dangreenup.com/end-times-timeline/>

David Guzik - Enduring Word Bible Commentary - <https://enduringword.com/#commentary>

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1. DANIEL 9 AS A CRUCIAL STARTING POINT

The book of Daniel gives a lot of context and structure to much of the end times prophecies.

Daniel 9:24-27 gives a time framework for Jesus' arrival on Earth, and the end times. It speaks of "seventy "sevens"" - or 490 years. *"There is almost universal agreement among Bible scholars and commentators that this refers to seventy sets of seven years, or weeks of years."* David Guzik - Enduring Word Bible Commentary

Daniel 9:24-27 NKJV - "24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. 25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come

Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.""

In this passage we see:

- The timing in history of Jesus' life, ministry and death and what He achieves
- What will happen to Him (He will be "cut off, but not for Himself")
- What will happen to Jerusalem (destroyed)
- An evil "prince" or ruler will arise
- He will sign a treaty or covenant for 7 years with Israel
- Half way through that 7 years he will "He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."
- This "abomination of desolation" is a very important milestone in understanding all the end time interpretations and scriptures, as we shall see below.

2. OTHER REFERENCES TO THE END TIMES & THE "ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION" IN DANIEL

In the rest of Daniel the end times and this "abomination of desolation" are further described in various places as follows:

- A. Daniel 7:21-27 NKJV - "21 "I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, 22 "until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgement was made in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. 23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast shall be A fourth kingdom on earth, Which shall be different from all other kingdoms, And shall devour the whole earth, Trample it and break it in pieces. 24 The ten horns are ten kings Who shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; He shall be different from the first ones, And shall subdue three kings. 25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time. 26 'But the court shall be seated, And they shall take away his dominion, To consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'"

Daniel 7 describes an amazing and beautiful vision Daniel had of the end times. It tells us about:

- the beast (the antichrist of the end) and how he is similar to previous world powers and rulers, but worse.
- The Ancient of days and the Son of man
- The ultimate victory of God and His people
- The timings of some of the events. Namely, a 3½ year period here described as "a time and times and half a time" when the saints will be persecuted by the beast.

- B. Daniel 8:11-14 NKJV - "11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. 13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" 14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.""

This is an extremely accurate prophecy concerning a Greek leader - Antiochus Epiphanes. In 167 BC he raided the temple in Jerusalem, stealing its treasures, setting up an altar to Zeus, and sacrificing pigs on the altar. He then slaughtered a great number of the Jews and sold others into slavery. He also ordered Jews to sacrifice to pagan gods and to eat pig flesh.

The Jews rebelled and won, and the Jewish festival of Hanukkah celebrates this. Jesus attended Hanukkah celebrations in John 10:22-23.

This whole story was prophesied incredibly accurately in Daniel 8, with exact timings and descriptions foretold hundreds of years in advance.

This "abomination of desolation" was very similar to the end times "abomination of desolation", and was definitely a foreshadowing, but it is clearly NOT the complete fulfillment of the prophecies of the end time "abomination of desolation" because Jesus told us in Matthew 24 that it was still to come, even though Antiochus Epiphanes' "abomination of desolation" had already happened:

Matthew 24:15-31 NKJV - "15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. 24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 "See, I have told you beforehand. 26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. 29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

- C. Daniel 11:31, 36-37 NKJV - "31 "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. ... 36 "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies

against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37 "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all."

This describes the antichrist in the end times, and how he does similar things to Antiochus Epiphanes in that he defiles the temple and "takes away the daily sacrifices, and places there the abomination of desolation"

- D. Daniel 12:2-4, 7-11 NKJV - "2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever. 4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." ... 7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. 8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?" 9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 "Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. 11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Chapter 12 of Daniel is all about the end times. It speaks of

- Some of these things being "sealed up" until the end. This is referred to in Revelation 6 where John sees the scroll sealed with 7 seals that only Jesus can open.
- A 3½ year period. This period (half of the final 7 year tribulation period, Daniel 9's seventieth week) is referred to here as "**a time, times, and half a time**"
- A period of "one thousand two hundred and ninety days". This is 30 days more than the 3½ year period mentioned elsewhere, indicating that it runs slightly into / overlaps with the next period - the Millennial reign of Christ - mentioned in Revelation 20. A further 15 days are also mentioned in Dan 12:12 indicating a further overlap into the Millennium period.

