

Analyzing Daniel prophecies in Chapters 7, 2 and 9

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1# I am going to discuss here the prophecies of Daniel in chapters 7, 2 and 9, and I am going to argue that there are some right predictions there, which are mixed with so many wrong ones. Therefore, we cannot say that these prophecies have a divine origin as they are mixed with so many wrong predictions. But also, we cannot ignore the conclusion that there are some impressive predictions. So, I am going here to suggest a philosophical model to explain the mix in these prophecies.

2# We can clearly conclude that the prophecy in Daniel chapter 11 (the north and south kings) was a man-made prophecy compiled about 165BC; as it is clearly obvious that the whole chapter is accurate about the accounts of Antiochus IV (the ruler of the Seleucid Empire, 215-164BC) except only the last few paragraphs. This does indicate that this chapter was written at the time of Antiochus IV, but before his death.

We can also say that the prophecy in Daniel chapter 8 (the ram and goat) is probably written at the same time (about 165BC) and it does represent Antiochus IV as the “small horn” in it.

It should be noted here that Antiochus IV (and his successors) did oppress the Jews starting from about 168BC. This oppression ignited the Jewish rebellion against the Greek starting about 167BC (the Maccabean Revolt). This rebellion was successful in liberating the Jews from the Greek at about 134BC. So, the prophecies of Chapter 8 and 11 can be regarded as intentional moral boosts for the rebels.

However, the prophecy in Daniel chapter 2 (the statue) is a bit problematic, but we could say that it was written at the same time as chapter 8 & 11; if we assumed that the “bronze belly” represents only the kingdom of Alexander, and the Seleucid Empire is represented by the “iron legs and feet”. This might be a bizarre assumption (i.e. to separate the Greek era into two), but it is possible.

3# However, the prophecy in chapter 7 is really problematic; because it is clear that the fourth beast is the Roman Empire. If this chapter was written before 160BC (which is the likely assumption) then the author of this chapter prophesied the entry of the Romans to Palestine about 100 years before. This is impressive.

Furthermore, the story of the 10 horns and the small emerging horn can marginally fit with the accounts of Constantine the Great:

I am going to assume that Constantine has a hand in the death of his father (Constantius). This would probably be a bizarre assumption, but it is not impossible. So, Constantine was dealing with the following 10 Emperors and x-Emperors: Diocletian, Maximian, Constantius, Galerius, Severus, Licinius, Daia, Maxentius, Martinian, and Valens.

Constantine destroyed the first three Emperors (Constantius, Maximian, and Diocletian):

- As assumed, he assassinated his father (Constantius).
- He forced Maximian to commit suicide,
- There is a hypothesis that Diocletian committed suicide as his Tetrarchy system fell apart by the hands of his successors, and probably he also feared that Constantine might be heading to his direction.

Constantine also destroyed the last three Emperors (Maxentius, Licinius, and Martinian).

One Emperor died honorably on his bed by natural causes (Galerius), and 2 Emperors (Daia and Valens) were destroyed by Licinius, and one Emperor (Severus) was destroyed by Maxentius.

So, there are differences between the small horn story and the accounts of Constantine, but also, there are some resemblances here.

Also, the small emerging horn “shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the seasons and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25).

This also does marginally fit with the accounts of Constantine:

- The “Council of Nicaea” was conducted by his command, and this council represents the start of the oppression of all Christian denominations other than the Trinitarians. So, the Monarchianism and Arianism were outlawed in the Roman Empire after this council.
- He enforced the weekly holiday to be on Sunday rather than Saturday.
- He enforced the 25th of December to be the celebration day of the birth of Jesus, and this date does probably coincide with the Roman pagan festival of Saturnalia.

However, there are some stuff that doesn't seem to have clear meaning, for example: “a time, times and half a time” doesn't have a clear meaning. But we can say here that numbers and arithmetic in the Jewish Bible aren't necessarily accurate.

Another surprising thing here is the clear formation of God in the body of a man with a white hair (Daniel 7:9). I am assuming here that this might be one of the rare verses (and probably the only verse) in the Jewish Bible that have a clear shaping of God in a human body, unless this can be interpreted to be an angel.

So, there are many things that were clearly wrong, but there are also some predictions that were impressively right. We might say that this is just a coincidence, but still, it is a very impressive coincidence.

4# Let us return back to the prophecy of Daniel in chapter 2, and we will assume here that the bronze represents the Greek era, which includes the kingdom of Alexander and the Seleucid Empire.

So, let us suppose that the statue was instituted in Babylon. So, we have the following kingdoms:

- 1# Gold = The Babylonians. 2# Silver = The Persians. 3# Bronze = The Greeks.
- 4# Iron = The Parthians. 5# ??? = The Sasanians.
- 6# The Fifth Kingdom = The Muslims.

There are two problems in this prophecy:

- There are 6 kingdoms according to the history, but only 5 according to the prophecy.
- The prophecy said that the second kingdom will be inferior to the first, but the Persians were much stronger than the Babylonians.

The first problem can be solved: The Parthians and Sasanians could be regarded as two dynasties in the same civilization; therefore, they are one. The Parthians could be represented by the iron legs, and the Sasanians could be represented by the iron and clay feet.

The second problem seems to be hard to solve.

