

## APPENDIX J

**THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION  
OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL**

During The First 500 Years of the Early Church

*by Dr. J. Paul Tanner*

---

**I. THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD (AD 90-190)**

Prior to Hippolytus (d. ca. AD 236), we do not have any extant commentaries on Daniel from this period. From the general evidence we have of the post-apostolic period, however, we can safely say that the early church leaders tended to be premillennial in their eschatological outlook. There was a tendency to believe that a personal Antichrist would arise before the Lord's return, following which the Lord Jesus would usher in a glorious kingdom age on earth.

**A. The Epistle of Barnabas (ca. 90-135)**

Although the author of this early document is uncertain, the echo of Matthew's gospel (note 4:14) suggests that it was probably not written before AD 90. He implies that the "little horn" in Dan 7 is a reference to the Antichrist.<sup>1</sup> There is a vague reference to Dan 9:24-27, in which the author seems to apply the building of the temple to the spiritual temple that we become through faith in Christ (in an argument to show the folly of the Jews putting their hopes in an earthly temple).<sup>2</sup>

**B. Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165)**

Justin Martyr, for example, held that the Second Coming would be followed by a 1000-year reign of Christ on the earth. According to Carey, Justin was born in the territory of Shechem of Palestine (Falvia Neapolis), and was converted to Christianity about AD 132.<sup>3</sup>

In his work entitled *Dialogue with Trypho* (an apologetic work to a Jew by the name of Trypho), he makes scattered comments about both the books of Daniel and Revelation. According to Chadwick, this was written sometime near the middle of the second century: "*The*

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Epistle of Barnabas*, chap IV in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh, 1867; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1981), 138.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chap 16, 147.

<sup>3</sup> J. D. Douglas, ed. *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub. House, 1978), s.v. "Justin Martyr," by G. L. Carey.

*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* was written after the first *Apology*, probably about 160, but is presented as an account of a discussion which Justin had with Trypho about 135.”<sup>4</sup>

Since Jerusalem and the Temple had been destroyed in AD 70, Justin asked Trypho if he believed the city would be rebuilt. He then went on to explain that it would be rebuilt during the 1000 year millennium:

But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.<sup>5</sup>

In chapter 31 of this work, he makes an extensive quotation of Dan 7:9-28, and then comments on this passage in chapter 32.<sup>6</sup> He insists that the Son of Man in Dan 7 is the Lord Jesus, and that the "little horn" is the Antichrist. The context also seems to indicate that he understood the temporal reference "time, times and half a time" as meaning 3 1/2 years.

### C. Irenaeus (ca. 120-202)

In his work *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus clearly articulated an earthly millennial kingdom of 1000 years that would come about after the rule of the Antichrist. Furthermore, this kingdom would be set up in a renewed Jerusalem.

According to Irenaeus, the "stone" cut out of the mountain (Dan 2) is a reference to Christ, and the fact that it is cut out of the mountain "without hands" (note Dan 2:34) is meant to signify the virgin birth (i.e., Christ was born without the human contribution of Joseph).<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the Son of Man is the Lord Jesus (Book IV.20.11).

He equates the *beast* of Rev 13 with the "little horn" of Daniel 7, both referring to the Antichrist that will rule in the end times (V.28.2).<sup>8</sup> He also equates the "little horn" of Dan 7 with the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thess 2, whom the Lord will slay at His second coming (Book V.25.3). Furthermore, he understood the "time, times and half a time" as a 3 ½ year period: "and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time," that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth" (Book V.25.3). He held that the present kingdom [i.e., Rome] would eventually be divided into ten kings, according to the prophecies of Dan 2 and 7, and that the ten horns of Dan 7 (= ten toes of Dan 2) were the same as those mentioned in Revelation 17 (Book V.26.1). The Antichrist will then slay three of these ten kings, by which he will become the premier ruler: "It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them."<sup>9</sup> The ten kings, however, will "lay Babylon waste." Irenaeus does not make a clear interpretation of what Babylon stands for, but possibly he sees it as the kingdom of the fourth beast, i.e., the Roman Empire. He states, "It must be, therefore, that the kingdom, the city, and the house be

---

<sup>4</sup> Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London: Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1967), 75.

