

New Perspectives on Daniel

Part I: Daniel 11:36-12:13

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Daniel's final vision presented in Daniel 10-12² is a most remarkable prophecy (some would say quasi-prophecy). It is not written in symbolic vision language like Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 or in the apocalyptic language of Daniel 7 and 8. It is written like a historical narrative. It is all the more remarkable in that from Daniel 11:2-35 it accurately portrays events in the period of the Persian Empire and with considerable detail the rise and fall of various Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings up until Antiochus IV whose reign came to an end in 163 BC. The vision was received in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia which would probably have been 535 BC (some would say 536 BC). So accurate is the narrative that many scholars believe that the book of Daniel must have been written around 164 BC by Jewish authors familiar with the history of the time and desiring to encourage their people who were going through a time of great persecution under Antiochus IV. Partly for reasons that are contained in the text which follows, this author believes that Daniel must have written in the sixth century BC.

As remarkable as these verses are, just as remarkable is the almost total mystery that surrounds the remaining verses of this vision starting from Daniel 11:36. The passage moves from one of substantial accuracy and precision suddenly to a passage of great obscurity and controversy. The interpretation that is given below is simple and logical and substantiated very strongly from history. It leads to conclusions that radically transform our perspective of the book of Daniel and even more dramatically our whole perspective of end time theology.

I. The Pattern in the Vision

There are cycles in the rise and fall of kings or kingdoms in this vision and with gradually increasing levels of distress for God's people. Under the Ptolemaic kingdom, the distress to Daniel's people can only be inferred as the Northern and Southern kingdoms compete for control of the land. Under Antiochus III³ there is a pattern starting to emerge which first focuses on his character and then is followed by his history reflecting first his rise to increasing power and then his demise without help. Next is a section about Daniel's people, followed by a short section on Seleucus IV⁴ which shows his attempts to derive financial income and his demise without help. The description of Antiochus IV then follows⁵ with this pattern much more prominent. His character, illustrated by the way he gained power through deception is first described then his history which shows mixed success. Finally this is followed by his persecution of Daniel's people causing suffering to them at a level not previously seen leading to their rebellion against him. There is an implied success in this rebellion, and the contemptible feelings against Antiochus IV are reflected in that he is never called a king and his demise is never described⁶. Finally there is encouragement to the wise, so that even though some may fall, they will receive a little help and there is a

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² When quoted with the abbreviation NIV, the scripture is taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

³ Dan. 11:10-19

⁴ Dan. 11:20

⁵ Dan. 11:21-35

⁶ Some say his demise is described in Dan. 11:45, but we will look at that later.

resulting refinement leading to their being purified and made acceptable to God until “the time of the end”⁷ which has not yet arrived.

A similar cycle is repeated in what follows⁸. A king is introduced who is not given the name of king of the North or king of the South. His character is then described in a fashion which shows greater opposition to God than the descriptions given to the previous kings and greater success as well. This is followed by his history which begins “At the time of the end”⁹ with some connection to both the king of the South and the king of the North. It continues showing his rise and then his fall with no one to help¹⁰. In a somewhat similar fashion to the description of the persecution under Antiochus IV, the distress of God’s people during this period is said to exceed any previous suffering they have experienced. Then it goes on to talk about the rewards for the wise and terrible judgment for the rest. This will continue until the “power of the holy people has been broken”¹¹. Finally there is mention of the refinement and purification of people also in a similar fashion to that described after the history of Antiochus IV.

The logic and positioning of this description suggests that this king is not Antiochus IV, but one who comes after him. There is thus one very obvious hypothesis that stands out and that is that this is a description of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire with the persecution of the Jews under that regime also being described. The mystery is why this obvious solution has never been investigated in any literature that this writer knows about with the exception of Calvin¹² in the sixteenth century, but whose description is broad and general as he does not seem to have access to the detailed history that is available today. Many scholars believe that this description contains further details of Antiochus IV so that option will also be investigated. The third major option is that it is a description of the end of the age ruler (frequently called the antichrist). In the following sections, these three options will be analyzed and compared. There is a fourth option which will also be examined which is a substantial variation to the second; that option is described in Gurney¹³. A fifth option is that the king is “Herod”; this option is described in Mauro¹⁴.

When these verses are interpreted so that “the king” is either Antiochus IV or the end of the age ruler then huge differences result in the overall understanding of the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation. Interpreting these verses so that “the king” is the Roman state or emperor results in another very different perspective. As will be seen, the effect is dramatic.

II. The King

Who is the king in Daniel 11:36? The answer to this question is possibly the most important key to understanding the book of Daniel. It is a major thrust of this paper to show that the absence of a clear answer to this question is what has caused enormous difficulty and confusion in understanding the book of Daniel.

The related and equally important question is, “What are the historical referents to the description of the king given in Daniel 11:40-45? Given the way in which the description in Daniel 11:36-39 is connected to Daniel 11:40-45, then the answer to one of these questions will almost certainly provide the answer to the other. The converse will almost certainly be

⁷ Dan. 11:35

⁸ Dan. 11:36-12:13

⁹ Dan. 11:40.

¹⁰ Dan. 11:45.

¹¹ Dan. 12:7.

¹² J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the book of the prophet Daniel*, (Volume II, translated by John Meyers, Christian Classics Ethereal Library. First published in the sixteenth century.)

¹³ R. J. M. Gurney, *God in Control*, (H. E. Walter Ltd., 2006)

¹⁴ P. Mauro, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, 1944 revision of the 1921 edition downloaded from the internet.

true as well; if the answer to one of these questions is not clear, then the answer to the other cannot be said to be established either.

The lack of clear answers to these two questions is a fundamental objection to the confidence that many scholars show in their interpretation of the whole book of Daniel. With reference to Daniel 11:40-45 Lucas¹⁵ writes "These verses have been a source of perplexity to commentators down the centuries. On the one hand, they seem to continue the story of Antiochus IV, providing the expected account of his downfall and death. On the other hand, they do not correspond in any way with the events following the second withdrawal from Egypt and the beginning of the persecution of the Jews". Walvoord writes "In contrast to the preceding section, there is no specific correspondence to history. Accordingly, scholars who regard this as genuine Scripture, usually regard this section as future and unfulfilled"¹⁶. Goldingay's comment is even more remarkable. He writes, "But vv 40-45 cannot be correlated with actual events as vv 21-39 can; further, in vv 40-45 the utilization of scriptural phraseology becomes more systematic than was the case earlier (see *Form*). These facts suggest that v 40 marks the transition from quasi-prediction based on historical facts to actual prediction based on Scripture and on the pattern of earlier events; this continues into 12:1-3. These predictions, then, are not to be read as if they were mere anticipatory announcements of fixed future events; like the promises and warnings of the prophets, they paint an imaginative scenario of the *kind* of issue that must come from present events."¹⁷ Then he writes, "It is not the nature of biblical prophecy to give a literal account of events before they take place."

In relation to Daniel 11:40-45 Baldwin says "At this point most commentators are persuaded that the author ceases to write history and looks ahead to describe how the tyrant will meet his end. In evidence it is noted that there is no mention of events recorded in the history (1 Macc. 3; 4) which took place in the later part of 166 BC, and the events that *are* mentioned, such as the conquest of Egypt and the battle between the sea and the glorious holy mountain (45), never took place"¹⁸.

Harman says "At this point there is a change, marked by descriptions that transcend the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. It must be admitted, though, that there is no absolute point of transition between the predictions of the Antiochan period and eschatological times, except that the expressions relating to time at the end of verse 35 may well point beyond the end of the period that is being described up to that verse"¹⁹.

Conner writes "The final passage seems to leap over to the "time of the end" and the final King of the Syrian division of the Grecian Empire, and the final manifestation of the King of the North, who is an absolute dictator and autocrat. Many writers see behind this "wilful king" a prophecy of the final Antichrist"²⁰.

The problem in taking a strong position based on something that is currently not well understood clearly is the risk that at some time, someone will find an understanding that will totally invalidate the strong position. Thus, if it is found that Daniel 11:40-45 does indeed match a set of fixed future events, then Goldingay's position that it is not the nature of biblical prophecy to give a literal account of events before they take place could be shown to be invalid. And if these events are proved to have occurred later than Antiochus IV, then the whole argument supporting second century BC authorship for the book of Daniel will collapse as well.

¹⁵ E. Lucas, *Daniel*, (Apollos Old Testament Commentary, Intervarsity Press, 2002) 290.

¹⁶ J. F. Walvoord, *Daniel, the key to Prophetic Revelation*, (Moody press, 1971, Moody Paperback Edition, 1989) 270.

¹⁷ Goldingay, John E., *Daniel*, (Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 30, Nelson, 1989) 305.

¹⁸ J. Baldwin, *Daniel*, (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Inter Varsity Press, 1978) 201.

¹⁹ A. M. Harman, *Daniel*, (EP Study Commentary Series, Evangelical Press, 2007) 289.

²⁰ K. Conner, *The Book of Daniel (An Exposition)*, (KJC Ministries Inc., 2004) 270.

So in the section which follows, the different views are examined and compared together with a new hypothesis which does indeed fully connect every clause in Daniel 11:36-12:13 with known history; a possible solution which demonstrates a precision and unity in the vision not seen before. In evaluating the new hypothesis, the criteria taken to be necessary to establish a valid interpretation is that every clause from Daniel 11:36-45 must have a valid and consistent match with history at least of the same quality as the passage in Daniel 11:4-35 matches the history of the various Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings up until Antiochus IV.

The different views are now summarized. In subsequent sections the passage is examined in detail.

At one end of the spectrum of views, there are those who see the date of the book of Daniel as being in the second century BC and the events recorded in this vision as largely past history (or quasi-prophecy) rather than prophecy and which climax in the time of Antiochus IV. These scholars see the book of Daniel as being written during the time (or at the end) of the persecution of Antiochus IV with the purpose of encouraging the people to stand firm in their faith during this terrible time. They then see Daniel 11:40-45 as the only prophetic content in the vision by describing the demise of Antiochus IV. A few others with this view of second century BC authorship see Daniel 11:40-45 as looking to the time at the end of the age with the view that it will not make much sense until that time.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are those that date the book of Daniel in the sixth century BC with Daniel as the author and these see the whole vision as prophecy and Daniel 11:36-45 as a description of the end of the age ruler. Walvoord writes "Because of the completely unsatisfactory explanation of an historical fulfilment of verses 36-45 in contrast to the precise fulfilment of the earlier portion, conservative expositors relate this passage to the climax of history culminating in the second advent of Christ"²¹. Some of these see Daniel 11:36-39 as applying to Antiochus IV and Daniel 11:40-45 as at the end of the age.

However, amongst those scholars who have this futurist perspective there are two main identifications of the king who is the antichrist. The first is that made popular by Darby in the 1800's, that the king is an unregenerate Jew, a false Messiah, but in league with a revived Roman world ruler²². The main support for this identification comes from Daniel 11:37 where it says of the king, "He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers", that is, the God of Israel (according to Darby). In this way, he honors the revived Roman world ruler as his god. The second is that supported by Walvoord and that is that the king is the revived Roman world ruler himself²³. He argues that the king is an absolute ruler who will do as he pleases and exalt himself above every god and even assume the role of God and he also perpetrates the persecution of the Jews and seeks to destroy them. In this way, the king seems to be the end of the age ruler himself.

Gurney has a unique view in seeing the book of Daniel terminating at the first advent of Jesus²⁴. To him, Daniel 11:36-39 describes Antiochus IV, but then Daniel 11:40-45 describes the demise of the Greek Empire.

Mauro similarly sees the book of Daniel terminating with the devastation of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70 AD²⁵. For him, the "king" in Daniel 11:36 is Herod the Great and his dynasty. For him, Daniel 11:36-39 described the character of Herod and his dynasty and then Daniel 11:40-43 is like a parenthesis describing the battles of Caesar Augustus who is the king of the North. The final two verses (Daniel 11:44-45) then resume the history of Herod. Unfortunately, Mauro's views are seriously flawed. He did not properly evaluate his assumption that the seventy sevens prophecy is sevens of years and his chronological

²¹ Walvoord (1989) 271.

²² J.N. Darby, *Studies on the Book of Daniel*, (Third Edition, London: Bateman, 1864) 97-105

²³ Walvoord (1989) 272.

²⁴ Gurney (2006).

²⁵ Mauro (1944).

foundation in Anstey who dates the decree of Cyrus as being given in 457 BC²⁶. From this he infers that Daniel's prophecies terminate in the first century AD. The other difficulty with taking Herod the Great and his descendents as the "king" is that they were appointments by Rome which means he did not have full authority, therefore it is hard to see him as a king who "will do as he pleases"²⁷. In addition, there is a period of history from 63 BC to 37 BC before the appointment of Herod the Great which is unaccounted for in Daniel. Mauro's solution ignores the scale and scope of Rome's authority over Judea from 63 BC.

