

# Historical Overview of Dan 11:23-28

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## *Introduction*

In this paper I argue that Dan 11:23-28 deals with roughly the same period of time as that discussed earlier for vss. 16-22.<sup>1</sup> More than a century ago Uriah Smith held a similar position.<sup>2</sup> One result of the present research, therefore, is to confirm Smith's view of how the middle verses of Dan 11 should be interpreted.<sup>3</sup> In his model vs. 23 applies to events that occur earlier than those in vs. 22. The continuous flow of events appears to be broken, but there is more than one reason for this. It is no mistake.

What are the verses saying?

The first part of Dan 11:23 says, "After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power." The most obvious sense of this passage is that a beginning point of some sort is in view. So our first task is to determine what begins when the above agreement is reached. If it is the relationship called into existence by the agreement, which would be a reasonable assumption, then who are the signatories and when did they first come into relationship with each other?

We must both raise and answer the above questions within the context of the book of Daniel. This one passage cannot be interpreted in isolation from all the rest. A prominent feature of the book is its recurring motif of four world empires. In the case of Babylon, Persia, and Greece the Jews had little to say about the relationship that was thrust upon them. But with Rome the Jews solicited a treaty on their own initiative. The "agreement" of vs. 23 is the formal alliance between the government of Judas Maccabeus and Rome, ratified in 160 B.C. That is where our story begins.

A fact that might seem so obvious that it does not need to be stated, but which does need to be stated, is that the above treaty had two signatories. In vss. 16-22 the ensuing

relationship is traced from the perspective of the first or initiating party. Jerusalem would be completely dominated and eventually engulfed and destroyed by her former ally. But what about the other party to the agreement--the treaty's other signatory? Would Rome enjoy success indefinitely? Verses 23-28 show that this would not be the case. Rome would succeed and would rule, "but only for a time" (vs. 24).

Both halves of the larger section (vss. 16-22, 23-28) have a reason for being exactly where they are and for saying what they do. In the first half section (vss. 16-22) Jerusalem loses its ability to function as the capital of a Jewish state (vs. 17). In the second half (vss. 23-28) Rome meets a similar end. The capital of the Roman Empire is not destroyed. Under Constantine, however, it is moved elsewhere. After A.D. 330 Rome no longer functions as capital of the Empire (vs. 24). By whatever means, both cities cease to rule.

Notice that the destruction of Jerusalem is not portrayed as the most important fact about Judea during this period, nor is Constantine's move to Byzantium the most important fact about Rome. Both of these events are relegated to proleptic preview statements found toward the beginning of their respective subsections. The focus of the one subsection (vss. 16-22)--the event to which it leads--is not the fall of the Jewish capital (vs. 17) but the death of the Jewish Messiah (vs. 22). Similarly, the focus of the other subsection (vss. 23-28) is not on the point when Rome would quit being capital of the Empire (vs. 24) but the point when it would quit trying to destroy Christianity (vs. 28). In both subsections the prolepsis comes in the second verse (vss. 17, 24), while the clause of greatest importance comes in the last verse (vss. 22, 28).

There is a question what it means for Rome's status as capital of the world to end. In terms of the contrast being developed between Jerusalem and Rome, it means that the roles of two major protagonists in the chapter are eventually reversed. In A.D. 70 Rome won and Jerusalem was defeated. For almost three centuries after that victory the Empire fought a desultory war against the Christian church, which eventually turned into a life or death struggle for survival. This time it was Rome that went down in defeat.<sup>4</sup> Rome had clearly lost a major struggle but who had won? Not an army but a set of ideas and beliefs. The state had been defeated by a church. The new capital at Byzantium would be just as Christian as Rome had been pagan.

Answering the one question about the end of Rome's supremacy in vs. 24 raises another that corresponds to it. When Constantine moved the capital of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium in A.D. 330 that was the end of an era. But exactly what era was it and when did it begin? This additional matter is discussed in vss. 25-28.

The angel's discussion is a study in economy of means. It includes all the essential facts, the importance of each event relative to the others is indicated, the church's role as the believing Israel of God is captured nicely,<sup>5</sup> greater emphasis is placed on the spiritual dimension of events than the secular,<sup>6</sup> and the fulcrum around which the entire narrative revolves is the crucifixion of Christ at the center of the section. The special interests of Jerusalem and Rome are both discussed in a half section each. And this entire fund of information and insight is compressed into only thirteen verses. The result is a carefully developed contrast between the Jewish state and the Roman state, between the people of God and the dominant world power. But where would the contrast be if the narrator had gone on to other things after vs. 22 with only half of it in place? There might be ways to get around the seeming repetition in this section,<sup>7</sup> but to the extent that we succeed we must correspondingly fail to grasp the points it was designed to convey.

Why was Smith right?

Smith did not create the unusual situation that he explains. But his interpretation does not obscure it. He allows the angel's emphasis on the cross of Christ in vs. 22 to come through at the center of everything--section, chapter, and narrative--with all the simplicity it was intended to have. Whenever this happens we can be very sure that we are not proceeding on wrong exegetical principles.<sup>8</sup>

When the two half sections making up vss. 16-28 are compared clause by clause the events they portray are indeed interlaced, but there is no repetition. No event is presented twice. Let me illustrate the relationships that follow from this arrangement with an analogy. When a picture is printed in full color the same piece of paper is run through the press three separate times. In each part of the picture there is some red, some yellow, and some blue, so that an outline of the entire picture can be seen when only one color is there. And yet in another sense we do not see the whole picture until all three colors are present together. A casual observer

might assume that the pressman is merely repeating himself as he works, but there is a reason for what he does.

We as Seventh-day Adventists should stop trying to pick the colors out of Dan 11:16-28. There is more to see than Smith was able to point out, but he has been misunderstood for responding to a dimension of the narrative that no one else had seen. The following table is repeated from an earlier paper.<sup>9</sup> It has been slightly revised.<sup>10</sup>

Table 1  
Harmony of Events Discussed  
in Dan 11:16-22 And 23-28

Event in History	Verse
Rome orders Antiochus Epiphanes to leave Egypt in 168 B.C.	16a
Rome's treaty with the Jews in 161 B.C. and rise to power	23
Pompey enters the temple in Jerusalem	24a
Pompey's settlement - Roman taxes but no Roman governor	16b
Julius Caesar in conflict with Pompey	18
Julius Caesar's largess to the Jews after Pompey's death	24b
Julius Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C.	19
Octavian's early association with Mark Antony	27a
Octavian's war with Mark Antony at Actium in 31 B.C.	25
Octavian's victory accounted for	26
End of the republic	27b
Quirinius' census under Caesar Augustus (Octavian)	20a
Judea annexed as a Roman province in A.D. 6	17a
Augustus' nonviolent death	20b
Tiberius' rise to power in A.D. 14	21
Tiberius' reign of terror	22a
Christ's crucifixion in A.D. 31 (midway through terror)	22b
Jews rebel against Rome on various occasions	17b
Rome persecutes the church	28b
Rome under Constantine quits persecuting the church	28c
Rome no longer the capital of the Empire	24c

When the applications proposed for both subsections (vss. 16-22, 23-28) are simply listed one after another in chronological order, the result appears to be disordered and arbitrary. But what is happening in the narrative becomes clear when three facts are understood: (1) The relationship between Judea and Rome is discussed from the perspective of both parties, (2) there is a proleptic statement toward the beginning of both halves of the larger section that shows the end result of what would follow, and (3) the material is arranged topically. The first point accounts for the fact that two largely parallel sets of events are superimposed on each other. Two independent series of verses can be traced in table 1. The second point accounts for the forward placement of vss. 17a, 17b, and 24c within their respective subsections (vs. 17b appears after vs. 22b, vs. 24c appears after vs. 28c). And the third accounts for the backward placement of vs. 27a (vs. 27a appears before vs. 25).

There is a difference between covering a period twice and not covering it at all. Unfortunately the same word "discontinuity" could be used to describe either situation. But it is important to keep them separate. If the question is whether each event in the narrative applies later than the one before it in the present model, the answer is no. But if the question is whether the narrative remains unbroken in the sense that it deals with every major era of history from Daniel's day to our own, the answer is yes. The latter question has to do with the chapter's content, the former only deals with how its content is arranged. Because Smith leaves nothing out, we could accurately say that he interprets the narrative in a continuous manner after all and that his work fully reflects the ideals of the historicist model that he had appeared to compromise in vs. 23.

There is another fact to consider. When we say Smith's model lacks historical continuity there is an assumption that single verses are the most appropriate basis for discussion. But if the angel develops his thought as a sequence of topics rather than isolated facts, we must learn to recognize intermediate units that are at once larger than verses and smaller than chapters. One such intermediate unit is the "section" (e.g., vss. 16-28), which helps us divide the chapter into three parts of approximately equal length. Verses 16-22 and 23-28 are "subsections." Below I show that vss. 16-19, 20-21, 22, 23-24, and 25-28 are also natural units within an outline.<sup>11</sup> Such smaller groups of verses could be called "blocs."

Once we realize that the narrative is presented on more than one level it is necessary to ask which of them conveys the desired historical continuity. Would it be fair to say, for example,

that continuity is not present in the required sense if it is not present at the level of individual verses? The text could easily be divided into units smaller than verses. Should the narrator be required to develop his thought in such a way that parts of verses, and not just verses as a whole, describe each event in sequence with the one before it? Where does continuity reside?

I am not arguing here that applications should be made in any order. I am arguing precisely that they have not been. There is order here for the seeing. But we must look for it where it occurs and to do this we need a concept of literary structure that is rich enough to include such additional units as the clause, bloc, subsection, section, and narrative. There is more in Dan 11 than a series of isolated verses, containing a series of isolated facts, making up an isolated chapter. The anomaly of vs. 23, as interpreted by Uriah Smith, is anomalous only at the level of individual verses. A major point of the present paper, however, is that the middle third of the chapter must be taken as a whole. When this is done the above problem disappears.

### *Verses 23-24: Rome in Relation to God's People*

In the present bloc of two verses we have a broad summary of Rome's career spanning more than half a millenium. The discussion opens with the treaty between Judas Maccabeus and Rome in 160 B.C. and ends when Constantine moves the capital of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium. Within this period the last 360 years are of special interest.

#### The treaty with Rome

"After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power." (Dan 11:23, NIV)

'He will enter into fraudulent alliances and, although the people behind him are but few, he will rise to power and establish himself [24] in time of peace.' (Dan 11:23, NEB)

Hebrew *ûmin-hithabb<sup>e</sup>rût ʿēlāyw* ("and from [the] joining to him") is difficult to translate literally.<sup>12</sup> A related noun is *ḥābēr* "companion, fellow." The sense is that two parties come, not only into contact, but into mutual association. The present clause shows by its very existence

that this fact is worthy of comment. A union of these particular two parties is unusual in some way or unexpected.

Judas Maccabeus had been the hero of a war against Antiochus IV Epiphanes to cleanse the temple and rid Judea of all foreign influences.<sup>13</sup> Five years later, however, he sent two men--Eupolemus son of John and Jason son of Eleazar--to request a formal treaty of friendship with Rome (1 Macc 8:17). The request was granted and a mutual defense agreement, or *foedus aequum*, was drawn up and ratified by the Roman senate.<sup>14</sup>

*What was the purpose of the treaty?* There are some things the treaty cannot have been designed to accomplish. It cannot be seen as a means of making a failed insurgency against Syria into a successful insurgency. If the Jews had been in actual need of military help, friendship with them would have been perceived in Rome as a liability and it is unlikely that a mutual defense agreement with them would have been forthcoming.

The fact is that things were going rather well for the Jews when the treaty was requested. Antiochus IV (175-163) had died three years earlier in 163 B.C. and in 162 B.C. Judas had made peace with Antiochus V Eupator (163-162). Next came Demetrius I Soter (162-150), who had indeed sent one army against the Jews under Bacchides (1 Macc 7:1-25) and another under Nicanor (1 Macc 7:26-50). But both had been defeated. The seventh chapter of 1 Maccabees, which describes these two unsuccessful Syrian campaigns, ends by saying, "So the land of Judah had rest for a few days" (vs. 50). The next chapter tells how Judas Maccabeus requested and obtained his treaty with Rome.

