

PROPHECY UNCUT

Similarities & Differences Between Daniel 2, 7 & 8

INTRODUCTION

It doesn't take very long for an astute student of prophecy to notice that there are incredible parallels between Daniel 2, 7 & 8. These prophecies cover the same period of Earth's history and foretell the rise and fall of the same nations.

Nevertheless, despite the incredible similarities, there are also some deep and profound differences. Each chapter builds on the previous one. The prophet follows the method of 'revise and enlarge'. That is to say, with each successive vision, the same history and events of the previous vision are repeated while at the same time there is an expansion describing new players on the stage of history as well as new events.

One might relate this methodology to the school system. A child goes off to grade 1 and learns the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic to start with. Once these pillars are cemented in the child's mind, the following grade builds on the foundation established in grade 1 and further expands this basic knowledge. Never is the previous grade's work removed to make room for an entirely different and conflicting learning experience. There are periods of review, which are typically followed by periods of new learning.

Daniel 2 is the "grade 1" of prophetic learning and studying. If one gets this chapter's interpretation wrong, the entire book of Daniel (and Revelation) will take on a skewed meaning. However, when one rightly studies Daniel 2, 7 & 8 an amazing parallel and harmony is found to exist between these prophetic messages, which were given by God at different points in time separated by many years.

It is the purpose of this study to examine, in particular, the points of similarity between Daniel 2, 7 & 8.

HOW DO DANIEL 7 & 8 PARALLEL DANIEL 2?

Daniel 7:17, 23, 24;
Daniel 8:20-22;
Daniel 2:38-40

In Daniel 7 & 8 two successive prophetic visions are given to Daniel, which give a general outline regarding the political and military rise and fall of nations from the time in which Daniel was living right through to the time when God's kingdom will be established. In both chapters the symbols used for the various kingdoms are either beasts (animals) or horns. In prophecy these two symbols (beasts & horns) represent kings or kingdoms (Dan 7:17, 23, 24; Dan 8:20-22).

Thus, just as in Daniel 2 each change in metal type represented a change in earthly political empires (Dan 2:38-40), so too in Daniel 7 & 8 the different beasts attacking and killing one another represent the various empires that would succeed one another through military conquest (Dan 7:17; Dan 8:20-22).

Daniel 7:4, 23

Babylon – Lion with Eagles Wings (Dan 7:4); No Representation in Daniel 8

Just as with Daniel 2, the starting point of the prophecy of



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Daniel 7 is the very kingdom that held sway at the time the prophecy was given – Babylon. The fourth beast is the fourth kingdom (Dan 7:23). Just as there were four world empires in Daniel 2 so too four world empires are foretold in Daniel 7. If the fourth empire is Rome, as in Daniel 2, then counting backwards from Rome the first beast would represent Babylon.

Daniel 8's vision begins with the second world empire – as is evidenced in the vision's interpretation, which begins in Daniel 8:20.

In summary, it is clear that the nation of Babylon is represented in Daniel 2 by the head of gold and in Daniel 7 by the lion with eagle's wings. There is no representation of Babylon in Daniel 8.

Daniel 7:5; Daniel 8:3-4

Medo-Persia – Bear Raised Up on One Side (Dan 7:5); Ram With One Horn Larger than the Other (Dan 8:3-4)

In the vision of Daniel 2, the chest and arms of silver represented the second world empire that would follow Babylon. This is the same power that is represented in Daniel 7 by the bear, which is raised up on one side. Historically, it is an undisputed fact that the nation of Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, their western lying neighbor, in 539 B.C. On their rise to world domination, they also conquered Egypt to the south in 525 B.C. and Lydia to the north in 547 B.C.¹ The conquering of these three nations is depicted by the fact that the bear has three ribs in its mouth (Dan 7:5).

The fact that the bear is raised up on one side indicates that there would be an imbalance of power. One side of this beast is stronger than the other. This metaphor is very fitting seeing as how Medo-Persia was a single nation formed by the amalgamation of two nations, the Medes and the Persians who inhabited the northern and the southern Iranian plateau respectively. Initially, the Medes were the more powerful of these two people groups. During the seventh century Persia became dominant over the Medes thanks to Cyrus who conquered Media and incorporated it into his kingdom.