The interest in the views of Gurney and Mauro partly springs from their recognition of some of the history contained in the new hypothesis below, but their overall perspective is damaged by constraints imposed by the interpretation of the seventy sevens prophecy.

The new hypothesis that will be examined and compared with the above views is that Daniel 11:36-39 is in fact, a description of the character of the Roman Empire which is then followed by its history (Daniel 11:40-45) and the trials of the Jews under this empire (Daniel 12:1-13).

If it is the Roman Empire that is in mind, then the expectation should be that all the history that is relevant to God's people is presented; not just a short portion of it since that is what Daniel was told by the "man in linen"²⁸. This is what has occurred in relation to the description of the Persian Empire, which although incomplete from a historian's perspective, has sufficient to lead us into the description of the Greek Empire. And besides, it was a period of relative peace, safety and restoration for the Jews. This is also the case for the presentation of the Greek Empire. There was a period of variable fortune and increasing instability in the land, terminating with the persecution under Antiochus IV. After this, for the next one hundred years, under the Hasmoneans, God's people enjoyed a substantial measure of freedom and self-government so that there is nothing more that needs to be said about this period which relates to the purpose for which this vision was written.

Unlike the Greek Empire with its succession of different kings, the Roman Empire is presented as a single entity. Such was the way in which the Roman State, with its philosophy and law, imposed itself on every person throughout its history and domain that it is quite reasonable to present the character of Rome in a single description. Under Greek rule, each king was different. Under Roman rule, the nature of the state prevailed throughout its history so it is not necessary to trace the events that occurred under every ruler. For this reason, the longer period of Roman rule does not need the same length of description to present the detail of its history and communicate the experience of the Jews in its time.

When Daniel received the vision in Daniel 11:21-35 which speaks of a ruler who sought to annihilate the Jews, who abolished the daily sacrifice and who set up an abomination that causes desolation; he would immediately connect this with the seventy sevens vision²⁹. We know today that this passage describes the persecution under Antiochus IV; Jesus would also have known this. In this picture of the seventy sevens prophecy, the sixty two sevens end in 171 BC and there are about seven years to its completion. It is the Seleucid army under Antiochus IV who devastates the city and the sanctuary (he did not destroy it). He set up an abomination that caused desolation in the middle of this final seven and history tells us that after three years and eight days the temple was re-consecrated as the Jewish uprising defeated Antiochus IV.

III. The Character of the King

²⁶ M. Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, Marshall Brothers Ltd., 1913.

²⁷ Dan. 11:40.

²⁸ Dan. 10:14.

²⁹ Dan. 9:24-27

Throughout the period of the Greek Empire, this vision contains no reference to any king without qualifying his title with either "of the North" (8 times in the NIV)³⁰ representing the Seleucid Empire or "of the South" (9 times)³¹ representing the Ptolemaic Empire except for Alexander the Great and Antiochus IV. So the natural inference is that the king in Daniel 11:36 represents someone different from either of these two, especially as Daniel 11:40 refers distinctly to all three³².

Up until Daniel 11:35 the Hebrew text never gives Antiochus IV the title of king although he was a ruler with significant power and his persecution against the Jews was substantial. Although the derogatory terms in which Antiochus IV is described might incline the reader to think that he was a contemporary of the writer of this text, it is not necessary that this be the case, since an evaluation of his rule by other authors at other times could easily reach similarly derogatory conclusions. In Daniel 11:28, the NIV reference to the "king of the North" certainly corresponds to Antiochus IV, but this phrase is not present in the Hebrew text and in other English translations of this verse; it is an unlikely translation because it is probable that the writer deliberately avoids giving Antiochus IV the title of king.

Goldingay advances a number of arguments in support of Daniel 11:36-45 continuing the story of Antiochus IV³³. He says the "paragraph begins resumptively" so that it could be read to say "The *northern* king will act as he pleases" and then goes on to say "there is no hint that the subject might be different from that in vv 21-35". There is a more likely alternative interpretation for six reasons. Firstly, as has been noted above this is the first occurrence of the unqualified reference to "the king", so without further evidence to assume that this is the king of the North, this inference lacks confirmation. Secondly, whereas up to this point chapter 11 focuses on events that occurred with at most only a verse or two on the characteristics of the king of the North (or South), especially of Antiochus III and IV, Daniel 11:36-39 has a different feel about it. These four verses focus on characteristics of "the king", far more than the earlier description of the characteristics of either Antiochus III or IV. Thirdly, as later discussion will show, the description in Daniel 11:36-39 does not match Antiochus IV very well. Fourthly, Daniel 11:32 seem to end the description of Antiochus IV. Fifthly, as discussed above, Daniel 11:33-35 which begins "Those that are wise" summarizes the consequences of the trouble on the Jews and seems like a marker to end a section (that referring either to Antiochus IV or more likely to the whole period of the Greeks). A similar textual formula is repeated in Daniel 12:4-10 to mark the end of the section describing "the king". Finally, as will be seen, the text of Daniel 11:40 provides strong evidence that "the king" is a different person from the "king of the South" or the "king of the North".

Some scholars wish to insist that "the king" has to be a single individual who only appears once in history. However, as has been seen, the references to the "king of the North" and the "king of the South" are to different individual rulers, so there is no reason why "the king" cannot be a generic title as well. Further, it is possible that these four verses could describe in a generic sense, either a set of rulers with similar characteristics or perhaps even the characteristics of the empire itself.

The prophetic words in Daniel 2:33-35, 40-45 and 7:7, 11, 19-20 have been frequently understood to be about the Roman Empire especially for those who accept sixth century BC authorship of the book of Daniel. For reasons that are unclear, no one except Calvin seems to have examined Daniel 11:36-12:7 as applying to that empire³⁴. This chapter is now going to do this, but first some background.

³⁰ Dan 11:6 (Antiochus II), 7, 8, 9 (Seleucus II), 11, 13, 15 (Antiochus III) and 28 (Antiochus IV. Used in the NIV, but not in the MT, LXX or other translations).

³¹ Dan. 11:5 (Ptolemy I), 6 (Ptolemy II), 9 (Ptolemy III), 11, 12 (Ptolemy IV), 14 and 17 (Ptolemy V) and 25 (Ptolemy VI - 2 times).

³² See the discussion for Dan 11:40 given later.

³³ Goldingay (1989) 304.

³⁴ J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the book of the prophet Daniel*, (Volume II, translated by John Meyers, Christian Classics Ethereal Library. First published in the sixteenth century.)

The Roman republic was first established in 509 BC. The Romans arose from an Etruscan background - a tribe that resided in central Italy. They had their own worship and in particular they worshipped a wolf god. As time progressed the Romans basically forgot much of their Etruscan religious heritage, adopting the Greek pantheon of gods as their own. Greek influence was enormous. During the Republic and Imperial Rome land sales were very important and the land owned by the nobles depended very much on their rank. Under Julius Caesar and some of the later emperors, the Roman state demanded worship of their emperors as if they were gods.

In the period from about 100 BC onwards, the Republican form of government had difficulty ruling over the whole empire especially when successful generals such as Marius, Pompey and Julius Caesar were able to command enormous popular support. Julius Caesar was emperor for a short time until he was assassinated in 44 BC by a clique of Senatorial diehards. After this, civil war broke out between Octavian and Antony until Octavian defeated Antony at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC. At this time Octavian (Augustus Caesar) legitimized the role of Emperor (27 BC) and strong, centralized, dictatorial rule then began. From this time on until Constantine is the period of Imperial Rome; a period of about 350 years. The hypothesis examined below is that Daniel 11:36-12:7 describes the character and history of the Roman state and includes the period when the Jews experienced tremendous suffering. In this period, the people started to look more and more upon the Emperor as divine. Frequently, divine status was given by the state after the Emperor died! As time advanced the features of the old Republic weakened, the Emperor saw himself more and more as divine and wielded his authority with greater absoluteness until Constantine.

For these reasons, it would seem logical and natural to examine the "king" in Daniel 11:36 as either the Roman Senate, the Roman Emperor or perhaps even the Roman State itself and the description from Daniel 11:36-39 as a general characterization of the main features of this empire.

1. *Daniel 11:36a NIV*
(36a) "The king will do as he pleases."

This phrase "the king will do as he pleases" occurs four times in the book of Daniel. The first of these is in Daniel 8:4 referring to Cyrus the Great; the second is in Daniel 11:3 referring to Alexander the Great and the third is in Daniel 11:16 referring to Antiochus III - also called "Antiochus the Great". The final occasion is here.

If this king is Antiochus IV, there is a problem, for in many respects he was constrained by the circumstances around him and did not have anywhere near the freedom of those previous three "greats" to do as he wished. He manipulated and bribed to obtain power in the Seleucid Empire after usurping power deceitfully. He attacked Egypt with reasonable success, but never obtained complete control. He was constrained because he did not want to face the growing might of Rome which severely embarrassed him, forcing him to give away control of Cyprus and Egypt. He battled with rebellion in Palestine and was defeated there. He eventually lost substantial portions of territory in the East to the Parthians. Therefore, to describe Antiochus IV as a king "who will do as he pleases" just does not match any period of his history. The only way this might possibly be seen to be valid is by second century BC writers in the midst of persecution who would then have a less objective understanding of the big picture. However, such a view is speculative at best and not supportable by what is known.

If however, the king is Rome, to say that "he did as he pleased", would match a general description of Rome's history throughout much of its period of greatness very well.

If the king is Rome then we can see that the vision has shifted focus on to Rome rather than Greece. Rome was the new growing power and there are two hints of conflict with Rome in the earlier text; the first in Daniel 11:18 with Antiochus III (in the period 192-188 BC) and then in Daniel 11:30 when Antiochus IV was humiliated by the Roman general and forced to

turn back else he would lose a battle he never could have won (168 BC). So there have been hints of a rising power in the West as the scene is being set for the much greater onslaught from the Roman juggernaut. Up until now the focus has been on the king of the South and the king of the North; as the story unfolds, the new focus on the Roman rulers now becomes apparent.

The problem in identifying Herod the Great and his dynasty with this description is that they were always subservient to Rome and after Herod the Great, the territory was divided amongst his descendents so they had reduced authority. One of those descendents, Archelaus whose vassal state was over Judea, was so incompetent that Rome annexed it and incorporated it into the Syrian province in 6 AD. This dynasty never had the power of Cyrus, Alexander or Antiochus III to give them this overwhelming control.

2. *Daniel 11:36b NIV*

(36b) He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods.

During the Imperial period, religious worship of the Emperor was frequently required by the state³⁵. Generally speaking, it was only abandoned after the emperor Constantine I started supporting Christianity.

In 44 BC, Julius Caesar declared himself as dictator for life over Rome and also allowed a statue of himself with the inscription in Latin "the unconquered god" to be created. Augustus Caesar initiated the building of a temple in Rome to the divine Julius and titled himself "son of a god". Up until Hadrian, Roman emperors generally avoided claiming the status of deity in their own lives; however as previously stated deceased emperors were frequently given this status. After Hadrian, the power of the emperors had become so absolute that they claimed divine status even during their lives so that the imperial cult became an aspect of persecution of Jews and Christians under some emperors. Loyal citizens of the empire were expected to make a periodic offering of incense to the Emperor and when they did this they received a certificate that they had demonstrated loyalty to the Emperor by sacrificing. Loyalty tests became an element of the imperial cult which was applied to Christians. The Christians regarded this as idolatry and refused to participate in this worship, so it was used to identify them. The imperial cult was abandoned when Constantine I became emperor as he adopted the Christian religion.

3. *Daniel 11:36c NIV*

(36c) He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.

If the "time of wrath" is until the persecution and desolation of the Jews under Antiochus IV ended, then to say that he will be successful until then just does not match history. Antiochus IV had limited success in Egypt and was forced by Rome to give it up along with Cyprus and then the Jews rose up in rebellion, defeated the Seleucid armies and regained control of the temple.

Mauro does not comment on this phrase, but assumes that the "time of wrath" is completed in 70 AD³⁶. To state that the Herodian dynasty was successful until 70 AD overstates what really happened. In addition, history shows that the Jews suffered frequently under Rome suggesting that the "time of wrath" continued for many more years.

If however, the "time of wrath" is a reference to the persecution and desolation of the Jews under Rome, the historical picture is accurate³⁷. From 63 BC, when Pompey captured

³⁵ H. Kinder and W. Hilgemann, *The Penguin Atlas of History*, (Volume 1, Penguin Books, 1978), 87.

³⁶ Mauro (1944).