Demetrius I was not in a strong position in Syria. He had usurped the throne from Antiochus V and his right to rule was contested by a number of his subjects.

The prince of Greater Armenia, the governor of Commagene, and, above all, Timarchus, satrap of Media and Babylonia, had renounced their allegiance to King Demetrius I. These defections were facilitated by the Roman Senate, which refused to recognize Demetrius, supported his opponents, and finally concluded an alliance with Timarchus.<sup>15</sup>

The Jews could not have found a better time to rebel against Syria. In this context the rationale for the treaty, as given in 1 Macc 8:18 ("that the kingdom of the Greeks was completely enslaving Israel"), sounds weak if not openly apologetic.<sup>16</sup>

All the actors in these political dramas, incumbents and insurgents, now played their roles with their eyes fixed offstage; Rome, without holding an inch of territory in Asia, was a paramount power there. She had thrust Antiochus III from Anatolia in B.C. 188 and saved Egypt from Antiochus IV twenty years later. Kings and would-be kings fought for her recognition, and in B.C. 160 Rome was visited by a number of eastern embassies. Both Demetrius I and Timarchus had their representatives there, followed by another from the Maccabees. The Roman Republic was generous with recognitions but chary with help. The Senate held off from Demetrius for a while, but both Timarchus and Judah Maccabaeus received the Roman stamp of approval.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, while a treaty with Rome may have had its practical side, the Jews' military needs taken in isolation cannot explain why having it was so attractive to them. The treaty with Rome was in effect a declaration of independence from Syria. For some 426 years, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., there had been no independent Jewish state. Now that the Jews had an official treaty of friendship with the new and still rising power of Rome, God's covenant people could realistically hope for a time when they would be free from all foreign domination. There was prestige in the arrangement as well as security.<sup>18</sup> Syria continued receiving Jewish tribute money for eighteen more years but in 142 B.C. there was a final break.<sup>19</sup> The nation was free at last.

*What were the results of the treaty?* The treaty initiated by Judas Maccabeus (d. 160) was renewed at different times by his brother Jonathan (152-142), by another brother Simon (142-134) (from whom we get the term "Hasmonean"), and by Simon's son John Hyrcanus I (134-104).<sup>20</sup> There were also treaties of friendship at this time between Jerusalem and Sparta, Athens, and Pergamum. See table 2.

Table 2  
Maccabean and Hasmonean Treaties  
with Foreign States

Ruler	Dates	Partner	Reference
Judas	d. 160	Rome	1 Macc 8:1-32
Jonathan	152-142	Rome Sparta	1 Macc 12:1-4 1 Macc 12:5-23; 14:20-23
Simon	142-134	Rome	1 Macc 14:16-19
John Hyrcanus I	134-104	Rome Rome Rome Athens Pergamum	<i>Ant.</i> , 13.259-66 <i>Ant.</i> , 14:145-48 <i>Ant.</i> , 14:217-22 <i>Ant.</i> , 14.148-55 <i>Ant.</i> , 14.247-55

NOTE: Dates are taken from Bickerman, *Ezra*, p. 185. Let "Ant." be read as "Josephus, *Antiquities*."

Jerusalem enjoyed friendship and acceptability with foreign states throughout much of the last century and a half before Christ. In fact this period might be called a golden age for Jewish foreign diplomacy. It comes in two phases. The treaties with Rome and with Greek city states listed above all pertain to the second century B.C. Later, in the first century, Jews made the singularly fortunate decision to support Julius Caesar (d. 44) in his war against the partisans of Pompey in Egypt. The result was a second wave of international favor. There were lavish benefits from Caesar himself and from others because of the Jews' relationship with Caesar. But this second phase of the golden age is discussed below in connection with vs. 24.

The verse division at vss. 23/24

(23) "After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. (24) When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did." (Dan 11:23-24a, NIV)

[23] 'He will enter fraudulent alliances and, although the people behind him are but few, he will rise to power and establish himself [24] in time of peace. He will overrun the richest districts of the province and succeed in doing what his fathers and forefathers failed to do, . . .' (Dan 11:23-24a, NEB)

While the last sentence of vs. 23 is translated with reasonable accuracy in NIV, it is incomplete. This fact, however, does not become evident until we go beyond vs. 23 to the first part of vs. 24. There the syntax is a problem and translators have had to find ways to compensate for it.<sup>21</sup> The Hebrew words on either side of the verse division are given below. My literal English gloss is given without capital letters or punctuation at first so as not to prejudge the issues.

w<sup>ə</sup>āṣam bim<sup>ə</sup>at-goy (24) b<sup>ə</sup>šalwâ ûb<sup>ə</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ə</sup>dînâ yābō

and he will grow strong with a few people (24) in peace and in the richest [parts] of a province he will come (literal gloss)

If we try to put a period after "people" instead of "peace" in the above gloss, none of this makes sense: "And he will grow strong with a few people. (24) In peace and in the richest [parts] of a province he will come." Such a solution makes "and" link "in peace" with "in the richest [parts] of a province." Linking these two phrases in the above manner makes the implicit claim that they are comparable syntactically. But they are not comparable and any translation based on the assumption that they are must remain forced and unconvincing.<sup>22</sup>

The editors of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* offer two possible ways to avoid the difficulty. The first is to change the text so that *b<sup>ə</sup>šalwâ ûb<sup>ə</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ə</sup>dînâ* is made to read *ûb<sup>ə</sup>šalwâ b<sup>ə</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ə</sup>dînâ*. Thus, the prefix commonly translated "and" (*û-*) is moved back one word:

w<sup>ə</sup>āṣam bim<sup>ə</sup>at-goy (24) ûb<sup>ə</sup>šalwâ b<sup>ə</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ə</sup>dînâ yābō

And he will grow strong with a few people. (24) And in peace in the richest [parts] of a province he will come. (literal gloss)

The sense of this new reading is: "And he will enter the richest [parts] of a province in peace." This is all very clear, but it is not what the text says. A second suggestion made by the editors of BHS is that, instead of moving a letter of the text, one could move the verse number:

w<sup>ē</sup>āṣam bim<sup>ē</sup>at-goy b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ (24) ûb<sup>ē</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ē</sup>dînâ yābō

And he will grow strong with a few people in peace. (24) And in the richest [parts] of a province he will come. (literal gloss)

When the verses are divided so as to make *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* the last word of vs. 23 instead of the first word of vs. 24, the problem disappears along with the challenge to the text. One implication of adopting this second solution is that the use of *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* in vs. 23 now corresponds to an earlier use of the same word in vs. 21, framing vs. 22 between them.

There is an exegetical as well as syntactic benefit from moving the verse number instead of changing the text. Rome made effective use of policy as well as arms and, if the above interpretation is correct, the angel emphasizes the fact by the way he uses the word *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* "in peace" in the present verse. This word describes an important aspect of Rome's rise to world power, which was accomplished from a small beginning point "with only a few people" (vs. 23).

Pompey enters the temple  
in Jerusalem

"When the richest provinces [*ûb<sup>ē</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ē</sup>dînâ*] feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did." (Dan 11:24a, NIV)

'He will overrun the richest districts of the province [*ûb<sup>ē</sup>mišmannê m<sup>ē</sup>dînâ*] and succeed in doing what his fathers and forefathers failed to do, . . .' (Dan 11:24a, NEB)

The Hebrew of vs. 24 does not support the translation, "the richest provinces" (NIV). The word translated "richest" modifies an implied noun that is plural; "provinces" (*m<sup>ē</sup>dînâ*) is not plural in the Hebrew but singular. It would be more accurate to say, "the richest districts of the province" (NEB). The two words underlying this clause, taken in context, mean "richest of" and "province." As a literal gloss I would propose "the richest [parts] of a province." There are many parts, but only one province.

If this is the case, there is a question which one province the angel has in mind and also what the richest parts of it might be.<sup>23</sup> In my view the province is Judea and, if this is the case,

then the "richest districts of the province" (NEB) can hardly be a reference to anything outside Jerusalem because the temple was located there.

Gifts given to a deity in ancient times would naturally be stored in the building dedicated to his or her worship. As a result temples were often heavily fortified.<sup>24</sup> The temple of God in Jerusalem is perhaps the best known example of a place of worship that was also capable of serving, when the need arose, as a military fortress. It was almost equivalent to a city within a city. To illustrate this point, consider that the final siege of Jerusalem lasted from May 10 to September 26, A.D. 70.<sup>25</sup> Within this four and a half month period the Romans' time was divided about equally between getting inside the city and getting from there inside the temple fortress.

Josephus offers some idea of the sums of money that were stored there. He reports that Crassus took 2000 talents (seventy tons) of gold from the temple after Pompey had left without molesting it plus "a bar of solid beaten gold, weighing three hundred *minae*" (750 pounds). Apart from this Crassus left behind some 8000 more talents (280 tons) that adorned the temple in the form of gold leaf and other ornamentation.

But no one need wonder that there was so much wealth in our temple, for all the Jews throughout the habitable world, and those who worshipped God, even those from Asia and Europe, had been contributing to it for a very long time. And there is no lack of witnesses to the great amount of the sums mentioned, nor have they been raised to so great a figure through boastfulness or exaggeration on our part, but there are many historians who bear us out, in particular Strabo of Cappadocia, . . .<sup>26</sup>

There follows an account of one contribution of 800 talents (28 tons) being transferred from Asia Minor to Cos. This money was bound for Jerusalem because those who gave it were afraid of Mithridates, king of Pontus. But even if they had transferred only a tenth of the amount stated--eighty talents or 2.8 tons of gold--we are still talking about vast sums of money.

Thus, from a military, monetary, or spiritual point of view, the results are the same as regards vs. 24a. If the "province" is Judea, then saying "the richest [parts] of" that province directs our attention to Jerusalem within Judea, and to the temple within Jerusalem.

Having identified the place referred to in vs. 24a, there is a question what would happen there. The verb is *yābō* "he will come" or "he will enter." This seems simple enough but why

would it be unusual for people to enter a place of worship? That was its reason for existence. If Gentiles entered the outer court, or Jewish worshipers entered the inner court, or common priests entered the first apartment, or on the day of atonement if the high priest entered the second apartment, there would be no reason to say so because it is something we expect. The intent of saying "he will come" or "enter" is that someone goes into the temple who does not belong there. Again, there were no restrictions on who could enter the outer court. But there were parts of the temple that no Gentile could see. Going there would clearly be a subject for comment.

When Pompey came to Jerusalem in 63 B.C. he was treacherously admitted to the city by the faction of Hyrcanus II. Once inside he besieged the temple fortress with their help. It was defended by the faction of Aristobulus II. The siege lasted three months (May to July, 63 B.C.)--a period shorter than that of Titus' final assault one hundred thirty-two years later but comparable to it in certain ways.<sup>27</sup> In Pompey's siege some 12,000 Jews were killed, defending or attacking the temple as the case may be, and a number of others were taken prisoner.

And not light was the sin committed against the sanctuary, which before that time had never been entered or seen. For Pompey and not a few of his men went into it and saw what it was unlawful for any but the high priests to see. But though the golden table was there and the sacred lampstand and the libation vessels and a great quantity of spices, and beside these, in the treasury, the sacred moneys amounting to two thousand talents, he touched none of these because of piety, and in this respect also he acted in a manner worthy of his virtuous character.<sup>28</sup>

Two things are noteworthy about the above account. First, Josephus criticizes Pompey more severely for walking inside the inner rooms of the temple than for tearing down its outer walls. And second, Pompey is praised for his piety even in an act of desecration.

The prophecy says that someone not expected to do so would enter the temple in Jerusalem. History says that in 63 B.C. the greatest Roman general of his day entered that temple by force and went as far as the second apartment or most holy place. In isolation neither fact is controversial. What I propose is that they be brought together as prediction and fulfillment.

