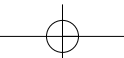
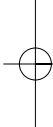
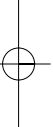




GOD'S PURPOSE FOR GREECE

Ivan Foster





God's Purpose for Greece

By Ivan Foster

'And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority' (Revelation 13:1-2).

The Book of Daniel was, like all Scripture, given for our instruction and edification. 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand' (Revelation 1:3).

'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope' (Romans 15:4).

The Author of Daniel 1 with its record of the stand taken by the young Hebrew captives against the

attempts of the Babylonian king to have them conform to the ways of their captors; and of chapter 3, with its wonderful account of the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to bow before the golden idol and their being cast into the fiery furnace, only to be miraculously preserved by the Lord; and chapter 5 with its rather chilling description of God's mysterious written warning to Belshazzar which appeared on the wall of his palace during a wicked banquet; and chapter 6, where we have Daniel's encounter with the lions in their den, is also the Author of chapters 7-8, 10-12 with their end-time prophecies.

All these chapters, not just 1, 3, 5 and 6 are meant for our 'blessing', 'learning, patience and comfort.'

Let us never forget this and dismiss the study of prophecy as some seem ready to do.

What does the near future hold for Greece, given its ongoing financial difficulties?

I do not know, but this I do know from God's Word that Greece will play a major part in the kingdom of Antichrist and the events which will lead up to the return of the Lord Jesus in power and great glory.

History teaches us that despots have arisen to prominence and power out of national chaos and confusion.

We need think only of Napoleon, of Stalin and of Hitler as prime examples of this in recent times.

I believe it very likely that just such a situation will take place within the territory of Greece in the future when a leader will arise to whom the people will give support and permit him to exercise the powers of a dictator over them because the chaos they are in appears to justify such leadership.

He will then go on to rise as the Antichrist.

I. Ancient Greece, Above All Empires, Left Its Mark Upon the Gentile World

In the New Testament, the world is divided between the Jew and the Gentile. However, oftentimes the word 'Greek' takes the place of the word 'Gentile.' Consider these verses. 'Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts 20:21). 'For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews

a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God' (1 Corinthians 1:22-24).

This use of the term 'Greek' as being synonymous with 'Gentile' indicates just how influential the Greek culture was in the Gentile world within the Roman Empire at the time of the apostles.

It will be so again as the world, and this part of it in particular, sinks down into the moral decadence that marked ancient Greece.

II. Greece Features in the Prophecies of the Last Days

Daniel 7 and 8 make that clear. Here are prophecies related to Medo-Persia (the Ram) and Greece (the He Goat). 'And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and

they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, 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. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things' (Daniel 7:3-8).

Consider also Daniel 8:21-25. 'And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and

practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.'

These words were written some 15 years before the setting up of the Medo-Persian Empire and over 200 years before the rise of the Grecian Empire, yet we have a most accurate prediction of the overthrowing of the Medo-Persian Empire by Alexander the Great and his death at 32 years of age in 323 BC and the breakup of his empire into the four kingdoms of Egypt, Asia, Macedonia, and Syria, the first kings of which were all of the Grecian or Macedonian nation.

1. The time indicated by the prophecies of Daniel.

Daniel enquired about what he had seen in the vision and let us ever follow his example and seek the Lord for an explanation of prophecy. He is only too willing to teach us about His Word from His Word.

These prophetic words touch upon events back in the 3rd century BC but they also refer to the future. Note the words in Daniel 8:23-25. 'And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the

full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.'

These verses point to a time yet future. This is clear from what is stated in Daniel 8:17, 19 and 23. 'So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for **at the time of the end shall be the vision...** And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be... And **in the latter time of their kingdom**, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.'

The time 'when the transgressors are come to the full' is identified by what follows in verse 25. 'He shall

also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.' This obviously refers to the antichrist's defiance of the Saviour and his resultant judgment when he is destroyed by the Saviour when He returns in glory as is stated by Paul. 'And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders' (2 Thessalonians 2:8-9).

Please note also what the Lord says in Daniel 8:23. 'And in the latter time of their kingdom.' The four sections of Alexander's kingdom will still be evident at the end of this age. Their territories will be part of the kingdom of Antichrist at the end of this age.

Just let me underscore this fact further by pointing out what is stated in Daniel 7:19-22. 'Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very

great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.'

The little horn, speaking great things is the antichrist. He arises from the midst of the ten horns which is the ten-fold division of the ancient Roman empire in its latter-day manifestation. But we are further informed in Daniel 8:23, which I have already quoted, that the antichrist will arise out of that territory within the borders of the old Grecian Empire.

So Greece is linked to the end-times and the return of Christ.

