

THE VISION OF THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT

PERSIA, GREECE AND ALEXANDER THE GREAT;
THE SELEUCIDS AND ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES;
AND ROME AND HEROD THE KING

By

Gerry Watts

Two years after Daniel had received the vision of the four beasts (see the earlier foundational study [The Vision of the Great Image and the Four Beasts](#)), he was given another vision, which can be found in Daniel chapter 8. This vision of the Ram and the He-goat revealed further details concerning that which lay ahead for His covenant people, Israel, in the years following the restoration from the Babylonian Captivity. God had already begun to reveal these things to His people through Daniel in the earlier visions. These visions were especially concerned with the people, and land, of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, giving details of those empires or nations who would cross paths with God's covenant people until the arrival of the promised Messiah.

As we shall now see, this vision focuses a little more on the rise of the Media-Persian Empire, followed by the rise of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great and its subsequent division into four lesser kingdoms. We are also given some very specific details about one of the kings of these four kingdoms and the first mention of the phrase 'the abomination (or transgression) of desolation' in relation to the overpowering and treading down of Jerusalem and the Temple by this king. Further details are also given about a certain king who would arise who would ultimately take his stand against the Messiah Himself.

The prophetic details that are revealed in Daniel chapter 8, as well as those in chapters 9 and 11, are amongst the most amazing predictions ever given. Scholars and commentators, as well as the average 'lay person,' are left with only two conclusions after seriously considering these prophecies in the book of Daniel:

1. They were divinely inspired by God through the prophet Daniel in the 6th century BC

Or

2. They were written later, after the events had occurred, in the 2nd century BC by another author (or possibly compiled from various sources)

The historical details of these prophecies are seen to be so accurate in their fulfillment that there is no other choice but to accept one of these two conclusions. There is some evidence for accepting conclusion number 1, for those who need it. The writing of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, was completed well before some of these events occurred, particularly that of the Seleucid wars under Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Jewish Maccabees, in the 2nd century BC - and the Septuagint contained the scroll of Daniel.

Nevertheless, that which holds the greatest weight is the fact that Jesus, the ultimate Prophet, testified that Daniel was truly "the *prophet* Daniel" (Matthew 24:15), therefore, if Jesus Himself accepted Daniel's words as divinely inspired, then that certainly settles the question for me. But of course, it's ultimately a matter of faith. Yet even those who hold to a late date for the book of Daniel agree that the original author intended that the prophecies should be understood as being given in the Babylonian world of the 6th century BC. I believe that these prophetic heavenly visions recorded in the book of Daniel *were* actually given to the prophet Daniel in the 6th century BC as the book states.

I might add that unless one is acquainted with some basic ancient history, these visions of Daniel cannot be understood correctly. Now, let us begin to consider this vision in Daniel 8 and its meaning.

The Vision

In the third year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon (who ruled as co-regent with his father Nabonidus), in about 550 BC, Daniel envisions himself in the palace of Shushan in the province of Elam, that is, **Persia**, and he comes to be on the Ulai canal, probably situated on a boat. This in itself was prophetic of what was to take place within two decades - Babylon would be conquered by Persia, and Daniel would find himself as a ruler within the Persian Empire. Here is the account of what he saw.

"I looked up, and there before me was **a ram with two horns**, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long (*or high*). One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great (*magnifies himself*).

As I was thinking about this, suddenly **a goat (a he-goat) with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west**, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage. I saw him attack the ram furiously (*bitterly*), striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power. The goat became very great (*magnifies himself unto excess - CV*), **but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.**

Out of one of them came another horn, which started small (*inferior*) but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as

the Prince of the host (*chief of the host - CV*); it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it (*the horn is given a host for trespassing against the continuous ritual - CV*). It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground."

(Daniel 8:3-12 NIV; **bold** emphasis mine; *words* in brackets added for clarity)

So here's a simple recap of this vision so far. A **Ram with two horns** appears. Daniel notices that the last of the two horns to grow up is higher than the other horn. This Ram then rushes towards the west, the north and the south, defeating all animals in its path. He magnifies himself so that he alone is king, and no one can stand against him (8:3-4).

Then suddenly a **He-Goat** appears from the West, coming swiftly over the surface of the entire earth without touching it. This He-Goat has **a conspicuous or prominent horn** between his eyes and he slams into the side of the Ram with great fury and bitterness. He breaks the two horns of the Ram and throws him to the ground, trampling on him, and there is no one to help him. The He-Goat then becomes excessively great and mighty, but at the height of his power his horn becomes broken, and **four other conspicuous horns** rise up in its place towards the four winds of the heavens (v 5-8).

Then **an inferior or smaller Horn** appears from one of these four horns, and he grows in might towards the south and the east and towards the Beautiful or Stately Land (that is, the land of Israel). He grows so mighty that he reaches up to the host of the heavens and some from the host, some of the stars, are thrown to the earth, and they are trampled on by him. He even magnifies himself above the chief or prince of the host or army of heaven, and he causes the continuous ritual of the daily sacrifices to be disturbed, that is, stopped or taken away. This Horn then desecrates the sanctuary of Yahweh, and it tramples on the host and trespasses against the divine rituals, throwing the truth to the earth. He does all of this and prospers! (v 9-12).

The vision then continues with the following in verses 13-14. Daniel hears two holy ones or saints speaking to each other. One of them asks the other,

"How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation (*the desolating transgression - CV*), and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?"

The other answers,

He said to me, "It will take **2,300 evenings and mornings**; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

Now this was a lot for Daniel to take in and he begins to search for understanding to the vision. What did it all mean? Then a heavenly messenger or master appears before him, and a human voice shouts to this messenger, '*Gabriel, make him understand the sight.*' But as soon as **Gabriel** stands beside him, Daniel falls on his face, petrified! This is the first of three instances in the Bible where the angel Gabriel is said to visit the earth to speak to a servant of God. He visited Daniel twice (in this vision, and the 'Seventy Sevens' vision in chapter 9), and in both instances the message was related to the coming of the Messiah. Then, as many are aware who don't even know their Bibles, in the account of the Nativity it was Gabriel who visited Mary to give her the news that she would be the one to bear Jesus, the Messiah. So in both these visitations of Gabriel to Daniel there is a special connection to the plan of redemption in the coming of the Messiah.

