

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Makeup of the Book

1. *Two Languages*: Written in **Aramaic (2-7)** & **Hebrew (1, 8-12)**; Aramaic was reserved for the parts of the book that had universal appeal or special relevance to the Gentile nations, and Hebrew was employed for those portions that most concerned the Jews (Miller, pg. 48).
2. *Two Main Sections*: Relational/Story Section (1-6) & a Prophetic Section (7-12).
3. *Daniel's Double Chiasm (Aramaic & Hebrew)*: (from Holbrook, Frank. Ed. 1986. "The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy." Daniel and Revelation Committee Series. Vol. 3. Review and Herald Publishing Association; Aramaic outline combined with Goldingay's (Goldingay, 157-158).

Daniel 1 **Historical Prologue**

Daniel 2 **A. Kingdom Prophecies: 4 empires and their end**

Daniel 3 **B. Trials of God's People: Faithfulness & a miraculous rescue (the 3 friends)**

Daniel 4 **C. King's Prophecy: Judgment presaged & experienced (Nebuchadnezzar)**

Daniel 5 **C'. King's Prophecy: Judgment presaged & experienced (Belshazzar)**

Daniel 6 **B'. Trials of God's People: Faithfulness & a miraculous rescue (Daniel)**

Daniel 7 **A'. Kingdom Prophecies: 4 empires and their end**

Daniel 8 **A. Kingdom Prophecies: Sacrificial animals**

Daniel 9 **B. Trials of God's People: prayer of forgiveness**

C. King's Prophecy: Decree to rebuild Jerusalem (9:25)

D. Messiah Dies Alone (9:26)

C'. King's Prophecy: Decree to destroy Jerusalem (9:27)

Daniel 10 **B'. Trials of God's People: Mourning for the temple**

Daniel 11 **A'. Kingdom Prophecies: King of north/king of south (continued in first part of ch. 12)**

Daniel 12 **Prophetic Epilogue**

B. Unique Aspects

1. *Hebrew*: Text goes back to Hebrew
2. *Last of Symbolic Visions*: Chap. 8 is the last of the book's symbolic visions; the succeeding revelations are more verbal than visual and still cryptic but not symbolic (Goldingay, 208).

C. Setting the Stage

1. Less than half of the chapters in Daniel had transpired (Daniel 5 & 6 had not yet happened)
2. Daniel was in his 70's
3. The third year of Belshazzar's reign (still in Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar's death)

D. Prophetic Factors

1. *Double Reference/ Fulfillments (Type)*: In the case of a type, or a typical prediction, the seer's eyes are fixed on the closer of the two events exclusively. In other words, details of the prophecy are completely satisfied by the earlier event or person. Yet scripture states (either in the original passage or elsewhere) that there is also a subsequent event or person foreshadowed by the prediction (McCallum).
2. *Gaps "Telescoping"*: When the prophet predicts one event or person, followed without notice by a reference to a later event or person, it constitutes a "prophetic gap". It should be noticed in this case, that the predictive material referring to the later event will not fit the earlier event. Neither will the description of the earlier event fit the later event. There are very few pure gap prophecies (McCallum).
 - a. Isaiah 11:1-5; 61:2-3 (Luke 4:16-30); Daniel 7
3. *Non-linear Prophecies*: future prophecies are intermixed throughout the Scriptures
 - a. Chiastic Structures: they are largely foreign to a western understanding
4. Takes a diligent searching out
 - a. Observing the festivals provides a consistent, annual time to look at these prophecies: three times a year [Fall festivals, Hanukkah, Purim]

5. Future Things: We're searching out future things. In light of this, it is important to maintain a humility and teachability as we prayerfully study these things.
6. It's God's Idea: God put these things in the Scripture because presumably He felt like they would be important for us to know.