<sup>5</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, A Jew* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, 239.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>7</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, 453 [from III.21.7).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 554.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 554-55.

divided into ten; and for this reason He has already foreshadowed the partition and division [which shall take place]."<sup>10</sup>

He briefly comments on Daniel 9:27, clearly taking the half-week of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> "week" as three years and six months and associating this with the time when the Antichrist will reign in power (Book V.25.4).<sup>11</sup>

According to Irenaeus, the rule of the Antichrist would be terminated by the Lord's return, following which there would be the kingdom:

But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that 'many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'<sup>12</sup> For Irenaeus, however, the Lord's coming and kingdom would be after 6000 years of history (Book V.28.3), in accordance with the six days of creation (i.e., 1000 years for each day of history). The kingdom, then, is the true Sabbath and the fulfilment of the 7<sup>th</sup> day of creation when God rested (Book V.33.2).

## II. THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL (AD 190-250)

### A. Clement of Alexandria (c. 155 - c. 220)

Titus Flavius Clement succeeded his teacher Pantaenus as head of the Catechetical School at Alexandria in 190.<sup>13</sup> Clement, as did others connected with the School at Alexandria, employed an allegorizing hermeneutic to Scripture, in contrast to earlier church fathers. One of his principal works is the *Stromata* (Miscellanies), in which he makes comments on Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy (see Book I, chap 21).<sup>14</sup> This would have had to have been written sometime after AD 192, as Clement refers more than once to the completed reign of Commodus (r. AD 180-192). He understood the "weeks" as meaning weeks of years, with the first 7 "weeks" being the time of the temple construction as recorded in Ezra and the 62 weeks running to the time when Christ "was anointed in His flesh by the Holy Spirit of His Father" (presumably, His baptism). [Clement does not try to show the dates involved, but 62 "weeks" from the temple construction would be short of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD]. He assumes (as do a few others) that the "Holy of Holies" (the most holy place) is a reference to Christ.

He seems to apply the final "week" to the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70:

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 555. The phrase "house be divided" refers to Mt 12:25, which Irenaeus had just quoted before this statement.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 560 [from V.30.4].

<sup>13</sup> *Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Clement of Alexandria," by G. L. Carey, 234.

<sup>14</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, 329.

The half of the week Nero held sway, and in the holy city Jerusalem placed the abomination; and in the half of the week he was taken away, and Otho, and Galba, and Vitellius. And Vespasian rose to the supreme power, and destroyed Jerusalem, and desolated the holy place.<sup>15</sup>

Strangely, he attributes Nero (d. AD 68) with placing the abomination in Jerusalem. In contrast with Irenaeus, however, Clement does not connect the final week with the Antichrist who was yet to come, but saw the completion of the 70<sup>th</sup> week by AD 70.

Later in the same chapter, Clement elaborates on the years of the 70<sup>th</sup> week at the time of Jerusalem's destruction and even connects them to the 2300 evenings and mornings mentioned in Dan 8:14: "These two thousand three hundred days, then, make six years four months, during the half of which Nero held sway, and it was half a week; and for a half, Vespasian with Otho, Galba, and Vitellius reigned."<sup>16</sup> He dates the beginning of the 2300 "days" from "the time that the abomination of Nero stood in the holy city, till its destruction."<sup>17</sup>

## B. Origen (c. 185 - c. 254)

Origen was one of the most prolific writers of the early church, but unfortunately some of his writings are lost or only exist today in fragments. Although Origen did not produce a commentary on Daniel, we can find scattered comments that he made on Daniel in the literature that remains, particularly in volume 10 of his *Stromata* (which Jerome cites), *Tract. XXIV* from his commentary on Matthew chapter 24, from *De principiis*, from *Contra Celsum*, and from his exchange of letters with Julius Africanus.

According to H. Crouzel, Origen (after serving as a teacher in a school of grammar following the martyrdom of his father) began to write after the age of thirty, i.e., after AD 215.<sup>18</sup> He is famous both as a textual critic (for his *Hexapla*) as well as for his hermeneutical approach to Scripture of a "triple meaning."<sup>19</sup> For Origen, Daniel in the lion's den prefigured Christ's triumph (*Contra Celsum* 7, 57).

