

# BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

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## Daniel: Historical & Chronological Comments (VII)

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### 14. The **Second Little Horn: Herod and Rome**

The whole time Daniel **sees** the Ancient of Days establishing His throne and getting ready for the judgment scene, he hears the Second Little Horn uttering its great boasts (**7:9-11**). Then he sees the “beast” **slain** and destroyed, while the other beasts continue to live, though without dominion. In fact, all the dominion is given to one **like** a Son of Man (vv. 13-14).

**This** is a puzzle. Rome did not simply disappear when Jesus became King of kings, nor did Rome disappear by AD 70. But the Herods did. What this indicates to me is that the “beast” of verse 11, which was eliminated at the time Christ became King, refers to the **Edomite** Herods.

Therefore, we have five **beasts**: Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and a Roman extension, Herod. Herod was the face of the Roman empire that was visible to the Jews in Palestine. Herod was eliminated, but the other **beasts carried on for a while through the Roman empire, which** lasted for a time after Christ-became King.

Now, as a matter of fact the Herods were Rome’s point men on the scene in **Judaea**, Galilee, and **Samaria**. The Herods were, thus, a “**head**” of the Roman beast, and important] y, they were the “head” that overlooked the Jews and **early** Christians. Moreover, the Second Little Horn of **Daniel 7** is a head, because it has eyes and a mouth, unlike the other horns, which are mere horns.

Herod’s father, Antipater, king of the **Edomites**, allied himself with Rome and did all he could to help the **Romans** in their takeover of Palestine and in suppressing revolts thereafter. Since Pompey had been the general who initially took Palestine, **Antipater** was initially loyal to him when the war between Pompey and Julius Caesar broke out. Once it was apparent that Pompey would lose, Antipater switched sides to Caesar, and helped him

greatly.

Antipater’s reward was that he was made a Roman citizen. Thus Herod, **Antipater’s** son, though of **Idumean** stock, **did** indeed come out of the fourth beast. **The** “horns” or “kingdoms” that Herod took over were **these**: While **Antipater** was alive, he appointed Herod prefect of Galilee. Thereafter, the Roman governor of Syria, **Sextus Caesar**, made him prefect of **Coele-Syria**. Later, the Roman Senate appointed him King of **Judea**. At his death, he had five territories to distribute among his sons: **Judea** and **Samaria** to **Archelaus**, Galilee and Peres to AntiPas, and **Iturea** to Philip.

Herod did not actually “speak **words** against the Most High,” for he tried to appear a religious Jew, but **his** actions were the equivalent of such blasphemy. I believe **Daniel 7:25** is structured **parallelistically**, so that the **phrases** help interpret one another:

- a. And words against the Most High he will speak,
- b. **And the saints of the Highest he will oppress,**
- a’. And he will try to change set-times and decree,
- b’. And they will be given into his hand for time and times and half of time.

Thus, speaking against God means trying to change **set-times** and decree. The word translated set-times here is used in **Daniel 2:21**, where God is praised as the one who changes times and set-times, removing and **establishing** kings. Perhaps more relevant is **Daniel 7:22**, just a couple of sentences before v. 25, which says that “the set-time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.” Any Satanically inspired personage would seek to oppose the coming of that time, but in fact it was Herod who slew the **babies** at Bethlehem in a self-conscious attempt to prevent the Messiah’s arrival.

Similarly, “decree” here is not the **Aramaic** equivalent

of "torah." What the Second Little Horn tries to change is God's decree, and that decree has just been stated in the preceding verses. The decree is that the Son shall rule, and that the saints will possess the kingdom.

**Thus**, in opposing the coming of the Messiah, an event the Bible itself records, Herod fulfilled the **prediction** that the Second Little Horn would speak out against God.

The oppression of the **saints** may be seen focally in the fact that **Jesus** and His family had to flee to Egypt. In larger compass, though, Herod tried to mollify the Jews and present himself as a good ruler, while in fact he was so vicious and unstable that he was quite oppressive. Josephus tells us that on one occasion he wiped out the entire **Sanhedrin** (**Josephus, Antiquities 14:9:4**), though modern scholars, who are pro-Herod, often deny this. He murdered **Hyrchanus**, the mild-mannered high priest (**Ant. 15:6:2**). When he neared death, a group of young Jews tore down the golden imperial eagle Herod had placed over the great gate of the Temple; Herod had them burned alive (Josephus, **Jewish War 33:2:3**). **Realizing** that no one would mourn his death, Herod ordered notable Jews from all over the nation to come to him, and then locked them in the hippodrome, ordering that they be killed when he died. Thus, the nation would be in mourning! Happily, the men were released rather than executed after Herod's **demise**.