II. DANIEL'S VISION

- A. Context of the Vision:** The third year of Belshazzar was about 551 B.C., two years after the vision in chapter 7 and about 12 years before the events of chapter 5. Daniel was then living within the kingdom of Neo-Babylonia, the first beast of chapter 7. Apparently this was not a dream combined with a vision (7:1), but just a vision. Probably it came to Daniel during the daytime. The vision that appeared to Daniel previously refers to the one in chapter 7 (Constable, 104).
1. Like the previous vision (chap. 7), this revelation came well before the events of chap. 5. It is possible that Belshazzar may have heard of these prophecies that intimated his downfall to the Persians, and this may be one reason for his blasphemous attack on Yahweh at the drunken banquet (Miller, 220).
- B. The Vision Given in Babylon:** Evidently Daniel was in Babylon when he had this vision, but what he saw, including himself, was in "Susa" (Shushan, AV; cf. Ezek. 8:3; 40:1).³⁶⁴ Some commentators, however, believe that he was physically present in Susa. Daniel probably knew where he was in his vision because he had visited Susa... The site of Susa is in modern Iran, whereas the site of Babylon is in modern Iraq (Constable, 105).
- C. Susa (in present day Western Iran):** "Elam" was the name of the province where Susa stood when Daniel wrote this book, not necessarily when he had this vision. When Medo-Persia overthrew Neo-Babylonia, Susa became the capital of the Persian Empire. Eighty years after Daniel had this vision, Susa became Esther's home. One hundred seven years later, it was the city from which Nehemiah departed to return to Palestine (Esth. 1:2; Neh. 1:1). The "citadel" was the palace, that housed the royal residence, and it had strong fortifications.
1. Susa (Heb. *šušn*, called Susa by the Greeks) was located about 220 miles east of Babylon and 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. At the time of Daniel's vision it was the capital of Elam⁹ and later became one of the Medo-Persian royal cities (cf. Neh 1:1 and 2:1; Esth 1:2). Susa was used as a winter residence by the Persian kings and was made the administrative capital of the empire by Darius I in 521 B.C (Miller, 221).
- D. Interesting Aspects of the Vision**
1. Two Angels Talking: Angels are interested in discovering what takes place (1 Peter 1:10-12)
 2. Daniel Was Seeking the Meaning
 3. A Unique Man Appears and instructs the angel Gabriel to communicate to Daniel the meaning of the vision
 4. Further Interpretation: Gabriel further interprets the vision
 5. Daniel's Body Affected by the Revelation
 - a. Daniel was sleeping & awakened by Gabriel
 - b. Daniel was weak and sick; after recovering, arose and worked
 6. Amazed & Perplexed: Ultimately Daniel was amazed at the vision but no one understood it

III. TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION

- A. The Ram:** Medo-Persia - The "ram" (male sheep) that Daniel saw standing before the canal represented Medo-Persia (v. 20). It corresponds to the lopsided bear in the chapter 7 vision (7:5). The two horns, representing power, symbolized Media and Persia, the two kingdoms that formed an alliance to create Medo-Persia (Constable, 105)
1. Empire Expansion: Historically, the Medo-Persian Empire pushed its borders primarily in three directions. It went westward (into Lydia, Ionia, Thrace, and Macedonia), northward (toward the Caspian Mountains, the Oxus Valley, and Scythia), and southward (toward Babylonia, Palestine, and Egypt). Compare the three ribs in the mouth of the bear (7:5). These advances happened mainly under the leadership of Cyrus and Cambyses.³⁷⁰ Driver, p. 113. (Constable, 106)