In Daniel 8 we have the same power represented by a different symbolic metaphor. The very first beast in Daniel 8 is a ram with two horns. One of the horns comes up later and is lifted up higher than the other. This fits perfectly with the idea of the Medo-Persian nation ultimately being an amalgamation between two smaller nations – the Medes and Persians – between whom there was an imbalance of power, one nation being stronger than the other. In the same way that the bear of Daniel 7:5 is raised up on one side, so too the ram of Daniel 8:3 has one horn which is higher than the other. Confirmation of the

¹ W. H. Shea, *Daniel: A Reader's Guide*, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 175.



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interpretation that sees the ram as the nation of Medo-Persia is found in Daniel 8:20 when the angel interpreter specifically tells the prophet, Daniel, that the ram represents “the kings of Media and Persia.”

In summary, it is clear that the nation of Medo-Persia is represented in Daniel 2 by the chest and arms of silver, in Daniel 7 by the bear lifted up on one side having three ribs in its mouth and in Daniel 8 by the Ram having two horns – one lifted up higher than the other.

Daniel 7:6; Daniel 8:5-8

Greece – Leopard With Four Heads and Four Wings (Dan 7:6); Goat With Large Horn (Dan 8:5-8)

In the vision of Daniel 2, the thighs of bronze represented the nation of Greece. This is the same power that is represented in Daniel 7:6 under the imagery of a leopard that has four heads and four wings.

In Daniel 8 we are introduced to a goat. It is characterised by a very large horn between its eyes. When we consult the interpretation that is given in Daniel 8:21, we are told that this goat represents the Kingdom of Greece.

The Grecians finally conquered Medo-Persia in 331 B.C. at the battle of Arbela. This new nation grew rapidly under the leadership of its first king – Alexander the Great. It is this first king that is specifically represented by the large horn (Dan 8:21). Almost as suddenly as Alexander rose to power, his reign would come to an end. The breaking of the horn is explained in Daniel 8:22 to represent Alexander the Great’s sudden death.

In the vacuum of power that was caused by king Alexander’s unexpected death along with the ensuing lack of a clearly appointed successor, the Grecian empire was ultimately fragmented into four smaller kingdoms (Dan 8:22), each led by one of Alexander’s four most powerful generals² – Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus. Daniel 7 depicts the four divisions of the Grecian Empire by way of the four heads and wings on the leopard-like beast.

Unfortunately, the division of the Grecian empire significantly weakened it, resulting in it only lasting until 168 B.C. when the fourth and final world empire made its way onto the scene of action.

In summary, it is clear that the nation of Greece is represented in Daniel 2 by the thighs of bronze, in Daniel 7 by the leopard with four heads and four wings and in Daniel 8 by the goat with the large horn, which is ultimately broken and replaced by four smaller horns.

² W. H. Shea, *Symposium on Daniel*, Ed. F. B. Holbrook, (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1986), 192.



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**Daniel 7:7;
Daniel 8:9**

Rome – Non-descript Beast (Dan 7:7); 1st Phase of the Little Horn (Dan 8:9)

In Daniel 7:7 we read of a beast that is so grotesque and so violent that it cannot be compared to anything known to man. This is why many commentators refer to this creature as the “non-descript beast”.

Verse 23 tells us that this fourth beast, the non-descript beast, is going to be the fourth kingdom on earth. Nowhere in Daniel chapter 2, 7 or 8 is this fourth world empire explicitly named. However, as we have discovered by comparing Daniel chapter 2 with Daniel chapter 8, the first three world empires are explicitly named as Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece (Dan 2:38, 8:20-21). With this information in mind, it is quite easy to determine which nation is represented by the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7. One simply needs to consult the history books to determine which nation conquered the Grecian empire.

On 22 June 168 BC the Roman commander Paullus defeated the Macedonian king Perseus. This essentially brought an end to the Antigonid line of Grecian kings, whose power trace all the way back to Alexander the Great - the first king of the Grecian empire mentioned in Daniel 8:21. “The Battle of Pydna and its political aftermath mark the effective end of Macedonian independence, although formal annexation was still some years away.”³ In other words, the Battle of Pydna “marked the final destruction of Alexander’s Empire and introduced Roman authority over the Near East.”⁴

In Daniel 8:8-9 we find a symbolic parallel to Daniel 7:7’s non-descript beast. The symbol employed in Daniel chapter 8 is that of a little horn. The little horn is described as growing out of one of the four winds of heaven.