Gabriel then comforts Daniel and says to him,

"Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end.... I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath (*or end of the menace*), because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end." (v 17, 19 NIV)

Gabriel is telling Daniel that this vision has to do with the era of the end, which has to do with the events that lead to the era of the Messiah, established in the earlier visions. Note well here that he also says that he was going to reveal the details of the end of this era of menace (or wrath) upon the people of Israel, because the vision was concerned with the appointed time of the end. It ultimately had to do with events relating to the Messiah.

Therefore, we need to bear in mind here that all of these visions were primarily concerned with 'the era of the end' - the appointed time of the end - in relation to Israel and the Old Covenant, and the coming of the Messiah to institute a New Covenant and the Kingdom of God. That is, these things were primarily fulfilled in the years leading up to, and including, the First Coming of Christ. It was all related to the then-approaching plan of redemption and salvation for Israel, and ultimately, the world.

The Media-Persian Empire

Then Gabriel gives the interpretation of the vision to Daniel. He begins by saying

'The ram which you saw possessing the two horns, is **the kingdom of Media and Persia.**' (v 20 CV)

It is stated plainly here that the ram is the **Media/Persian Empire**. It is also the equivalent of the second kingdom of **Silver** in the earlier vision of the Image, and of the **She-Bear** in the vision of the Beasts. The two horns of the ram are representing the two kingdoms of Media and Persia that united to form a powerful Empire. A horn was an ancient symbol of power and strength, and it represents the king or ruler of a kingdom. (In these visions, and also in the vision given to the apostle John in Revelation, the general rule is that the *horns* are symbolising individual rulers or kings, i.e. governing powers, and the *heads* are representing kingdoms or empires.)

The higher horn that grew up later than the other is symbolising the Persian kingdom represented by King Cyrus. Media was the stronger to begin with, represented by King Darius the Mede, then Persia subsequently became the dominant power. This is also represented in the She-Bear that was tilted up on one side.

As we saw earlier, Daniel lived to see this kingdom take over from Babylon, and he was given a high place in the kingdom as a chancellor over the satraps (cf. Daniel chapter 6). It is for this reason that he is located in the citadel of Shushan in **Persia** in this vision. Like the ram, the Media/Persian Empire spread out and conquered the territory of the Babylonian Empire, westward, northward and towards the southland, and no one could stand before it. This Empire did as it pleased and magnified itself.

The Greek Empire

Gabriel continues with the interpretation of the He-Goat.

'The hairy he-goat is **the kingdom of Greece**. The great horn which is between its eyes, it is **the first king**. When it is being broken, standing up are four in its stead: **Four kingdoms from his nation** are standing up, yet not with his vigour.' (v 21-22 CV)

The He-Goat is the **Greek Empire**, and it is also the equivalent of the third kingdom of **Copper** in the vision of the Image, and of the **four-winged, four-headed Leopardess** in the vision of the Beasts. (The number four symbolises the world in its four directions of north, south, east and west. The four wings represented the swiftness of the worldwide dominion of Greece, and the four heads represented the four primary divisions of the Empire after Alexander's death.)

The great horn represents **Alexander of Macedon, known as Alexander the Great**, its first Ruler or King. Like the He-Goat moving so fast it didn't touch the earth, Alexander came swiftly from the West to conquer the Persian Empire with speed and force, attacking it bitterly, tramping it on the ground and taking it over from about 333-331 BC. The kings of Persia could only flee from this powerful foe and they could not stand against him. At the time this prophecy was given, to imagine the many warring city-states of Greece and Macedonia becoming a mighty unified Empire was virtually laughable - yet it happened just as God said it would. Alexander magnified himself to excess, but after about 12 years of total rule, in 323 BC, at the height of his power, he died, at a young age of thirty-two, having conquered the world. The horn was truly broken.

We are told in the vision that when the horn is broken, **four** horns will come up in his place, which are said to be *four* kingdoms **from his nation**. This was fulfilled after Alexander's death. He was the only sole ruler of this Empire, and after his sudden death, the Greek Empire was divided up between his generals. This in itself is an amazing prophecy because kings usually had an heir to the throne, but in Alexander's case, there was no heir apparent at the time of his death, so the Empire was initially divided up between a number of his generals. Yet the prophecy states that four primary kingdoms would eventually rule in Alexander's place, to the four winds of heaven, but not with his power or vigour.

In the years that followed his death, his generals began to make war with one another as each tried to extend his own kingdom and become sole ruler of the once mighty Greek Empire. No one succeeded in having the same power as Alexander, and instead, the Greek Empire predominantly became four rival kingdoms.

After the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BC, the following four kingdoms emerged as the predominant powers ruling Alexander's territory:

1. Cassander ruled over **Greece and Macedonia**;
2. Lysimachus controlled **parts of western Asia Minor and Thrace**;
3. Seleucus I ruled over **Syria, eastern Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Persia**;
and
4. Ptolemy I controlled **Libya, Egypt and Israel**, of which the latter became known as **Palestine**.

These boundaries often changed, of course, due to various wars. All of the historical details mentioned here can be searched out and verified from any good history source.

Later on in Daniel chapter 11, which we shall consider in the study of Daniel's Final Vision, we are given further prophetic details concerning two of these kingdoms, the **Seleucid Empire** known as the King of the North, and the **Ptolemaic Empire** known as the King of the South, and their dealings with the Jewish people and the land of Israel.

The largest of these four kingdoms was the Seleucid Empire. At its greatest extent, it ruled a good part of the Middle East, including Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), Syria, Lebanon, Persia (modern Iran) and Afghanistan, as well as parts of Armenia and Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Western India, and they sought to take Egypt and Macedonia as well. Its territory was immense. Its three main capital cities were Syrian-Antioch, Seleucia and Babylon, the latter two being in modern Iraq. It also took control of Israel and Jerusalem, particularly during the reign of Antiochus IV.