## Transitional clause

What Pompey's actions fulfill is the first clause of vs. 24: "And he will enter the richest [parts] of a province" (literal gloss). The next clause ("and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did") can be applied in either of two ways. It can go with what precedes or with what follows. Here I argue for the first alternative, but one could make a case for the second.

If one wanted to apply "and will achieve [*w<sup>e</sup>āśâ*] what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did" to the next clause, which says, "He will distribute plunder, loot, and wealth among his followers" (vs. 24b), there could be an appeal to Hebrew syntax. The particle *w<sup>e</sup>-*, correctly translated "and" ("and will achieve"), has much less of a subordinating function in Hebrew than the corresponding word "and" has in English. It frequently appears at the beginning of a new clause and marks the introduction of a new thought. Thus, in English finding the word "and" would be a reason for taking the rest of the clause with what precedes it, as the last part of a thought that has been started earlier but not finished, while in Hebrew the opposite is true. Finding the corresponding particle *w<sup>e</sup>-* (or *û-*) is a reason to suspect that what follows might begin a new clause.

The fact that *w<sup>e</sup>-* does not appear at the beginning of the next clause in the verse strengthens the argument that "and will achieve" marks a point of transition. So does the sequence of accents (*s<sup>e</sup>gôltâ, zâqêp parvum, atnâh*, i.e., stronger, weaker, strongest).

On the other hand, if "and will achieve" is taken together with the distribution clause after it rather than the invasion clause before, we would have one clause set off against three and the symmetry of thought within the verse would be weakened. Thus, "he will invade" would stand alone on the one hand in contrast to "and will achieve," "He will distribute," and "He will plot" on the other. In addition one could argue that the idea of distributing wealth is related to the idea of plotting more closely than it is to the idea of invading. In this case the last two clauses fit naturally with each other in a way that the middle two do not. Thus, we could generalize that the thoughts within the verse come in groups of two and two rather than one and three.

What the party active in vs. 24 achieves is something that "neither his fathers nor his forefathers did." In vs. 37 a hostile power exalts himself above the "gods of his fathers" in a manner reminiscent of the invasion clause of vs. 24b. In vs. 38 he honors "a god unknown to his fathers" in a manner reminiscent of the distribution clause of vs. 24a. These parallels are highly instructive but offer little help in resolving the present difficulty. The statement that "he will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did" fits both parallels equally well, just as it seems to fit the preceding and following clauses equally well.

When the achievement clause is applied to history in the present model one must admit that Pompey's violence against the temple and Caesar's largess to the Jewish nation as a whole were equally without precedent. So here also we are in the position of choosing between two acceptable alternatives. For purposes of identifying the clauses within vs. 24, however, one cannot have it both ways. So I apply "and will achieve" in the same way as NIV, i.e., with reference to what comes before. Pompey did something that no Roman had ever done when he violated the sanctity of the temple by entering it.<sup>29</sup>

Verse 24 can therefore be divided as follows. The opening words, followed by "he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did," are vs. 24a "He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers" is vs. 24b. And the proleptic statement that "He will plot the overthrow of fortresses--but only for a time" is vs. 24c.

Julius Caesar shows favor  
to the Jews

"He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers." (Dan 11:24b)

After Pompey's death Julius Caesar received the active and wholehearted support of the same Jewish faction that had let Pompey into Jerusalem--the faction of Hyrcanus II. In response he granted a number of lavish concessions to Jews living throughout his domain. We begin with what the Jews did for Caesar and then return to what Caesar did for the Jews.

*The Jews support Caesar against Pompey.* Caesar pursued Pompey to Egypt but by the time he got there his rival had been assassinated. Caesar stayed to campaign against the partisans of Pompey and to arrange matters in Egypt to his advantage. While there he expected

help from an auxiliary force led by Mithridates of Pergamum, but Mithridates was delayed. At just the right time Antipater, the Idumean vizier of Hyrcanus II and father of Herod the Great, brought up a contingent of 3000 heavily armed Jewish troops and led them in a distinguished manner. Besides this he also persuaded some Arab chieftains to join Caesar's cause and, by his zeal, made it necessary for the rulers of Syria to bring in troops as well or appear inactive by comparison. Back in Jerusalem Hyrcanus wrote letters to the Jews living near Memphis to receive Caesar and his armies hospitably and give them all possible support.<sup>30</sup>

When Mithridates finally did arrive with his reinforcements, Antipater saved him from being routed in one battle and on other occasions was himself wounded. Antipater's troops were reserved for the most dangerous assignments throughout the war and he showed himself a trusted and valuable friend of Caesar's cause.<sup>31</sup>

*Caesar rewards the Jews for their help.* Two main results followed from all of this. First, Caesar was successful, as one might expect. And second, he never forgot how useful Antipater and Hyrcanus had been when help was badly needed. There followed a profusion of favors and concessions not only to Antipater and Hyrcanus personally but to Jews wherever found--and they were found everywhere.<sup>32</sup> Antipater was granted Roman citizenship and exemption from taxation on one occasion and was later made procurator of Judaea. Hyrcanus was confirmed in the high priesthood and allowed to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which Pompey had demolished before leaving. For their part a Jewish delegation brought a gold shield to Rome worth 50,000 didrachmas (the coin used by Jews living outside Judea for the annual half-shekel temple tax [Matt 17:24]). The treaty of mutual friendship between Judea and Rome was renewed (c. 54 B.C.).<sup>33</sup>

In book fourteen of his *Antiquities* Josephus devotes a section of eighty-three paragraphs (185-267) to documenting the various forms that the good will of Caesar and of others in power outside Rome eventually took. A total of twenty-two documents are cited. Five come from Caesar himself, one from the senate as a whole, and the remaining sixteen from either Roman officials or the magistrates of Greek cities under Rome's direct influence. The cities mentioned include Delos, Ephesus, Halicarnassus, Laodicea, Pergamum, and Sardis.

Nine times it is decreed that Jews shall be allowed to celebrate their annual religious festivals unmolested; seven times that they shall be exempted from military service; four times

that they shall be free to keep the Sabbath; three times that they may take up collections of money for the support of their religion; twice that they would have remission or reduction of taxes during the Sabbatical year, be released from winter quartering of troops, have free right of assembly, be allowed to build synagogues, and even maintain their own internal judicial system. Two decrees mention food, one of which puts the official in charge of the public market in Sardis under obligation to import foods required by that city's Jewish population. Jewish delegations are given the privilege of addressing the senate in person on their nation's behalf and are promised a response within ten days whenever they should do so. The treaty of friendship with Rome is renewed, as mentioned above, the Roman garrison is removed from Joppa, and both Joppa and Lydda are restored to Jewish control. See Appendix.

Moreover, when Caesar in the course of time concluded the war and sailed to Syria, he honoured him greatly; while confirming Hyrcanus in the highpriesthood, he gave Antipater Roman citizenship and exemption from taxation everywhere.<sup>34</sup>

Josephus does not cite any documents that mention Antipater in the section of *Antiquities* under review. Thus, as impressive as it is, he does not say everything that might have been said to illustrate Rome's high regard for the Jews at this time. Never before had Jews received such prominent and favorable attention from other nations in the Mediterranean basin. Two things should be pointed out in this regard.

First, we should ask why this amount and quality of attention should come when it did during the last half century before Christ. The timing of events might be a coincidence, but I do not think so. In an earlier paper I pointed out that Alexander's conquests had the effect of giving the ancient world a widely accepted international language and set of cultural norms. But politically, as we see from the smoldering feud between Ptolemies and Seleucids in Dan 11:5-15, the Greeks simply could not be restrained from fighting each other. The unity they imposed was only linguistic and cultural. Politically the Hellenistic age was a time of fragmentation and ceaseless wars. When the Romans came they supplied what the Greeks could not--political cohesiveness and discipline. As the Roman peace began to settle over the Mediterranean world the Jewish nation was brought to people's attention in a very widespread and favorable manner. There is a pattern here. The world was being prepared for the gospel.

And second, consider the fact that later, when the message of a crucified and risen

Savior started being preached throughout the eastern Mediterranean basin and in Rome itself, the state did not immediately oppose it. Opposition came from Jews first and only later from Romans. Well into Nero's reign Rome continued to give Christians the same protection it had always given Jews. At one time Rome and her allies had held the Jews in high esteem. The relationship had been cordial and its effects did not all disappear at once.

## Discussion

For centuries God had been preparing the world to receive His Son. As many obstacles were removed as possibly could be. No effort was spared to create circumstances that would be the very most favorable. Thus, when Paul says, "The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Rom 13:1), they really had been. It was in God's providence that Rome should be immensely strong and impose a single universally recognized government on the Mediterranean world and beyond.

It was also in God's providence that Alexander should conquer the East and bring Hellenistic culture to so wide an area. He well knew that the Greeks who divided up Alexander's realm after his death would be suicidally fractious, as they had been in their homeland. He knew that subject peoples would not be allowed to serve in the army and that a steady influx of soldiers from the Greek and Macedonian homeland would be required to support the endless series of wars. Having come to fight they of course stayed on to farm or engage in commerce and retire. The very contentiousness of the Hellenistic Greeks was thus made to serve a unifying purpose in God's plan.

There is another side to this, however. If the Greeks brought in linguistic and cultural unity, under Antiochus IV they also very nearly destroyed the Jewish religion. And if the Romans introduced a level of political unity that could never have been achieved by Greeks, the Empire's wonderful strength was eventually turned upon Christians. So was God really working through the events described here to accomplish His purposes? Yes. Beyond any possible doubt, He was. And there is something profoundly instructive about the fact. God is not above approaching us where we are, and where we are is right here in real time and space. He does not disdain to use real historical events to accomplish a purpose higher than the persons involved in them are able to appreciate. He will work with flawed instruments. Otherwise He would use no instruments at all.

There are some broader issues to consider as well. When Michael fought against the dragon in Rev 12:7, the war did not end in vs. 9. Hurling the dragon to the earth did not change either the nature or the intensity of the conflict but only its venue. Having hurled Satan to the earth, "when the time had fully come" (Gal 4:4), Christ pursued him here aggressively and with the express purpose of bringing the matter at hand to full completion. The war was not over; there was work to be done.

At the cross the principles espoused by both parties were fully and finally revealed. The issue being settled there was not which of the two parties could destroy the other. That was never in doubt. Indeed, it would have been easier for Christ to destroy Satan than to keep him alive, because doing so would have involved nothing more than withholding the blessings that even then, at the cross, were sustaining his opponent's life. Instead the issue was to persuade the onlooking universe. One or the other party would win and subject all of his spectators to the principles of government that even then were shaping his strategy in the conflict. The question was, Who will you have to rule over you? Despite His death--especially because of His death--Christ came off the winner. His words, "It is finished" (John 19:30), rang like a shout of victory.

When we understand what was happening on the cross we will be better equipped to interpret other events in history that reveal the same two forces working in the same mutually opposed manner. The fact that God has been opposed in His attempts to bless and benefit mankind, and that the results of such opposition have become a part of the historical record, is not evidence of indecision or mixed intent on His part. Instead it is evidence that the conflict between Christ and Satan is intensely real.

The widely spoken language of Greece, the universal government of Rome, the favorable light in which the Jewish nation was seen in the time of Caesar, a few short years before Christ's birth--all these things are a silent testimony to the breadth of God's plans and the lengths He would go to so that the world might have every advantage in receiving His Son when He should come, just as predicted, exactly on time.

## Prolepsis in vs. 24c

"He will plot the overthrow of fortresses--but only for a time [*w<sup>c</sup>ad ʿēt*]." (Dan 11:24c)

The bulk of vs. 24c makes a general statement about Roman dominance. Having risen to power by a combination of force and shrewd policy, Rome would continue to "plot the overthrow of fortresses." But this state of affairs would not last forever. The metal image of Dan 2 had not only legs of iron but also feet of iron and clay (Dan 2:33). And after the iron had had time to become mixed with clay another mineral (not another metal) would be introduced--the rock "cut out, but not by human hands" (Dan 2:34), which would strike the image on its feet and then fill the whole earth. Thus, telling about the unmixed might of the Roman Empire is not the same thing as finishing our story. Rome would not rule indefinitely and this fact--from Daniel's perspective--raises the question of when it would cease to rule.