Origen apparently recognized that Daniel's seventy weeks' prophecy were fulfilled in Christ: "The weeks of years, also, which the prophet Daniel had predicted, extending to the leadership of Christ, have been fulfilled."<sup>20</sup> Although we do not know the details of his calculations (or if

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. This opinion of Clement is also preserved in *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel* (trans. Gleason L. Archer [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958], 105). Jerome (rebuking Clement's opinion) points out that the years involved would be far too many: "He [Clement] attempts to reckon in these seventy weeks the ages of the Persians, Macedonians, and Caesars, even though according to the most careful computation, the number of years from the first year of Cyrus, King of the Persians and Medes, when Darius also bore rule, up to the reign of Vespasian and the destruction of the Temple amounts to six hundred and thirty" (*Jerome's Comm.*, 105; actually, Jerome's figure of 630 is probably excessive, but the figure would be over 600 years).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Angelo Di Berardino, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, 2 vols., trans. Adrian Walford (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1992), s.v. "Origen," by H. Crouzel, 2:619.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *De principiis* IV, 2, 4. For Origen, Scripture had a triple meaning corresponding to the divisions of his trichotomic anthropology: the corporeal or literal meaning, the psychological or moral meaning and the spiritual or mystical meaning (Crouzel, 621).

<sup>20</sup> *De principiis*, IV.1.5, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson

he even attempted this), he apparently made the assumption that the seventy "weeks" began with Darius. Jerome (citing the 10<sup>th</sup> volume of the *Stromata*) preserved Origen's opinion on this:

We must quite carefully ascertain the amount of time between the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, and the advent of Christ, and discover how many years were involved, and what events are said to have occurred during them. Then we must see whether we can fit these data in with the time of the Lord's coming.<sup>21</sup>

Origen held to the view that Daniel prophesied of the Antichrist, who was the same individual as described in 2 Thess 2:

Paul, moreover, in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, shows in what manner there will one day be revealed "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." . . . Any one, moreover, who likes may find the prophecy in Daniel respecting antichrist.<sup>22</sup>

Origen held that the activity of this Antichrist was described in both chapters eight (see 8:23-25) and nine (9:27) of Daniel:

The prophecy also regarding Antichrist is stated in the book of Daniel, and is fitted to make an intelligent and candid reader admire the words as truly divine and prophetic; for in them are mentioned the things relating to the coming kingdom, beginning with the times of Daniel, and continuing to the destruction of the world. And any one who chooses may read it. Observe, however, whether the prophecy regarding Antichrist be not as follows: "And at the latter time of their kingdom, when their sins are coming to the full, there shall arise a king, bold in countenance, and understanding riddles. And his power shall be great, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and prosper, and practise; and shall destroy mighty men, and the holy people. And the yoke of his chain shall prosper: there is craft in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by craft shall destroy many; and he shall stand up for the destruction of many, and shall crush them as eggs in his hand." What is stated by Paul in the words quoted from him, where he says, "so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," is in Daniel referred to in the following fashion: "And on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations, and at the end of the time an end shall be put to the desolation." So many, out of a greater number of passages, have I thought it right to adduce, that the hearer may understand in some slight degree the meaning of holy Scripture, when it gives us information concerning the devil and Antichrist.<sup>23</sup>

---

(Edinburgh, 1867; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989), 353.

<sup>21</sup> Origen, *Stromata*, vol. 10, cited by Jerome in his commentary on Daniel (see *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason L. Archer, Jr. [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958], 105-06).

<sup>22</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Book II, chapter XLIX, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, 450-51.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Book VI, chapter XLVI, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, 594-95.

### III. THE EARLY CHURCH PRIOR TO THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (AD 200-600)<sup>24</sup>

#### A. Tertullian (c. 160/70 - c. 215/20)

Most of Tertullian's works were written during the years AD 196-212. Although his Greek works no longer remain, at least 31 Latin works do. Among these is *Contra Judaeos* (Against the Jews), and in chapter 8 of this work he gives an explanation of the Daniel 9 passage on the Seventy Weeks to argue (against the Jews) that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in His first advent. Much of this same material by Tertullian is quoted in Jerome's commentary on Daniel.