- B. The Goat:** Greece - The text also identifies the male goat—goats are relatives of sheep—in this vision as representing Greece (v. 21). History has confirmed the identification. Alexander the Great is clearly the conspicuous horn. Normally goats have two horns, so this goat was unusual. Under Alexander, the Greek armies advanced quickly from the west against Persia. (Constable, 106)
1. Rapid Conquest: "Alexander's conquest of the entire Near and Middle East within three years stands unique in military history and is appropriately portrayed by the lightning speed of this one-horned goat. Despite the immense numerical superiority of the Persian imperial forces and their possession of military equipment like war elephants, the tactical genius of young Alexander, with his disciplined Macedonian phalanx, proved decisive."^{372 372} Archer, "Daniel," p. 97. (Constable, 106)
 1. Large Horn Broken: Alexander (Daniel 11:3-4 clearly refers to Alexander) Expositors, both liberal and conservative, have interpreted this verse as representing the untimely death of Alexander and the division of his empire into four major sections. Alexander, who had conquered more of the world than any previous ruler, was not able to conquer himself. Partly due to a strenuous exertion, his dissipated life, and a raging fever, Alexander died in a drunken debauch at Babylon, not yet thirty-three years of age. His death left a great conquest without an effective single leader, and it took about twenty years for the empire to be successfully divided."³⁷⁶ Walvoord, *Daniel . . .*, p. 184. (Constable, 107)
 2. Four New Horns: the most probable identifications of the four horns are Lysimachus, Cassander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy (cf. 11:4).³⁷⁸ Lysimachus ruled the northern part of Alexander's empire, Cassander the western part, Seleucus the eastern part, and Ptolemy the southern part. (Constable, 107)
- C. The Little Horn:** Antiochus (he is further described in 11:21-35) with a further fulfillment with the coming Anti-Christ
1. Chapter 7 & 8 Little Horn Differences: The little horn of chap. 7 symbolizes a ruler who will come from the fourth beast, Rome, and will be living in the last days when the “son of man” appears. On the other hand, the horn in this passage comes from the Greek Empire and proceeds from one of four horns, not ten horns as in chap. 7. It is true that the individual symbolized by the horn in chap. 8 has a character similar to that of the eschatological Antichrist. This is because he, like the Antichrist, is satanically inspired, and many of his qualities are characteristic of dictators generally (Miller, 238).
 - a. The emphasis in this chapter is on the little horn, as the emphasis in chapter 7 was on the little horn, though two different individuals are in view. The little horn in chapter 7 is Antichrist, and the little horn in chapter 8 is Antiochus in the short range and Antichrist in the long range. Chapter 8 focuses on the Jews as the target of Antiochus' antagonism in the short range. Chapter 7 focuses on believers generally as the target of Antichrist's opposition. However, there is some hint in both chapters that in the long range the Jews will be the objects of persecution. (Constable, 116).
 2. Why does the vision have to be so negative?
 - a. Free-Will Lovers: God has always desired (and will ultimately have [Hosea 2:16, Revelation 22:17]) a “spousal” partnership with humans who choose Him of their own free-will. He provided the opportunity for forgiveness through Yeshua’s sacrifice that is the only entry point (John 14:6) providing a relational connection between a holy God and a sinful people. Israel was the people who this Promised Seed was foretold to come through. The beginning place of response to God’s invitation is for a person to realize their need before Him.
 - b. The Storms of Difficulty: The free-will opportunity God provides at its most basic level brings about the evil and difficulty in the world. For people to have the opportunity to love God, means they must also have the subsequent opportunity not to love and serve Him—with real consequences for our choices. Otherwise, we are all robots. The resultant storm proceeds from God’s gift of free will; it is the collision of high and low pressure systems. The high pressure of the redeemed who love God and want to walk in His ways colliding with the low pressure system of those who hate God, His people, and who detest His ways. The clash of these two groups of people is not neutral or passive and always produces a storm. God’s intention is that this storm wakes up the people and shakes them off the fence and into one of two clear camps—either to love and serve Him or to hate Him with its resultant negative actions.

c. *The Difficulty and Subsequent Breakthrough is Producing Greater and Deeper Love*

3. Characteristics of the Little Horn

- a. Satanically empowered
- b. Shall prosper and thrive
- c. Shall destroy the holy people
- d. Deceit will prosper under him
- e. Shall exalt himself
- f. Will destroy many
- g. Will rise against the Prince of princes
- h. Broken without human means