If we ask how long Rome would rule and are told "only for a time," we have done little more than replace one question with another. How long is a "time"? The best way to find out is to consult parallel passages of the same book where the same word is used in a similar manner. There are sixteen examples of the word *ʿēt* "time" in the Hebrew portions of Daniel (chaps. 1, 8-12).<sup>35</sup> In the Aramaic portions (chaps. 2-7) there are thirteen examples of the corresponding word *ʿiddān*.<sup>36</sup>

The account of Nebuchadnezzar's madness uses the expression "seven times" to refer to a period of seven years (Dan 4:16, 23, 25, 32). Thus, in Dan 4 a year and a "time" are not different things, as it were, but different ways of referring to the same thing. This is one way to use the word in a symbolic manner.

The "time, times and half a time" of Dan 7:25 provide another example but here the reference is not to literal, historical years. If it were, under one popular interpretation, we would be reading about three years exactly instead of three years and a half.<sup>37</sup> There is no way to apply the whole "time, times and half a time" to history literally. No such application is available in the sixth century and in the second century the last "half a time" must be left off. In Dan 7:25 each day of the symbolic "times" or years is itself a symbolic year. The three and a half "times" of Dan 7:25 represent 1260 literal years.

Returning now to Dan 11:24, it would make no sense to speak of any great empire--especially Daniel's fourth and culminating empire--being in power for only one "time" if by that we mean one year. The word could be taken generally as an indeterminate period of unknown duration on the basis of Dan 7:12. But let us begin with the stronger alternative hypothesis that "time" has symbolic intent. If "time" in Dan 11:24 is interpreted the same way as "time" in Dan 7:25, then the period in question is not one year but 360 years.<sup>38</sup> This is a reasonable length of time for a city or an empire to be in power internationally. It is a figure worth checking against the historical record.

Not coincidentally, the length of time from the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. (when Octavian defeated his last rival) to A.D. 330 (when Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Byzantium) was a period of 360 years.<sup>39</sup> If the question is how long Rome would rule over an empire, then the angel has given us a useful, concise, and accurate answer. Rome was a capital before there was an empire for it to rule. And there was a Roman Empire long after the city of Rome had ceased to be its capital. But the city of Rome was capital of the Roman Empire for 360 years. See fig. 1.

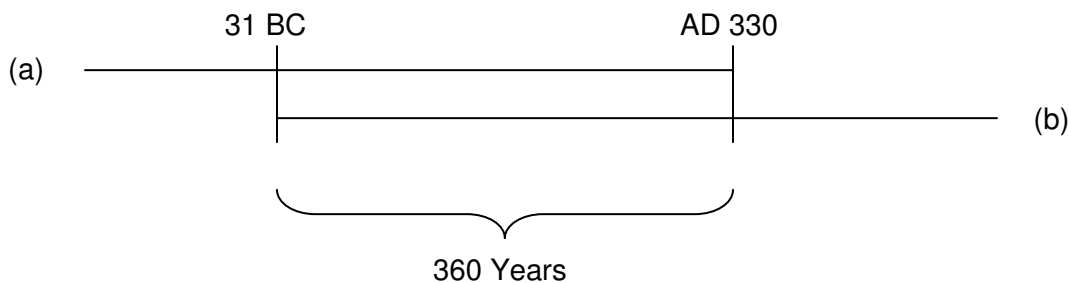


Fig. 1. The period during which both of the following two conditions apply: (a) the city of Rome serves as a capital and (b) there is a Roman Empire for the city to preside over.

The prophecy's interest in Rome is not limited to the Empire in general but extends to the city of Rome as well. The capital might move elsewhere, but the prophecy's interest in the city remains. Neither history nor prophecy is through with Rome in A.D. 330. The same city that rose once as the seat of a powerful empire would rise again as the seat of a powerful

church/state. That is the subject of a later paper.<sup>40</sup> But just now we need to finish learning how Rome came to power the first time. The angel has broken sequence with what follows to show that Roman supremacy would end at a set time. He now returns to show when that period would begin.

### *Verses 25-28: Transition from Republic to Empire*

After showing how many years the city of Rome would serve as the Empire's capital in vs. 24c, the angel returns to events that occur in sequence with what he had said earlier about Pompey and Caesar in vss. 24a and b.

The sack of Rome by the Ostrogoths in A.D. 476 is commonly taken to be the end of the Roman Empire in the west.<sup>41</sup> But that is not what the angel has in mind here. If it were, the "time" of vs. 24c would either be a general statement or it would begin 360 years earlier in A.D. 116. But nothing happened then that is comparable in importance to what happened in A.D. 476. If, on the other hand, we take as our ending point the year when Constantine moved the capital of the Empire to Byzantium, the "time" of vs. 24c would begin in 31 B.C. That is when Octavian defeated Antony and by so doing reestablished sole rule in Rome after half a millenium of republican government.<sup>42</sup>

In this latter case there is a balance between the significance of what happened at the beginning of the "time" and what hapened at its end. The textual interpretation is based on solid parallels with other chapters of Daniel and the historical application maintains a sense of proportion. And apart from its demonstrable symmetry, the above application corresponds to what the angel is saying in the rest of the chapter. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Dan 11:24c has a definite prophetic "time" of 360 literal years in view, that A.D. 330 is its end point, and that it begins in 31 B.C.

## The battle of Actium

"With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him." (Dan 11:25)

Verse 25 says three things. It says (1) that the king of the North (see vs. 28) would be the aggressor in a war against the king of the South, (2) that the king of the South would have a larger army than his opponent, and (3) that despite this fact the king of the South would lose. The battle, together with supporting information about its background and aftermath, occupies four verses or roughly eleven percent of the prophecy. It was an event of the highest importance.

*What is the significance of Actium?* Rome started ruling an empire when it stopped ruling a republic. We should realize, however, that the Empire was far different to those who ruled it than it is to us as we look back from the perspective of history. This fact should be kept in mind as we try to understand what sort of change to look for at its inception.

The title of Augustus' official autobiography was *Res gestae divi Augusti quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit* [Accomplishments of the divine Augustus, who subjected the world to the rule of the Roman people]. Thus for Augustus the Roman empire was not only the whole world controlled by Rome: it was equivalent to the world itself. Nor was this view peculiar to Augustus or a recent development. The globe appears on three issues of Roman denarii of the seventies B.C., in two of which the figure of Roma has her foot on it. The first Latin text which asserts Roman domination of the *orbis* [circle, disk] is a little earlier, in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (4.13): 'nedum illud imperium orbis terrae cui imperio omnes gentes, reges, nationes, partim vi, partim voluntate concesserunt' [not to mention that rule of the world to which rule all peoples, kings, (and) nations have submitted--some by force, some voluntarily]. However, a similar view was already being asserted by Polybius in the middle of the second century, when he described the Romans as masters of practically all the *oikoumene* [inhabited world], or more precisely that *kath' hemas* [our contemporaries], the world with which his history dealt (e.g. 1.1.5; 1.3.10). This is a warning against our conceiving Rome's empire too narrowly. Polybius wrote the relevant passages between 167 and 146, before the annexation of Macedonia and Africa as provinces. Yet for Polybius the Roman empire included not only these countries but the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt and the Seleucid kingdom in Syria, not to mention smaller kingdoms like Numidia and the theoretically free cities of Greece.<sup>43</sup>

Livy states that for 244 years after its founding Rome was ruled by kings.<sup>44</sup> Then there was a revolt and the people exiled their last king, Tarquin the Proud. Instead of allowing all power to remain in the hands of one man they established a republican form of government in which two men were elected each year by popular vote. Those who served in this way were called consuls. Thus, the purpose for establishing a republic initially was to eliminate monarchy or sole rule. What called the Roman Republic into existence was a distribution of power.

If the Republic began when power was taken away from one man, the end of the Republic should be seen as a reversal of this same process. When power is again concentrated in the hands of a single individual that is the end of the Republic, i.e., it is the end of what made the Republic what it was.

For Augustus the momentous changes that occurred during his lifetime were a return to republican government, not a final break with it.<sup>45</sup> He saw his own role in the new order as one of restoring the old after all the confusions of civil war. What to us is the all important distinction between power residing in the hands of one man or of many was lost on him because all the old institutions were carefully maintained. The senate still met. The consuls were still duly elected and he was usually one of them.<sup>46</sup> The territories were still governed as they had been before. Augustus thought of himself, or presented himself to the people, as a first citizen (*princeps*) serving the state in whatever way it required.

In retrospect we can see that much more was at issue and that Augustus, despite any pretensions to the contrary, had in fact created a new political order. By whatever name there had been a significant change in the government of Rome. The present bloc of verses shows when that change occurred. Octavian defeated his last competitor off the coast of Actium in 31 B.C. After that battle there was no one left who could demand a real share in the power of the state. For this reason Actium should be seen as the opposite counterpart of exiling Rome's last king. The republican experiment had gone full circle at this point. The battle of Actium marks the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire.

*How important is the battle's date?* Four years later, in 27 B.C., Octavian received the title "Augustus" and restored the outer forms of the ancient Republic.<sup>47</sup> But adjustments in legal language after the fact do not provide any basis for saying that Rome was made an empire at

this point. The basis had already been provided in Antony's defeat and that did not occur in the pillared halls of the senate building.

Octavian himself dated his acquirement of absolute power to a time before Actium when all the towns of Italy took an oath of loyalty to him and his descendants after him.<sup>48</sup> A similar oath was taken by the provincials of Gaul, Spain, Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia. But if Octavian had lost the war with Antony, this oath would have meant nothing.

Two years after the battle Octavian returned to Italy. He celebrated his magnificent triple triumph in Rome on August 13, 29 B.C. Two years later in 27 B.C. "an ill-defined guardianship over the state" was conferred on him by the senate.<sup>49</sup> In 19 B.C. the senate voted to give Octavian "the *imperium* of the consuls for life."<sup>50</sup>

Augustus' constitutional powers were now complete: he received two additions to his title later, *pontifex maximus* and later *pater patriae*, but these were purely honorific and added nothing to his powers.<sup>51</sup>

All of these are important dates, but do any of them really provide an adequate basis for saying that the transition from Republic to Empire was complete? If the issue were when Augustus' constitutional powers became complete, we should date the Empire from 19 B.C. instead of 27 B.C. No one does this. But the same reasons that argue against 19 B.C. as a starting point argue just as forcefully against 27 B.C. and all other dates in this category. The crucial event was not a decree or an oath or any other formula of words. Words mean little if there are no facts to support them. What made the words meaningful in this case was accomplished "with arms and with iron" at Actium in 31 B.C.<sup>52</sup> By focusing the prophet's attention on the battle itself and not its legal aftermath the angel has correctly identified the nature of this important transition.

Why did Antony lose?

"Those who eat from the king's provisions will try to destroy him [*yishb<sup>c</sup>rúhû*]; his army will be swept away [*v<sup>e</sup>hêlô yishtôp*], and many [*rabbîm*] will fall in battle." (Dan 11:26)

I stated earlier that vs. 25 has three clauses and makes three separate assertions. Verse 26 explains the last of these clauses ("he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him," vs. 25c). There are some intriguing reasons for Antony's failure and these are now explained in greater detail.

*The word  $yishb'ruhû$ : "try" has been added.* There is no thought of trying to destroy the king of the South in this verse. The word has been gratuitously added. Once this is done a number of problems arise. As translated in NIV the statement that certain ones "will try to destroy him" calls for another line to the effect that the effort would be unsuccessful. But this very clear implication turns the meaning of the original around backwards. The Hebrew says  $yishb'ruhû$  "they will destroy him," not "they will try [unsuccessfully] to destroy him." There is no indication that the persons involved would fail and yet there is no indication either that they would try. This is a crucial point. The meaning of this verb is not confined to evil intent.