The origins of the respective dynasties of these kingdoms, though, (including the Ptolemaic dynasty of Pharaohs in Egypt) were rooted in the division of Alexander's Greek Empire, that is, the four kingdoms from his nation were Hellenistic kingdoms. This needs to be borne in mind as we continue with this vision, particularly in its details of the appearing of the little horn.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

Out of one of them came another horn, which started small (*inferior*) but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host (*chief of the host - CV*); it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host of the saints and the daily sacrifice were given over to it (*the horn is given a host for trespassing against the continuous ritual - CV*). It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground."

(Daniel 8:9-12 NIV)

Returning to the vision, we are now told that, out of one of these four Hellenistic kingdoms, a small, inferior horn will grow in power to the south, to the east and toward the land of Israel. It will grow so big that it will overpower the people of Israel, particularly the priests and leaders (symbolised as the host of heaven), throwing them to the ground and trampling on them. It will even set itself up to be the Prince or Chief of the people (that is, by replacing Yahweh's representative, the high priest) by altering the sacrificial rituals in the temple in Jerusalem. This king will specifically stop the ritual of the daily sacrifices and will desecrate the sanctuary of God. Due to rebellion by Israel, this king will be given an army to take over the people and the temple. It will prosper in everything it does and truth will be thrown to the ground due to wickedness and deception.

Now even though we are not told exactly who this king is, or precisely which kingdom he will come from, it is beyond a shadow of a doubt, as can be verified from history, that this was fulfilled in the Seleucid king Antiochus the IV Epiphanes. This is not usually disputed by Biblical scholars, whether Jewish or Christian. Even the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus understood these prophecies to relate to Antiochus IV and the subsequent rise of the Maccabees. Yet we shall also see that the interpretation of this part of the vision, given in verses 23-25, is not only describing Antiochus, but it goes further than this and describes another king who is to arise and take his stand against the Messiah Himself. Both are viewed as being wicked, lawless men who seek to be worshipped as god, who, put another way, are false christs or antichrists. We shall be considering these wicked men in much more detail in the study on Daniel 11, so for now I'll just give the necessary details to explain the prophecies of Daniel 8.

Antiochus IV became the ruler of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire in 175 BC. He began 'small' or was 'inferior' because he was a hostage in Rome who, upon his release, took the throne by deception. His power grew to the south, when he conquered Egypt for a time, and the east (Mesopotamia and Persia), and his power grew over the land of Israel when he attacked Jerusalem in 169 BC and ransacked the Temple, stealing its holy treasures and vessels. He subsequently rebuilt Jerusalem as a Seleucid fortress. He gave himself the name of Epiphanes which basically means 'the Magnificent One' or 'God Manifest' - yet the Jews changed this to Epimanes, meaning 'the Mad One' due to his insane and wicked acts towards them.

Even before his attack on the Temple in Jerusalem, Antiochus had replaced the chief priest in office with his own brother, Menelaus, and had caused many Jewish priests to start becoming Hellenistic Jews, introducing Greek beliefs and customs into Judaism. Antiochus promoted the cult belief that He was the earthly manifestation of the Greek gods Zeus and Dionysus (also known as Bacchus). He brutally persecuted the Jews and their religion, forcing them to accept the cult worship of the gods. He attacked and killed many priests who were true to the faith of Yahweh, thus *'throwing some of the stars to the earth and trampling on them.'*

In 167 BC, he did the ultimate act of setting himself up as God and chief priest by erecting a statue of himself in the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem and placing an altar of sacrifice to Zeus over the Jewish altar of burnt offering. He then ordered that unclean pigs should be sacrificed on the altar in his honour, and that

the temple should become an idolatrous Greek temple where all sorts of prostitution and revelry should occur. This whole act of desecration is later called 'the abomination of desolation.' He thus '*stopped the daily sacrifices*' being offered to Yahweh (the continuous ritual of the evening and morning sacrifices) and '*brought low His Sanctuary.*' Yet all of this occurred due to the rebellion or apostasy of many of the Jews and priests (the saints or stars), so that '*truth was thrown to the ground.*' Yet at this time, Antiochus '*prospered in all he did.*' And yet, strangely enough, this also marked the beginning of the demise of the Seleucid Empire.

Before we look at verses 13-14, where we read of the '*2300 evenings and mornings,*' let us consider the interpretation given in verses 23-26.

Herod the King

"In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked (*when the transgression comes to an end - CV*), a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise (*standing up is a king of strong presence and understanding problems (or riddles) - CV*). He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does (*marvelously shall he ruin and prosper and deal - CV*). He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper (*By his intelligence he causes deceit to prosper - CV*), and he will consider himself superior (*In his heart he is magnifying himself - CV*). When they feel secure, he will destroy many (*and with ease will he ruin many - CV*) and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power (*yet at the limit of his hand he shall be broken - CV*).

"The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future (*for it is for many days - CV*)."

I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

(Daniel 8:23-27 NIV)

It is interesting to note here that this spiritual vision made Daniel ill for a few days, totally wiping him out! So much for spiritual visions pepping you up! If we were to accept the teaching of many today, who say that spiritual experiences should make you healthy and vibrant, especially a meeting with an angel - well, Daniel got shortchanged didn't he! The fact is, he had witnessed the awesome power of God's heavenly kingdom via the vision and the angels, and his poor body and mind just couldn't absorb it all in one go! It is only by the grace of God that any human being can survive in the presence of the heavenly Power. Nevertheless, after a few days of rest and meditation, Daniel was up and about doing his job for the king.

He was also left shocked and appalled by the vision and he couldn't grasp the implications of it all. He was told to seal up the vision in writing for it was yet many years before it would be fulfilled. In fact, as we now know, the majority of the vision actually took over 300 years before it was fulfilled! This is in stark contrast to the message of the book of Revelation where the apostle John was told NOT to seal up the vision for it was near or about to occur quickly (Revelation 1:1-3; 22:10).

Now concerning Daniel 8 above, I believe, without a shadow of a doubt, that, not only are we being told about the character and acts of Antiochus IV in this explanation of the vision, but we are also being told about another king who would arise, a king of strong presence, a stern-faced king, (that is, a powerful king with a temper), one that would be intelligent and understand problems or dark sayings.