³⁷ Notice that the two "times of wrath" mentioned by Daniel in Daniel 8:19 and Daniel 11:36 both come to an end when their corresponding "time, times and half a time" come to an end. In other words God intervenes to "cut short" the activities of His enemies which He

Jerusalem and entered the temple, the Jews were under pressure and from time to time engaged in rebellion against Rome, the most severe being the Jewish War (66-73 AD). Gradually, the Jews were scattered more and more and during this time Rome remained successfully in control. Thus it would be completely accurate to say that the empire was very successful according to God's timetable spelled out here. God is in control even though He may not appear to be so.

Overall it can be seen that verse 36 is a general statement describing the character of the king as Goldingay affirms³⁸. This statement is then followed by greater detail of his character in verses 37-39. Goldingay sees these verses as reflecting the religious attitudes of Antiochus IV moving from the "earthly plane of attacks on people and sanctuary to the heavenly plane of attacks on God himself." But careful analysis of these verses shows that this is not quite what they are saying. It's not so much that this king sees himself as divine or directly attacking the God of gods, but rather that he puts his trust in himself and in particular his military might as verse 38 shows and so devalues the God of gods. He places his highest honour and trust on his own military prowess in order to do as he pleases. Because he exalts his military power he then has no reticence to say insulting and dishonoring things about the God of gods. This precisely describes the character of Rome and does not reflect the character of Antiochus IV who wished to Hellenize the Jews and force them to worship the Greek gods. Antiochus IV did not exalt and trust in his military might the way that Rome did and in the way that is clearly described in these verses.

When it says that the king acted as he pleased it emphasizes exactly what is meant. He did what he wanted using his military power and nothing could stop him. It does presage disaster as Goldingay says, but this is not really the point. Goldingay does not examine the degree of Antiochus' success and does not reflect on the fact that he was not really that successful.

The verses here are not about the king suppressing worship of other gods, nor about claiming divinity; rather they are about the exaltation of his military power above all gods; it is worship in that sense. According to Goldingay, Antiochus IV regarded himself as more important than any god and is said to have taken his divinity more seriously than most for political reasons. However, this king puts "the god of fortresses" above all else, a phrase those scholars who see the king as Antiochus IV are unable to apply to him with any confidence, nor can they apply it to Herod the Great and his dynasty. This king focuses on the military; he is very different.

4. *Daniel 11:37-38 NIV*

(37) He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. (38) Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.

Antiochus IV replaced Apollo by Zeus as the god of the Seleucid dynasty, apparently for political reasons (see Goldingay³⁹). Darby and Gaebelien say that the king is an apostate Jew where one of the most important arguments in support of this is found here in the translation "regard neither the God of his fathers" (NKJV, KJV)⁴⁰. Walvoord argues that the Hebrew word here for God is *Elohim*, a general name for God which can apply to the true God as well as false gods, which is also plural so that the others translations are correct to translated "the gods of his fathers" which would be more appropriate if the king was the antichrist.

is using as His instrument of judgment against His people and so terminates the two "times of wrath" in order to preserve His people from total physical annihilation.

³⁸ Goldingay (1989) 304.

³⁹ Goldingay (1989) 304.

⁴⁰ Walvoord (1989) 273. He quotes and refers to (A.C. Gaebelien, *The Prophet Daniel*, New York: Our Hope Publ., 1911).

On the other hand, Rome no longer acknowledged her Etruscan gods, in particular, the wolf god. They still consulted entrails and looked for signs to guide their decisions; this aspect of their Etruscan heritage was continued. The Roman gods were from a strange mixture of influences. Before Rome became a big city, the area around it, called Latium, was settled by superstitious villagers, the Latins, who believed in many gods and spirits. As Rome grew into a city and began to become more powerful it came into contact with the Greeks, who had a complex Pantheon of their own. It seems that the Roman gods were a mix of those two main influences; Latin and Greek. In many cases, the Romans found there were Latin and Greek gods for one and the same thing. They tended to take the two and make them one. So for example, Vulcan was the old Latin god of fire. But the Greeks had a god called Hephaestus, who was very similar. And so the Romans just mixed the two together and made them one.

If the king is Antiochus IV, then the "one desired by women" may possibly be a god favoured by Egypt (Adonis or Dionysius) or perhaps even Tammuz whose legendary death was mourned annually in Canaanite rituals. However, these options are very unconvincing especially as they apply only to a subgroup of peoples within the Seleucid domain. On the other hand, if the king is Rome, the god whom women loved would be Juno (the wife of Jupiter) and there could be little question that worship of Juno would apply generally to women in the empire. However, more importantly, Juno was a god which the Roman emperors showed no regard for.

If the king is Antiochus IV it is difficult to say that he had no regard for any god even if his motivation was political. On the other hand, most of the Roman leaders trusted in their own power. Under imperial Rome, the Roman state required a declaration of loyalty, in effect seeking god-like status for the emperor and demanding worship from their subjects. However, having given that commitment of loyalty, subjects within the empire could then go and worship whatever gods they desired. In this way they showed less respect for their gods than for their military might. The main Roman gods were Jupiter (the Greek Zeus), Juno (his wife), the Greek Hera (the goddess of women and fertility), Mars (the god of war), Venus (the goddess of love) and Minerva (the goddess of wisdom and learning, the Greek Athena). Although many individuals from the more lowly classes worshipped their own gods, Rome did not mind this providing they were willing to show their loyalty to the state.

If the king is Antiochus IV, then the identity of the "god of fortresses" is obscure. Although various proposals have been put forward, none of them has a strong basis in history. If the king is Rome, however, this term precisely characterizes its worship of military power as has been seen. Rome was very good at both defending and attacking cities, especially strongly fortified ones. Their siege technology was second to none in its day. They were not as fast moving as the Greeks or Parthians, but they were very strong and their infantry was superb. This enabled them to exert control and garrison their provinces, defend them strongly and maintain control as no previous empire had done. The Roman Empire had a well defined boundary protected by a fortified line or by a network of castles and fortifications⁴¹. This was partly why it lasted so long.

The Roman Empire was a very powerful, military machine. It placed its confidence in its military might. The strength and security of the Empire was very dependent on the legions and this is where it placed its trust. Rome invested enormous funds into building and training its military machine. This cannot be said to be true of Antiochus IV to anything like the same extent.

All these interpretations have a measure of plausibility; however, the identification of the king with the Roman Empire leads to a very specific and precise interpretation which has a quality which exceeds the others. This is the pattern that we will see throughout this passage.

⁴¹ H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, (Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2007), 363.

5. *Daniel 11:39 NIV*

(39) He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.

The interpretations that have been made for understanding "the help of a foreign god" when Antiochus IV was king seem most unlikely; for example, Lucas writes, "The reference here is probably to the establishing of the fortresses in Jerusalem and Judea, garrisoned by worshippers of pagan gods"⁴². This possible solution is guesswork with little concrete evidence that it is valid. On the contrary, under Rome, the solution is clear and applies throughout the empire: the foreign god is Mithras, a Persian god who was very popular with the soldiers. Roberts writes, "Roman soldiers first came into contact with the Persian god Mithras in Asia Minor. The Mithraic cult, which offered hope of life after death, became immensely popular in the Roman army and quickly spread throughout the empire."⁴³ In this first phrase, there is perhaps a trace of sarcasm; Rome glorified its military power, but attacked the strongest opponents needing the help of a foreign god!

If the king is Antiochus IV, then the remaining phrases are hard to interpret as most commentaries will show. If the king is Rome the meaning is clear and appropriate. Rome honoured anyone who honoured Rome. They especially honoured those who were successful, military success even resulting in victory parades before the emperor in Rome, promotion, increased status and even governorships resulting in greater land allocations and wealth which enabled purchase of property too. So you were richly rewarded if you aligned your actions with the vision and philosophy of Rome and you could be successful even if not born as a Roman citizen.

Land gifts and distribution were given to Roman citizens according to their status; the land could be anywhere in the Empire. Roman law and engineering were also developed to a much higher level than anywhere before.

6. *Conclusions*

With respect to these verses Baldwin says, "Commentaries vary their assessment of verses 36-39 as a history of the career of Antiochus Epiphanes."⁴⁴ Generally, the description of him is fairly obscure and there is much debate as to what each phrase might mean with no clear certainty about many of them. The discussion of this passage by both Goldingay⁴⁵ and Lucas⁴⁶ concurs; they both reflect similar difficulties. The only aspect that seems clear is that Antiochus IV magnified himself above all gods; the evidence for this seems to rely heavily only on the coinage. In general his subjects regarded him as arrogant and mad; this is in stark contrast to the way the Roman world viewed its Emperor; he truly had godlike status for much of the nearly 400 years of Imperial Rome. It is also unclear why this additional description of Antiochus IV in Daniel 11:36-39 would be needed given that his whole life except his end has been covered quite comprehensively in the earlier description.

When this comparison is done, it is very clear that the text matches the Roman state far better than the empire of Antiochus IV. It is also very clear that the text very concisely and precisely captures the major features of the Roman Empire. No phrase leaves us in much doubt about its meaning and all contribute to give a complete picture.

If the king is an end of the age ruler, then the details described in these verses cannot be tested against history as they are still in our future. Note that scholars with this view usually interpret the iron layer in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and the fourth beast in Daniel's vision as the Roman Empire. If this is so, it would be surprising if the history of the Jews

⁴² Lucas (2002) 290.

⁴³ J. M. Roberts, *Ancient History*, (Duncan Baird Publishers Ltd., 2002), 415.

⁴⁴ Baldwin (1978) 198.

⁴⁵ Goldingay (1989).

⁴⁶ Lucas (2002).

under the Roman Empire was not discussed in this vision in Daniel 11. They suffered tremendously under the Romans and it lies within the domain of Daniel's prophecies and greatly impacted the future of God's people. The main arguments used to support that the king is an end of the age ruler are firstly that there is no match of Daniel 11:36-45 with known history and secondly the view that the time, times and half a time in Daniel 12:7 is the final three and one half years before the end of the age. The former basis is being refuted here and the discussion of Daniel 12:7 will address the second point.

Before coming to some final conclusions, it will be important to see how well the different views are matched by the events described in the next six verses. The quality of the match will determine the extent of confidence in the various views being tested.

IV. The History of the King

The discussion of Daniel 11:40-45 in the literature is unsatisfactory and confusing to say the least. It seems that no recent scholar has considered Daniel 11:36-12:7 to be the Roman Empire, although some scholars have considered Antiochus IV or a transition to either Antiochus V, Pompey the Great, Herod the Great or the end of the age ruler (sometimes referred to as the antichrist) - see, for example, Goldingay⁴⁷. It is probable that some have thought that "the king" must be a single individual, rather than a generic word for a group of rulers with similar characteristics. This is in spite of the fact that both the 'king of the North' and the 'king of the South' are associated with multiple individuals in the vision. As far as it has been possible to determine, no writer (with the exception of John Calvin) has associated these verses with the whole of the Roman Empire. Unfortunately, Calvin did not correctly associate the relationship of the Ptolemaic kingdom with Rome, assuming that they must have been in conflict, but unable to pinpoint in history when that occurred⁴⁸. This is possibly why his viewpoint was rejected and perhaps why it has not been considered since. When the correct association is made, it will be seen that there is a very good match with known history. With the exception of Mauro⁴⁹ and Gurney⁵⁰ who does identify verse 41b, no known scholar has been able to match these verses with any known history except perhaps verse 45 which is frequently understood to be the demise of Antiochus IV or the antichrist. For those who see "the king" as the antichrist, all the description given would, of course, be future and therefore currently unverifiable, although suspect because it is clear a future antichrist could in no way engage with either the Ptolemaic or the Seleucid kingdoms.

Another possible reason why these verses have not been associated with the Roman Empire is because of the change in time scale. The history of this empire described here spans more than 650 years. This should not really be surprising considering that this period is in the "time of the end" as verse 40 says and so a foreshortening of history as time proceeds from its starting point in the third year of Cyrus should be expected. In addition, since Rome as a state performed fairly uniformly over its history when compared with the Greek Empire, perhaps less detail would be needed.

One of the main objections to these verses referring to Antiochus IV is that they cannot be matched with his history. To an extent it is not surprising if prophecy cannot be interpreted with certainty until the events forecast have occurred; that is why a great variety in the understanding of Daniel by the early Christians in the Roman period should be expected. However, those that consider these verses past history should remain in considerable doubt about the king being Antiochus IV because the historical outcomes do not match the actual text; history should verify the written words of the book of Daniel if it is correctly understood.

⁴⁷ Goldingay (1989) 305.

⁴⁸ Calvin, lecture sixty-fourth. He used the KJV which says "shall the king of the south push at him" when it would have been more accurate to translate "with him".