Modern historians make it out that Herod was no worse than other rulers of his time. The Biblical standard, however, is far higher. **Herod** was "king of the Jews," and thus must be measured by the **Davidic** standard. In such terms, he was a monster beyond anything seen in the Old Testament. He was worse than Saul, Ahab, and Manasseh put together.

The saints will be given into his hand for a "time, times, and a half of time." Though this phrase is often taken to mean "a year, two years, and a half a year," for **3½** years, there is no reason to take it as a reference to years, nor is there any reason to take the plural as only two. Arguably, if only two years were meant by "times" the **Aramaic** would be in the dual rather than the plural form.

A similar expression is found in Daniel **12:7**, "time, times, and a half," but the Hebrew word is not the same as the Hebrew equivalent of the **Aramaic** term here in **7:25**. Moreover, in the phrase "appointed time, appointed times, and a half," the word for "time" only occurs twice. In Daniel 12, the **phrase** refers to the period from the Persian empire to Christ, which in this prophecy contains three periods: the time of Persia, the times of the Greek empire (Alexander, the wars of North & South, the career of **Antiochus**), and finally the half time of the **Willful King**, which is broken off by the arrival of the Messiah.

The phrase is picked up in Revelation 12:14, which **repeats the word** "time" **thrice, thus** linking with Daniel **7:25** instead of **12:7**. While the similar phrase in Daniel 12

denotes three periods, the phrase here and in Revelation does not come in a context that indicates three periods. Rather, the idea in both cases seems to be that of a unit of time that is broken off by the coming of some kind of salvation: a time that is extended to times but then is broken off before it is completed. Or possibly, if we take the conjunction **explicatively**—"a time, even times, even half a **time**"—**then** we have a period of time which consists of a series of times, but which ultimately is **only** half a time because it is broken off. Whatever the case, it is **clear** that **Herod's** reign was broken by the coming of Christ.

## 15. The Ram, the Goat, and the First Little Horn (Daniel 8)

The third hour, day, year, month, etc. is a time of judgment and resurrection in the Bible. In **Belshazzar's** third year Daniel had his second vision. At this time, Daniel may have been visiting the court of the **Medes** in Susa (compare Nehemiah 1:1; Esther 1:2& **2:8**). Possibly he was in some kind of exile, probably self-imposed. More likely he was thereon the business of King **Belshazzar** (v. 27).

It is unclear, however, whether Daniel was in Susa in a vision or in person. At any rate, if the location was part of the vision, the fact that Daniel recognized Susa and the **Ulai Canal** **indicates** that he had visited **there** in the past and was familiar with the place. As a **high** Babylonian official, he probably got to know Cyrus on such visits, or at least Cyrus's **Median** relatives, and this helps explain why Daniel was favored by "Darius the **Mede**" in Daniel 6.

The place of the vision was by the **Ulai Canal**. The importance of this comes in verse 15, when Daniel sees the Lord over the river. As the Spirit hovered over the waters to create the world in Genesis 1, so Christ is over the waters to direct history. Compare Ezekiel 1 and also Daniel 10-12. The water is a Gentile stream, of course, and represents the Gentile world. God directs the course of Gentile history from above the waters. and now shows that course of history to Daniel.

The fact that Daniel was in Susa and by the Ulai stream, whether in person or only in a vision, means that God is no longer with the Babylonians but is raising up the **Medes** to attack and conquer Babylon. Thus, God is at Susa, and brings Daniel to Himself to receive the communication. Two years earlier God had visited Daniel in Babylon; now God is at Susa and Daniel must go there to encounter Him.

Daniel sees two animals. They are not beasts this time, but sacrificial animals: a ram and a goat. They represent Persia and Greece. Each morning and each evening Israel would offer a lamb as a sacrifice. This fact is **central** to the present vision, and will explain why Persia and Greece are pictured as flockmembers.