D. The Abomination that Causes Desolation (taken from Mike Bickle's teaching notes)

1. Partial fulfillment (in Daniel 8:13; 11:31)
2. Yeshua called His people "to see" the abomination of desolation, and then pointed us to the book of Daniel to grasp the main Old Testament idea behind it (Mt. 24:15). In the New Testament, our understanding is greatly expanded by what John (Rev. 13) and Paul taught (2 Thes. 2).
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...²¹then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been..." (Mt. 24:15-21)
3. Yeshua made it clear that Daniel's "abomination of desolation" is the central event that helps us to understand His view of the end times. Yeshua only identified this one specific political event, which will let His people know that they are in the generation of His return and that the Great Tribulation has started. There are many implications associated with this key event.
4. In order for the Antichrist to put an image of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, Israel must be a nation, with Jerusalem under its jurisdiction, and the temple must be built on its original site (Solomon's temple), functioning with sacrifices according to the law of Moses.
 - a. One major obstacle to the temple being rebuilt is that Al-Aqsa Mosque (Islam's third most holy site) and the Dome of the Rock stand on the Temple Mount (original site of Solomon's temple). Someone must bring peace to the Middle East before this can happen.
 - b. The abomination of desolation is the single key event that Yeshua highlighted to help us understand many other events that will be connected to this terrible abomination.
5. The abomination of desolation is referred to eight times in the Scripture. Daniel used a form of this phrase four times (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), two passages quote Yeshua's use of the phrase (Mt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14), and it is described by Paul (2 Thes. 2:3-4) and John (Rev. 13:12-18).

E. Time of the End (:17)

1. Described as such 3 times (8:17, 19, 26)
2. Some commentators believe it can be interpreted as not the eschatological end but the end of a prophetic horizon of a future fulfillment. This would allow for Antiochus to fulfil this "time of the end."
3. Other believe it refers to the Eschatological End: Lahaye and Hindson speak of its ultimate end-time meaning: The term "time of the end" (Hebrew, èt-qetz) in Daniel (8:17, 19; 11:35; 12:4, 6, 9, 13), as in the rest of the Old Testament, is distinct from the term "latter days" (Hebrew, acharit hayamim) (2:28; 10:14). Both are eschatological expressions, but only èt-qetz refers exclusively to the final eschatological period or event ... The focus on the "end-time" and the "final period of the indignation" reveals that the events pertaining to Antiochus' persecution of the Jewish people and desecration of the Temple—and therefore against God, "the Prince of prince"—would have their ultimate fulfillment with the antitype, the Antichrist during the Tribulation... Antichrist did many of the things the future Antichrist would do, and in this way established a prophetic pattern for what is to come (as found in Richardson, 110).
 - a. Double fulfillment: both Antiochus and a coming AntiChrist - The difference between the *double fulfillment* view and the *type and antitype* view is semantic. Both of these views see some fulfillment in Antiochus and some in the Antichrist. The conclusion that the prophecy relates to both times rests on what follows in verses 23-25 and on other uses of the phrase "the end" in Daniel (9:26; 11:6, 27, 35, 40, 45; 12:4, 6, 9, 13). Other examples of this double, or typological fulfillment, are Jesus

fulfilling *what was prophesied* of Him—fulfilled to some degree earlier by Moses, the Israelites, and David. (Constable, 114).

F. How Long: 2300 Evenings & Mornings (2 Options)

1. 1150 Days: Most scholars believe that 2,300 evenings and mornings involve only a total of 1,150 days, since the 1,150 evening and 1,150 morning sacrifices (which would not be offered) equal a total of 2,300.³³ This method of calculation results in a period that was a little more than three years. In December 167 Antiochus set up an altar (and possibly a statue) to Zeus in the temple (1 Macc 1:54), and Judas Maccabeus rededicated the temple on December 14, 164 B.C. (1 Macc 4:52). According to the three-year view, the beginning date would be sometime near the setting up of this altar to Zeus, and the termination date would be the rededication of the temple; 1,150 days before December 14, 164 B.C. That would fall in September/October (Tishri) 167 B.C., whereas the altar to Zeus was set up one month and fifteen days later in December 167. Either the date is to be taken as a close approximation or, as Archer suggests, the daily sacrifice may have been abolished even before the altar was erected,³⁴ a suggestion that is plausible (Miller, 228-229).
2. 2300 Days: The case for the 2,300-day view seems conclusive, indicating that the period in view covered six years and almost four months. December 164 (the reconsecration of the sanctuary) is the termination date given in the text, thus the 2,300 days began in the fall of 170 B.C. Something significant must have occurred at that time that marked the beginning of the persecution, and such an event did take place. In 170 B.C. Onias III (a former high priest) was murdered at the urging of the wicked high priest Menelaus, whom Antiochus had appointed to that position for a bribe. From this point trouble between Antiochus's administration and the Jews began to brew (cf. 2 Macc 4:7–50). In 169 B.C. Antiochus looted the temple and murdered some of the Jewish people (cf. 1 Macc 1:20–28). The altar to Zeus was not set up until 167 B.C., but the persecution had been going on long before that event.⁴⁰ According to the 2,300-day view, therefore, the whole persecution period (the time that the saints “will be trampled underfoot”) was involved, not just the span from the cessation of the sacrifice and the desecration of the sanctuary until the rededication of the temple.⁴¹ (Miller, 229-230).