There are *some* details in this text that don't seem to fully meet the requirements for a complete fulfillment in Antiochus, such as his understanding of problems, being strong by someone else's power, and ultimately his stand against the Prince of princes, though, granted, these are all somewhat debatable points. Nevertheless, I believe that these details are more accurately and completely fulfilled in king Herod the Great, the one who actually made his stand against the Messiah, Jesus, when he sought to kill him by the mass murder of the infants. This is brought out even clearer in Daniel 11 where the atrocities of Antiochus and the exploits of the Maccabees are followed by details of another king that fits Herod perfectly, with details of the emerging Roman Empire given as well, which then leads right up to the coming of the Messiah.

I first understood and accepted this interpretation some years ago after reading **Daniel's Seventy Weeks** by Philip Mauro. I had been researching Daniel 11:36-45 because I was having great difficulty accepting the popular 'futurist' interpretation which believes that the details of this portion of the prophecy are yet to be fulfilled in a future antichrist, along with the accompanying details of a yet-future war. For starters, it certainly didn't make any sense to me whatsoever that the prophecy should jump from prophetic details of Antiochus and the Maccabees that were fulfilled in the 2nd century BC to an antichrist figure who would appear well over 2000 years in the future! Surely it had to do with the events of ancient Israel and the ancient empires so clearly revealed in Daniel, all of which leads to the arrival of the Messiah. We shall consider this in much more detail when studying Daniel 11. For now, here are my reasons for believing that the above text was also fulfilled in Herod the Great.

Firstly, we are told that this king would arise in the '*latter part of their reign*' (or kingdom). In other words, this would occur towards the end of the rule of the four Hellenistic (Greek) kingdoms under consideration. Notice also that in verse 26 Daniel is told that the vision would be fulfilled in 'the distant future,' which literally reads *after many days* (this is, of course, to be taken figuratively as 'a long time'). The text also states that it would be at a time '*when the sins or transgressions (or transgressors) are complete or full*.' The CV and KJV convey the correct meaning here. It is saying that this king would arise in an era when the sins (that is, transgressions or transgressors, those who rebel against the commands of God) would come to an end or be full or complete, that is, when sin shall become ripe for judgment.

It is interesting to note that in the prophecy of Daniel 9, the prophecy of the 70 Sevens, it states that one of the consequences of the Messiah's coming at the end of the 70 Sevens would be '*to restrain transgression and put an end to sin*' (Daniel 9:24). So there are two ways that sin can come to the full or be brought to an end - one is negative and the other is positive. The negative is when sin increases to the point when it is ripe for judgment. Significantly, this is brought out in Jesus' words to the Jewish leaders of His day.

"**Fill up**, then, the measure of **the sin** of your forefathers!"

(Matthew 23:32 NIV)

The positive aspect is that Jesus, as the Messiah or Christ, has put an end to sin through the Sacrifice of Himself. Therefore, the era for the fulfillment of this prophecy in Daniel 8, when Israel's sins would be full, would be around the time of the coming of Christ, at which time sin would be brought to an end in a positive, legal sense due to the Messiah's death and resurrection, yet the wrath and vengeance of God would also be poured out on a people whose sins were full (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:16).

Now, the description of this era in the above text fits in perfectly with the rise of Herod the Great, which occurred in about 46 BC. At this time, the Seleucid Dynasty had effectively ended in 63 BC when the Romans conquered Syria, but the Ptolemaic Empire of Egypt remained until 30 BC, when its final ruler, Queen Cleopatra, committed suicide after Rome conquered Egypt and fully took over the world as the fourth kingdom (mentioned in the earlier prophecies of Daniel).

Herod officially began his reign of Judea in 37 BC, when he overthrew Antigonus, the final Hasmonean ruler established by the Maccabees. During this era, Cleopatra of Egypt, and Mark Anthony of Rome, were amongst Herod's most powerful allies. This was also the era of the birth of the generation that would 'fill up the sins to a completion,' especially amongst the Jewish leadership, for they were the generation that killed the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, as the New Testament abundantly testifies.

Herod the Great was the first king in Israel for many centuries. He was renowned for having a *strong presence*, or as some versions say, *a stern faced, fierce looking king*. This indicates a powerful, angry presence, a bold and arrogant ruler. Herod was known for his vile temper and insane paranoia, which caused him even to have members of his own family murdered, caused by his intense envy of anyone who would threaten his throne. He was also very *intelligent* and he understood how to deal with political problems. A classic example of this quite early in his career was when he cleverly and boldly, though deviously, switched allegiance to Octavian, who became Caesar Augustus, after the defeat of his previous allies Anthony and Cleopatra by Octavian. To jump from the losing side to the winning side and get away with it as Herod did was truly a feat of seduction and selfish ambition, with much intelligence and craftiness!

The phrase '*understanding problems*' (CV) deserves closer attention. The KJV renders this as '*understanding dark sentences*' and others use the word '*riddles*.' The Hebrew word essentially means 'a hidden or secret saying; a puzzle,' such as a riddle or proverb, or some esoteric message. It is often used in the OT in respect to the figurative sayings of God, but it can be used of other sayings, whether spiritual or not, and whether of God or not. It can actually include the sayings of magicians and soothsayers, those who practice the secret or occultic arts. In fact, the word Occult comes from the Latin *occulta* meaning '*hidden things*.'

Herod was one who understood the mysteries or secrets of the idolatrous religions of the nations, for not only did he view himself as god, but he also gave much honour to the various gods of Rome, including worship of the divine Emperor, which

he mastered to a tee with his unabashed mass building projects that were often named in honour of Caesar. This aspect of his career, of 'honouring a god of fortresses' is truly brought out in the prophecy of Daniel 11:36-45.

Herod would've had his own court astrologers, and it was customary in those times to initiate certain people, such as royalty, into the secrets of the Magi. When the special Magi from the East traveled to Jerusalem at the time of Jesus' birth, Herod sought a special audience with them to learn from them their interpretations of the celestial phenomena that had been occurring for almost two years (Matthew 2:1-18)¹ Anyhow, one thing is clear - Herod was not that familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures for he called upon '*the chief priests and scribes of the people*' to find out about the Messiah's birth (Matthew 2:4-6).