The ram of Persia has two horns, one **behind** the

other. The one in back is later, but is also longer. The first horn is Media, the second Persia, but it is one ram. The ram conquers to the west, north, and south; since it comes from the east it does not need to conquer to the **east**. God gives everything to the ram, and lets it rule the world (vv. 3-4, 20).

Then a male goat comes from the west, as the ram came from the east. They collide, and the goat is utterly victorious. The goat's **swift** advance represents the incredible progress of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The great horn between the goat's eyes is Alexander himself, but the horn is broken very quickly, because Alexander died at the age of 30. Then four new horns arose and took over Alexander's empire in four directions. This is in fact what happened, as Alexander's generals divided the empire between themselves (vv. 5-8, 21-22).

Then a little horn grew up out of their midst. This is **the First Little Horn, and represents Antiochus IV Epiphanes, ruler** of the Northern part of Alexander's broken empire. Antiochus's oppression of the saints is then described (vv. 9-14, 23-26).

Christ tells Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel. Gabriel explain that this vision "pertains to the time of the end." The end of what? The end of the first creation, which came to a **full** close in **AD 70**. The "time of the end," or "latter days," or "last days" goes from the **decree** of Cyrus to the destruction of Jerusalem. Gabriel identifies the ram and the goat, and gives more information about **Antiochus** (w, 15-26).

Then Daniel was sick and exhausted for several days, after which he arose and went **about** the king's business. What king? The only king in context is King **Belshazzar**, though it is clear from Daniel 5 that he was not personally acquainted with Daniel. We can assume that Daniel was still employed by the Babylonian court, but had been greatly demoted from **being** second only to the King. He was far enough down the ladder that the King did not know who he was. The reason attention is called to Daniel's **service of this seems to be that though** the Gentile rulers will oppress God's **people** for a season, the proper response is to be good citizens, serve **the kings**, and wait for the Ancient of Days to give the kingdom to His people when He is ready.

The full career of **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, the **First Little Horn**, is delineated in Daniel 11 and we shall examine it when we get there. Here it is those aspects of his career that most touch God's people that are highlighted, and that cause Daniel so much distress. **Antiochus** would assault the "host of heaven," and cause some of the "host" and some of the "stars" to fall to the earth, and trample them down (v. 10). The host refers to the Jews, and the stars to their leaders (compare Genesis 1:16, where stars are governors).

In verse 11, Antiochus makes himself equal to the Prince of the host, possibly a reference to Christ, or a

reference to the High Priest. It is more likely Christ, since Antiochus removes the continual offerings from "him" and casts down the place of "his" sanctuary, language more appropriate to Yahweh than to the High Priest.

What was the cause of **this**? Verse 12 says that transgressions committed by the host caused God to give them into Antiochus's hand. Later, Daniel 11 will speak of the Jews as committing the abomination that causes God to desolate His sanctuary, with the result that God's agent of punishment, **Antiochus**, is brought in upon them.

Now, verses 13-14 say that the regular sacrifices will be cut off for **2300** evenings and mornings, during the time that the transgression causes desolation. The phrase "evenings and mornings" might refer to the **daily** evening and morning sacrifices, so 2300 such sacrifices come to 1150 days. Everywhere else in the Bible, however, "evening and morning" means one day, and thus it is far **more likely that 2300 days are in view.**

Now, in fact **Antiochus** only halted the actual performance of sacrifices for about three and one half years. The **restoration** of the Temple came at the end of this time, on the 25th of **Kislev** (December) 165 **BC**. If we count back a little over six years (six years and 109 days), we will come to the abomination of desolation that caused God to forsake the sanctuary.

Compare Ezekiel 8-11, which shows that the sacrileges of the priests caused God to abandon the sanctuary several years before the Temple was actually destroyed by His agent, Nebuchadnezzar. In Ezekiel's day, God abandoned the Temple in the sixth year of **Zedekiah**, month 6, day 5 (**Ezk. 8:1**). **This** was the year 591 **BC**. The Temple was burned in 586 **BC**, month 5, & y 10. **This comes** to about 1800 **days**, just under five years.

