

records show that there was an interval of twenty years (or seven years, at the very least) between the return from Jerusalem mentioned in verse 36 and the assassination described in verse 37³

Unspecified intervals also frequently occur in books of prophecy. This fact, which might seem quite obvious, is often overlooked by interpreters, who sometimes insist, when a prophet describes two events in succession, that the second must immediately follow the first, without an interval.

Such an interval occurs in chapter 2, in Daniel's first extensive prophecy. In the course of his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream about an image of a man, composed of sections made of different metals, Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "You are that head of gold. After you, another kingdom will rise" (Dan. 2:38d-39a).

From this statement one might conclude that the second kingdom would rise immediately after Nebuchadnezzar's death. Actually, however, at least four kings reigned over the Babylonian empire during the 23 years between Nebuchadnezzar's death and the Persian conquest.

An equally clear illustration is found at the beginning of chapter 11. Verse 2, which tells how the Persians would attempt to conquer Greece, is immediately followed by verse 3 which describes Alexander the Great, who would conquer the Persian empire. There is an unspecified interval of more than a century between these two verses.

In Daniel 11:21-35 the prophet describes the reign of Antiochus (IV) Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), who persecuted the Jewish religion. Then he goes on to tell about a persecutor whose actions differ in many ways from what is known historically about Antiochus and this is immediately followed in chapter 12 by an account of the final resurrection at the end of the present age. Anyone who believes that the book of Daniel contains a revelation from God about events that would occur after Daniel's time must realize that there is an important gap somewhere in this account. Even if all of chapter 11 were taken as a description of Antiochus Epiphanes, as is done by those