Even though he became very powerful, especially in relation to his magnificent building projects, his position and power was given to him by Rome. Amongst his allies were Mark Anthony and Cleopatra, though he later cleverly switched his allegiance to Octavian, who became Caesar Augustus. Herod was a master at making various deals, weather politically or economically, and he prospered greatly, yet he also ruined or destroyed many people in the process, including mighty men or rulers, to get his own way, and he ultimately brought ruin to the Jewish people due to his blasphemous and murderous acts, as well as the Herodian dynasty he founded, who later murdered John the Baptist and mocked Jesus (Herod Antipas), and persecuted and killed some of the Apostles (Herod Agrippa I).

Herod the Great was a very deceitful, crafty individual who magnified himself, acting as though he was God himself in religious matters. There was even a certain group of Jews, who were called Herodians, who believed that Herod was the Messiah. With ease he destroyed many, in ways that make us marvel at his arrogance, and his ultimate savage act was taking his stand against Jesus the Messiah himself, *the Prince of princes*, by murdering many innocent babies in the area of Bethlehem. Shortly after this horrific act, Herod died a very painful death due to sickness, hence he was '*destroyed or broken but not by a human hand.*' Interestingly enough, Antiochus also died due to sickness, causing him to go insane.

It is clearly evident to me that the above prophecy was fulfilled in both Antiochus *and*, in a greater sense, Herod. This will be further established in a later study on Daniel 11. Even though Antiochus is not mentioned by name in scripture, he clearly holds a prominent place in prophecy and Jewish history. Be that as it may, Herod *is* specifically mentioned in scripture, and both Herod and Antiochus are viewed as false messiahs or antichrists. Like Herod, there is also another king of Israel who was a man of the flesh, and who is also symbolic of an antichrist spirit - his name was Saul. It is worth digressing here a little to consider this fascinating subject.

Saul and Herod - The Edomite King

There are some really interesting and significant parallels between king Saul and king Herod. It is evident to the spiritually minded that both these biblical kings are types or symbols of the man of flesh, the man of the world, the false ruler who attempts to usurp the true rule of God. There are a number of highly significant people in scripture who represent these two opposing truths: the man of the flesh versus the man of the Spirit; the usurpers versus the chosen ones; the kingdom of Satan versus the kingdom of God. For example, there is Cain and Abel; Ishmael and

Isaac; Hagar and Sarah; Esau and Jacob; Saul and David; etc. Let us take a brief look at this in relation to Saul and Herod.

You can read about Saul in 1 Samuel. He was the first king of Israel, and even though he was not a usurper, as there was no one before him to usurp, nevertheless he was not of the prophesied kingly line of Judah, but was from the tribe of Benjamin instead. Benjamin means 'son of the right hand' so Saul is a type or shadow of the one who seeks to replace the true King/Messiah, the true 'Son of the right hand' of God.

Later, Herod was the first king in Israel for many centuries, yet he was a usurper. He was not a descendant of the kingly line, instead he was a half-Jewish, half-Edomite king. Edom was the name given to Esau's descendants, who also became known by the Greeks and Romans as Idumeans. The Edomites had ceased to be a distinct nation in 126 BC after being conquered by the Jewish Hasmonean/Maccabean dynasty under John Hyrcanus, even though this was primarily a religious change.²

The surviving remnant of Edom were forced to convert to Judaism and they subsequently became a part of the Jewish nation. This is well established in history. On an interesting side note, which relates to our present subject, this in itself fulfilled a number of biblical prophecies about Esau/Edom.

In the beginning, when Esau's brother, Jacob, had deceived him twice by conning him out of his birthright and stealing his blessing from their father, Isaac, Esau begged for a blessing from his father. Isaac then prophesied the following upon Esau.

His father Isaac answered him,
"Your dwelling will be
away from the earth's richness,
away from the dew of heaven above.

You will live by the sword
and you will serve your brother.
But when you grow restless,
you will throw his yoke
from off your neck."

(Genesis 27:39-40 NIV)

The first part of the prophecy was fulfilled by Esau marrying into the Canaanite family of Seir the Horite and dwelling in the area south of the Dead Sea, which is a very hilly, rocky, desert-type area (cf. Genesis 36). Figuratively speaking, it was also saying that Esau would remain far away from the character and blessings of God. As for the rest, the Edomite clans, including the Amalekites, were continual enemies of Jacob/Israel and were violent warmongers (they lived by the sword), and they always sought to take back the land inheritance of Canaan from Israel, but they usually failed to do so as they were destined to be subservient to Israel.

Nevertheless, due to God's justice, which could not allow Jacob's original fraud against his brother to go unnoticed, the Edomites would be allowed to regain

something of their inheritance for a season. This partially occurred during the time of the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BC when Edom rejoiced over Judah's downfall. The Edomites helped the Babylonians to sack Jerusalem and slaughter the Jews, and they subsequently resettled in the southern portion of Judah. The prophet Ezekiel alludes to this arrogant treachery and the judgment prophesied against Edom (see Ezekiel 35:1-36:7). Yet a greater fulfillment was to come.

The Hebrew word translated 'restless' in the text quoted above includes the idea of 'dominance or rule by tramping about' indicating that the Edomites would one day become strong and dominant, extending their territory, and would therefore throw off the yoke of subservience to Israel for a season, in repayment for the original deception of Jacob. Nevertheless, this 'rule' would be the final nail in Edom's coffin, and later prophecies concerning Edom reveal that Esau/Edom would cease to be a distinct nation and their land would be destroyed and laid bare (see Isaiah 34 & 63:1-6; Obadiah; and Malachi 1:1-4.) This would ultimately occur by the nation of Judah/Joseph consuming them as prophesied by Obadiah.

The house of Jacob will be a fire
and the house of Joseph a flame;
**the house of Esau will be stubble,
and they will set it on fire and consume it.**
There will be no survivors
from the house of Esau."
The LORD has spoken.