If we count back 23(M) days from the 25th of **Kislev**, the ninth month, 165 **BC**, we come to around the beginning of Ab, the fifth month, 171 **BC**. Moses Stuart summarizes the events of that year, which demonstrate clearly that the abomination that provoked God to abandon His Temple **and whistle for Antiochus took place during that year:** "During this year, **Menelaus**, the high priest **appointed by Antiochus** on the ground of a proffered bribe, rifled the temple of many of its treasures in order to **pay** that bribe, and in this transaction he was assisted by his brother Lysimachus." We have already seen that the removal of the gold and treasures of the Temple can signify God's departure from it (Daniel 1).

Stuart continues: "The regular and lawful high priest, **Onias III**, who had been removed, severely reprov'd this sacrilege committed by his brethren; and afterward, through fear of them, fled for refuge to Daphne, an asylum near **Antioch** in Syria. Then he was allured by the false promises of **Menelaus**, and perfidiously murdered by the king's lieutenant, **Andronicus**. See the whole story in 2 **Maccabees 4:27ff**. The Jews at Jerusalem, incensed by the violent death of their lawful high priest, and by the **sacri-**

**legous** robberies of **Menelaus** and **Lysimachus**, became tumultuous, and a severe contest took place between them and the adherents of those who committed the robbery, in **which** the patriotic Jews at last gained the victory, and Lysimachus was slain at the **treasury**. This was the first contest that took place, between the friends of Antiochus and the adherents of the Hebrew laws and usages." Moses Stuart, *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1850), p. 238.

The precise date of **these** events is unknown, but clearly they are close enough to **indicate** the meaning of the prophecy. **2300** days is just over 6 years, thus not 7 years, and thus not a full desolation.

The parallel between the first abomination of the Temple in Ezekiel and this abomination by **Menelaus**, **indicates** to me that we should look for a similar event several years before the destruction of the Temple in **AD** 70, which I propose is the massacre of the 144),(XXI Jewish converts described in Revelation 14-15, whose blood is poured on Jerusalem, which has drunk their blood (Rev. 16-17).

Returning to Daniel 8, we find further information about **the** career of **Antiochus** in verses 23-25, which are expanded in Daniel 11, and whose career we shall consider at that point.

Now we need to **link** the sacrifices with the ram and goat. Israel was set up to serve as a priestly nation to the other nations. Her sacrifices were never for herself alone, but also for the sins of the whole world. This became especially true in the Restoration era, the first phase of the latter days. During this phase, the Jews were spread out as the four winds among all the nations, to minister to them, as we have seen. The two phases of the former &ys, the priestly phase from Moses to David and the kingly phase from David to the exile, concentrated on the land of Israel.

The two phases of the . . . on a world-wide scale: priestly from Cyrus to Jesus, and kingly from **Jesus** onwards.

Cyrus had directed that the Temple be restored as a house of prayer on behalf of all nations (2 **Chron.** 36:23; **Ezr.** 1:1-4; Dan. 6:26-27). Thus, the sacrifices mentioned in Daniel 8 were being performed for the ram and the goat, among others. The lambs, bulls, rams, and goats sacrificed were in the place of the ram and the goat, which is why Persia and Greece are in this vision designed by these sacrificial animals. The apostasy of the Jewish priesthood, God's abandonment of His Temple, and the cessation of actual sacrifices actually threatened the existence of the entire world.

Moreover, this chapter adds to what was communicated in Daniel 7. In Daniel 7 we saw that the faithful witness of the saints produced monsters from the fleshly hearts of humanity. Here in Daniel 8, we see that such monsters are given freer rein when God's people become faithless. Antiochus was already a monster, and he already hated God and His covenant. He was, however, unable to do very much against the Jews until the priests decided to conspire with him and abandoned the covenant. This perspective continues to be relevant to Christianity in the world today. Christian witness will indeed call forth monsters, but such **monsters** will be relatively restrained and eventually destroyed if the Church remains faithful. When such monsters gain vast power and are able to wreak havoc in the Church, as in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, or in many parts of Asia and Africa, and increasingly in the United States, it is because the Church has committed abominations that cause God to desolate her.

Daniel, participating with his people, felt desolated (not "astonished") at the end of the vision.