Strangely, Tertullian quotes the Daniel 9 passage, but in a way significantly different than the Hebrew text we have today (as well as any known Greek manuscripts). Instead of three periods for the 70 "weeks" ( $7 + 62 + 1$ ), he only has two: one of  $62 \frac{1}{2}$  and another of  $7 \frac{1}{2}$ . These are translated as "hebdomads," but from the context he clearly means *units of 7 years*. Tertullian attempts to show (in detail) how the first period of  $62 \frac{1}{2}$  hebdomads (i.e.,  $437 \frac{1}{2}$  years) was fulfilled from the time of Darius (when Daniel received the vision) until the birth of Christ. He lists all the rulers from Darius onward as well as the length of their rule, which he tabulates as being  $437 \frac{1}{2}$  years. Yet Tertullian is greatly in error about his historical facts. For instance, he assumes that the Darius mentioned in Daniel 9 is the same as the Darius under whom the Temple was rebuilt (though these are different men), he leaves out some rulers altogether (e.g., Xerxes), and he gives inaccurate figures for the length of reign of some of them. Thus, there are far more than  $437 \frac{1}{2}$  years from Darius until the birth of Christ. He does assume that the "anointing of the Holy of Holies" does refer to Christ Himself, and that with His first coming "vision and prophecy are sealed" (i.e., there is no longer "vision or prophet" to announce Him as to come).

For the final  $7 \frac{1}{2}$  hebdomads (i.e.,  $52 \frac{1}{2}$  years), Tertullian suggests that this refers to the time from the birth of Christ until the first year of Vespasian when Herod's Temple was destroyed (once again he provides a list of rulers and the length of each one's rule). Yet again, his data and calculations are in error, for  $52 \frac{1}{2}$  years prior to AD 70 gives us not the year of Christ's birth but something like the year AD 17. Furthermore, he omitted the reign of Claudius. Nevertheless, Tertullian sees the "ceasing of sacrifices" as having its fulfillment with the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. Tertullian's view is quite novel, but Jerome merely mentions it without giving any verdict about it.

#### B. Hippolytus (d. ca. 236)

Hippolytus served as a presbyter and teacher in the church at Rome. He was also a premillennialist, although he (like Julius Africanus) anticipated the millennial kingdom about the year AD 500.<sup>25</sup> He identified the beast of Rev 13 as arising from the fourth beast of Dan 7

<sup>24</sup> In addition to the fathers cited below, there are several minor figures to be considered. For Ephraem the Syrian (c. 306 - 373), see *Commentar, in Dan.*, in his *Opp. Gr. et Syr*, ed. Assemani, Rom., 1740 et seq., tom. II., p. 203 et seq. For Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 310 - 386), see *Catech.* xii. 19. For Sulpicius Severus (c. 362 - early 5<sup>th</sup> century), see *Chron.*, II. 21. For Quintus Julius Hilarianus, see *Chronologia s. libellus de muni duratione* (in Migne, t. 13, p. 1098). For Theodoret (c. 393 - c. 458), Bishop of Cyrrhus (Syria), see *Commentar. in visiones Danielis prophetae* (Ἰρόμνημα εἰς ὑράσεις τοῦ προφήτου Δανιήλ) in his *Opp.* ed. Schulze, Hal., 1768 et seq., t. II., p. II., p. 1063 et seq. For Basil of Seleucia (bishop of Seleucia in Asia Minor c. 448-458), see *Orat.*, 38 in t. 85 of of Migne's *Patrol.* For Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390 - c. 463), see *Chronicon*.

<sup>25</sup> This was based on the "6000 year theory," in which it was thought that there would be 6000 years of history prior to the Kingdom (the true Sabbath). Since Christ was believed to have been born in the year 5500

(i.e., the Roman Empire). The Antichrist would rule for 3 ½ years (his interpretation of "time, times and half a time")<sup>26</sup>, but the number 666 would not be understood until the future. He seems to have understood the great harlot and Babylon as Rome.

Hippolytus is significant as being the first we have record of to have written a commentary on the Book of Daniel, possibly dated ca. AD 230.<sup>27</sup> His views are also quoted in other works, including Jerome in his own commentary.

He understood the ten toes of the image (ch 2) to represent ten kings that came out of the final kingdom, and equivalent to the ten horns of chapter 7.<sup>28</sup> The four beasts of Dan 7 were understood to be Babylon, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans (vol. 5, 1.2). The three horns plucked up by the roots (Dan 7:8,20) represented Egypt, Libya, and the Ethiopians (1.2). The "little horn" was the Antichrist (1.3). Thus he expected the "ten horns" out of the Roman Empire and the Antichrist to come about at the end of the 6000 years (i.e., roughly AD 500).