⁴⁹ Mauro (1944).

⁵⁰ Gurney (2006).

If these verses are about the Roman Empire, the basis for seeing them as quasi-prophecy written by authors in the second century is seriously challenged. In fact, it will become clear that this whole vision would have to be prophecy since it terminates beyond 600 AD well after the earliest known fragments of the book of Daniel from the Qumran caves. It would also mean that the focus of Daniel is not for people living during the reign of Antiochus IV as is often maintained. This would also cast serious doubts on the interpretation given to the earlier dreams and visions by many scholars as well.

1. *Daniel 11:40a NIV*

(40a) "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships.

The events described here begin "at the time of the end"⁵¹. Altogether, there are six occurrences of the phrase in Daniel and when analyzing these phrases it becomes clear that the "time of the end" must begin with the Roman Empire if the interpretation in this book is correct. This phrase needs to be understood from Daniel's perspective since the events being described are a long time in the future for him; prophecy in the future can often be foreshortened. It is therefore not unreasonable for this phrase to apply to events which are ancient history from our perspective today, 2500 years after Daniel. In Daniel's thinking, the Roman Empire is the one after the Greek Empire (which he would have known about) and so is in "the time of the end".

This understanding is also consistent with all the Old Testament prophets who see the coming of the Messiah as a single event and do not distinguish between His first coming and His second. Even in Jesus day this is apparent as many of the Jews were expecting the Messiah to set up His earthly kingdom and when Jesus failed to do this they rejected His Messianic identity. Even the disciples were still expecting this after His resurrection as Acts 1:6 makes clear. John the Baptist, who recognized his own prophetic role as preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah, joined the prophecies of Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3 and expected that Jesus was coming as judge and so had questions about Jesus identity as the Messiah (Matthew 11:3). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up to preach and quoted from Joel and identified that the outpouring of the Spirit was something that God was beginning to do in these "last days". The early church was looking for the soon return of Jesus, realizing they were in the last days. It is only in our day that we realize that "the time of the end" in Daniel is similar to "the last days" in the New Testament and so far has stretched over more than 2,000 years of history.

From the context of this text, the "him" would have to be "the king" in verses 36-39 as discussed above. Both the king of the South and the king of the North are interacting with "the king", so the normal understanding would be that three different kings are in view here. For those that see "the king" to be Antiochus IV (for example, Goldingay⁵² and Lucas⁵³, the interpretation of this verse is obscure; the first "him" is the king of the North and the second the king of the South, which conflicts with the natural understanding of this verse. It would seem that in order to fit the larger assumed picture (that "the king" is Antiochus IV), the natural exposition of this verse has been bypassed. The subsequent history then matches nothing that is known which is what we would expect if the identity of "the king" is incorrect. Baldwin says these verses are not history, but look forward to how Antiochus IV (or the tyrant, the king) will meet his end⁵⁴. Goldingay has similar difficulties and along with Lucas sees these verses as most likely describing how Antiochus IV will meet his end⁵⁵. It is no surprise that Lucas writes "These verses have been a source of perplexity to commentators down the centuries"⁵⁶.

⁵¹ This phrase occurs six times in the book of Daniel, Dan. 8:17 and 19; 11:35 and 40; 12:4 and 9. We will soon see what it means under this hypothesis. The outcomes are very significant.

⁵² Goldingay (1989) 305.

⁵³ Lucas(2002) 257.

⁵⁴ Baldwin (1978) 201.

⁵⁵ Goldingay (1989) 305.

⁵⁶ Lucas (2002) 290.

Walvoord sees this verse being fulfilled at “the time of the end” which is the end of the age for him (the last 3½ or 7 years, see later)⁵⁷. In this view, both the “king of the South” and the “king of the North” attack the “king”. Since no such battle occurred during the Greek or Roman Empire, Walvoord feels justified in interpreting this as an end of the age conflict, in spite of the strangeness of using the generic terms for the kings that were previously always applied to the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings. This has led to a rather speculative association of this battle with various end time battles described in other prophecies in the OT. However, as will be seen later, whether the “king of the South” is actually engaged in battle against the “king” all depends on how the Hebrew word normally translated into the English preposition “with” is interpreted here. Does the “king of the South” engage in battle *against* the king or *together with* the king?

The view taken by Mauro is that verses 40-43 are like a parenthesis describing the activities of Caesar Augustus. This is also hard to support, because the identity of the various kings is unnatural⁵⁸. The result is that Cleopatra is king of the South (not queen) and the king of the North is the Roman general Octavian who became Caesar Augustus; at this time Syria had become a Roman province and the Seleucid Empire no longer existed. This is inconsistent with all the previous uses of the “king of the North”. In addition, the conflict was really Octavian against Anthony supported by Cleopatra rather than Octavian against Cleopatra supported by Anthony. Historians record this conflict as a civil war between Roman leaders, not Rome versus Egypt. In addition, Herod’s degree of support for Cleopatra is unclear and motivated by political expediency. After Anthony’s defeat, Rome under Caesar Augustus still allowed Herod the Great to govern Judea. Overall, the big picture of Herod being a king who could do as he pleased as described in Daniel, is not supportable.

In addition to all this, Mauro’s work was completed before Israel became a nation in 1948 and so his perspective that the period up to 70 AD was the “last stage of the national existence of Daniel’s people” is clearly incorrect⁵⁹. Although it is possible to critique the other historical references that Mauro makes, it is not really necessary to do so.

In reality the events recorded in Daniel 11:40 backtrack slightly from the immediately preceding history of Antiochus IV to the time of Antiochus III so that the account can trace the entire advance of the Roman Empire into the Eastern Mediterranean. This is done in order that the scope of the history encompasses all events in the known world of the book of Daniel. Remember that the focus of Daniel is a focus on God’s people in Israel and Jerusalem and this necessitates giving the full perspective of the growth of Roman power in the East.

If it is thought strange to backtrack chronologically, then reflect that it is quite common when recounting events in multiple places to first trace events from one perspective and then to trace concurrent events from another perspective. Earlier, from Daniel 11:3-35, the events have been described from a Greek perspective centred on Jerusalem. Now, from Daniel 11:36-45, they are described from a Roman perspective but also centred on Jerusalem. They start from when Roman power began to emerge in the Eastern Mediterranean (the known world from Daniel’s point of view) in conflict with Antiochus III, but then extending well beyond the end of the Greek Empire.

Verse 40a then, clearly describes the warfare between Rome, the Ptolemaic kingdom to the South and the Seleucid kingdom to the North. Daniel 11:18 has already alluded to the war between Rome and Antiochus III which resulted in victory for Rome and which involved the large Seleucid navy. It is significant that this war between Rome and Antiochus III is the only one in the Eastern Mediterranean which includes large naval forces as well as armies until the Battle of Actium in 31 BC and the associated battles in Egypt. As a result, the historical association of this conflict with Daniel 11:40a is very precise and cannot be mistaken. At this time, the Seleucid armies and navies were defeated and Rome became

⁵⁷ Walvoord (1989) 277.

⁵⁸ Mauro (1944) 52ff.

⁵⁹ Mauro (1944) 57.

master of the Mediterranean Sea beginning its inexorable advance across Asia Minor and towards Jerusalem. This conflict resulted in the end of the Seleucid kingdom in 64 BC with the settlement obtained by Pompey the Great and which created the Syrian province of the Roman Empire.

Chronologically, the history described backtracks to the first major conflict between Rome and the Seleucid kingdom under Antiochus III in the coastland regions of the Aegean (192-188 BC). In Daniel 11:18 this encounter is described but from the perspective of Antiochus III (the "he" is Antiochus III); but here in Daniel 11:40 the focus is on Rome (the "him" is Rome). As a result of the defeats at the Battle of Thermopylae in 191 BC, at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BC, the naval defeats in the Aegean prior to this battle and other defeats, the king of the North, Antiochus III, was forced to pay an indemnity leaving Rome master of the Eastern Mediterranean⁶⁰. This was the beginning of Rome's advance into the East.

The Ptolemaic Dynasty was founded in 305 BC and lasted until 30 BC when Egypt became a Roman Province. During the reign of Ptolemy V (204-181 BC), Antiochus III and Philip V of Macedon made a pact to divide the Ptolemaic possessions overseas. Philip seized several islands and places in Caria and Thrace, whilst the Battle of Panium (198 BC) definitely transferred Coele-Syria, including Judea, from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids. After this, Antiochus III made peace, gave his own daughter Cleopatra I to Ptolemy V Epiphanes as wife (193-192 BC). Nevertheless, when war broke out between Antiochus III and Rome, Egypt aligned itself with Rome since Antiochus III was seeking to take over the islands under Ptolemaic jurisdiction. Subsequently, it is found that the Ptolemaic Dynasty was consistently in alliance with Rome and being more and more influenced by Rome.

If this verse does indeed describe that the king of the South was on the same side with Rome and engaging in battle against the king of the North, then the remaining issue to resolve is the translation of the first phrase of this verse in our English versions. All translations have assumed that the "king of the South" is engaged in battle against "the king". However, the Hebrew text is ambiguous and literally says "At the time of the end the king of the South will engage in battle *with him*" so that the actual meaning requires a correct understanding of the historical context. So the thought that the king of the South (Ptolemy V) is on the same side with the king (Rome) and together they are against the king of the North (Antiochus III) accords with history and is within the meaning of the Hebrew words. If our hypothesis that these verses describe the rise and fall of the Roman Empire is correct, then our English translations need to be modified to reflect this change.

Unfortunately, John Calvin missed this possible interpretation and perhaps later scholars too, because our English translations have always assumed that "the king" fought against "king of the South". This may be one reason that regarding "the king" as the Roman Empire has not been considered by recent scholarship until now.

Since it is being said that the events described in this verse go back thirty years or so before Antiochus IV, some may question whether this can be validly described as "at the time of the end". However, Biblical prophecy regularly exhibits this characteristic of telescoping the future, so that more distant events merge with the nearer ones so as to become indistinguishable from them. Given that the focus is the Roman Empire as opposed to the Greek one which preceded it and that it is the Roman Empire that is in the "time of the end" this is not really a problem. Keep in mind that Rome extended many hundreds of years beyond the Grecian one.

2. Daniel 11:40b NIV

(40b) He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood.

It is clear from all of Daniel that the focus of events centres on Jerusalem and the nation of the Jews. For this reason, the primary domain is the Eastern Mediterranean. The Roman Empire continued to expand until around 117 AD under Trajan. The description of the

⁶⁰ F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations*, (the Paternoster Press, 1969)

expansion being like a flood is a good characterization of the Roman advances. The advance of Rome is traced in the following table

Province	Year when it became Roman	Notes
Achaea	148BC	
Macedonia	146BC	
Asia	133BC	
Numidia (North Africa)	106BC	
Lydia and Pamphilia	103BC	
Phrygia	103BC	
Pisidia	102BC	
Cilicia	101BC	
Cyrenaica (North Africa)	96BC	
Bithynia	74BC	
Crete	69BC	
Pontus	65BC	
Syria	64BC	Pompey
Judea (a dependency)	63BC	Pompey. Became part of the province of Syria in 6 AD under Augustus
Egypt	30BC	Augustus
Cyprus	27BC	Augustus
Galatia	25BC	Augustus
Cappadocia	20BC	Augustus
Arabia	106AD	Trajan
Armenia	114AD	Under Emperor Trajan
Assyria	117AD	(the greatest extent
Mesopotamia	117AD	of the empire)

The description of sweeping through many countries like a flood is clearly accurate. Since the advance is from one country to the next adjacent ones, the picture of an unstoppable, advancing flood conveys very well the nature of the expansion. After that time relatively small gains were made at a much slower rate and Imperial Rome went into a phase of consolidating and exploiting these gains.

3. *Daniel 11:41a NIV*

(41a) He will also invade the Beautiful Land.

In 64 BC Pompey marched into Syria and deposed the final Seleucid king Antiochus XIII Asiaticus (69-64 BC) and made that country a Roman province. In 63 BC he advanced further south, in order to establish the Roman supremacy in Phoenicia, Coele-Syria and Palestine. After that he captured Jerusalem. The Jews refused to submit to him, and shut the gates of Jerusalem against him, and it was not until after a siege of three months that the city was taken. Pompey entered the sacred Holy of Holies in the temple; this was only the second time that someone had dared to penetrate into this sacred spot.

4. *Daniel 11:41b NIV*

(41b) Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand.

Whatever interpretation is applied to Daniel 11:36-45, the references to Edom, Moab and Ammon are challenging to understand. When Rome advanced into Judea the land previously occupied by these nations had already been overrun by the Nabateans, with the exception of a small region in southern Israel which became known as Idumea; what was left of Edom. After the Romans put down the Jewish revolt in 66-70 D, Idumea was totally absorbed into the Roman province of Syria.

