

Daniel 11: The Final Frontier

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While COVID-19 has been devastating on our nation, it has given me something I have never had much of – time. I decided to use this time to study out the prophecies of Daniel chronologically, each empire as they appear each prophecy, instead of the chapter by chapter studies most often used.

Here are a few initial insights that I learned. First, we see that the prophecies of Daniel do not always follow chapter divisions. We do see all of Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of the giant image in chapter 2 and all of Daniel’s dream of the four beast kingdoms contained in chapter 7. These two are parallel prophecies over secular world empires and written predominately in Aramaic. They also focus on the beginning and end of each empire with characteristics and generalities about the empire occurring within their reign.

The remaining two prophecies take up more than just one chapter per prophecy. In Chapters 8, Daniel is given a two-part vision where he sees a fight between a ram and a goat, then he hears two angels discussing a time length and the sanctuary. The angel gives Daniel the interpretation of the vision he saw containing a ram and goat, but Daniel faints before the angel can give him the interpretation of the portion he heard about the time and sanctuary. In chapter 9, the angel comes back to give the interpretation of part two of the vision that Daniel heard about the sanctuary.

The next vision is the longest and is also written in Hebrew like the vision in chapters 8 and 9. The single vision of Daniel 10-12 focuses on the overall shifts in the balance of power, not necessarily the end of the kingdom as we find in Daniel 2 and 7, and on how kings and kingdoms affect Palestine and the ministry of the temple.

My second insight was that Daniel 2 has 6 divisions in and not just 5. Notice the wording in Daniel 2:41-42, *“And as you saw the **feet and toes**, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the **toes of the feet** were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle¹.”*

Kingdoms of Daniel 2

Image Part	Kingdom	Start	End
Head	Babylon	605BC	538BC

¹ All Scripture references taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.

Chest and arms	Medo-Persia	538BC	331BC
Belly and thighs	Greece	331BC	168BC
Legs	Pagan Rome	168BC	476AD
Feet	Divided Kingdoms	476AD	1798
Toes	Papal Rome	1798	End

Someone may say, "So What?" Well, these political divisions and time periods can be easily seen through each of the remaining prophecies. Here are the divisions for each prophecy by chapter and verse.

Empires by Chapters

<u>Empire</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8-9</u>	<u>10-12</u>
Babylon	32,37-38	4,12,17	n/a	n/a
Medo-Persia	32,39	5,12,17	8:3,4,14,20,26; 9:23-25	2
Greece	32,39	6,12,17	8:6-8,21-22	3-19
Pagan Rome	33,40	7,12,17,19, 23	8:9,10a,23* 9:26,27a	20-22
Divided Kingdoms	33,41,42,43	8,20,21, 24-25	10-14,23-24,27b	23-39
Papal Rome	43,42,44	9-11,22, 26,27	25	40-45

**Pagan and Papal Rome are mingled in these verses*

The Prophecy of Daniel 10-12

Daniel is told in Daniel 12:4, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase." This text has certainly been fulfilled by Adventists regarding the prophecies in chapters 2, 7, 8-9, 10, and 12. However, it's chapter 11 that we struggle with. I would like to call Daniel 11, the Final Frontier in Adventist Eschatology. The Adventist Review even ran an article about this a few months back: "*What Does Daniel Chapter 11 Mean? Theologians review and debate Adventist understandings.*"²

We also need to recognize that Daniel understands this vision. Daniel 10:1 states, "*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a word was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. And the word was true, and it was a great conflict. And **he understood the word and had understanding of the vision.***"

In Daniel 8, he did not understand the vision and needed more explanation which is found in Chapter 9. In 8:27, "*And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and*

² <https://www.adventistreview.org/what-does-daniel-chapter-11-mean>

went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.” Daniel 9:22, “He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, “O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding.”

Why would Daniel be able to understand this vision in Daniel 11– that we have such a hard time understanding – but he could not understand about the 2,300 days? The answer lies in chapter 8 where Daniel understands the “chazown” section of the vision which he had already seen in Daniel 2 and 7, but the “mar'eh” vision portion he doesn’t understand because it was not in Daniel 2 and 7. We also see Daniel asking for understanding about the “*time, times, and half a time*” in chapter 12 verses 7 and 8.

Therefore, Daniel 11 must be a repetition and enlargement of what Daniel saw in the visions of 2, 7, 8-9. Like in Daniel 8, he would have stated he did not understand this vision if the angel had added elements he had not seen. Themes in Revelation, while they are certainly true and may fit perfectly into Daniel's four prophecies, should not be used to interpret Daniel 11, or again, Daniel would not have been able to understand it.

Daniel is told the angel has come “*to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.*” If the vision of great struggles is about the end of time, why did the angel spend so much time on the Kings of the North and South during the Greek empire? The answer must be that verses 4-19 can help us to interpret the parallel verses of 23-40. After all, the same power is behind both kingdoms.

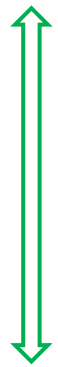
The Bible tells us the power behind Babylon is Satan (see Isaiah 14) and this is representative of all the kingdoms. God can influence a king to do his will and for some time, the power behind the King of Persia is God. Daniel 10:13 *The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia.*” The exiles returned home under the decrees of Persia in a time of peace with the protection and authority of the power of the day. Their conflict was with the small nations around them who harassed them, but when they believed the promises of God, they were able to overcome these trials through God’s strength.

All the kings of Greece, Pagan Rome, Divided Rome, and Papal Rome has Satan behind them, and as such, God’s people must be vigilant against the actions Satan will use in the name of the state.

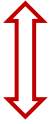
Daniel 11 Parallel Kingdoms

Daniel 11 has parallel kingdoms which often mirror each other.

Medo-Persia in verse 11:2 – Cyrus was the deliverer from literal Babylon to usher in a time of peace



Greece in verses 3 to 19 – King of North and King of the South



Pagan Rome in verses 20 to 22 – Kills the Prince of the Covenant

Divided Kingdoms in verses 23 to 39 – King of North and King of the South



Papal Rome (Toes) in verses 40 to 45 – Attempts to kill the People of Prince of the Covenant

Everlasting Kingdoms verse 12:1 – Michael will be the deliverer from the final Papal church-state union and usher in a time of peace

When looking at Daniel 11, we are too often focused on the warfare of the Kings of the North and South and the Abomination of Desolation. Here we may be falling into the trap many have with focusing on the revelation of the beast and his mark in the book of Revelation instead of focusing on the revelation of Jesus Christ. So, Daniel 11 must be interpreted in light of 1) Jesus and His covenant, 2) great struggles by powers to control of nations impacting physical and spiritual Palestine, 3) the effects on the people of God who find themselves caught in the middle of this struggle, and 4) an emphasis on the end of time.

Daniel 12:3 says, “And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” Here we find, as the people of the Prince of the Covenant, our end time marching orders. Through keeping His covenant and teaching others about the God who reveals the future, we can be the literal fulfillment of the prophecy in this text.