2. We are told that the chief feature of the Antichrist is that of a leopard.

In Daniel 7:6, Alexander's kingdom is depicted under the likeness of a 'leopard.' 'After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.' Revelation 13:2 points us forward to the manifestation of 'The Beast,' the

antichrist. 'And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.' Here is reference to all the creatures that God employed when depicting the character of the great empires in Daniel 7:4-8. However, the foremost feature of the 'Wicked One' seen by John is that of a leopard, then it is the bear and then the lion that are further employed to describe to us the full terrible character of the antichrist.

So then, here is a further indication of the Grecian element of the latter-day kingdom of rebellion and wickedness.

3. The 'little horn,' the antichrist, will arise from amongst the four-fold division of the old Grecian Empire which will lie within the territory of the 10 kingdoms of the old Roman empire.

Daniel 7:7-8 and 8:8-9. But 8:9 indicates a further piece of geographical information which serves to pinpoint the region with which the antichrist will particularly be associated. Verse 9 reads: 'And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east,

and toward the pleasant land.’ That area must lie, according to these geographical pointers, west of ‘the pleasant land’ or Israel and of course that fits exactly the location of Greece in relation to Israel.

Perhaps we might add that the use of the adjective ‘little’ suggests that at the first the person referred to will be politically insignificant but he will of course rise to greatness later.

4. This man, characterised by a ‘leopard’ is also described as having ‘eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.’

‘And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows’ (Daniel 7:20). This person will be marked, I believe, by the attractiveness and beauty and stealth of the leopard as well as possessing great intelligence and boldly speaking ‘great things’ against the Almighty. This blasphemous daring is referred to also in Daniel 8:23-25. ‘And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not

by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.'

His blasphemy, like that of Goliath, will be judged by the Lord.

III. Given the Place That Greece Will Have in the Kingdom of Antichrist, We Should Watch It Closely

Greece has come to the fore in a manner not seen in modern times. The chaos that is there at present and which I believe will continue despite their parliament's agreement to accept cutbacks, may yet give rise to the emergence of a dictator.

I do not say that this is about to happen in the immediate future for many other things must yet take place.

1. The final development of the 10-kingdom, latter-day Roman Empire has yet to take place.

I refer to the final development of the image of world power as seen by Daniel. The 10-toed manifestation of the image is what is in existence when Christ comes to destroy that power and set up His Kingdom. 'Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out 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: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth ... And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven 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 stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the

great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure' (Daniel 2:42-45, 42-45).

2. Germany was never part of the Roman empire and I believe that its alliance with the countries which were part of the Roman empire will be dissolved.

Such developments do not of necessity take a long time. Christ tells us that events in the final days of this age will happen very quickly (Revelation 1:1). The phrase, 'shortly come to pass,' means it 'takes place in a short period of time.'

3. Furthermore, the likes of Turkey, Israel, Iraq and Syria, were all part of the Roman Empire and must therefore be allied in some form of union with the European nations that were also part of ancient Rome.

All these things can happen very quickly as we saw in the 1990s when the Russian Empire disintegrated and Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and many other nations established their independence in a very short time period. More recently, in the upheavals in the Arab world, we have seen how quickly change can come about.

IV. These Coming Events Will Serve Notice Upon the World That What the Bible Says is True

1. God's prophesied purpose amongst the nations shall come to pass.

‘The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand’ (Isaiah 14:24).

‘Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’ (Isaiah 46:10). ‘And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant’ (Jeremiah 51:29).

2. We often use the prophecies of Christ's first coming to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the Word of God.

That will happen again, only it will be the prophecies regarding the Saviour's second coming that will be used to show the truthfulness of Holy Scripture. ‘Verily I say unto you, This generation (*Greek 'genea'*

- *nation*) shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away' (Matthew 24:34-35).

3. The Bible's account of man's sin, its revelation of God's mercy, its pronouncement of God's judgment are also all true.

Man's sin in the Garden, God's redemption at Calvary, the final judgment at the Great White Throne, these are truths of immediate importance to you if you are not saved. Please recognise now the truth of what the Bible has to say on these matters. Judgment is coming and only those who have heeded the gospel message and sought refuge in the wounds of Christ will escape the dreadful retribution that awaits sinners.

Dear reader, if you are not saved please heed the words found near the close of the Bible. 'Write: for these words are true and faithful' (Revelation 21:5). Believe them and rejoice rather than discovering them to be true to your eternal grief and sorrow.

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The Middle East and North Africa have been very much in the news. God has a lot to say about the nations in this area, and this series of messages was arranged for 2012 so that particular thought should be given to what the Bible tells us of their future. The reason why the Lord has told us so much is because He would have us to understand His purpose for the earth.



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