Regarding the Seventy Weeks prophecy of Dan 9, he saw this as taking place in three periods (1.13-16). The first 7 "weeks" would be 49 years prior to Joshua the High Priest.<sup>29</sup> This would be followed by 62 "weeks" (434 years) from Joshua/Zerubbabel/Ezra until Jesus Christ. [This is a puzzling assertion, since Joshua and Ezra were separated by quite a few years]. This 62 weeks would then be followed by a "gap" of time before the final "week" (1.22). During this final week (a future period of 7 years in which Antichrist would come to power), Elijah and Enoch would appear as the two witnesses of Rev 11. The "anointing of the most holy" in Dan 9:24 supposedly referred to the anointing of Christ Himself in his first coming (rather than to the anointing of the *most holy place* of the Temple—see 1.17). The halting of sacrifice mentioned in Dan 9:27 is taken in a *spiritual sense* rather than in reference to literal sacrifices. "But when he comes [the Antichrist], the sacrifice and oblation will be removed, which now are offered to God in every place by the nations" (1.22).

The man dressed in linen of Dan 10 refers to Christ (1.23). At this point, Hippolytus indulges in quite fanciful allegorization. For example, the men on the two sides of the river (note 12:5) represent the "law and the prophets." He recognizes that "the king" of Dan 11:36 is no longer Antiochus, but a reference to the Antichrist (1.38-39).

### C. Julius Africanus (b. ca. 170; d. after 240)

Julius Africanus was originally a native of Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem). He was at Heraclas's school at Alexandria and knew Origen, but died in Palestine. He wrote a five volume *Chronographia* (Chronology) in which he attempted to synchronize sacred and profane history. He predicted that the world would last for 6000 years, and (significantly) he held that Christ had been born in the year 5,500. Thus, he was expecting the return of Christ about AD 500. In

---

from Adam, there remained therefore 500 more years until the end of the age, the appearance of Antichrist, and the establishment of the Kingdom. The idea of 5500 years until Christ was based on allegorization, this figure being the sum of the dimensions of the Ark (i.e., 5 1/2 cubits), with Christ being the "true Ark."

<sup>26</sup> See *Scholia on Daniel*, 7.25 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5.

<sup>27</sup> As suggested by Wilbur M. Smith in the "Introduction" to *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, trans. Gleason L. Archer, Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958), 5.

<sup>28</sup> Hippolytus, "The Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5, part 1.2.

<sup>29</sup> According to Hippolytus, Daniel prophesied in the 21st year of the captivity, and there were "7 weeks" (i.e., 49 years) remaining in the captivity. The 21 plus 49 added up to the 70 years of captivity.

volume five of this work, he comments about the Daniel 9 passage (though only fragments remain—some in Eusebius' *Demonstratio evangelica* [Book VIII, ch. ii.] and some also in Jerome's commentary on Daniel).

Julius held to the view that the entire 70 "weeks" would be fulfilled with the advent of Christ. The significant matter about his view, however, is that he rejected the decree of Cyrus as the *terminus a quo* in favor of the decree of Artaxerxes in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (since the city and its walls were never built in the era following Cyrus' decree). He stated:

It [the city] remained in this position, accordingly, until Nehemiah and the reign of Artaxerxes, and the 115<sup>th</sup> year of the sovereignty of the Persians. . . . And reckoning from that point, we make up seventy weeks to the time of Christ. For if we begin to reckon from any other point, and not from this, the periods will not correspond, and very many odd results will meet us. For if we begin the calculation of the seventy weeks from Cyrus and the first restoration, there will be upwards of one hundred years too many, and there will be a larger number if we begin from the day on which the angel gave the prophecy to Daniel, and a much larger number still if we begin from the commencement of the captivity.<sup>30</sup>