The NIV translation of the reference to Ammon as the “leaders of Ammon” is a difficult phrase for translators. TWOT⁶¹ suggests that the more probable reading is the “best of the Ammonites”. The ESV and NRSV read “the main part of the Ammonites”. Perhaps “most of Ammon” is possible as in the Living Bible. Another possibility is “what is left of Ammon” as in the Good News Bible or the “best part of Ammon” as in the New living Translation. Since it should be understood that it is the region of these countries that is meant and not the people (see next paragraph) a translation like the ESV would be correct.

So it is necessary to understand that the references to Edom, Moab and Ammon are circumscribing the region rather than identifying the people. From history it is known that this region was under the control of the Arab people known as the Nabataeans by the time Antiochus IV became ruler and also when the Romans came. A significant feature of this description is to recognize that Moab and Ammon did not exist as nations any more in the second century BC and Edom was compressed into a small region identified as Idumea, so for a writer in the second century BC to refer to these three nations by name when they had long disappeared rather than by a current second century BC name to reflect their Arab occupation would be strange. It is also significant, that the writer has listed these three nations together and so defined the region which would be occupied by the single Nabataean nation by the time of the Romans. These factors argue that this text must have been written at an earlier time when the three nations existed in their own right and that prophetically they have defined a region which would be occupied by a single nation when the prophecy was to be fulfilled. The description of the “main part of Ammon” is also significant in that the Nabateans were not in control of what was the northerly domain of Ammon in Daniel’s time; the high probability is that this phrase is therefore quite precise. It is also interesting to note that this understanding fulfils the words of prophecy in Ezekiel 25:1-11 that both Ammon and Moab will be given “to the people of the East as a possession”; note that the people of the East are unlikely to be the Babylonians as the Jews were already in exile under the control of Babylon when this word was given. In addition, Ezekiel 25:12-14 accords well with the ultimate destruction of Edom by Israel.

The Roman military did not ultimately succeed in their campaigns against the Nabateans in the last century BC; in 62 BC Marcus Aemilius Scaurus accepted a bribe of 300 talents to relieve a siege on Petra (the Nabataean capital), partly because of the difficult terrain and also because Scaurus had run out of food provisions⁶². The Nabateans subsequently became allies of the Romans which served to provide a buffer for them against invasion from nations further to the East. They continued to flourish throughout the first century AD. Their power extended far into Arabia along the Red Sea to Yemen and Petra remained a cosmopolitan marketplace. Under the Pax Romana (the peace afforded to all nations under Rome) they lost their warlike and nomadic habits, and were a sober, acquisitive, orderly people, wholly intent on trade and agriculture. Rabbel II Soter was the last King of the Nabataeans, ruling from 70 until 106 AD. After Rabbel II Soter’s death, the Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) annexed the Nabataean kingdom in 106 AD and it became the Roman province of Arabia.

From this description, it is possible to see how the region was indeed delivered from the hands of the Romans. They were never conquered by military power and indeed Petra was delivered from their hand. They subsequently remained allies of Rome for a significant period of time and the transfer to Roman rule in 106 AD was through a largely peaceful annexation rather than military conquest. Remarkably, history has shown that at the time when the “beautiful land” was invaded by the Romans and many countries in the East fell to their military conquest, the Nabataeans were indeed delivered from their hands in 62 BC in the only significant military threat to their sovereignty by either the Seleucids or the Romans!

⁶¹ Harris, Archer and Waltke, *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (Moody Bible Institute, 1980) 826.

⁶² Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 14.5.1

It is interesting that Gurney has also recognized this interpretation as he describes the destruction of the Greek Empire⁶³. If Antiochus IV or the end of the age ruler is the king, it is difficult to see what these verses might mean. Remember that Daniel was told by the man in linen that this vision would give him understanding⁶⁴.

5. *Daniel 11:42 NIV*

(42) He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape.

Not only did the Romans defeat many countries in battle, they also made these countries into provinces setting up a provincial government in them and in many cases stationing legions to provide security and protect the territory gained from external invasion by other empires.

In pursuit of total control of the Empire, Julius Caesar, after conquering Gaul from 58-50 BC, entering Rome in 49 BC and defeating Pompey in the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC, pursued the fleeing Pompey to Egypt. In Egypt, Pompey was killed and Julius Caesar participated in the Alexandrian War from 48-47 BC. He won this war and put Cleopatra on the throne of Egypt. Eventually he became the Roman Empire's first dictator in 44 BC. After the assassination of Julius Caesar one month later, the Roman Empire entered a period of Civil War between three powerful generals, Anthony, Octavian and Lepidus. Egypt became a Roman Province in 30 BC after Octavian won a major naval victory over Anthony (the battle of Actium in 31 BC) in the civil war between them. This story is covered by Shakespeare and popularized by the movie "Anthony and Cleopatra." In 27 BC, Octavian reached a constitutional settlement with the Senate at Rome which gave him the title "Augustus" and made him the first Roman emperor. This was the beginning of Imperial Rome. The peaceful provinces were left in the control of senatorial governors; while in frontier and other provinces where military action might be needed, Augustus chose his own governors.

6. *Daniel 11:43 NIV*

(43) He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission.

From the time of Augustus, wealthy Egypt provided most of the grain for Rome's urban population. These countries were rich in natural resources. Nubia is Ethiopia. History assures us that the wealth of Egypt was a major source of the ongoing strength of the Empire, providing food for Rome and monies to support the standing army.

7. *Daniel 11:44 NIV*

(44) But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many.

Here we see prophecy being foreshortened. Rome fought many battles in the east against the Parthian and later the Persian Empire and against the encroaching Germanic peoples such as the Goths, Visigoths, Huns and others in the North over the next few hundred years.

In the final centuries BC, the empire of the Parthians progressively took control of Persia and Mesopotamia in the East. In 53 BC, they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Roman general Crassus at Carrhae and in 36 BC they caused heavy casualties to Mark Anthony's retreating army. But by the second century AD, they were no longer the force they had been. Emperor Trajan successfully invaded Mesopotamia in 114 AD and controlled the whole country for a brief period. Nearly a century later as a result of the Parthian Wars (195-199 AD), Rome established two new provinces in the Eastern portion of Mesopotamia. A subsequent attack in 217 AD by Emperor Caracalla, although it weakened the Parthians did not result in further territorial gains.

⁶³ Gurney (2006), chapter 6, page 9.

⁶⁴ Dan 10:14.

The middle of the third century was a period of weakness in the Roman Empire as it was threatened by internal strife and foreign invasions especially from the Goths in the North Eastern provinces. The Goths even managed to mount a combined land and sea offensive in 268 AD and sack Athens. In the 220's, the Persians overcame their Parthian overlords to establish a new empire east of the Euphrates. They staged multiple attacks in the east culminating in a great invasion in 253 AD when Antioch was sacked. The Romans fought back successfully on all fronts and within a few years the Persians were driven back beyond the Tigris and the Goths beyond the Danube.

With the accession of Emperor Diocletian in 284 AD, the empire entered into a period of reorganization and recovery. Unwilling to share power like Diocletian, Constantine defeated his rivals, reunified the empire, made Christianity the state religion and moved the capital to Constantinople in 330 AD. Prosperity continued through most of the fourth century. In 378 AD the Romans lost the Battle of Adrianople and subsequently the Western Empire gradually disintegrated with attacks from the Northern Germanic Vandals, Visigoths and Goths. Finally, the last Western Roman emperor Romulus was forced to abdicate in 476 AD as Rome became part of the Ostrogothic kingdom.

From this point on the Eastern Roman Empire became known as the Byzantine Empire with its capital in Constantinople. Eventually, this empire was destroyed by the Islamic Empire in 1453 AD.

It is probably worth pointing out that with this verse, Mauro reverts back to seeing the history as that of Herod the Great⁶⁵. However, the ground used for changing the antecedent for "he" between verses 43 and 44 is absent other than that the history can be made to match. The historical referents he makes are also unconvincing since they seem to be at too detailed a level rather than at the big picture level of national conflict.

8. *Daniel 11:45 NIV*

(45) He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Daniel 11:45 ESV

(45) And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

The two variations reflect the variations of understanding in our English translations. The NIV suggests that the royal tents (the center of government) is located on the temple mount at Jerusalem between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas (the Hebrew word for seas is plural). Alternatively, the ESV takes the plural word for sea as a plural by extension⁶⁶ (reflecting a large surface) and so the center of government is between the Mediterranean Sea and the temple mount at Jerusalem. Since both are grammatically possible, then the interpretation will depend on the context.

If the king is the Roman Empire, then this verse is a summary statement of the Roman Empire's authority over God's people throughout most of this period. It describes the Roman province of Syria, whose capital was located at Caesarea. A paraphrase of this verse might then be, "Even though the Roman Empire set up Caesarea as the capital of the province of Syria in 6 AD between the Mediterranean Sea and the temple mount at Jerusalem, yet the Roman Empire still came to its end with no one to help it." In this interpretation, all phrases of the verse have an acceptable meaning.

Wikipedia makes this entry about Caesarea, "The pagan city underwent vast changes under Herod the Great, who renamed it Caesarea in honor of the emperor. In 22 BCE he began construction of a deep sea harbor and built storerooms, markets, wide roads, baths, temples to Rome and Augustus, and imposing public buildings. Every five years the city

⁶⁵ Mauro (1944) 61.

⁶⁶ Goldingay (1989)

hosted major sports competitions, gladiator games, and theatrical productions”⁶⁷. The Jewish Virtual Library says “In the year 6 CE, Caesarea became the seat of the Roman procurators of Provincia Judaea and headquarters of the 10th Roman Legion. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the city expanded and became one of most important in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, classified as the “Metropolis of the Province of Syria Palaestina”, Caesarea played an important role in early Christian history. Here the baptism of the Roman officer Cornelius took place; (Acts 10:1-5, 25-28) from here Paul set sail for his journeys in the eastern Mediterranean; and here he was taken prisoner and sent to Rome for trial (Acts 23:23-24). *The palace* was built on a rock promontory jutting out into the sea, in the southern part of the Roman city. The excavations revealed a large architectural complex, measuring 110 x 60 m., with a decorative pool, surrounded by porticoes. This elegant structure in its unique location was identified as Herod’s palace. (Antiquities, XV, 332) The palace was in use throughout the Roman period, as attested to by two columns with Greek and Latin dedicatory inscriptions naming governors of the province of Judea”⁶⁸.

If “the king” is Antiochus IV, then the verse is much more problematic. Antiochus IV and his army did station themselves near Jerusalem on at least two occasions, but he was not there when he died and his authority only lasted about 3 years. If “the king” is the antichrist, then the NIV translation suits better than the ESV since setting up his authority at the temple mount does make sense.

In 37 BC, the Roman Senate appointed a Jew, Herod the Great, king of Judea. He was unpopular and imposed heavy taxes some of which were used to build grandiose buildings especially the rebuilding of the temple. At his death in 4 BC, the kingdom was divided between his three sons which was an unsatisfactory arrangement from the Roman point of view. That is why this government was superseded in 6 AD, when Judea became part of the Roman province of Syria governed from Caesarea. In 26 AD Pontius Pilate became procurator, effectively the governor in the region for the next ten years. This reduction of the authority of the Herodian dynasty is a problem for Mauro⁶⁹ in choosing the “king” in Daniel 11:36 to be Herod the Great.

Under Roman rule, the treatment of Judean subjects was often callous and brutal. In 66 AD there was a major Jewish uprising and the Roman legions were needed to retake Jerusalem in 70 AD. They utterly destroyed the temple which meant the daily sacrifice was stopped and the rebellion was finally crushed in 73 AD. This was not the end of Jewish turbulence, but it was a major turning point. Judeans continued to live in their land in significant numbers, and were allowed to practice their religion, until the second century when Julius Severus ravaged Judea while putting down the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 AD. At this time 985 villages were destroyed and the Jews were banished from Jerusalem; the Jewish population then centred on Galilee. The on-going activities of the Jews are a problem for the interpretation given by Mauro⁷⁰ who sees the national power of the Jews totally broken in 70 AD.

Many of the Jews living in Judea were sold into slavery while others became citizens in other parts of the Roman Empire. This is part of the explanation of the Diaspora, or the Jews who were scattered all over the Roman and Persian Empires. However many of the Jews in the Diaspora were most likely descendants of Jews previously deported from Israel and Judah or who migrated to the cities of the Hellenistic world, especially to Alexandria and Asia Minor. They would have been affected by the Diaspora in a spiritual sense, as the sense of loss and homelessness which became a cornerstone of the Jewish creed was also supported by persecutions in various parts of the world. The policy of conversion, which spread the Jewish religion throughout the Hellenistic civilization, seems to have ended with the wars against the Romans and the following reconstruction of Jewish values for the post-Temple era.