IV. ANOTHER INTERPRETATION

A. Reasons Some Believe a Different Interpretation Best Fits the Passage

1. Sealing of the Book: At this point, you may be wondering how we could have missed all this until now. How could we as the church miss this new interpretation, and only now wake up to see what is truly happening both in Scripture and in the world? The only answer I keep coming back to is that Daniel was a sealed book—sealed, that is, until the end times (Davidson, 10).
 - a. Twice in the book of Daniel (Dan. 8: 26 and 12:4), Daniel was told to seal or shut up the words of visions and messages he had received from God (Davidson, 11).
 - b. even the smartest and most saintly of men cannot properly read a passage if God has said it is to be sealed, until it is to be opened (Davidson, 15).
2. Literal “Time of the End” Interpretation: Daniel 8:17, 19 says that this relates to the time of the end
3. Close Interpretation (but not entirely accurate): I believe popular theology has assigned Daniel 8 to ancient history for two reasons. The first is because ancient history actually followed the description in the vision fairly well— not exactly but closely enough (Davidson, 125).
 - a. One example is Alexander’s fast conquest (twelve years was fast by ancient standards) being compared to the goat’s hooves not touching the ground. A better fulfillment might be airlifted troops or a modern air force attacking the ram because the goat is airborne.
 - b. Another example of an ancient fulfillment being close but not quite good enough is that Alexander’s empire originally broke into several dozen pieces, but the strongest generals consolidated their gains. There were five kingdoms actually, and then four, and finally two. It could be argued that there were five final kingdoms and not four. A better fulfillment would be for the empire to break up into exactly four pieces (Davidson, 125).
 - c. Antiochus didn’t expand mightily to the east—Antiochus’ capital was in Turkey

4. There were other references in Daniel 11 that referred to Alexander and Antiochus

B. The Ram: Iran - Daniel 8:20 says, “The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.” The language used sounds like an ancient description. It uses “kings” instead of rulers, and “Media and Persia” instead of Iran. Remember though, this prophecy was given in ancient times and an appropriate frame of reference was needed. In the time of Daniel, Iran was the land of the Medes and Persians. So the ram is confirmed as Iran (Davidson, 126).

1. *Two Horns:* this suggests there will be two leaders at the same time leading Iran, sharing power, each in their respective positions of power. Davidson, Mark. Daniel Revisited: Discovering the Four Mideast Signs Leading to the Antichrist (p. 127). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.
 - a. *The Supreme Leader & the Revolutionary Guard:* Astonishingly, this describes the situation perfectly between the supreme leader and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). I believe the supreme leader of Iran is the first horn that was initially longer— the horn that in the end will be exceeded in length by the second horn. The IRGC is the power behind the second horn, the horn that grows up and becomes longer in the end. We do not yet know who the man will be who is the second horn, but his power will come directly from the IRGC. He may be a representative of the IRGC or an IRGC commander (Davidson, 177).
2. *Charging from Susa:* Daniel 8:2–3 says that before the ram’s charge, the ram was standing near the citadel of Susa. The ruins of Susa can still be found today and are just 150 miles or so east of Baghdad. This verse suggests that Iranian forces will begin their charge out from Susa. Now Susa may just be a point of reference in the vision, and they may or may not do so. However, the geographic area would be a good staging area just inside the Iranian border. The border between Iran and Iraq is mountainous and not very traversable. But Susa is west of these mountains and on the plains, still within Iranian territory. Anyway, the verse says that Iranian military forces are to charge and conquer to the north of Susa, to the west of Susa and to the south of Susa (Davidson, 192).
3. *Shia vs. Sunni:* As a Shia nation, Iran would have as its objective the subjugation of the Middle East to Shia Islamic rule, and to export its Islamic Revolution. It would also have in mind as part of this to take the two holiest cities in Islam— Mecca and Medina. In order to best export the Revolution and cause chaos in the world it would also have the strategic objective of capturing all the Gulf oil fields (Davidson, 193).