(Obadiah 18)

This began to be fulfilled in 126 BC when the Jewish Maccabean family conquered Edom/Idumea and 'consumed them' by causing them to be absorbed into the Jewish nation (even though at that time the Nabateans had already begun taking over the Edomite territories and the Edomite kingdom was already dwindling.) Yet because this was primarily a religious take over, for the next two centuries these Idumeans could still trace their genealogy, even though Edom had technically ceased to be a distinct nation anymore.

So by the time Herod came to the throne of Judea in 37 BC, it was widely known that he was an Idumean by descent. So, in Herod, the prophecy of Isaac had its fulfillment, because an Edomite/Idumean king conquered the then-rulers of Judah (the Maccabees) and proceeded to rule over Israel in the land of Canaan for a season whereby '*the yoke of Israel was thrown off.*' Ultimately, though, Edom as a nation was destroyed and its land desolated. Thousands of Idumeans fought alongside the Jews in the Jewish/Roman War in the 1st century AD, but shortly after that, they disappeared completely as a distinct people.

All the prophecies about Edom have apparently been fulfilled in history, yet there is the text of Isaiah 63:1-6 that mentions Edom and Bozrah (its ancient capital) in the context of a great judgment upon the nations, described as grapes being trodden in the winepress. It is evident from Revelation 14:17-20 and 19:13-16, that this speaks of the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God that was trodden by Christ Himself when the 'days of vengeance' were poured out upon Israel in the War of 66-70 AD (cf. Luke 21:20-24).

Be that as it may, this is also a prophecy of the ultimate Day of the Lord and the great judgment upon the nations of the world. Biblical prophecy should be viewed as a cycle of patterns that are fulfilled in stages leading to an ultimate fulfillment, therefore this text of Isaiah is using Edom/Esau as a type or symbol of the unbelieving nations who are enemies of God and His people - and that would include unbelieving Israel as well. So, in that sense, this prophecy has literally been fulfilled already in the ancient nation of Edom, yet there is a greater fulfillment yet to come upon all nations in the Day of the Lord, at the Return of Christ.

Anyhow, let us return to the subject of Saul and Herod. Let us briefly compare a few similarities between king Saul and king Herod. Saul had a strong physical presence and was prone to fits of rage and paranoia. So was Herod. Saul was essentially a rebel at heart, disobeying God, even consulting spiritists and mediums, which he knew were forbidden. Herod also was very involved with idolatrous practices. Saul took his stand against David (meaning Beloved), the man of God, and tried to kill him a number of times. Herod also tried to kill David's greater son, the Beloved of God, Jesus Himself, by murdering the babies around Bethlehem. These are just some of the more significant biblical parallels between Saul and Herod.

Saul, Antiochus and Herod are types and shadows of the antichrist figure prophesied in the New Testament.³ And this has great significance in relation to the act of Antiochus commonly known as 'the abomination of desolation' because not only did Jesus prophesy about another 'abomination of desolation,' which had been spoken by Daniel, which would occur in the 1st century AD in relation to Jerusalem and the Temple, but this would also become a type for the 'man of lawlessness' who would go on to defile the Christian Church in a similar manner.

The Abomination of Desolation

We considered this subject in quite some detail in relation to the Antichrist in [The Vision of the Great Image and the Four Beasts](#) but we need to take a look at a few more details surrounding this event, especially as it relates to the time period of the 2300 evenings and mornings given in Daniel chapter 8.

The Hebrew word *shiqquts*, usually translated as **abomination(s)**, essentially means 'a detestable thing or act,' usually used in relation to idolatry. The Hebrew word *shamem*, usually translated as **desolation(s)** (or **desolate**), essentially means 'to shock or stun by devastation or destruction.' So the term 'abomination of (or which causes) desolation' means 'a detestable or filthy act of idolatry that causes shocking destruction.' It goes without saying that this is describing a sacrilegious act that is in blatant defiance of God and His commands, which inevitably results in severe judgment.

This exact phrase is used twice in the book of Daniel (11:31 and 12:11), yet a very similar phrase is used in our present text of Daniel 8.

"How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, **the rebellion that causes desolation** (*the desolating transgression - CV*), and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?"

He said to me, "It will take **2,300 evenings and mornings**; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

(Daniel 8:13-14 NIV)

Where the NIV says '**the rebellion that causes desolation**,' the KJV reads 'transgression of desolation,' while others say 'sin of desolation,' and the CV says '**desolating transgression**.' This is talking about a transgression or sin, which is rebellion against, or disobedience to, God, that causes desolation. This is another way of saying 'abomination of desolation.'

The vast majority of biblical commentaries would agree that this phrase in the above text is prophesying the detestable idolatrous act of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 BC, talked about earlier, in which he set up an idolatrous image in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, and he also set up his own altar on top of the Altar of Burnt Offering and sacrificed unclean meats (swine) on it. All of this was accompanied by idolatrous acts of worship ultimately devoted to himself as the divine god in accordance with Greek idol worship. All manner of horrific murders and immoral acts also took place at this time in the temple courts and even within the Holy Place of the temple itself.

This particular 'abomination of desolation' is also being prophesied in Daniel 11.

"His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. **Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation**."

(Daniel 11:31 NIV)

The text of Daniel 12:11 may also be referring to the events of Antiochus.

"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days."

(Daniel 12:11-12 NIV)

The time spans in chapter 12, if taken literally, are referring to a time period of 3 1/2 years plus a month or two (i.e. a period of under 4 years). This fits the historical events of Antiochus Epiphanes, nevertheless, it is highly probable that these details were ultimately fulfilled in the Jewish/Roman War of 66-70 AD. (We shall consider these things in a little more detail in the article on Daniel's Final Vision).

Now take note here that in these texts the vision has to do with the Temple in Jerusalem (God's Sanctuary), the daily sacrifices (or continuous ritual; that is, the evening and morning sacrifices), and the desecration and trampling of the city and the sanctuary by foreign armies. The language of Daniel 8:13-14 and 11:31 also suggests that the whole period of this 'trampling' of the holy city and the temple is under consideration, and not just the latter part of the 'abomination' of 3+ years.