*The word  $yishtôp$ : active, not passive.* NIV's treatment of vs. 26 is difficult for more than one reason. The Hebrew says  $w'hêlô yishtôp$ . The root underlying  $yishtôp$  ( $štp$ ) has to do with the movement of fluids--usually water and usually in abundance.<sup>53</sup> In various conjugations the same root appears elsewhere in vss. 10 ("sweep on"), 22 ("be swept away"), and 40 ("sweep through"). The problem is that in vs. 26 the verb is active (Qal). It is simply inaccurate to translate  $yishtôp$  as "be swept away" because that gives the word a passive meaning it does not have. To support a passive reading the Hebrew would have to say  $yishšatêp$  (Niphal). In some cases one can change the vowel points to get a different shade of meaning while keeping the same consonant letters, but here different letters are involved. The consonant letters actually used are  $yštwp$  ( $yishtôp$ , Qal), whereas the sense proposed by NIV would require  $yštp$  ( $yishšatêp$ , Niphal).

Apart from the matter of having to change the text in order to support the above reading, after doing so the sense would still be wrong. To say that an army "will be swept away" raises the question by whom? The obvious answer would be another army. But if the king of the South is defeated by superior force and nothing more, then what is vs. 25c trying to say? The whole point of the passage is that the king of the South goes into battle with greater military resources than his opponent (see vs. 25b) but loses for reasons that are unrelated to

this fact (see vs. 25c). It is useless to argue that the angel denies in vs. 26 what he asserts in vs. 25.

We are not through with *yīšṭôp* yet. If we simply change "his army will be swept away" (vs. 26) to its grammatically active counterpart ("it [his army] will sweep away") yet another problem arises. It will sweep what away? We are reading about the losing side. The king of the South's army sweeps nothing away. On the contrary, it goes down in defeat. The next clause continues this same thought by saying, "and many will fall in battle" (vs. 26). The predicate in question describes a sweeping military failure.

What I propose as a solution is that "it will sweep away" be interpreted to mean something like "it will rush away." Here the sense is one of a rupture in the king's defenses, which would fit perfectly with the "plots" of vs. 25c. Those who rush away in the above manner are not compelled by superior force to do what they do but leave on their own initiative. Evil intent is not the issue; they just go. The king of the South was to be defeated by more than military means. He would be betrayed by those he supplies with provisions. This much has to do with the text.

*Historical application.* Not many battles in antiquity fit all the requirements of Dan 11:25 and 26. But one does and the fit is precisely accurate. It is the battle of Actium.

Over the objections of Antony's men, it was decided that Actium would be a naval battle.<sup>54</sup> For four days bad weather made any engagement impossible. The fifth day was clear but Antony's ships stayed so close to shore that for a while Octavian thought they were at anchor. He made no move while the enemy was so close to land and in fact neither side did anything until noon. Finally Antony's men became restless and started putting out from shore with their grossly oversized vessels. Octavian's ships, which were smaller and more agile than Antony's, quietly rowed backward to draw them further out. After the fighting had begun, but before there was any indication of how matters would go, Cleopatra simply raised sail and left with her entire contingent of sixty Egyptian ships. When Antony saw what was happening he set out after her in a single five-oared galley. Those who remained fought on for about four hours--against Caesar and also against a heavy sea.

Only a few were aware that Antony had fled, and to those who heard of it the story was at first an incredible one, that he had gone off and left nineteen legions of undefeated men-at-arms and twelve thousand horsemen, as if he had not many times experienced both kinds of fortune and were not exercised by the reverses of countless wars and fightings. His soldiers, too, had a great longing for him, and expected that he would presently make his appearance from some quarter or other; and they displayed so much fidelity and bravery that even after his flight had become evident they held together for seven days, paying no heed to the messages which Caesar sent them. But at last, after Canidius their general had run away by night and forsaken the camp, being now destitute of all things and betrayed by their commanders, they went over to the conqueror.<sup>55</sup>

Verse 26 does not describe Antony's Romans, but his Egyptians. The Romans in his army and navy were true to Antony even after he had been false to them. But his Egyptians deserted. When they left, he left. And when he left, the battle was lost. This is not the usual profile of a military defeat. There have been few events like this in history.

*The word rabbîm: what does "many" mean?* The second clause of vs. 26 ("and many will fall in battle") accomplishes two things. First it confirms that *yîšb<sup>r</sup>ûhû* ("they will destroy him") at the beginning of the verse must be applied to a defeat rather than a victory. And second it supplies important additional information about circumstances surrounding that defeat. The angel does not say the same thing twice in vs. 26 but makes two mutually instructive observations.

Some of Antony's forces would rush away. This is the sense of the Hebrew. But "many" others would fight and die. The number of men who died at Actium was in fact not very large if the standard for comparison is how many men customarily died in battles fought during this period on a similar scale. So vs. 26 cannot be used to maintain that Actium was an especially bloody battle as such battles go. Octavian and Antony between them had only five thousand dead and 300 of Antony's ships were captured, i.e., spared.<sup>56</sup> So what point is being made when the text says *w<sup>c</sup>nâp<sup>l</sup>û l<sup>l</sup>âlîm rabbîm* "and many will fall in battle"?

We must read the present clause in the context of the one just before it. The number of those who died on this occasion was large in comparison with the number of those who fled. Cleopatra commanded only sixty ships but the desertion of those sixty were the undoing of Antony's entire fleet. The one clause must be allowed to interpret the other.

Why did Antony fight?

"The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time." (Dan 11:27)

Just as vs. 26 explains the last clause of vs. 25, vs. 27 explains the clause before that ("The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army," vs. 25b). It does this by explaining the reasons for the animosity between Octavian and Antony.

*"With their hearts bent on evil"*. While Julius Caesar was alive Antony had been one of his closer friends and after his assassination Caesar's widow Calpurnia turned to Antony for help in guarding the estate. The deceased's papers were turned over to Antony and also 25,000,000 denarii in cash. Hopefully things would become more stable soon.

Octavian, for his part, was a grand nephew of Julius Caesar. He had been elevated to the college of pontifices at the age of eleven and invited to go on two of Caesar's campaigns. When Caesar died his will announced that Octavian was to receive three quarters of his estate and be adopted as his son. From what he received in the will Octavian was to give every citizen of Rome seventy-five denarii, or about a fifth of a laboring man's yearly income. It was a princely sum to give. But he had to get the money first.

Thus, in order both to finalize the legal adoption process and to secure the funds needed to fulfill Caesar's last request on behalf of the Roman people, young Octavian needed Antony's help. The response he got from the older man was cold and insolent.<sup>57</sup> No help would be forthcoming from Antony.

Later some of Antony's veterans plotted to assassinate him and when Octavian offered the services of his own bodyguard to protect the great general he was rebuffed and accused of being part of the plot himself.<sup>58</sup> Unable to deal with Caesar's friends Octavian turned next to Caesar's enemies, making common cause with Cicero. He also started calling up Caesar's veterans from retirement to active service and they flocked to his standard. In one of his letters to Atticus Cicero writes:

On the evening of the 1st I had a letter from Octavianus. He is doing great things. He won over to his side the veterans at Casilinum and Calatia. No wonder, he is giving them 500 denarii each. He is thinking of going round the other colonies. Clearly this means that there will be war against Antonius with him as leader.<sup>59</sup>

In the actual event what happened was that Antony saw his mistake in time to be reconciled to Octavian. One factor that led Antony to make this decision was the insistence of his bodyguard --men who had fought under Caesar and were sympathetic to his adopted heir. But Octavian and Antony could not stay reconciled. The foundation had been laid for a strained and bitter relationship that would eventually lead to war, as Cicero predicted, but not at this early date. The year was still 44 B.C.

Some time later Antony heard a rumor that Octavian was indeed plotting his assassination. No explanation would suffice.

So once more their hatred was in full career, and both were hurrying about Italy trying to bring into the field by large pay that part of the soldiery which was already settled in their colonies, and to get the start of one another in winning the support of that part which was still arrayed in arms.<sup>60</sup>

The senate, on Cicero's advice, now declared Antony a public enemy and sent the consul Hirtius with an army to drive him across the Alps. The other consul, Pansa, was to raise additional troops in Italy and join Hirtius when he could. Antony did go across the Alps but both consuls died fighting him. And when he finally reached Gaul Antony appropriated the forces of a senior general named Lepidus. The two men marched back into Italy together at the head of seventeen legions and a cavalry of 10,000 horse. At this Octavian was given the fasces and made praetor, which was an altogether extraordinary office for a twenty year old.<sup>61</sup> But he commanded the only troops available to the senate under the present very dangerous circumstances and they were forced to rely on him.

Any other Roman youth would have thought that holding *imperium pro praetore* ten years before the legal age was an accomplishment. For Octavian it merely stood between him and greater accomplishments. There were higher offices to obtain and he lost no time in seeking them. Later that same year, while he was still only twenty years old, he sued for the consulship--not by the normal electoral process but by sending a delegation of 400 centurians to demand it.<sup>62</sup> The office was vacant after the deaths of Hirtius and Pansa. When the senate

refused his demands Octavian marched on Rome with five legions of veterans. While there he seized the state treasury and paid his troops from it. Then, courteously withdrawing from the city during the voting, he was forthwith elected consul. Having achieved the highest office in the state by these means Octavian gave the citizens of Rome the seventy-five denarii each that Caesar had so wisely specified in his will. Octavian had at once robbed and endeared himself to the entire populace. There were now two armies in Italy--one of seventeen legions led jointly by Antony and Lepidus and one of five legions led by Octavian.

*Sitting at the "same table"*. After Octavian got what he wanted from the senate he abandoned Cicero and went to see Lepidus and Antony. The three met on island in the middle of a river.

Octavian and Antony composed their differences on a small, depressed islet in the Lavinus river, near the city of Mutina. Each had five legions of soldiers whom they stationed opposite each other, after which each proceeded with 300 men to the bridges over the river. Lepidus by himself went before them, searched the island, and waved his military cloak as a signal to them to come. Then each left his 300 men in charge of friends on the bridges and advanced to the middle of the island in plain sight, and there the three sat together in council, Octavian in the center because he was consul. They were in conference from morning till night for two days, and came to these decisions: that Octavian should resign the consulship and Ventidius take it for the remainder of the year; that a new magistracy for settling the civil dissensions should be created by law, which Lepidus, Antony, and Octavian should hold for five years with consular power (for this name seemed preferable to that of dictator, perhaps because of Antony's decree abolishing the dictatorship); that these three should at once designate the yearly magistrates of the city for the next five years; that a distribution of the provinces should be made, giving Antony the whole of Gaul except the part bordering the Pyrenees Mountains, which was called Old Gaul --this, together with Spain, was assigned to Lepidus--while Octavian was to have Africa, Sardinia, Sicily, and the other islands in the vicinity thereof.<sup>63</sup>

Having divided the world among themselves in this manner, another item of business was to decide who could live and who must die. There were some hard compromises but in the end 300 men were proscribed.<sup>64</sup> One of those whose head was now valued at a fixed bounty was Cicero. Another provision of the meeting was that Octavian should marry Clodia, Antony's niece, to help ease the future tensions that both men knew would surely arise between them. In addition they agreed to wage war jointly on Cassius and Brutus, the last of Caesar's assassins. While Octavian and Antony were away campaigning, Rome, the rest of Italy, and all the western

provinces were temporarily entrusted to Lepidus.<sup>65</sup> Antony and Octavian were enemies, but on this occasion circumstances demanded that they act like friends.

When the text says "The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other" (vs. 27), the "table" in question is not a dinner table--a place where provisions are eaten (see vs. 26)--but a council table where decisions are made.

*Why were there only "two kings"?* There is a question why only two kings are mentioned in a text that describes the formation of the second triumvirate. The word "triumvirate" means a body of three men. So why are only two mentioned? One reason is that Lepidus soon fell from power.<sup>66</sup> This fact may account for the fact that Appian, in the above quotation, also begins with a reference to only two men.