In other words, the little horn does not grow out of the goat, which had a large horn that was broken and replaced by four smaller horns. If this were the case, then the little horn would represent a king or a kingdom, which grew out of the Grecian empire. The symbolic representation of the little horn growing out of one of the four winds indicates that the little horn power is a new and distinct entity from the Grecian empire represented by the goat.

Furthermore, both the little horn of Daniel 8 and the fourth beast of Daniel 7 share overlapping characteristics, which indicate that both originate as successors to the Grecian empire and both undergo major military expansion.

³ “Battle of Pydna”, Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Pydna.

⁴ Paul K. Davis, *100 Decisive Battles from Ancient Times to the Present: The World’s Major Battles and How They Shaped History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 51. (Quoted in “Battle of Pydna”, Wikipedia).



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Therefore, in Daniel chapter 8 the little horn stands parallel in meaning to Daniel chapter 7's non-descript beast - both represent the Roman Empire.

In summary of Daniel 8:3-9, "The ram represents Medo-Persia. The goat represents Greece, its chief horn representing Alexander. The four horns that came up after the breaking of this chief horn represent the Hellenistic kingdoms, the main divisions of Alexander's empire. The little horn that followed these represents Rome."⁵ In Daniel 7 Rome is represented by the non-descript beast.

Daniel 7:7, 24; Daniel 8:9-12

Divided Europe – Ten Horns on the Non-descript Beast (Dan 7:7, 24); A Shift from Horizontal Expansion to Vertical Expansion (Dan 8:9-12)

Daniel 7 gives clear indication that the Roman Empire would not last forever. The ten horns on the head of the fourth, non-descript beast represent 10 smaller kingdoms, which "arise from this kingdom" (Dan 7:24) i.e. the Roman Empire would be carved up into smaller kingdom units.

Daniel 8 gives no clear symbolism with regard to the termination of the Roman Empire, except that the language describing the activities of Daniel 8's little horn shifts in focus from horizontal expansion to vertical expansion.

In summary, Daniel 2 makes use of the symbolism of the iron giving way to a mixture of iron and clay in the feet of the statue to indicate that the Roman Empire would terminate through division rather than by being conquered by a fifth world empire. This same message is paralleled in Daniel 7 by the symbolism of the ten horns growing out of the fourth, non-descript beast. Daniel 8's imagery pictures a shift in focus from earthly conquest to spiritual conquest, perhaps indicating the termination of imperial Rome in favour of a new era.

Historically, the present-day nations of Europe grew out of the divisions of the former Roman Empire, which have continue to divide and sub-divide even to the present day. Many historians recognize the original divisions of Rome to have officially taken place by 476 AD.

Daniel 7:8, 24-25; Daniel 8:10-12

Blending of Political Rulership with Spiritual Rulership – Little Horn (Dan 7:8, 24-25); 2nd Phase of Little Horn (Dan 8:10-12)

In Daniel chapter 8 the little horn is clearly described as having two phases. The first phase involves a military expansion and is described in the language of directional movement. The second phase

⁵ W. H. Shea, *Symposium on Daniel*, Ed. F. B. Holbrook, (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1986), 192.



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is a spiritual phase, which is described in overtly religious language, more specifically, the language of the Old Testament's Sanctuary services - a language that would have been particularly suited to the prophet Daniel's understanding.

The idea that both the little horns in Daniel 7 & 8 are political entities stems from the fact of the symbolism itself. That is to say, Daniel 7:24 & 8:22 are clear that horns in Bible prophecy represent kings or kingdoms. Thus, whatever the historical reality is that the little horns of Daniel 7 & 8 point to, they must be political in nature i.e. nations, kingdoms or countries.

The spiritual phase of the little horn in Daniel 8 stands parallel to the religious antics of the little horn in Daniel 7. In Daniel 2 the religious element is represented by the potter's clay.

Notice that in Jeremiah 18:6 the metaphor of clay is used to represent God's people living in relationship to him. In other words, the clay has a religious significance. Thus, in Daniel 2 the feet made up partly of iron (representing the continuation of some element of the Roman Empire) and partly of clay (representing the religious element) may very well represent the coming together of religion and politics in some new form of government in a post-Empire era – perhaps one that represents an attempted union of political and spiritual rulership. In present-day language we might describe this as a union between church and state.