So, the order would be as follows:

- 1# Gold = The Babylonians. 2# Silver = The Persians. 3# Bronze = The Greeks.
- 4# Iron = The Parthians and Sasanians. 5# The Fifth Kingdom = The Muslims.

If we regarded that the statue has been instituted in Jerusalem, then:

- 1# Gold = The Babylonians. 2# Silver = The Persians. 3# Bronze = The Greeks.
- 4# Iron = The Romans. 5# The Fifth Kingdom = The Muslims.

The Roman Republic could be represented by the iron legs, and the Roman Imperial could be represented the iron and clay feet.

5# Let us discuss here the prophecy of Daniel in chapter 9 (the seventy-seven), but it should be noted that the arithmetic in this prophecy is wrong. So, we will be focusing on the events more than the arithmetic.

I will put here the prophecy using the translation in www.mechon-mamre.org:

25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto one anointed, a prince, shall be seven weeks; and for threescore and two weeks, it shall be built again, with broad place and moat, but in troublous times.

26 And after the threescore and two weeks shall an anointed one be cut off, and be no more; and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; but his end shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease; and upon the wing of detestable things shall be that which causeth appalment; and that until the extermination wholly determined be poured out upon that which causeth appalment.

The threescore means sixty, week means seven, and the arithmetic here are in years.

5.1# Seven-Seven (49 years) from the permission to build Jerusalem until the anointed prince. The permission was given by the Persians in 537BC, and 49 years after that is 488BC. So, who could be a good candidate for being this prince around that time?

I would assume that the best candidate is Nehemiah (465–424 BC), who was active about 444BC. He was a prince (i.e. the governor of Judaea) and he was well-respected to the point that he has a book by his name in the bible.

So, has Nehemiah been anointed?

I am not sure, but he was close enough.

5.2# After that 62-Seven (434 years) the temple will be rebuilt again in a troublesome time. So, 434 years after 444BC is 10BC. That marginally fit with Herod rebuilding the temple in 20BC, and Herod was a very troublesome king.

5.3# After re-building the temple, an anointed one [will] be cut off. The arithmetic here is wrong. So, let us just put it aside and see the events without it.

It has been suggested that the anointed one here is Jesus, but the context of the text suggests two options:

- # Either the anointed has been killed near the time of re-building the temple,
- # Or he has been killed near the time of the destruction of the temple.

Jesus crucifixion event is not near to any of these two options.

The best candidate for this anointed one is “James the Just”: his murder (about 62AD) was very near to the destruction of the temple in 70AD. Actually, Origen (3rd century Christian scholar) have quoted Flavius Josephus saying [paraphrasing] that the destruction of the temple was God’s revenge for the murder of James. It should be noted that this quote is not found in Josephus book, but still, it seems that some people did have this thought.

Has James been anointed?

He might have been anointed by Jesus for priesthood. If so, then James would be the last anointed person in Judaea. Therefore, “an anointed one [will] be cut off and be no more”, i.e. no more anointing after him.

5.4# Then came the destruction of the temple by the Romans.

5.5# The verse 27 is really not clear, however, it does resemble the things that happened between Hadrian (the Roman Emperor) and the Jews prior to the Jewish revolution in 135AD. It seems that Hadrian did promise the Jews to rebuild the temple for them, however, he suddenly changed his mind and decided to rebuild the temple for Jupiter. This enraged the Jewish populous and triggered the revolution.

6# So, there are some predictions in Daniel that were accurate probably beyond the limit of coincidence, but it is mixed with so many wrong useless predictions. Therefore, we cannot say that these prophecies have a divine origin; because they contain so many wrong predictions. But how could someone without divine support be able to predict the future the same as Daniel?

We can offer the following philosophical model (as science here cannot help):

It seems that there are some people who have a special talent of sensing the past (this talent has been named by some as “previous life experience”). Other people have a special talent of sensing the future (I never heard anyone yet naming this talent as “future life experience”!). This has been observed but science couldn’t prove it or disprove it; because science couldn’t put this talent under experimentation; because this talent is not consistent with the people who allegedly have it. However, this talent has been observed cross cultures and cross disciplines.

Nevertheless, the people that allegedly have this talent don’t see the future as crystal clear; but they sense it as a picture with so many big holes in it, and these people instinctively would fill these holes by their interpretations. Therefore, we have useless predictions; as it is a mixture between accurate predictions with so many wrong interpretations.

Best example is the book of Nostradamus: It is going to be very useless to use it for predicting the future; because the verses there are very cryptic and there are so many wrong predictions in it. But there are some predictions in Nostradamus book that seems to be accurate.

If this analysis is acceptable, then we can say that Daniel did have the talent to sense the future (same as Nostradamus), but his senses were not crystal clear, therefore, there were many holes in his vision, and he filled them with his own interpretations, therefore, we find many wrong predictions mixed with few accurate ones.

Now ... regardless whether we believe in some prophecies or not, still, most of us are attracted to read and interpret all of them. It seems that humans in their design have strong longing to know the future. However, the prophecies of Daniel and Nostradamus can give us a clear sign that most of these types of prophecies are wrong, and some few of them might have some impressive predictions, but they are mixed with so many wrong interpretations, which would make these prophecies useless.