A better answer, however, would be that only two of those who divided the world among themselves on this occasion fought at Actium. The present bloc of verses (vss. 25-28) describes the birth of the Roman Empire and this transition was accomplished at Actium. Lepidus had no part in that crucial battle.

*Waiting for "the appointed time"*. According to the prophecy, "an end will still come at the appointed time" (vs. 27). The text says *kî-ôd qêš lammô'êd* "since an end [will] still [come] at the appointed time" (literal gloss). It had appeared to Cicero that Octavian and Antony would settle their differences early on, but the war he expected was delayed. There would be two more false starts before the actual event.

After Brutus and Cassius had been defeated, Octavian returned to Rome so ill that he did not expect to live much longer. Antony took his troops into Asia Minor and Syria, setting up and putting down dynasts based on their loyalties in the war. While there he raised funds amounting to 200,000 talents (7,000 tons), presumably of gold.<sup>67</sup> It was while he was in Cilicia extorting money from the populace that Antony summoned Cleopatra VII (61-30), his vassal queen in Egypt, to appear before him, which she did.<sup>68</sup> Thus, while Octavian was at Rome, Antony was busily occupied in Asia. Circumstances, which had previously brought the two men together, now temporarily kept them apart and out of each other's way.

In 40 B.C., however, Antony received word that his brother Lucius and wife Fulvia had waged war on Octavian, had lost, and were fleeing from Italy. The Parthians were just then invading Asia but Antony made for Italy with 200 ships.<sup>69</sup> He would deal first with Octavian and then with the foreigner invader. When he arrived it became clear that Fulvia had been guilty of provoking the conflict and so Antony did not press the matter.

It was agreed that Italy should be ruled by all three of the triumvirs jointly but that Antony would otherwise stay east, and Octavian west, of the line dividing Greek-speaking Macedonia from Latin-speaking Illyricum.<sup>70</sup> Lepidus was given Africa and Antony agreed to marry his colleague's sister Octavia.<sup>71</sup> War between Antony and Octavian had been averted a second time.

On yet another occasion, in response to what Plutarch calls "calumnies," Antony sailed against Octavian with 300 ships.<sup>72</sup> But Octavia met with her brother and persuaded him not to accept Antony's challenge. When the two finally met at Tarentum it was an unusual spectacle. Two large armies and navies lay idle side by side while their opposing commanders entertained each other. Caesar agreed to give Antony two legions for the impending war against Parthia and Antony agreed to give Octavian 100 bronze-beaked galleys. Once more they parted amiably.

Three times Antony and Octavian came to the brink of war and stopped short of fighting. An end would surely come, but not until "the appointed time" (vs. 27).

The final break--not between Antony and Octavian only but between Antony and the people of Rome--came because of Cleopatra. Antony had already given Cleopatra the entire Levant apart from Judea, which she had wanted as well.<sup>73</sup> This was bad enough but in 32 B.C., when Antony celebrated a triumph of sorts over his Armenian vassal king Artavasdes, he did so in Alexandria rather than Rome.<sup>74</sup> This was deeply offensive to all Romans. At the same time Caesarion, the son Cleopatra had born to Julius Caesar, was acknowledged as legitimate, thus challenging the validity of Octavian's adoption. And Antony not only repudiated Octavia but sent some men to evict her from his home in Italy where she was rearing his children both by her and by Fulvia before her.<sup>75</sup>

Octavian learned these things and also something about the contents of Antony's will from those who now defected to him from Egypt. The will was being held by the vestal virgins in Rome pending Antony's death. What Octavian did next was in poor taste. He seized the will and read it to the senate while the testator was still alive. This was repugnant to everyone but when its contents became known they were so angry about what it said that all else was forgotten. Antony had requested that his body be buried beside Cleopatra in Alexandria even if he should die within the walls of Rome. At this the senate declared war on Cleopatra and sent a decree to Antony relieving him of his command. No one expected the order to be obeyed. The final outcome was decided at the battle of Actium on September 2, 31 B.C.

#### Octavian's return to Rome

"The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, . . ." (vs. 28a)

Verse 28a corresponds to vs. 25a. The relationship is not one of explaining. Both clauses are clear without explanation. The king of the North sets off to battle in vs. 25a and returns home from battle in vs. 28a.

After catching up with Cleopatra as she left the fighting, Antony fled to Egypt. For a while he withdrew to a small pier that he had built out into the sea at Pharos and refused all visitors. Finally, however, when his general Canidius came in person and told Antony how thorough the defeat had been he was able to throw off despair and abandon himself once more to his accustomed pastimes of banqueting and debauchery. The rest of the story cannot detain us. Antony eventually committed suicide.

Octavian annexed Egypt as a Roman province the following year (30 B.C.). But it was not until yet a second year had passed that he was able to return to Rome.

As for Caesar's return to Italy and to Rome--the procession which met him, the enthusiasm and magnificence of his triumphs and of the spectacles which he gave--all this it would be impossible adequately to describe even within the compass of a formal history, to say nothing of a work so condensed as this. There is nothing that man can desire from the gods, nothing that the gods can grant to a man, nothing that wish can conceive or good fortune bring to pass, which Augustus on his return to the city did not bestow upon the state, the Roman people, and the world. The civil wars were ended

after twenty years, foreign wars suppressed, peace restored, the frenzy of arms everywhere lulled to rest.<sup>76</sup>

The wealth of Egypt now became part of the Roman treasury. Financially the effect of Octavian's annexation of Egypt was similar to Rome's earlier acquisition of Asia.<sup>77</sup> As the angel had observed to Daniel so many years before, "The king of the north will return to his own country with great wealth, . . ." (vs. 28a)--and not for the moment only but into the future as well. Egypt provided an inexhaustible source of grain.

Epilogue: Rome's relationship  
with the Christian church

". . . but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it [*w<sup>e</sup>āśâ*] and then return to his own country." (Dan 11:28)

There are two assertions in vs. 28b but they are not divided in the Hebrew as they are in NIV. The first assertion is that "his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it [*w<sup>e</sup>āśâ*]" (vs. 28b). The second assertion is that, after doing so, he will "then return to his own country" (vs. 28c). On the one hand the king of the North will do something against the holy covenant. On the other hand he will stop doing things against the holy covenant. This is the sense of the passage. The word *w<sup>e</sup>āśâ* is properly the last word of vs. 28b--the middle clause. It does not begin a new thought; i.e., it is not the first word of vs. 28c, as NIV implies.<sup>78</sup>

*Hostility toward the church.* Octavian did not follow up his victory at Actium with an attack on the Jews. He finished his business in Egypt and went home (vs. 28a). What follows next happens at a later time, separate from the conflict between Octavian and Antony and unrelated to it.

Rome would take action against the holy covenant on a number of occasions after the Empire had come to full power. Christ was crucified under Tiberius. Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus. But by the time Jerusalem was destroyed it is difficult to call the Jewish nation "the holy covenant." By A.D. 70 that term does not apply to Jerusalem or even the temple. If Jerusalem was holy, why did God destroy it? If the temple and its services were holy after Christ's death, what does Matthew mean when he says, "At that moment the curtain of the

temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split" (Matt 27:51)? What was the significance of what he describes?

There are two points to make here. First, unless we confine Dan 11:28b and c to the crucifixion alone, the passage must be applied to a time later than the crucifixion. Pilate's condemnation of Christ was the first time after Octavian's victory at Actium that Rome took what could be called an action against the "holy covenant," i.e., an action against God or His people that could be said to have spiritual significance. And second, if we apply these final clauses of vs. 28 to a time after the crucifixion, the application cannot be confined to the Jewish nation. The beginning of Rome's actions against the "holy covenant" was simultaneously the end of the Jews' status as the special people of God. After that time their access to the Father would be on the same basis as any Gentile--by believing on the Son. I suggest that at this point in the prophecy our focus of attention must shift from literal Israel to believing Israel--from the Jewish nation to the Christian church.

The Empire that Augustus established avoided persecuting Christians at first. For thirty-one years after Christ's death no action was taken against them at all. In fact during the church's first years Rome protected it from Jewish persecution.<sup>79</sup> A possible exception is the edict of Claudius (42-54), issued in A.D. 49, which expelled all Jews from Rome. To the extent that Christians were included in the scope of this edict, however, it was probably not because they were Christians but because they were still thought of as representing a sect within Judaism.<sup>80</sup>

The first emperor to persecute Christians specifically was Nero (54-68) and even he did not take any action against them until 62 A.D., half way through his reign.

This change in Nero's policy is indicated and/or was influenced by several concomitant events: the mysterious death of the prefect Burrus, Seneca's withdrawal from political life, Nero's repudiation of his lawful wife Octavia in order to marry his Jewish mistress Poppaea, and the emperor's break with the senatorial class.<sup>81</sup>

That the Neronian persecution of A.D. 62 was not particularly severe is demonstrated by the fact that Paul, who arrived in Rome during A.D. 60 and was a prisoner there for two years (Acts 28:30), was released at the end of that time--in A.D. 62. As Alfred Wikenhauser points out,

"If he had suffered martyrdom then Acts would certainly have recorded it, for there could hardly have been a more striking ending."<sup>82</sup>

Two years later, in A.D. 64, there was a great fire in Rome. Of the fourteen precincts into which Rome was then divided only four survived. Seven precincts were damaged beyond repair and three were burned to the ground, completely. On the newly vacant land, along with some public buildings, Nero built a magnificent new palace. It was "remarkable not so much for its gold and jewels--these are the ordinary trappings of luxury and have become commonplace--as for its meadows, its lakes, its artificial wilderness, now of woods and now of open spaces, and its vistas."<sup>83</sup> But there were rumors that Nero had wanted the fire to clear a spot for his palace.<sup>84</sup> Those who were dispossessed by it needed a politically harmless method for venting their rage and so Nero accused the Christians of doing what he himself had probably done. He accused them of setting the fire.

Those who confessed to being Christians were at once arrested, but on their testimony a great crowd of people were convicted, not so much on the charge of arson, but of hatred of the entire human race. They were put to death amid every kind of mockery. Dressed in the skins of wild beasts, they were torn to pieces by dogs, or were crucified, or burned to death: when night came, they served as human torches to provide lights. Nero threw open his gardens for this entertainment, and provided games in the Circus, mingling with the crowd in a charioteer's dress, or else standing in the car.<sup>85</sup>

Paul was executed by Nero (see 2 Tim 4:6, 16-18), whether in A.D. 64 or not we do not know. Perhaps it was later, but definitely before A.D. 68.<sup>86</sup>

There is a memory of persecution in the book of Hebrews. When the necessary pre-A.D. 70 date of composition is combined with the fact that there had been time for the memory of such earlier hardships to become remote, it is probable that Heb 12:4 (see also Heb 10:32-34; 1 Pet 4:12-19) refers to Jewish rather than Roman persecution.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, Hebrews was written from Italy (Heb 13:24) and it would be possible to assume that its author was a prisoner in Rome at the time it was written. If Nero's persecutions can be dated to A.D. 62, 64 (Paul's first imprisonment), and some year after 64 but before that emperor's death in 68 (Paul's second imprisonment [2 Tim 4:16-18]), one could assume further that the author of Hebrews was being held prisoner by Nero. But again we do not know.

Some thirty years later John the Revelator was exiled to Patmos by Domitian (81-96) (Rev 1:9).<sup>88</sup> Another early emperor who persecuted Christians was Trajan (98-117). Many others would follow their example.

From the fifth century it has been customary to reckon ten great persecutions: under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian. This number was suggested by the ten plagues of Egypt taken as types (which, however, befell the enemies of Israel, and present a contrast rather than a parallel), and by the ten horns of the Roman beast making war with the Lamb, taken for so many emperors. But the number is too great for the general persecutions, and too small for the provincial and local. Only two imperial persecutions--those of Decius and Diocletian--extended over the empire; but Christianity was always an illegal religion from Trajan to Constantine, and subject to annoyance and violence everywhere. Some persecuting emperors--Nero, Domitian, Galerius, were monstrous tyrants, but others--Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, Diocletian--were among the best and most energetic emperors, and were prompted not so much by hatred of Christianity as by zeal for the maintenance of the laws and the power of the government. On the other hand, some of the most worthless emperors--Commodus, Caracalla, and Heliogabalus--were rather favorable to the Christians from sheer caprice. All were equally ignorant of the true character of the new religion.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, starting with Nero and for two centuries afterward, there were sporadic persecutions. It was not unusual for natural disasters or other calamities to provoke local outcries against Christians as a target for general public frustration.