3. RELEVANCE AND LINKING OF THE MENTIONS OF A 7 YEAR AND A 3½ YEAR PERIOD

The repeated mentioning of a 3½ year period within the context of the 70th week of Daniel 9 is important to the understanding of end times and in linking Daniel with Revelation.

In Daniel 9:24-27 there are 70 "weeks" (or 490 years) given as a timeline, and the last 7 year period is clearly stated as the time when the antichrist is reigning. His final 3½ years, the second half of this week, are extremely important as they are mentioned so many times:

- Daniel 9:27 NKJV - "27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But **in the middle of the week** He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing

of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."''

- Daniel 7:25 NKJV - "25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For **a time and times and half a time.**"
- Daniel 12:7 NKJV - "7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a **time, times, and half a time**; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished."
- Revelation 11:2 NKJV - "2 "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for **forty-two months.**"
- Revelation 11:3 NKJV - "3 "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**, clothed in sackcloth."''
- Revelation 12:6 NKJV - "6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there **one thousand two hundred and sixty days.**"
- Revelation 13:5 NKJV - "5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for **forty-two months.**"

We therefore see that repeated references to this time frame link all of these prophecies together and give a roadmap in describing and interpreting the final seven year tribulation, the second half of which is a terrible tribulation where the antichrist rules the world and viciously attacks Christians and Jews in the world.

4. SOME OTHER RELEVANT NEW TESTAMENT END TIMES PASSAGES APART FROM REVELATION

- A. Matthew 24:3-31 - Jesus answers His disciples' question "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?". His answer is striking because of:
- The detail He gives in His predictions
 - The stunning amount of agreement between Jesus' words, and those in Revelation 6 & 7, and Thessalonians (see below)
 - His description of His second coming and the gathering up of His people - Mat 24:27-31
 - His desire that His followers not be troubled or upset (Mat 24:6). He wanted them to be ready, but not to panic, and He went to great lengths to reassure them that the end won't come without some really momentous and terrible events happening first, including the "abomination of desolation"
 - His reference to Daniel and "abomination of desolation" - Mat 24:15
- B. 1 & 2 Thessalonians - Paul devotes large parts of these 2 letters to the topic of the end times, mainly because the readers were very anxious about it. Of note are the following:
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 NKJV - "13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 **For the Lord Himself**

will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words."

- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 NKJV** - "1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness."
- **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 NKJV** - "1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ **and our gathering together to Him**, we ask you, 2 **not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled**, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for **that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.**"

Note that Paul in Thessalonians is concerned that they are not shaken or troubled unnecessarily. He also reminds them that the second coming **and our gathering** cannot happen until the antichrist sets himself up in God's temple and wants to be worshipped - which is exactly the same as the "abomination of desolation" message in the various other places we have mentioned above, also mentioned by Jesus in Matt 24:15, and in Revelation 13:4-6, 8, 12, 15.

5. CONCLUSION & OTHER REFERENCES

While we have done our best to interpret God's word correctly, we do not believe that we should be dogmatic about these things, and so we welcome fellowship with others who hold different views on these matters.

Please see [HERE](#) for a short message on our view about the popular Pre-Tribulation Rapture position.

In summary, when we see the time-frames given in Daniel, particularly the 7 year tribulation divided in half by the "abomination of desolation", it enables us to put the various predictions in Matt 24, and in Thessalonians into context, and to interpret Revelation with more clarity.

All of these passages link up with extremely high continuity and agreement, the main themes that run through them all being:

- A 7 year tribulation period divided into 2 halves, the second half being the worst
- The antichrist as a key figure
- The "abomination of desolation" as a key event