⁶⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesarea>.

⁶⁸ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Archaeology/Caesarea.html>

⁶⁹ Mauro (1944).

⁷⁰ Mauro (1944).

Of critical importance for the reshaping of Jewish tradition from the Temple-based religion to the traditions of the Diaspora was the development of the interpretations of the Torah found in the Mishnah and Talmud.

Jews were widespread throughout the Roman Empire and to a lesser extent in the period of Byzantine rule in the central and eastern Mediterranean. The militant and exclusive Christianity and the Caesaropapism of the Byzantine Empire did not treat Jews well, and the condition and influence of Diaspora Jews in the Empire declined dramatically. Several pogroms were initiated under a variety of Emperors, and the treatment of Jews can be generalized as vicious and cruel.

As we have already seen, the Western Roman Empire eventually succumbed to the Northern invasion in 476 AD. The Eastern Roman Empire, later called Byzantium, was eventually destroyed by the Islamic Kingdom in 1453 AD. The end of the Roman Empire is an interesting contrast to the attempt to destroy the Jews under Antiochus IV where it is said in Daniel 11:34 that they will receive "a little help" and in Daniel 12:1 of the help they received from Michael. When the Roman Empire was finally destroyed, there was no one to help, however, the Jews received help and survived and outlasted both the Greeks and the Romans. This is a fact the writer of Daniel wants us to know.

This final phrase in Daniel 11:40-45 is the only one that could be applied with some confidence to Antiochus IV. However, it can be applied even better to the Roman Empire and fits the overall context far better.

As a result of this analysis, it would seem appropriate to paraphrase these verses to reflect the interpretation that has been given, since translations have assumed the eschatology in their translation and imparted a meaning which has been shown to be invalid. We have based this on the NIV, but it could have equally well come from other translations. Note that the parentheses are mine.

Daniel 11:40-45 modified

(40) "At the time of the end the king of the South will ^aengage in battle together with^a him, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. (41) He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but (the regions defined by) Edom, Moab and the ^bmain part^b of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. (42) He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. (43) He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. (44) But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. (45) He will pitch his royal tents between the Mediterranean Sea and the beautiful holy mountain (at Caesarea). Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

Comment

40a-a: This paraphrase reflects the fact that the Hebrew word translated "with" depicts a close relationship emphasizing companionship, togetherness and fellowship. It can be understood to be in battle against as many translations imply, but the idea of fighting on the same side and being in alliance is also possible and reflects accurately the relationship that the Ptolemaic kingdom made with Rome in battle against Antiochus III in the Aegean region and their subsequent co-operative relationship until Egypt became a Roman province.

41b-b: The paraphrase here reflects the meaning of the Hebrew word which contains the idea of "the best of". However, it needs to be seen that the words are designed to reflect the land region of these three nations in the sixth century, and not the people, so translating as "the leaders of Ammon" as in the NIV is less appropriate. By the time of Antiochus IV, this entire region was occupied by the Arab people known as the Nabateans with their capital at Petra.

Although concise, these six verses give us an accurate overview of the history of the Roman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The detail level corresponds well with the earlier description of events under the Greek Empire. Keep in mind that under Rome, in a broad general sense, a single kind of rule operated even though the rulers changed; the Roman State in Republican and Imperial form was substantially similar in character until Constantine and even after that did not change that much. Its focus on military power was still similar. During the Greek Empire the circumstances changed dramatically with each king, as first the South and then the North dominated the “beautiful land”. Under Rome, in a general sense, Rome dominated the “beautiful land” throughout the period so that greater detail of the history under each senate and each emperor is not needed.

9. Conclusions

The interpretation that Daniel 11:40-45 describes the history of the Roman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean from 192 BC when Antiochus III invaded Macedonia until the demise of Roman authority in the region around Jerusalem in 638 AD is very strong. This is because every clause matches the known history of the region precisely, both in chronological order and detail. The growth of the empire is described in verses 40 to 43, its demise in verse 44 with an overall summary in verse 45.

In contrast, the match with the known history of Antiochus IV is poor and the match with the end time antichrist speculative. In the case of the latter, some of the interpretation of the description is doubtful. For example, the references to the king of the South and the king of the North as end time authorities, when all previous references are to Grecian kings should require verification. Further the reference to the region defined by Edom, Moab and the main part of Ammon does not correspond to a currently existing nation. In fact, the land of Edom is currently part of Israel and the region of Moab and Ammon part of Jordan. Of course, this can change, but the precision of this region being the nation of Nabatea during the Roman Empire is highly significant. The issue that “the time of the end” defines the final 3½ or 7 years before Jesus returns will be addressed later. However, it needs to be emphasized that this is a descriptive term that must be understood from Daniel’s perspective, not ours today, since the visions are to give Daniel understanding. It will not do to assume that they will only make sense at or near the time of fulfillment.

V. The Jews in Great Trouble

1. Daniel 12:1a NIV

(1a) “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.

The opening phrase “At that time”, makes clear that this passage is in the same period of time as the previous context, that is, “the time of the end” in Daniel 11:40.

There are five references to Michael in the Bible⁷¹. The one in Judges 1:9 identifies him as an archangel, clearly a top level spiritual being and this reference also suggests that his status was equal to that of the devil in the days of Moses. The three references in Daniel inform us that Michael is the prince whose responsibility is over the Jews and that he is “a great prince” who protects them. The two references in Daniel 10 suggest that Michael came to the assistance of the “man in linen” against the spiritual power over Persia probably, in part, because of the presence of Jews in the Persian region and also as a result of Daniel’s prayer. The reference in Daniel 10:21 also implies, that assistance of the “man in linen” from Michael, also led to many Jewish exiles returning to Jerusalem. The reference in Revelation 12:7, suggests a conflict when Michael supported by his angels fights against the devil and his forces. This is very likely the time when Michael “will arise”; since this fits the pattern of the book of Revelation’s many allusions to the book of Daniel. This would be further supported by the context in the previous verse in Revelation 12:6 speaking of God’s people (the woman) fleeing into the desert and being taken care of for

⁷¹ Dan 10:13, 21; Dan 12:1. Jud 1:9; Rev 12:7

1260 days. Since Revelation 12:6-7 is clearly after Jesus, this further supports our contention that the king is not Antiochus IV.

Daniel's phraseology here is very significant. Daniel says the degree of distress will be unequaled "until then" since it ranks the level of distress as the worst up until this time, but leaves open the possibility that there may be a time of distress even worse in the future.

The previous analysis has shown that there are now three major hypotheses about when this prophecy is fulfilled. It is either during the time of Antiochus IV, or the Roman Empire or the antichrist. The interesting thing is that these three periods of time are periods when the Jews have or will experience a severe "time of distress", each of which is worse than the one before. History reveals that the suffering of the Jews under the Roman Empire was greater and longer than that under Antiochus IV. In addition, the words of Jesus would suggest that the final period of suffering just before Jesus returns will be worse than any previous one, but never to be equaled again. Jesus said, "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again"⁷². The phraseology of Jesus' quotation would clearly suggest an allusion to Daniel 12:1, with the extra phrase He added "never to be equaled again" suggesting that Jesus interpreted Daniel 12:1 as the previous period of suffering which was the worst until then. If it is the previous period of suffering then it must be that under Rome, because in Luke 21:20-24, Jesus clearly describes a similar and difficult period of suffering the Jews will experience flowing from the desolation of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 AD prior to the end of the age suffering, but after that under Antiochus IV.

Those scholars, for example Walvoord, must contend that this time of distress is during the reign of the antichrist⁷³ and that it is the period of "the Great Tribulation" in the last 3½ years before Jesus returns. This conclusion depends on an argument external to this final vision in Daniel relying on a chain of chronological links from Daniel to Revelation and back so that there is no way that Daniel could have understood it. An examination of this chain of time links will be the subject of a future paper, but let us state now that it relies on a number of poorly established and fragile exegetical assumptions.

2. *Daniel 12:1b-3 NIV*

(1b) But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. (2) Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. (3) Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

If "the king" is the Roman Empire, then the beginning of the deliverance of those whose name is written in the book must also begin at that time⁷⁴. For us today, this clearly suggests that the deliverance is that associated with the first coming of Jesus, whose coming inaugurated the "last days". This neatly harmonizes with the interpretation that Revelation 1:5 is about the ascension of Jesus into heaven and the setting up of God's rule on His throne in heaven at that time. This deliverance must be spiritual and connect with the salvation available to all people who place their trust in Jesus. Here in Daniel 12:1 then, they must be Christian Jews or Jews who have faith in God like Abraham whose deliverance will be determined at the final judgment⁷⁵. That final judgment also specifies that those whose name is written in the book of life will be delivered.

⁷² Matt 24:21 and also Mark 13:19.

⁷³ Walvoord (1989) 282.

⁷⁴ By this inference, we do not mean to imply that the deliverance begins exactly when Rome engaged in battle with Antiochus III in 192-188 BC, but rather less specifically during the period of the Roman Empire.

⁷⁵ Rev 20:11-15.

Following on from verse 1, verse 2 speaks of a final resurrection consistent with the resurrection that precedes the final judgment. Then verse 3 is an encouragement to the wise and the faithful. Jesus seems to allude to the first half of verse 3 when he was explaining the parable of the wheat and the weeds and shares about the reward that will be received by the righteous, "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father"⁷⁶.

At this point there is a summary statement about the rewards for the wise which has similarities with Daniel 11:33-35. There, the vision is talking about those who are wise at and subsequent to the persecution by Antiochus IV. Here the rewards are associated with the period during and perhaps after the end of the empire of the king not unlike those at the end of the Greek Empire. Gurney (2006) argues that the repetition of this pattern from that in Daniel 11:33 under Antiochus IV supports this passage referring to the period of Antiochus IV. However, Daniel 11:33-35 suggests that the period of time is prior to the "time of the end", whereas here in Daniel 12:2-3 we are already in the "time of the end". Therefore, it must mark the suffering of the Jews under Rome and subsequent events. The whole context that has been studied from Daniel 11:36 onwards would support this conclusion. Those that see the king as the antichrist would of course see the rewards as being associated with that final time of persecution. However, the evidence for this view comes from considerations external to this vision, whereas the interpretation that the suffering is that under Rome comes primarily from the content of the vision itself which is far more compelling and no longer speculative.

Note that God's treatment of His people is really special and even though many of them rejected the Messiah, they are judged according to their faith in what they know. Fundamentally, their deliverance is based on the same grounds as applies to all of us.

3. *Daniel 12:4 NIV*

(4) But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

The basic meaning of the Hebrew word translated "close up" here, is either to "stop up" or to "hide". The sense of these words seem to be that either Daniel is to stop writing the words he is being given and then secure the scroll or the written communication he is making or that its meaning is to be hidden (not that it is closed so that it cannot be read). The idea of "sealing" then implies that the book should not be available to everyone, but only to those to whom authority has been given. In this way God is somehow controlling the measure of understanding that is given to us. It should be explained then that this "hiding" and "sealing" does not prevent people from reading the book, but it does imply that its meaning will not be properly understood until God's appointed time. It may also mean that Daniel has put together this vision in such a way that it cannot be fully understood until certain keys have been supplied. It is an encoded prophecy. This may well explain the considerable confusion that still exists in our understanding of this vision. Note that it is Daniel that is to do the closing and sealing in this verse.

The final sentence may relate to this perception. People "will go here and there" to seek understanding, but the statement is rhetorical. Knowledge will increase, but understanding will not be obtained until God's appointed time.

Some scholars suggest that this scroll is the whole book of Daniel, not just the final vision⁷⁷. However, Daniel is still receiving words from the "man in linen" so the context strongly suggests that he is to close up and seal the words he has just received and (presumably) written. Daniel is to close and seal these words and it will remain that way until "the time of the end" which is now known to start in the period of the Roman Empire. The "scroll" cannot refer to the "book of Truth"⁷⁸ that the "man in linen" is using as his resource, since Daniel has no access to it.

⁷⁶ Matt 13:43a

⁷⁷ E.g. Goldingay (1989) 309

⁷⁸ Dan 10:21

VI. How Long?

1. *Daniel 12:5-6 NIV*

(5) Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. (6) One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?"