*Determined efforts to destroy the church.* Christians were persecuted in a decisive and concerted manner for the first time throughout the length and breadth of the Empire under Decius (249-51).<sup>90</sup> In A.D. 250 he passed an edict requiring everyone in the Empire to deny Christ. Fortunately the Decian persecution lost momentum a year after it started because its author lost his life fighting Goths in the Balkans.

Both Gallus (251-53) and Valerian (253-60) continued the policies of Decius, but with less intensity. The next major outburst of hostility came in A.D. 257 under Valerian. Then after him Aurelian (270-75) issued an edict of persecution, but died before it could be implemented. The measures he had planned were never carried out. The next forty-three years (from A.D. 260 to 303) were relatively peaceful ones for the church.

We now come to Diocletian (284-305). Diocletian mounted the longest and most bitter persecution on record. Unlike Nero he was not a capricious fiend. On the contrary, he was methodical and precise.<sup>91</sup> Starting on February 23, A.D. 303 Diocletian issued a series of three edicts against Christians.<sup>92</sup> They came in rapid succession and were progressively more severe. First, all church buildings were to be destroyed. That same day the beautiful cathedral in Nicomedia was torn down. Second, all Bibles were to be burned. And third, all Christians were to be deprived of public office and civil liberty. A fourth edict was issued not by Diocletian himself but by his junior colleague Maximian.<sup>93</sup> This fourth edict, published on April 30, A.D. 304, declared that every Christian man, woman, or child in the Empire, without exception, must sacrifice to the gods or die.<sup>94</sup> Diocletian's retirement from office the next year only made matters worse, because his successor Galerius and the latter's nephew and junior colleague Maximin Daia<sup>95</sup> were even more radically opposed to Christianity than he had been.

For eight long years (303-11) the persecution was universal in scope, raging throughout the Empire, but in Egypt and Syria under Maximin it was especially intense. In the western provinces of Britain, Gaul, and Spain, Constantius Chlorus was in power. Both he and his son Constantine tried to blunt the force of the persecution, but with no particular success. In A.D. 308 at the height of the persecution a fifth edict was issued by Maximin to the effect that every male, along with his wife, children, and servants, should sacrifice to the gods and personally taste what was offered. Every item of food sold in the public markets after this was sprinkled with sacrificial wine.

This monstrous law introduced a reign of terror for two years, and left the Christians no alternative but apostasy or starvation. All the pains, which iron and steel, fire and sword, rack and cross, wild beasts and beastly men could inflict, were employed to gain the useless end.<sup>96</sup>

Then on April 30, A.D. 311 Galerius issued an edict of toleration from Nicomedia, where the persecution had begun. It was effectively ignored, however, by Maximin in the east and by Maxentius in Italy for two more years until A.D. 313. When this supremely trying persecution was finally over it had lasted a total of ten years. Ironically Diocletian, and those associated with him, were confirming the truth of the Scriptures they had wanted to destroy, because the length of time during which they tried to do so was itself a fulfillment of prophecy.

Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Rev 2:10)

On October 27, A.D. 312 Constantine defeated Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge near Rome with troops who had been instructed to paint crosses on their shields. The rivalry between the two men had been growing ever since Diocletian's retirement, i.e., throughout most of the persecution. The next year, in A.D. 313, Constantine issued a new edict of toleration jointly with his colleague and brother-in-law Licinius, and compelled Maximin to accept it. The tyrant had himself been forced to recant. Having done so, he committed suicide. So did Diocletian. The last of the great persecutions was over. Christianity was declared a legal religion and within a short time it would go on to become the official religion of the state.<sup>97</sup>

The third and final clause of vs. 28 marks the end of Rome's desultory war against Christianity. Christ's death on the cross occurred approximately sixty-one years after Octavian's victory at Actium. Persecution of His followers by the Roman state would not begin for another thirty-one years. When persecution finally began under Nero it would continue for two and a half centuries. In the end Rome's war against the church would turn into a life or death struggle for survival. When Rome finally returned home as it were, in vs. 28c, the struggle was over. But this time the church had triumphed and Rome went down in defeat.

## Summary

There is a lot to consider in Dan 11:25-28 from a literary as well as historical point of view. Verses 28b and c are here approached as a separate epilogue. They are part of the above bloc of verses and yet describe a different set of events. Both are summarized below.

*A first set of relationships.* Verses 25-28a form a neatly structured chiasm. Verse 25 has three clauses, each corresponding to a later verse. The king of the North provokes a battle (vs. 25a). The king of the South responds with even greater force (vs. 25b). But despite any apparent advantage he may have had initially, the king of the South loses (vs. 25c).

The king of the South's defeat (vs. 25c) is explained in vs. 26. It is caused not because of what his opponent does so much as because of what his friends and allies do--"Those who eat from the king's provisions" (vs. 26).

The reason why the king of the South is so eager to fight (vs. 25b) is explained next in vs. 27. He and his opponent have been closely associated. They "will sit at the same table and lie to each other" (vs. 27). But their hearts are "bent on evil," i.e., they are hostile to each other. If what they think is hostile, and if what they say is false, it follows that what they say is not hostile but friendly. The two men have reached agreements with each other. This clause cannot be applied to the time when they finally meet in battle. Fighting is not the same as agreeing. And decisive engagements, such as battles, mark the unsuccessful end of a discussion, not its beginning. So any agreement between the two men must have been earlier.

In vs. 25a the king of the North goes forth to war. Corresponding to this is vs. 28a, where the king of the North returns home from the war. He has been successful and brings "great wealth" (vs. 28a) back with him. Thus, vss. 26, 27, and 28a each correspond to one of the earlier clauses of vs. 25 and they do so in reverse order. See table 3.

Table 3  
CHIASTIC FORM OF VSS. 25-28

Topic		Vs.	Part 1	Part 2	Vs.	
Outcome	C	25c	South loses	Why South loses	26	C'
South	B	25b	South's advantage	Why South fights	27	B'
North	A	25a	North sets out	North returns	28a	A'

The symmetry of the passage does not end here. Antony's friend behaves as an enemy against her inclinations in vs. 26 and Antony's enemy behaves as a friend against his inclinations in vs. 27. The historical sequence differs from the order of clauses, but there is a reason for the difference. The set of relationships being developed here takes the order of clauses in vs. 25 into account. Verse 27 does not follow vs. 26 because events occurred in that order historically. They did not. It follows vs. 26 because of the sequence of clauses in vs. 25.

*A second set of relationships.* There are three interesting verbal parallels that occur within vss. 25-28. Together they do two things. They confirm the unity of the bloc and emphasize the unique status of vss. 28b and c within it.

First, the king of the South "will wage war with a large and very powerful army [*b<sup>h</sup>āyil gādôl*]" (vs. 25b). Toward the end of the narrative, "The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth [*bir<sup>k</sup>ûš gādôl*]" (vs. 28a). The same Hebrew word *gādôl* (literally "large") is used in both cases.

Second, the king of the North "will stir up his strength and courage [*ûl<sup>b</sup>ābô*] against the king of the South" (vs. 25a). Then "his heart [*ûl<sup>b</sup>ābô*] will be set against the holy covenant" (vs. 28b). The same Hebrew word *ûl<sup>b</sup>ābô* (literally "and his heart") is used in both cases.

And third, the king of the North "will return to his own country [*aršô*] with great wealth" (vs. 28a). We also read that he will "then return to his own country [*aršô*]" (vs. 28c). The same Hebrew word *aršô* (literally "his land") is used in both cases. Thus, each clause of vs. 28 has a verbal parallel linking it with some other part of the present bloc.

The first example links the end of the battle narrative with its beginning. The king of the South fields a large army and the king of the North returns with great wealth. The second example shows that the battle narrative as a whole has a sequel. The king of the North sets his heart against the king of the South and then sets his heart against the holy covenant. These events are similar but distinct. The third example confirms the second. The king of the North returns to his land after fighting the king of the South and also after fighting against the holy covenant.

From the above facts I draw that what happens in vss. 28b and c is separate from what happens in vss. 25-28a. There is no redundancy. The war against the holy covenant is different from the war against the king of the South. The conflict between the king of the North and the king of the South refers to the battle of Actium. The conflict between the king of the North and God's people refers to Rome's later efforts to harass and ultimately destroy the Christian church.

Verses 28b and c are not proleptic. They do not look forward out of sequence with what follows in vss. 29-39 but provide a smooth transition to that later material. In vs. 28c we are brought up to the fourth century A.D. The narrative resumes in vs. 29 with events in the fifth century A.D. Far from being out of place, vss. 28b and c serve to unify the narrative.

There is one further point to make and it is an important one. While the kings of the North and the South figure prominently within Dan 11, if these secular powers did not affect the lives of God's people in some way there would be no reason to talk about them. At the end of the first section (vss. 2-15) there was a carefully developed summary showing the king of the North in relationship to God's people (vs. 14), the king of the South (vs. 15), and the next king of the North (vs. 16)--a rival who would displace him, thus introducing a new king of the North and a new section in the chapter (vss. 16-28). Here at the end of the second section (vss. 16-28) the king of the North defeats the king of the South (vs. 28a) and then turns on God's people (vs. 28b). In vs. 29 we meet his successor. Thus, the two sections end in a comparable manner. But in both cases the activity of warring kings is only one part of a greater controversy involving the fate of God's people.

### *Discussion*

From one point of view the present chapter has three main parts or sections (vss. 2-15, 16-28, 29-45). From another point of view it has two main parts (vss. 2-22, 23-45). We cannot merely choose which fact to accept. They are both true. The following summary brings these two lines of thought together. It begins with familiar material but should be read in its entirety.

It is almost certainly the case that Smith himself did not understand all the reasons why he was right about Dan 11:16-28. He was silent on the whole topic of literary structure. Thus, my work and his are related but independent of each other. We do not even address the same topics. But in my view the argument from structure provides strong support for his model. If it is possible to be right for reasons we do not understand, here is an illustration of the fact.

The chapter divides into  
three parts

The present chapter divides naturally into three sections of approximately equal length. To understand these sections in their broadest context one must compare them with material from other chapters. In Dan 2 there is an image of a man made of four metals (gold, silver,

brass, iron) and the fourth is presented to Daniel in two separate phases (iron alone, iron mixed with clay). Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is identified as the head of gold (Dan 2:38).

In Dan 11 Babylon is not mentioned,<sup>98</sup> but the setting for the narrative is the beginning of the Persian period (vs. 1) and four later kings of Persia are mentioned specifically (vs. 2). In the symbolism of Dan 2 Persia corresponds to silver. Verses 3-15 deal with kings of Greek rather than Persian descent. Since the chapter has a total of forty-five verses we could generalize that, apart from a brief mention of Persia, the first third of the chapter traces the historical influence of Greece, as it affects God's people. Greece corresponds to brass.

A new power is introduced at vs. 16, corresponding to iron in the earlier chapter.<sup>99</sup> There are structural reasons for positing a break at vs. 16 and yet it is not so readily apparent as the one at vs. 29. After vs. 29 we start encountering terms with religious associations, such as "holy covenant" (twice in vs. 30, also vs. 28), "temple fortress," "daily sacrifice" (*tāmîd*), and "abomination" (vs. 31). While some are led to violate the "covenant," others firmly resist (vs. 32). Such terms as "covenant," "temple," and "abomination," are religious in nature<sup>100</sup> and the fact that they start appearing about two-thirds of the way through the chapter is significant.