Although Julius bases his calculations on the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes, it is difficult for us to know what year he would have considered that to be based on our present calendar system. For us, the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes would be 444 BC.<sup>31</sup> He calls this the 115<sup>th</sup> year of the sovereignty of the Persians. The "115 years" may pertain to the time when Cyrus The Great began his reign over the Persians, for it was in 559 BC that Cyrus began his 31 year reign.<sup>32</sup> If so, then 115 years following 559 BC would be about the year 444 BC. Julius also refers to Artaxerxes's 20<sup>th</sup> year as the "4<sup>th</sup> year of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad." According to Finegan, this would mean that Nisan of that year would be Nisan, 444 BC.<sup>33</sup>

From this year (the same as that in Nehemiah 2 when Artaxerxes permitted the rebuilding), Julius calculates the 70 "weeks." Apparently, he sees the terminal point as being the time when Christ was baptized and entered into His public ministry, because he bases his calculations on Luke 3:1 which mentions the "fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." Thus, Julius would argue that there are 70 "weeks" of years from the decree of Artaxerxes (in his 20<sup>th</sup> year) until the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Julius Africanus, *The Extant Writings of Julius Africanus*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 6, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh, 1867; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989), 135.

<sup>31</sup> See my notes on Dan 9:20-27 discussing the dating of Nehemiah's decree.

<sup>32</sup> Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), 80. It is not altogether clear, however, that Julius would have thought in terms of 559 BC, for he makes the statement, "And from the capture of Jerusalem that makes 185 years" (i.e., 70 years more than the 115). Yet 70 years prior to 559 BC would be 629 BC for the capture of Jerusalem, a date which is obviously wrong. So we cannot be certain he would think of Artaxerxes' 20<sup>th</sup> year as being 444 BC.

<sup>33</sup> Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 1998), 92-98.

<sup>34</sup> In the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* edition (based on a fragment found in Eusebius), the date of Tiberius' 16<sup>th</sup> year is said to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 202<sup>nd</sup> Olympiad, but Jerome (in his quotation of Julius) gives it as Tiberius' 15<sup>th</sup> year (see *Jerome's Comm.*, 97). Jerome (95) claims to be quoting Julius Africanus "verbatim."



The following shows his method of calculation. In ancient history, dating was often done on the basis of an "Olympiad"—a four-year period between Olympic games. Julius states that the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes was the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Olympiad (= 115<sup>th</sup> year of the Persian empire). Then he states that the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 202<sup>nd</sup> Olympiad. This would be a difference of 475 years. However, he would argue that 490 years (70 "weeks") *according to Hebrew numeration* was equivalent to 475 years, since the Jews (he says) reckoned a year as 354 days rather than 365 1/4 days. The former represents twelve months according to the moon's course, while the latter is based on the solar year. This amounts to a difference of 11 1/4 days per year, but is eventually made up by the insertion of extra months at eight year intervals:

Hence the Greeks and the Jews insert three intercalary months every 8 years. For 8 times 11 1/4 days makes up 3 months.<sup>35</sup>

Thus over a 475 year period, there would be over 59 *eight-year periods* in which three months would be added, or close to fifteen years in all. Thus, 490 years by Hebrew numeration would be equivalent to nearly 475 solar years.

Julius Africanus is to be commended (in my opinion) for basing his calculations on Artaxerxes' 20<sup>th</sup> year. However, although he can show *a way* that 490 years (70 "weeks") can be calculated to Christ's lifetime, he has not build a convincing case that the 490 years should be calculated in this manner, and especially that all 70 "weeks" were meant to be exhausted during Christ's first advent. Notice that he makes no mention of the destruction of the city by the Romans or how this relates to the calculations—a matter which is mentioned *after* the 69<sup>th</sup> "week" but before the 70<sup>th</sup> (Dan 9:26). Furthermore, his system would yield a date in the spring of AD 30/31 (the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 202<sup>nd</sup> Olympiad) for the beginning of Christ's public ministry, which would imply in turn a rather late date for the crucifixion.

#### D. Porphyry (232 - c. 305)

Porphyry was a Neoplatonist writer who wrote 15 books attacking Christianity. From Jerome, we learn that he rejected the early date of Daniel in favor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC date. Consequently, Jerome rebutted Porphyry's arguments, as did Eusebius and others:

Against the prophet Daniel Porphyry wrote a twelfth volume, denying that that book was composed by him with whose name it is inscribed, etc. To him Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, has replied very skillfully in three volumes, that is, in volumes XVIII., XIX., and XX. Apollinarius also in one large volume, that is, in the twenty-sixth volume, and before these, in part, Methodius.<sup>36</sup>

#### E. Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265 - c. 339)

In the 15th book of his *Demonstratio evangelica* (in which he attempted to prove Christianity by the Old Testament), he expounded the meaning of the dream of Dan 2 and the vision of Dan 7, equating the two and explaining the meaning as the four kingdoms (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) to which the nation of the Jews was held in bondage.<sup>37</sup> Some have speculated that

<sup>35</sup> Julius Africanus, 135.