This same idea of Rome living on in some new form beyond its imperial and political collapse is echoed in Daniel 7 by the fact that the little horn grows out of the fourth beast (Dan 7:7). It is not an entirely new beast, but rather a horn growing out of the fourth beast. Daniel 8 captures this same idea in the symbolism of a single little horn, which is described first in the language of directional expansion (first phase) and second in the language of religious expansion (second phase).

In summary, Daniel 2, Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 indicate that after the demise of the last world empire – Rome – something of a politico-religio nature would take its place on the scene of action; some sort of union between religion and politics that somehow grows out of the Roman Empire.

**Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14,
26-27;
Daniel 8:14**

The Heavenly Judgment Scene (Dan 7:9-10, 13-14, 26-27); The Cleansing of the Sanctuary (Dan 8:14)

The awesome announcement and climax of the three-fold visions found in Daniel 2, 7 & 8 is that despite the abuses of political and religious power as exercised through the various nations foretold to arise and fall throughout human history, God will ultimately right



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these wrongs by establishing a new order of theocratic government – one which will be eternally just, loving and worthy of human loyalty.

This divine kingdom is pictured in all three chapters, as completely eradicating all systems of human governance. That is to say, the divine kingdom does not manifest itself alongside or through human leadership or present-day political systems. It is a completely and radically new era; one in which righteousness reigns supreme and the saints, who have often been persecuted and downtrodden, are vindicated and liberated. The enemies of God, who have often been in the position of power and authority as persecutors are once-and-for-all overcome and eradicated.

While this good news is central to the concluding scenes of the visions found in Daniel 2, 7 & 8, at the same time these three visions add unique nuances to how this final scene of victory is accomplished.

Daniel 2 gives a brief account in which a stone essentially smashes all previous governments and civilizations, ultimately supplanting them as one universal kingdom (Dan 2:31-35, 44-45). This imagery conveys the power and might of the coming kingdom and that it would be established entirely by the grace of an Almighty God, without human intervention. It is a picture of salvation for the saints by the grace of God.

Daniel 7 gives extensive snapshots of a heavenly judgment scene, which conveys a behind the scenes look into the legal, judicial process that heaven undertakes before stripping human powers and civilizations of their claim to political rulership (Dan 7:26-27). In other words, if Daniel 2 emphasizes the might and power of God, Daniel 7 emphasizes the justice and righteousness of God in how the divine victory is finally accomplished. God does not rule supremely simply because he has the biggest guns and the most power. If He did, He would be no better than the power-hungry, unjust human nations that He undertakes to supplant. Rather, God's ultimate victory is one that is legal and legitimate, based upon carefully considered evidence and heavenly witnesses that are akin to a jury.

If Daniel 7 emphasized God's righteous process in stripping away political rulership and authority from corrupt human powers, then Daniel 8 seeks to establish the righteousness of God in removing the claim to spiritual authority, privilege and even rulership by those who would presume to claim such prerogatives on false grounds. This process is described in the language of the Old Testament Sanctuary system as the "cleansing of the sanctuary" (Dan 8:14).

In summary, the concluding scenes of the prophecies in Daniel 2, 7 & 8 encourage the believer to remain faithful to God by giving



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assurance that the Divine kingdom will ultimately triumph politically and spiritually by the gracious and mighty intervention of God Himself. Though earthly political and religious systems may rule with injustice for a time, bringing suffering and persecution to the honest followers of God, a day of reckoning and restitution has been appointed according to the Divine calendar of events.

At present humanity is standing on the brink of this final scene of supreme Divine intervention being fulfilled. Every other aspect of these prophecies has been literally and entirely fulfilled – a fact that both evidences the divine, supernatural origin of the scriptures and also gives assurance that the yet unfulfilled prophetic elements will come to pass as prophesied.

SUMMARY & APPEAL

The knowledge that God is ultimately in control of the destiny of planet earth and that there is a day of reckoning and restitution ahead should encourage those faithful to God to endure to the end.

No matter what your former spiritual allegiance has been, God desires to spend eternity with you. Will you surrender your life and will into His hands?



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