Thus, in terms of an outline that starts at the beginning of the chapter and works toward the end, Dan 11 has three approximately equal parts corresponding to brass (Greece), iron (secular Rome), and iron mixed with clay (religious Rome) in the earlier prophecy of Dan 2. Greece occupies the first third of the chapter (vss. 3-15) and Rome the last two thirds. The two sections on Rome correspond to the earlier secular phase (vss. 16-28) and later religious phase (vss. 29-45) known so well to us from history. Thus, the above three-part model for Dan 11 is based solidly on parallels from other chapters of the same book.

The chapter divides into  
two parts

In terms of an outline format that starts at both ends and works toward the middle, Dan 11 divides into two main parts (vss. 2-22, 23-45). The materials form a mirror image or chiasm that revolves around vs. 22. My entire exegesis of Dan 11 is built on the proposed fact that the Prince of the covenant at the center of the chapter is Jesus Christ dying on a Roman cross. In a

rigorous structural sense vs. 22, with its reference to the Prince of the covenant, is the fulcrum around which the entire narrative revolves. Below I mention three supporting lines of evidence.

*Paragraph breaks in the Hebrew.* Indirect support for the claim that the two halves of Dan 11 are a mirror image of each other comes from an unlikely quarter. The famous Leningrad Codex (Codex Leningradensis) is the primary manuscript source used for *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)*--a standard published version of the Hebrew text. The editors of *BHS*, and presumably the scribe who prepared the Leningrad Codex, left several characters width of blank space before Dan 11:1, 2b, 5, 10, 20, 21, 25, 29, 36, and 40. Leaving blank spaces before the beginning of a verse is equivalent to indenting for new paragraphs and as such represents a form of scribal comment on the literary structure of the text being copied.

Not all the breaks listed above are of immediate interest. But notice the ones at vss. 20, 25, and 29. If we add a paragraph break at vs. 16, and ignore the artificial one (one verse into another paragraph) at vs. 21, what we have is a well balanced group of blocs consisting of vss. 16-19, 20-24, and 25-29. These contain four, five, and four verses respectively. See table 4.

Table 4  
Paragraph Divisions in *Biblia  
Hebraica Stuttgartensia*

Comparisons	Bloc 1	Bloc 2	Bloc 3
Which vss.	16-19	20-24	25-28
How many vss.	4	5	4

In the above arrangement there are two verses before vs. 22 within the middle bloc and two verses after it. See table 5.

Table 5  
Chiastic Outline in Five Parts  
(First Statement)

Comparisons	Bloc 1	Bloc 2			Bloc 3
Which vss.	16-19	20-21	22	23-24	25-28
How many vss.	4	2	1	2	4

The proposed arrangement now contains blocs of four verses, then two, then one, then two again, then four again--with vs. 22 at the center. Thus, the argument from ancient scribal paragraph breaks supports the present chiastic analysis of Dan 11 and the central place of vs. 22 within it.

*No structural break at vs. 21.* If the chiastic features of Dan 11 really are structural in nature, i.e., if they arise from within the text and are not imposed on it artificially, then the center of the chapter should also be the focus of attention in the chapter. Thus, if the chapter's focus of attention is on the villain of vs. 21, as many suppose, one could reasonably expect vs. 21 to be the structural center of the chapter. When stated in this way the assumptions of the preterist and futurist models become useful hypotheses subject to objective tests.

By contrast the historicist hypothesis is that vs. 22 is the center of the chapter. In this model it is not Antiochus or any other villain that we find at the center of the chapter but the suffering Prince of the covenant. At issue is the fundamental issue of whether the orientation of the prophecy as a whole is positive or negative. The latter view is so popular that one must ask whether the present chiastic analysis is off by one verse.

*Lexical inclusio around vs. 22.* No, it is not. Consider the following lexical inclusio around vs. 22. As the verses are commonly divided the Hebrew says *b<sup>e</sup>šalwâ ûb<sup>e</sup>mišmannê m<sup>e</sup>dînâ yābō<sup>ʔ</sup>* (literally, "in peace and in [the] richest [parts] of a province he will come"). This does not make either good sense or good syntax. One way out of the difficulty would be to change the text, but alternatively one could move the verse number forward one word. When this is done the problem disappears. The only thing that changes is our understanding of the passage.

The idea of a nation rising to power (vs. 23) is readily understandable. But early editors did not see how this could happen "in peace." So to avoid what they thought was an incongruity in the application they included *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* with vs. 24, which speaks of someone distributing "plunder, loot and wealth among his followers." It seemed more consistent for *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* to be linked with the giving of gifts than with the giver's initial rise to power. But the incongruity of a rapacious political entity coming to power in part by peaceful means is intentional. It is not a problem. And forcing the syntax so as to avoid it is certainly not a solution.

Once the verse division is moved forward one word, as here proposed, the term *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* occurs in vs. 21 and in vs. 23, i.e., immediately before and immediately after vs. 22. These two occurrences of *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* an inclusio around vs. 22, framing that verse between them. This is a fact. The question now is how important the fact is. Answering this question well will clarify the structure of the entire section under review.

*Alternating themes.* The lexical inclusio around vs. 22, involving paired occurrences of *b<sup>ē</sup>šalwâ* ("in peace") in vss. 21 and 23 properly numbered, is not an isolated fact. There is a whole set of related themes alternating across the section in five blocs of verses. In this manner a contrast is developed between the recurring themes of peace and violence.

The relationship between Pompey and Caesar in vss. 16-19 is a violent one. They were rivals for control of the state. In marked contrast to this is the peaceful transfer of power from Octavian to Tiberius in vss. 20-21. At the center of the section the Prince of the covenant in vs. 22 is put to a violent death. Then in vss. 23-24 Pompey and Caesar are both mentioned again, but not with reference to each other. Their rivalry is passed over in silence and instead the emphasis is on how both of these men dealt with the Jews. Finally, in vss. 25-28 Octavian is shown in conflict with Mark Antony. The sequence of themes listed above, therefore, is violence (vss. 16-19), peace (vss. 20-21), violence (vs. 22), peace (vss. 23-24), and violence again (vss. 25-28) across five successive blocs of verses. See table 6.

Table 6  
Chiastic Outline in Five Parts  
(Second Statement)

Comparisons	Bloc 1	Bloc 2	Bloc 3	Bloc 4	Bloc 5
Which vss.	16-19	20-21	22	23-24	25-28
How many vss.	4	2	1	2	4
Protagonists	Pompey Julius Caesar	Octavian Tiberius	Christ	Pompey Julius Caesar	Octavian Antony
Motifs	Violence	Peace	Violence	Peace	Violence

*Alternating roles.* Notice that in table 6 the same people appear in contrasting roles. Pompey and Caesar are shown in conflict with each other in the first bloc (vss. 16-19) but separately in the fourth (vss. 23-24). Similarly Octavian is shown in peaceful relation to Tiberius in the second bloc (vss. 20-21) but in violent conflict with Antony in the fifth (vss. 25-28).

The fact that there is an alternating sequence in the violence/peace motif is one point. The fact that the same people appear in different roles is a second point. Notice also that the sequence of their appearance is reversed in the following manner. Caesar and Pompey are portrayed in a violent role (bloc 1) before they are portrayed in a peaceful role (bloc 4). Octavian is portrayed in a peaceful role (bloc 2) before he is portrayed in a violent role (bloc 5). When these facts are all taken together, with the violence to the peaceful Prince of the host at the center of the section, there is an exquisite, even awe inspiring, symmetry that runs through the section.

*Content of what is being presented.* And there is more here than just structural symmetry. The specific nature of the motifs presented is such as to emphasize the violence done to the Prince of the covenant. It is the cross and not some other event in Christ's life that lies at the center of the chapter.

Let me restate this fact another way. I pointed out above that when the syntax of the transition between vss. 23 and 24 is correctly understood and the verse number separating them is placed where it should be, the word *b<sup>c</sup>šalwâ* ("in peace") occurs both in vs. 21 just before vs. 22 and in vs. 23 immediately afterward. It is not just that a lexical parallel occurs but that it is

this particular parallel. The peaceful nature of the events placed immediately before and after the death of the Prince casts the violence of His death in the boldest relief possible. I do not know what more the angel could have said or done to make this one point any more strikingly clear or impress it more deeply in our thinking. The Prince of the covenant comes to an unjust and violent death at the center of the chapter. Here is where every feature of the discussion must lead. Here is the angel's great focus of attention and it must be ours as well.

### Summary

It will be hard by now for anyone to claim that Dan 11 lacks chiastic structure. And it would be hopeless to argue that there are no parallels with earlier chapters. I submit that if neither of these facts can be denied, then both should be accepted--fully, at face value, and with whatever exegetical implications might follow from that starting point. The parallels demand a three-part division of the chapter and the chiasm demands a two-part division. The resulting structure is no more complicated than what we would get by folding a strip of paper in half and then cutting it into three equal lengths. If we wish to understand the chapter well, this is one of the things we are going to have to understand about it. Both types of structure are present simultaneously and the middle section has a crease as it were.

Mutually complementary outline formats, literary motifs, and symmetry between subsections were all foreign to Uriah Smith. Examining the structure of passages he was exegeting did not appear to serve his purposes and he left such matters alone. But the fact is that, correctly understood, they give powerful independent support to what he was saying. I refer here to Smith's interpretation of the middle verses of Dan 11. The end of the chapter is another topic altogether.

With or without understanding the structural ramifications of his own model, Smith's interpretation of Dan 11:16-28 is the only one I know of that allows Christ to assume His rightful place at the center of the chapter. Smith was not merely right by a technicality; he was resoundingly, abundantly right. And the depth of what he says on these verses has probably not yet been fully explored.

## *Conclusion*

Vindicating Uriah Smith is not the issue before us. At issue is the validity of his church's historical mandate. The question is whether Seventh-day Adventists were well or poorly led as they developed their system of prophetic interpretation during those early years of their history. If the results of the present research are accepted, then the answer to the above question must be that they were very well led indeed. They were right for reasons they did not know.

There is no more potentially Christ-oriented message on the face of our planet than the one available to people who wholeheartedly accept the framework for interpretation treasured by Seventh-day Adventists. I think it is fair to say that we have taken our own message too lightly. People are allowed to assume that the prophecies of Daniel are to us a chronicle of beasts and villains--and these are present--but we fail to convey, because we fail to understand, that the reason why these prophecies are so anti-beast is that they are so intensely pro-Christ. If we could once capture this second point, we would have a better basis for understanding the first and everything we say about the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation would be put in a useful perspective.

The sequel to our need for greater discernment concerning the prophecies, however, is that when Christ is seen in them as He can and should be, no supporting truths are obscured in the process. The one single most fundamental characteristic of truth is that it is consistent. All the parts work together in an organic manner. For this reason we accept the whole Bible, with its detailed factual information as well as its devotional passages, the Old Testament as well as the New, central truths and supporting truths. This is the right approach.

In our study we must see both the forest and the trees. We must be aware of detailed factual information but keep it in balance, carefully guarding the peripheries of our belief system against flaws but at the same time allowing the focus of our attention to move toward the center--not discarding either set of facts. If we ever do this, and I believe we will, Christ will be lifted up by Seventh-day Adventists with a power that has eluded even the best and most effective of Evangelical preachers. The cry we have been giving these many years will become loud. If it is not loud now it may be that we treat supporting truths as though they were central

and central truths as though they were secondary. There is room for both but they are not the same.

God has perhaps given us more riches than we have been able to appreciate (Rev 3:17). We do not need to become Evangelicals in order to see them. They are right here--all latent within the framework for study that our pioneers saw opening before their eyes. The windows of heaven have been opened and so much blessing has been poured out that we have not had room enough for it (see Mal 3:10). This is not something God is about to do. He has already done it. The historicist framework for prophetic interpretation, adopted by Seventh-day Adventists, has within it the potential of being truly resplendent with Christ. As we ask God for a new vision of Jesus, we should also ask for a renewed understanding of this two and a half thousand year old vision of Jesus. He is there to be seen if we will allow ourselves to see Him.