The 2300 Evenings and Mornings

There are three time periods that are revealed in the book of Daniel that are usually believed to be in direct relation to the stopping of the daily sacrifices and the setting up of the abomination of desolation by Antiochus.⁴

- a) 2300 evenings and mornings (8:14)
- b) 1290 days (12:11)
- c) 1335 days (12:12)

Let us consider the first period of 2300 'days.' There are two ways of viewing this: as 2300 days or as 2300 daily sacrifices of 2 per day, which would work out as 1150 days. The emphasis is on the daily evening and morning sacrifices and offerings, which is why the text doesn't actually say *days*. The focus of this prophecy had to do with the disruption of the daily service in the temple in Jerusalem, which service was usually carried out by the holy priests, as commanded by God.

There has been some debate as to whether the ancient lunar year is to be used in calculating these prophetic time periods or the true solar year. After thoroughly researching this issue I have come to the conclusion that it just doesn't matter one way or the other, because ultimately we understand history in regular solar years - even when ancient calendars were used based on lunar years.⁵ I have written down some detailed notes on how these things could've been fulfilled in the events of Antiochus based on historical sources concerning the lunar year and inter-calary months, and the writings of 1 & 2 Maccabees, but I don't think their inclusion here would necessarily be beneficial to the reader.

Instead, I will quote from two renowned commentaries on this subject as they sum up the key points to understanding the fulfillment of this part of the vision.

"...it shall continue *2300 days and no longer, so many evenings and mornings* (so the word is), so many *nychthemera*, so many *natural days*, reckoned, as in the beginning of Genesis, by the evenings and mornings, because it was the evening and the morning sacrifice that they most lamented the loss of, and thought the time passed very slowly while they were deprived of them. Some make the morning and the evening, in this number, to stand for two, and then 2300 evenings and as many mornings will make but 1150 days; and about so many days it was that the daily sacrifice was interrupted: and this comes nearer to the computation (ch vii 25) of a *time, times, and the dividing of a time*. But it is less forced to understand them of so many natural days; 2300 days make *six years and three months*, and about eighteen days; and just so long they reckon from the defection of the people, procured by Menelaus the high priest in the 142nd year of the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, the sixth month of that year, and the 6th day of the month (so Josephus dates it), to the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the reestablishment of religion among them, which was in the 148th year, the 9th month, and the 25th *day of the month*, 1 Mac iv 52"

(Matthew Henry's Commentary)

two thousand . . . three hundred days--literally, "mornings and evenings," specified in connection with the *morning and evening* sacrifice. Compare Ge 1:5. Six years and a hundred ten days. This includes not only the three and a half years during which the daily sacrifice was *forbidden* by Antiochus [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 1:1.1], but the whole series of events whereby it was practically interrupted: beginning with the "little horn waxing great toward the pleasant land," and "casting down some of the host" (Da 8:9-10); namely, when in 171 B.C., or the month Sivan in the year 142 of the era of the Seleucidæ, the sacrifices began to be neglected, owing to the high priest Jason introducing at Jerusalem Grecian customs and amusements, the palæstra and gymnasium; ending with the death of Antiochus, 165 B.C., or the month Shebath, in the year 148 of the Seleucid era. Compare 1 Maccabees 1:11-15; 2 Maccabees 4:9, &c.

(Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary)

Even though it is virtually impossible to verify the historical fulfillment of these time periods down to the very day based on the presently available sources, there is ample evidence on hand to accept that these things were fulfilled in the events of Antiochus and the Maccabees. Moreover, due to the nature of biblical numerology, these time periods are bound to have a symbolic significance as well, though at present I'm not too sure what that might be, though I've read some interesting theories on this. Right now, I don't wish to speculate.

Be that as it may, as is evident from the commentary quotes above, according to the details given in 1 Maccabees 1:10-64; 4:42-58; & 2 Maccabees 4:7-18; 6:1-2; 10:1-8 (and I would encourage the reader to examine these references), the 2300 'evenings and mornings' were fulfilled either from

a) 171 - 164 BC (as 2300 days, the whole period of the trampling of the city and sanctuary, i.e. 6+ years)

Or

b) 167 - 164 BC (as 1150 days, the period of the actual 'desolating abomination' till it's cleansing, i.e. 3+ years)

The cleansing or reconsecration of the temple by the Jewish Maccabees occurred on 25th Kislev 164 BC, exactly 3 years from the time of the 'swine sacrifice' on the sacred altar (1 Maccabees 1:54-59; 4:52-54). This initial Feast of Dedication, otherwise known as Hanukkah, has been observed by the Jewish people ever since. It was only a matter of months after this that Antiochus Epiphanes died, and shortly after his death amnesty letters were sent to the Jews from Antiochus Eupator and the Romans, though this in itself didn't end the war (2 Maccabees 11:13-12:2). As mentioned earlier, the time periods in Daniel 12:11-12 may have been referring to these events in some measure.

The Jewish historian Josephus understood that these things were fulfilled in this way, though he happens to give slightly differing time periods in different places.

"[For example, I shall relate] how Antiochus, who was named Epiphanes, took Jerusalem by force, and held it three years and three months, and was then ejected out of the country by the sons of Asamoneus..."

(preface to *Wars*)

"AT the same time that Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, had a quarrel with the sixth Ptolemy about his right to the whole country of Syria, a great sedition fell among the men of power in Judea, and they had a contention about obtaining the government; while each of those that were of dignity could not endure to be subject to their equals. However, Onias, one of the high priests, got the better, and cast the sons of Tobias out of the city; who fled to Antiochus, and besought him to make use of them for his leaders, and to make an expedition into Judea. The king being thereto disposed beforehand, complied with them, and came upon the Jews with a great army, and took their city by force, and slew a great multitude of those that favored Ptolemy, and sent out his soldiers to plunder them without mercy. He also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months."