C. The Goat with One Horn: Turkey? The Aramaic word for “Greece” is Yavan. Yavan first appears in the Bible in Genesis 10 as the name of a son of Japheth, a son of Noah. It is generally agreed that the descendents of Yavan are the people around the Greek Peninsula, the southern Balkan Peninsula, Crete, and the west coast of Turkey (Davidson, 127).

1. *Characteristics:* There are several things to note in this text. First, the goat has a prominent horn. Second, the goat comes from the west. Third, as the text moves on to talk about the charge of the goat, we are told that the goat crosses the whole earth without touching the ground. Fourth, the goat attacks in a great rage. Fifth, the goat tramples the ram and shatters the two horns of the ram. Sixth, the goat becomes great. And seventh and last, the large horn breaks off and four horns replace it (Davidson, 212).
2. Both the Confederacy’s purpose and motivation to conquer would be quite different from that of Iran’s. Iran would have started a war to bring chaos to the region in hopes of allowing the emergence of the Mahdi. Many of the nations of the Middle East— Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Azerbaijan, and others— would have recently been victim to a Shia-backed push to start Islamic-backed revolutions in each of these countries. Most Muslims are Sunni, not Shia. In contrast, the purpose of the Confederacy... would be to push back the advance of Shia Muslim conquests by retaking territory, and punishing the leaders of Iran, who started the whole mess (Davidson, 222-223).

D. Four Horns: Possibly - New Turkey, New Iran, New Egypt, and New Arabia

1. The nations represented by the four horns of the goat in Daniel 8 are included as part of the ten horns of the fourth beast in Daniel 7. Because four of the nations will be new and are part of the ten nations of Islam, some of the ten nations do not exist today (Davidson, 242).
2. The Little Horn would then arise and replace one of these four leaders

E. Other Aspects

1. More scholarship will look at this and expose any flaws in this theory
2. Timing isn't imminent

V. PREPARING OURSELVES FOR THE FUTURE

A. Watch & Pray (corporately and individually)

1. Prayerfully Read the Word
2. Watch the Middle East
3. Prophetic Markers
 - a. The Gospel to every people group (Matthew 24:14)
 - b. The temple must be rebuilt
 - c. Jewish Leaders must call for Yeshua as the Messiah to return "Baruch Haba bashem Adonai"

B. Cultivate our Personal Relationship with God

1. Be Humble: no one person will have all the answers
2. Don't let the study of "end-time eschatology" be an end in itself

C. Stay in Biblical Community

[N]ot forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Hebrews 10:25

D. Have His Heart's Desire as our desire:

1. Gospel to the nations/neighbors
2. Compassion on/justice for the widow/orphan/foreigner/the poor (those in need)
3. Love for Israel

E. Know (and Study) the Story

1. Some parts are scary but important to know.
2. God is sovereign and His dealings are not haphazard and random.

F. Closing Questions:

1. What Will You Take With You? What is the most relevant concept from today's teaching for you personally?
2. Who Can You Share With? As we share with others, that which we are learning grows in our lives. As we make our decisions accountable to someone else, we are more likely to walk in the way that we desire.
3. How Will You Walk Differently? What is one practical thing that you will do this week in light of today's teaching?

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