<sup>36</sup> Introduction to Eusebius's *Church History*, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series*; vol. 1 (Galaxie Software: Theological Journal Library, Version 3).

<sup>37</sup> Attested in *The Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus; Scholia on Daniel, 2.31*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*; vol. 5.

Eusebius may have even written a commentary on Daniel (note the quotation above under Porphyry).

**F. Apollinaris of Laodicea (b. ca. 310)**

Apollinaris became bishop of the Nicene church of Laodicea about 361, and wrote an apologetic work against Porphyry (see quotation above under Porphyry).

**G. Chrysostom (c. 344/354 - 407)**

See *Interpretatio in Danielelem*, in his *Opp.* vi. 228 et seq. In his *Homilies*, Chrysostom refers to Daniel many times, but this usually involves reference to Daniel's piety and faith (rather than prophetic matters). I will point out, however, that Chrysostom understood most of Mt 24 (including the reference to the "abomination of desolation") as referring to the events of AD 70, though the Second Coming is in view from 24:29 onward.

**H. Jerome (c. 345 - c. 419)**

Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* was dedicated to Pammachius and Marcella in the year 407. It would be difficult to summarize the entire commentary, but the reader is referred to Archer's translation for further insight.<sup>38</sup> Jerome pointed out that the churches universally read from the Greek translation of Theodotion rather than the Septuagint version (the latter being regarded as quite corrupted). Regarding chapter 7, Jerome understood the four beasts to represent Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. The "little horn" was not Antiochus, but the future Antichrist. Also, the expression "time, times and half a time" referred to his reign of 3 1/2 years.

**I. Polychronius (d. ca. 430)**

Bishop of Apamea in Syria and brother of Theodore of Mopsuestia. A prominent exegete of the Antiochene school who wrote a commentary on Daniel (as well as Ezekiel). *Commentarius in Danielelem*, in A. Mai, *Nova Collect*, I. B, p. 155.

**J. Augustine (354 - 430)**

Ep. 199. Augustine, who commended Jerome's commentary on Daniel, very clearly saw the "little horn" of Daniel 7 as the coming Antichrist, and his reign of terror as being 3 1/2 years. However, he was open to spiritualizing the number "ten" of the *ten horns*.

Daniel prophesies of the last judgment in such a way as to indicate that Antichrist shall first come, and to carry on his description to the eternal reign of the saints. For when in prophetic vision he had seen four beasts, signifying four kingdoms, and the fourth conquered by a certain king, who is recognized as Antichrist, and after this the eternal kingdom of the Son of man, that is to say, of Christ, he says, "My spirit was terrified, I Daniel in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me," etc. Some have interpreted these four kingdoms as signifying those of the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians, and Romans. They who desire to understand the fitness of this interpretation may read Jerome's book on Daniel, which is written with a sufficiency of care and erudition. But he who reads this passage, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of Antichrist shall fiercely, though for a short time, assail the Church before

---

<sup>38</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958); and Jay Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Hebrew Bible*, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series No. 7* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Assoc. of America, 1978).

the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign of the saints. For it is patent from the context that the time, times, and half a time, means a year, and two years, and half a year, that is to say, three years and a half. Sometimes in Scripture the same thing is indicated by months. For though the word times seems to be used here in the Latin indefinitely, that is only because the Latins have no dual, as the Greeks have, and as the Hebrews also are said to have. Times, therefore, is used for two times. As for the ten kings, whom, as it seems, Antichrist is to find in the person of ten individuals when he comes, I own I am afraid we may be deceived in this, and that he may come unexpectedly while there are not ten kings living in the Roman world. For what if this number ten signifies the whole number of kings who are to precede his coming, as totality is frequently symbolized by a thousand, or a hundred, or seven, or other numbers, which it is not necessary to recount?<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 2, Book 20, Ch. 23.