(*Wars*, book 1, chapter 1)

"Now it so fell out, that these things were done on the very same day on which their Divine worship had fallen off, and was reduced to a profane and common use, after three years' time; for so it was, that the temple was made desolate by Antiochus, and so continued for three years. This desolation happened to the temple in the hundred forty and fifth year, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Apeliens, and on the hundred fifty and third olympiad: but it was dedicated anew, on the same day, the twenty-fifth of the month Apeliens, on the hundred and forty-eighth year, and on the hundred and fifty-fourth olympiad. **And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eight years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve that worship [for some time].**"

(*Antiquities*, book 12, chapter 7)

"...and should spoil the temple, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered for three years' time. And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel;"

(*Antiquities*, book 10, chapter 11)

As can be noted from this last portion, Josephus also accepted the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9:26-27 (and possibly 7:23-25 & 12:5-12) as being fulfilled in the events of the Jewish war of 66-70 AD and the destruction of the temple by the Romans. The time periods given in Daniel 12 could easily have been fulfilled in the events of Antiochus, but the overall context of the final vision in Daniel concerns the breaking or shattering of Israel in complete fulfillment of all these things (cf. 12:7).

This fits in better with the three and a half years of the Roman/Jewish War and the final destruction of the temple, which brought the Old Covenant system to an end.

Before closing (and as I've already alluded to it above), it is worth pointing out here that the text of Daniel 9:26-27 also speaks of 'desolations' and 'abominations' in relation to the temple and the city of Jerusalem, but as we shall see when we consider our next study on *The Seventy Sevens*, this is clearly prophesying the later events of the Jewish/Roman War in 66-70 AD *after* the arrival of the Messiah. This is the 'abomination of desolation' that Jesus was referring to in His Olivet Discourse. Daniel 9:26-27 is *not* prophesying about the events of Antiochus - or, may I add, of a yet-future antichrist!

In concluding, these texts in Daniel are no longer prophesying a future event, for all these things have already been fulfilled in history, just as Jesus himself declared.

"Now whenever you may be perceiving Jerusalem surrounded by encampments, then know that her desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains, and let those in her midst be coming out into the country, and let not those in the country be entering into her, **for days of vengeance are these, to fulfill all that is written.** Yet woe to those who are pregnant, and to those suckling in those days; for there will be great necessity in the land and indignation on this people.

And they shall be falling by the edge of the sword and shall be led into captivity into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden by the nations, until the eras of the nations (*or times of the nations*) may be fulfilled."

(Luke 21:20-24 CV)

For further study, see [The Prophecies of Jesus' Olivet Discourse](#) and [Another Look At The Ten Horns and the Little Horn of Daniel 7 \(and the Ten Toes of Daniel 2\)](#)

Endnotes

¹ For further study of these events at the birth of Christ, see the book *The Star that Astonished the World* by Ernest L. Martin, and the booklet *When Really Was Jesus Born?* by Dr. Steven E. Jones.

² So even in this there is a connection between Antiochus and Herod via the Maccabean dynasty, as this dynasty began at the time of Antiochus' persecution and ended in the early years of Herod's rule.

³ The antichrist is mentioned specifically by the apostle John, though he also talks of many antichrists (cf. 1 John 2:18-19). The 'false prophet' of Revelation 13:11-18; 16:13, also known as the beast out of the land or earth, appears to be one and the same as the 'man of lawlessness' prophesied by the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2. When these texts are carefully studied together, I think it becomes very evident that they are all prophesying about the same 'person' or empire.

⁴ There are actually 4 time periods altogether:

- a. time, times, and half a time (Daniel 7:25 & 12:7)
- b. 2300 evenings and mornings (Daniel 8:14)
- c. 1290 days (Daniel 12:11)
- d. 1335 days (Daniel 12:12)

Time period **a.** is not usually accepted as being fulfilled in Antiochus, but in the Jewish/Roman war of 66-70 AD (or for Historicists and Dispensationalists in some other later event). Time period **b.** is widely accepted as being fulfilled in the events of Antiochus, while periods **c.** & **d.** are viewed as being fulfilled in either Antiochus or the Jewish/Roman War of the 1st century AD. Dispensationalists/Futurists largely view periods **a., c.** & **d.** as yet to be fulfilled in relation to the end of this age.

It is my belief that time periods **b., c.** & **d.** *may* be related, but it makes better sense to see **a., c.** & **d.** as connected in relation to the Jewish/Roman War of 66-70 AD - particularly as **a.** is repeated in Daniel 12 which is then followed by **c.** & **d.**

Time period **b.** is definitely fulfilled in the events of Antiochus Epiphanes, as is 'the abomination of desolation' of Daniel 11:31. The remaining 3 periods appear to be related to the 1st century events of the destruction of the temple, as Jesus prophesied that a further 'abomination of desolation' would occur in relation to that catastrophic event (cf. Matthew 24:15). Time period **a.** is also repeated in the book of Revelation in relation to the three and a half year War of 66-70 AD.

Either way, I think it is very evident that all these time periods have been fulfilled in either the events of Antiochus or the Jewish/Roman War - or possibly in both! Of course, all the above is true only if these periods are taken literally. It is also probable that they all have a figurative meaning and application as well!

⁵ The ancient lunar year contained 12 months which alternated between 29 and 30 days for a total of 354 days. This was 11 days short of a solar year. The fixed lunar year was 12 months of 30 days each giving a total of 360 days per year. This is still 5 days short of a true solar year which is rounded to 365 days.

360 days is the fixed lunar year, and it is this year that is used a number of times in Scripture, particularly in relation to prophetic events (cf. Genesis 6:5-8:22; the time spans in Daniel and Revelation of 1260 days or 42 months or three and half years). Hence it has been termed by some as the *prophetic year*. This fixed lunar year also appears to be the basis for the circle of the Zodiac which is 360 degrees, 12 sections of 30 degrees each. Due to the difference of 5 days between this year and the actual solar year, an inter-calary month needed to be added to the calendar every 2-3 years. Nevertheless, in relation to any period that is over 3 years in length, the inter-calary month(s) would automatically be included - bringing the year in line with the solar year as a luni-solar year. This means that the time spans in scripture are to be prophetically and historically understood as being ordinary years! (*Handbook of Biblical Chronology* by Prof. Jack Finegan, p.15 (29); p.17 (35).

Primary reference sources for this article:

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