There are significant similarities in pattern between this vision and the one in Daniel 8. They may help us to understand this vision. In Daniel 8:1-14, Daniel records the vision he received. In the final component of that vision Daniel hears a holy one speaking and then another holy one asks the first one a "How long" question about certain events that had occurred in the vision. The first holy one replies with a very specific length of time (2,300 evenings and mornings) after which the sanctuary will be restored. The structure of this final vision is similar except that it is much longer (Daniel 11:2-12:7). It also involves three angelic beings, two of which emerge near the end and one of them asks the "man in linen" a "How long" question. The "man in linen" replies with the length of time being the "time, times and half a time", at the completion of which the shattering of the power of God's people will come to an end. In both visions, one angel does not participate in the answer about the length of time, but is there as a witness to it; as Walvoord points out this is in keeping with the concept of two witnesses establishing a point⁷⁹. It also underlines the importance of the answer.

The Hebrew text for the "How long" question has led to some differences in translation which impact on the understanding of precisely what is being asked. These differences need to be resolved.

The interlinear translation in Green (1985) is "Until when (is) the end of the wonders?" which is translated in the margin as "How long until the end of these wonders?"

KJV: "How long *shall it be to* the end of these wonders?"

NKJV: "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be*?"

ESV, NRSV: "How long shall it be until the end of these wonders?"

NASB: "How long *will it be* until the end of *these* wonders?"

JPS: "How long shall it be to the end of the wonders?"

Mauro, who examines only the KJV, assumes that the words in italics should not be there and interprets the question to mean "How long the end of these wonders?"⁸⁰ In other words, "How long will it take to complete all the wonders that occur in the time of the end?" However, this view conflicts with the weight of scholarly understanding reflected in all the translations.

Harman gives a puzzling statement saying the "The question relates to when the astonishing events that have been spoken about will commence."⁸¹ He does not define what the astonishing events are and it is therefore strange not to recognize them as beginning in the third year of Cyrus. It is even more strange that on the next page, when considering the answer in verse 7, that the commencement of these events is a period of time and not a point in time. Of critical importance is to identify what is the beginning and ending of "these astonishing things" for that will define the period of time to which the "How long" question applies.

Baldwin takes the astonishing things as the sufferings and deliverances in Daniel 11:31-12:3 without giving the reason for this limit⁸². Lucas takes the astonishing things to be the

⁷⁹ Walvoord (1989) 293 and Deut 19:15; 2 Cor 13:1.

⁸⁰ Mauro (1944).

⁸¹ Harman (2007) 305.

⁸² Baldwin (1978) 207.

events of Daniel 11:29-12:3 since the “word used for ‘awesome events’ is a different form from the same root as the word used for Antiochus’ deeds in Daniel 8:24 and 11:36”⁸³. This argument is not strong especially as it is uncertain (we believe incorrect) that Daniel 8:24 and 11:36 do in fact refer to events associated with Antiochus IV. Goldingay says the ‘awesome events’ apply only to events that came to a climax in Daniel 11:29ff and so does not clearly define what part of the vision is involved⁸⁴. Conner interprets Daniel 11:36-12:7 as referring to the end of the age ruler and interprets the time, times and half a time as the last three and one half years before the end of the age. In effect, the components of the ‘awesome events’ are inferred from the answer to the “how long” question⁸⁵. Walvoord does not address the question⁸⁶. Overall, it is strongly apparent that the identification of the beginning and the ending of the “awesome events” have been inadequately addressed in the literature that has been examined.

As described above in Daniel 8:13 a holy one asks a key question, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled?” This question is then further qualified by defining four components of the vision which are the subject of this “how long” question. In other words the question only includes the part of the vision concerned with the little horn which is at the end of the vision. It excludes the earlier part of the vision concerning the ram and the goat. The answer given is very specific. In the interpretation of this vision, the length of time of the answer given is confirmed and then Daniel is told to seal up the vision because it concerns the “distant future”.

Given the quality of the Danielic writings and also the force and importance that is given to the answer in Daniel 12:7, it seems unlikely that the author would have left the domain of the “how long” question unclear. If the question ‘how long will it be before ...’ was asked, the normal understanding would be that the starting point is the time the question was posed. The natural, logical and normal understanding of the domain is that the “how long” question refers to the whole vision. There is really no reason to doubt that this is what he intended for if he meant some subset of the whole vision he would have qualified the question with the intended components just as he did in Daniel 8:13.

From the whole context of this passage then it would seem difficult to interpret this question as starting from anything other than the third year of Cyrus and with the end point depending on the identity of the king.

2. *Daniel 12:7 NIV*

(7) The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, “It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.”

The whole tenor and context of this passage with the man clothed in linen and the two others and the swearing by Him who lives for ever seems to be to establish the authority and the witness behind the statement that the length of the period is a time, times and half a time. A total of four heavenly beings are involved!

Baldwin has difficulty interpreting the phrase “when the power of the holy people has been finally broken” because the assumed historical time period is Antiochus IV and the end result of the persecution and rebellion then was the success of the Maccabees⁸⁷. The interpretation that the final events of the vision refer to an end of the age ruler runs into the same difficulty, since when Jesus returns God’s people will not have their power shattered but rather they will be completely victorious! Lucas runs into a similar difficulty and Goldingay is vague. In the context of the whole vision, it is very difficult to see how

⁸³ Lucas (2002) 296

⁸⁴ Goldingay (1989) 309.

⁸⁵ Conner (2004) 288.

⁸⁶ Walvoord (1989) 292-294.

⁸⁷ Baldwin (1978) 208.

this period could be only three and one half years given that neither of these two historical referents fit very well.

However, by understanding that Daniel 11:36-12:7 refers to the Roman Empire, the interpretation is compelling, simple and natural and accords well with known history. The final phrase "the power of the holy people has been finally broken" seems to be a very apt description of the end result of the scattering of the Jews all over the known world at this time. Indeed, the Jews were left with no power in Jerusalem by the time the Islamic Kingdom captured Jerusalem in 638 AD and built the "Dome of the Rock" from 687-691 AD.

Additional evidence for this in detail is found in the paper by Abramson and Katz⁸⁸. The following points journal Roman invitations and Jewish attempts to rebuild the temple and has been taken from that paper.

70 C.E., The Temple is destroyed

100 C.E., Trajan gives Jews permission to rebuild the Temple which, however, they neither could nor would make any use.

118 C.E., Hadrian allows the Jews to return to Jerusalem and grants permission for the rebuilding of their Holy Temple, but soon reneges.

132 C.E., Rebel Bar Kochba re-institutes ritual sacrifice in Jerusalem. Aspirations of rebuilding Jewish Temple.

138 C.E., Antoninus Pius allows Jews to return to Jerusalem.

332 C.E., 'Bordeaux Pilgrim' reports that Jews anoint the "lapis perfusus" rock near Hadrian's statues on Temple Mount.

333 C.E., Edict of Milan, the Jews start to build the Temple.

362 C.E., Julian besieges the Persian city of Ctesiphon. Julian plans to rebuild the Temple and even begins construction.

438 C.E., Eudokia (wife of Theodosius II) gives the Jews permission to pray on Temple Mount.

443 C.E., Eudokia permits Temple reconstruction.

512 C.E., Jewish Exilarch Mar Zutra II tries to make Jewish State in Persia

525 C.E., Joseph Asher Dhu Nuwas, King of the Jewish Kingdom of Arabia, revolts against Rome with Persian help.

584 C.E., Maurice sent Jewish builders from Constantinople to Jerusalem to repair Julian's structure on Temple Mount.

614 C.E., Persian-Jewish alliance conquers Jerusalem, and attempts to construct a temple on the Temple Mount

638 C.E., Judeo-Arab alliance conquers Jerusalem. Jews build wooden Temple on the Temple Mount

691-692 C.E., Dome of the Rock is built by 'Abd al-Malik on (or adjacent to) the site of the Jewish Temple

Throughout this period a number of Jewish rebellions occurred, initially promoted from within the land, but later financed and encouraged from the Jewish Exilarch. With the advance of Islam, these power bases declined. The many attempts to rebuild the temple all failed and the daily sacrifice either was never resumed or if it was, only for short periods of time. As can be seen from the journal above, the conquest of Jerusalem in 638 BC by the growing Islamic kingdom, with help from the Jews is the final show of power by the "holy people" over Jerusalem until the modern era.

The explanation by Goldingay of the "time, times and half-a-time" in reference to Daniel 7:25 will be repeated here because of its importance⁸⁹. He says the Hebrew word translated "time" in the NIV is not simply a substitute for "year" although it could be. He says that the time, times and half-a-time "suggests a time that threatens to extend itself longer: one

⁸⁸ Abrahamson, Ben and Katz, Joseph, *The Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614CE compared with Islamic conquest of 638CE*, Draft Copy, 2004 (PDF file downloaded from the internet)

⁸⁹ Goldingay (1989) 181.

period, then a double period then a quadruple period... but the anticipated sequence suddenly breaks off, so that the seven periods (in effect an eternity) that were threatened are unexpectedly halved". Then he goes on to say in relation to the little horn that, "The period he rules is a long one, but is brought to a sudden termination. This way of speaking carries no implications whatsoever of the chronological length of time that will correspond to these periods". Similar reasoning can be applied to the time, times and half a time in Daniel 12:7.

It seems that the conclusion about the meaning of the "time, times and half a time" in Daniel 12:7 is irrefutable if Daniel 11:36-45 describes the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. It must be the period of time from the beginning of the vision given to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus around 535 BC until its end when the power of the Jews was finally broken. This occurred after the demise of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD and at least until the capture of Jerusalem by the Muslims in 638 AD. This is a total period of time coming close to 1200 years!

If this conclusion is correct, it is impossible that the king described in Daniel 11:36-45 can be Antiochus IV or an end of the age ruler. This conclusion is startling and has a huge impact on the interpretation of the book of Revelation. The time, times and half a time cannot be three and one half years as many maintain.

There can be no doubt that Daniel would have been very curious to know more. The vision that has been revealed to him would be as stunning to him as it is to us. He would have been deeply concerned that his people are left with their power broken and with many more years of desolation to follow. Of course he would want to know what was going to be the end of all this.

The view point presented here sees two climaxes rather than one in this final vision and then an undefined period beyond that whose details remain to be revealed in "the time of the end". The first climax is in the reign of Antiochus IV where persecution of the Jews is severe and their survival under threat. Daniel 11:21-35 focuses on this period. The end of this period is signaled in Daniel 11:33-35 in an interesting segment beginning with "those that are wise" and referring to suffering, refinement and a little help being received sufficient to enable survival. Daniel 11:32 shows firm resistance to Antiochus IV, implying but not specifically mentioning his final failure. The second climax is described in the verses which follow (Daniel 11:36-12:7) and as well as describing the nature and history of the Roman Empire, builds to a conclusion where the persecution of the Jews and the threat to their existence is even more severe. The Roman Empire is finally destroyed with no one to help (Daniel 11:45), but the Jews survive with help from Michael; however, the power of the Jews is broken (Daniel 12:7) and from history it is known that they were completely scattered with only a small number remaining in Jerusalem. The end of this period is also signaled in the text with the same phrase as in the first climax; the phrase "those that are wise" together with similar phrases describing their suffering and refinement (12:4 and 12:10) thus revealing a deliberate pattern in the way the whole vision has been put together.

VII. Epilogue

The vision that begins in Daniel 10 was given to Daniel by a man clothed in linen. The epilogue contains the final words from this heavenly messenger. The dialogue continues from the previous verse.

1. *Daniel 12:8 NIV*

(8) I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

Daniel having heard the answer to the "How long" question, has many more questions in his mind. He can see some things that he does not understand.

Daniel's question is - "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" It is very likely that he is puzzled because he knows that in the end, the desolation of his people will be concluded and his prayer given in Daniel 9 answered. But the answer to the last question has left his people scattered, defeated and with no power. This cannot be the final end, so he wants to know more.

NKJV: "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

NRSV: "My lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

Green: O My lord what the end of these

What will be the future, the last point of these things? He knows His people are not going to end with their power completely broken. He knows there is more to happen. They will be delivered (Daniel 12:1), but it is strange that at the end of this vision their power is completely broken.

2. *Daniel 12:9 NIV*

(9) He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.

It can be seen that the closing and sealing is metaphorical. He hears this response and knows that it is not the time for the complete answer to be given. He knows that further revelation is needed which will only be given at the time of the end. The scroll will be opened and unsealed at the time of the end. The full understanding will happen after a later revelation is given, but it is not for him to know. It should be noticed that these words are given by the "man in linen" who is informing Daniel that the words are closed and sealed. It is not Daniel who is to close and seal these words so this is the closing and sealing of a different resource accessible to the man in linen. The context then demands that this resource be the "Book of Truth" mentioned in Daniel 10:21. The revelation is incomplete, there is yet more to be given, but not until the time of the end. Until then, the additional revelation is to remain hidden and then exposed to those given the authority to reveal God's plan.

3. *Daniel 12:10 NIV*

(10) Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

Then Daniel is given just a few insights into that time. The first of these, given here is very general and is chiasmic with an ABB'A' pattern. It applies to God's people the Jews.

- A. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined,
- B. but the wicked will continue to be wicked.
- B'. None of the wicked will understand,
- A'. but those who are wise will understand.

As a result of this pattern the first and last phrases are related, the righteous, those who will be purified, made spotless and refined are also the wise who will understand. The two middle phrases are also related; the wicked will not change and none of them will understand. The wicked are also blind; they will not understand God's plan and neither will they see that God is in control. They will not see. This book has shown that in the end the wicked have nothing and their power on earth is totally destroyed.

In this verse there is a clear link with Daniel 11:35; the wise will stumble with the same result. The same three words are used, but their order is different. However the circumstances do explain that God's people will be made righteous and there is a time limit, until "the time of the end". Here in Daniel 12:10, the same process continues and the context shows us that it continues right through "the time of the end". Daniel 11:35 describes a process applicable to the Greek Empire, Daniel 12:10 is the ongoing process from the beginning of the Roman Empire until the end of the age.

4. *Daniel 12:11-13 NIV*

(11) "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. (12) Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. (13) "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

The words to Daniel suggest to him that there is a lot more time to pass before the end; two specific time periods and two events are specified and then Daniel is told that he will rest until the end of the days. Daniel 12:13 suggests that there is yet a long time to pass before the end of the days and so the 1290 days and the 1335 days must be long periods of time and not literal 24 hour days.

The vision has started with Daniel positioned at the beginning of the Persian Empire. He has seen in the vision many kings rise and fall within the Greek Empire which he knows will follow after the Persian one. That will then be followed by another Empire in the time of the end during which his people will suffer a time of distress like never before and at the end of which their power will be totally broken. At that point he is told to seal up the vision and prophecy. He knows that a long period of time; many hundreds of years must pass before this point is reached. He also knows that there must be a whole lot more, because from the seventy sevens prophecy he knows from Gabriel that God will be victorious in the end so that his prayer for his people will be answered. Therefore, his people cannot finish up with their power totally broken.

The two concluding words will ensure him of two things. Firstly, the righteous will receive their reward and receive their inheritance and God will be just. God's plan will not fail.

Secondly, and this will be discussed further in a later paper, it can be seen that Daniel would have inferred that the time, times and half a time in Daniel 12:7 is related to the 1290 days and the second one in Daniel 7:25 to the 1335 days. They are divided in the middle by the removal (stopping or ending) of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination that causes desolation. Notice how the abomination that causes desolation is singular here; only a single event is envisaged. This is the pattern of God's template for the history of His people given in the seventy sevens prophecy. The final seven in that prophecy describes two periods of three and one half which are separated by the abolition of the daily sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination which causes desolation. Thus he would know that this abomination that causes desolation is a third one; different from that in Daniel 8:13 and different from that in Daniel 11:31.

Daniel is now told to rest until the end of the days. He would see this as being many years in the future. Did Daniel know what these two lengths of time meant? I think so, but it is not possible to prove that this is so.

VIII. Conclusions

The following conclusions flow from the interpretation above in order for there to be balance and unity in the book of Daniel. These conclusions are put forward without extensive attempts to develop the foundation on which they are based. However, they are made with confidence to show how the effect of the interpretation above flows into the rest of the book of Daniel.

1. *Daniel 11:36-12:13 is about the rise and fall of the Roman Empire*

In this paper, this interpretation of the passage has been investigated as thoroughly as has been possible. The conclusions are startling. Every phrase has a precise, obvious and meaningful interpretation. The precision in the text is striking, at least equaling the visions earlier description of the Persian and Greek Empires. This is in dramatic contrast to the poor match with the known history of Antiochus IV and the rather speculative and at times doubtful match of the description with an antichrist in the last 3½ years before Jesus returns. It is our view that there can be little doubt about the validity of the interpretation given in this paper.

2. *The date of authorship of the book of Daniel*

The primary basis for the book of Daniel being written in the second century BC is the latest historical events described, which until now, has been the persecution against the Jews promulgated by Antiochus IV from 171 to 164 BC. If the king in Daniel 11:36 is the Roman Empire and Daniel 11:36-12:13 describes the rise and fall of this empire up until the Jews were totally scattered and no longer had any power in Jerusalem as occurred in 638 AD, then the basis for second century BC authorship disappears. The book must have been written in the sixth century BC.

3. *The Time of the End*

Under this interpretation, Daniel 11:40a describes the conflict between Antiochus III and the Roman Empire in 192-188 BC. This is specified as the "time of the end". The only logical inference is that the "time of the end" begins with the Roman Empire. We need to see this as Daniel's perspective looking from the sixth century to beyond the empires that existed in his day. For him, this was a long time in the future, and the phrase the "time of the end" is quite plausible from his framework. Of course, we know today that more than 2,000 years followed after, however, our perspective is very different and we need to be careful to understand the book of Daniel through Daniel's eyes not our own in the 21st century.

4. *The Time, Times and Half a Time in Daniel 12:7*

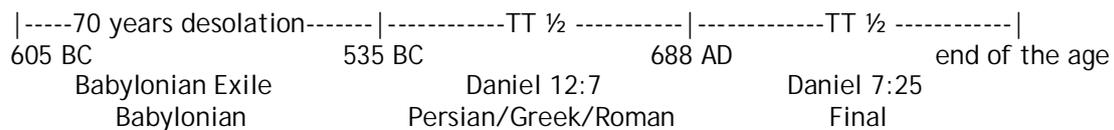
The time, times and half a time in Daniel 12:7 is symbolically a period of time which threatens to be a completion of some purpose, but is cut short. It must also be literally more than 1,200 years, not 3½ years as is frequently asserted. To be more precise, we believe it starts in 535 BC and terminates around 687-691 AD when the Dome of the Rock was being constructed on the temple mount in Jerusalem (a period of about 1,220 years).

It should be appreciated that this simple conclusion has enormous repercussions on our end time theology. It invalidates every existing published end time position, since most of them either assume that the time, times and half a time in Revelation 12:14 is 3½ years or that it is symbolic of the whole church age. In this conclusion it is neither of these.

5. *The Time, Times and Half a Time in Daniel 7:25*

Knowledgeable scholars of the book of Daniel will quickly make a connection between the time, times and half a time in Daniel 12:7 with the one in Daniel 7:25. The results are even more dramatic.

Since we are now certain of sixth century BC authorship of the book of Daniel, we can be sure that the four empires described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 and the vision in Daniel 7 are the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman Empires. Since the little horn in Daniel 7:8 emerges from the Roman Empire also lasts for a time, times and half a time (TT½), it must be contiguous with the one in Daniel 12:7 and follow after it. It is a different period of time from the one in Daniel 12:7 and when joined together with it makes a single longer period of seven, starting in 535 BC and still continuing today and with an abomination that causes desolation in the middle (Daniel 12:11-12).



The total period of time from these two TT½ must exceed 2,500 years as the end of the age has not yet come.

The astute student of the word of God will see that the two $TT\frac{1}{2}$'s precisely matches the final seven in Daniel 9:26-27. It contains two contiguous three and one halves with an "abomination that causes desolation" in the middle. However, this is not seven years, but very much longer. The prayer and vision of Daniel 9 will be examined in detail in Part 2 of this work.

6. *The Little Horn in Daniel 7*

All of Daniel's visions focus on God's people and centre on Jerusalem. The four empires he describes in Daniel 2 and 7 are all empires which had authority over Jerusalem and interestingly each of the founders of these empires is explicitly identified. So the question must be asked, what empire has controlled Jerusalem for most of the time after the Roman Empire and who was its founder?. The answer is clear, the Islamic kingdom. The little horn in Daniel 7 must therefore be Muhammad, the prophet and founder of the Islamic kingdom.

Daniel 7:7-8 NIV

(7) "After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast-- terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. (8) "While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

Without discussion here, we assert that the 10 horns are symbolic of an empire which was effective throughout the known world (10 can be symbolic of completeness), but whose authority was exercised through provincial or national local governments. When Islam rose to power starting in 610 AD, it advanced very rapidly and in the process claimed about one third of the existing Byzantine Empire (which was what remained of the Roman Empire at that time). In Daniel's vision, the little horn displaced 3 out of the 10 horns of the fourth beast; this is how one third would be expressed (when using integers) and so the proportion matches history.

In Daniel 7:25, the actions of the little horn are succinctly described.

Daniel 7:25 NIV

(25) He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

This is a particularly important verse and the English translations may have missed some of the intention of the Hebrew text because of the interpretation placed on it by the translators. The NIV translation misses the textual balance suggested by the Masoretic Text. Literally, and reflecting the Hebrew word order, the translation is:

And words against the Most High shall he speak,
And the holy ones of the Most High shall wear out.

And he will try to change times and law,
And they will be given into his hand until a time and times and one-half time.

The dashed line is inserted to reflect the Masoretic Text punctuation (an atnah) that divides the verse into two balanced halves as shown. This literal translation is similar to Goldingay⁹⁰ and Lucas⁹¹. Note that there are clearly two pairs of thought units each with two parallel lines (two bicolons) which implies that the "they" of the last line must be taken to refer to the "times and law" and not to the "saints" as interpreted by the NIV. This association of the "they" is also supported by the fact that the "times and law" are the immediate antecedent of the "they". This structure then implies that the little horn

⁹⁰ Goldingay (1989) 143.

⁹¹ Lucas (2002) 160.

will continue to function by trying to change the times and law for a time, times and half a time.

The important point of interest here is how most English translations associate the “they” of the last phrase as being associated with the saints rather than the times and law. This would fit the interpretation usually given of a persecution under the little horn for three and a half years; however, it is a less likely interpretation from a grammatical point of view.

However, if as we assert, the little horn is Muhammad, then the description is an excellent summary of the way in which the Islamic kingdom has exercised its authority throughout its history. In fact, history tells us that Islam was very tolerant of the Jews; however, they were treated as second class citizens making their existence within that kingdom difficult. In fact, that difficulty was enhanced because the Muslims would meet five times a day and they operated under their own calendar which was different from the Jews. As a result, gradually the number of Jews in Islamic countries declined. A similar numerical decline has also happened for Christians.

7. The Little Horn in Daniel 8

There are significant similarities between the two visions in Daniel 7 and Daniel 8. The second was only given two years after the first and they both use an apocalyptic style where empires are depicted as animals and both end with the activities of a little horn. In fact, there is some evidence (not addressed here) that the two visions come together to form a single unified picture even though the former was written in Aramaic and the latter in Hebrew.

Not only that, the description of the ram in Daniel 8, which is clearly interpreted as the kingdom of the Medes and Persians in Daniel 8:20, has strong common features with the bear in Daniel 7:5. Further, the description of the goat in Daniel 8, is clearly interpreted as the kingdom of Greece in Daniel 8:21 and has strong common features with the leopard in Daniel 7:6. Given that the book of Daniel can no longer be written in the second century BC (point 2 above), then the fourth beast in Daniel 7:7 must be the Roman Empire.

The vision then says the following

Daniel 8:9 NIV

(9) Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land.

Many scholars have interpreted this little horn as Antiochus IV and others have said he is Antiochus IV and a type of the final end time ruler. This interpretation has always been doubtful because even though there are some similarities, the differences have never been explained. Verse 9 says he starts off small, but the Seleucid Empire was the largest at the time when Antiochus IV took the leadership. The vision also says he was very successful which was also not true of Antiochus IV.

The new perspectives on the final vision remove the ambiguity. Daniel 8:17 and 19 clearly provides an interpretation which shows that this little horn emerged in the “time of the end”. Since this period begins with the Roman Empire, there is no way that this little horn can be Antiochus IV as many assert. He must be the end of the age ruler.

This vision must then be interpreted to say that the end of the age ruler emerges out of the region of the Greek Empire, starts off small and grows in power towards the south and the east and towards the Promised Land. This makes it very likely that he will emerge to the north of the land of Israel and be Islamic.

The pattern is symmetric. The little horn in Daniel 7 defines the beginning of the kingdom that emerges after the Roman Empire. The little horn in Daniel 8 defines the final end of that kingdom. Some may argue that Muhammad died in 632 AD and therefore he did not

last until the end of the age as Daniel 7 portrays. However, we need to note that his name has carried authority right up until the present day.

8. Overall Summary

The overall picture that has emerged from simply finding the interpretation to Daniel 11:36-12:13 dramatically modifies the picture of history and imparts a precision and reality to the prophetic word of God in Daniel which exceeds anything seen before. But this is just the beginning. Part 2 will examine the famous and highly controversial seventy sevens prophecy and the whole of Daniel 9. We are now going where no one has been before. The result is different, but just as amazing. The effect on the book of Revelation is extraordinary.