

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In order to properly understand Daniel 8 and Daniel 11, it is important to understand that Antiochus is never specifically referred to in either of these chapters even though many assume that he is. Rather than being either “a fulfillment” or “the fulfillment” of Daniel 8 and Daniel 11, Antiochus Ephianes was only a prototype of the individual Daniel is referring to because there are similarities between what he did and what this evil individual will do.
- B. There is a difference from being a prototype due to similarities and being a fulfillment and it is important for us to understand that difference and therefore why Antiochus is not mentioned in Daniel. When we look at the text plainly we can see that, rather than describing the actions of Antiochus, Daniel is actually describing the specific activities of the individual generally known as the Antichrist.
- C. Even though a plain reading of Daniel excludes Antiochus from being the fulfillment of these two key chapters, Bible interpreters have often prematurely inserted Antiochus into Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 as a fulfillment, either in full or in part. This happens for two main reasons.
1. Liberal scholars insert Antiochus into Daniel because of their belief that the book of Daniel was written either during or just after the conflict between Israel and Antiochus. Because they do not believe in predictive prophecy, they use Antiochus' similarities to the Antichrist to demonstrate that the book of Daniel was written to encourage the Jews who experienced Antiochus' rage. In their view, the difference between what Antiochus actually did and what the book of Daniel says the Antichrist will do amounts either to errors on the part of the author of the book of Daniel or the author using exaggerated language to encourage the Jews in their resistance of Antiochus. In short, they insert Antiochus into the text because they do not consider the Scriptures infallible and do not value predictive prophecy.
 2. Unlike liberal scholars, conservative scholars generally hold to the idea that the Scriptures are infallible and place a high value on predictive prophecy. Because of their view of the Scripture and, in their zeal to prove the divine origin of predictive prophecy in the Bible, they use the similarity of some of Antiochus' actions with the actions of the Antichrist to insert Antiochus into the text. They do this to prove that the book of Daniel is divinely inspired. While their motive is good, their interpretation ultimately undermines the book of Daniel because they are forced to ignore the fact that Antiochus clearly did not fulfill many of the key statements of Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 in order to advance their argument that Daniel correctly predicted history. Though they insert Antiochus into these passages in a genuine desire to be faithful to Scripture and to validate the prophetic witness, they ultimately obscure the point that God is emphasizing in the book of Daniel.
- D. Ultimately both interpretations of Daniel that insert Antiochus into the text end up robbing God of the full glory of predictive prophecy and end up deemphasizing the primary message that Daniel is emphasizing in these two chapters.

1. God has staked His glory and honor, not on partially predicting the nature of the reign of Antiochus a few hundred years after Daniel, but on predicting in great detail precise events that occur thousands of years after the author first recorded them – events that are significant to God because they are significant to the finishing of His plan in this age. The predictions given to Daniel are going to be for His great glory at the end of the age and is precisely why He tells Daniel that what he has been given is to be sealed up until the end.
⁹And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. (Daniel 12:9 NKJV)
 2. Not only does the insertion of Antiochus into the text rob God of the full glory of prophecy, it as serves to deemphasize the precise thing that God is emphasizing in Daniel. These two chapters were given to Daniel because God wants to emphasize the nature and life of the Antichrist. God considers this individual and what he will do important that he wants to give the church understanding of this dreadful and terrible individual before he takes the stage of history. Given the fact that He did not do this for Hitler or Stalin tells us just how terrible a man the Antichrist is and just how disastrous his reign will be.
 3. When we insert Antiochus into the text, and consider the text partially fulfilled we end up believing that something incredibly significant is part of the past when it is instead part of the future and this leaves the church unprepared. As dreadful as Antiochus was, there is a reason that Daniel was so undone at his revelation and when we think it refers, even in part, to events that are already past it makes it harder for us to feel what Daniel felt and what God intends us to feel about this revelation (Daniel 7:15, 19-20, 28; 8:27, 12:8).
²⁷And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it. (Daniel 8:27 NKJV)
 4. All of this is why Antiochus is not mentioned in Daniel. God is aiming for something future and far more glorious for the book of Daniel. It will both demonstrate the glory of God in prophecy far beyond anything we have considered and also be one of God's tools for preparing the church for the final conflict of the age.
- E. Once we understand why Antiochus is often inserted into Daniel by commentators and why it is so critical that we are faithful to the text, it is important to briefly look at both of these chapters so that we can see why Antiochus is not the individual Daniel is referring to.

II. DANIEL 8

- A. Daniel 8 introduces the Antichrist as one who would begin as a “little horn.” A little horn is a ruler who initially appears insignificant because he rules a relatively insignificant area or people.
⁹And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. (Daniel 8:9 NKJV)
- B. This is the same way that Daniel 7 introduces the Antichrist.

⁸I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. (Daniel 7:8 NKJV)

- C. Because Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 introduce this individual in the same way, it tells us that the “little horn” of Daniel 7 and 8 are the same individual. This means you cannot interpret Daniel 8:9 as referring to Antiochus unless you also interpret Daniel 7:8 as Antiochus.
- D. Because Daniel is so clear that the Antichrist begins as a “little horn” it is crucial to recognize that Antiochus was never a “little horn.” This simple fact is often completely overlooked by commentators.
 - 1. Because the individual of Daniel 7 and 8 is first identified by a key characteristic that was never true of Antiochus, it not only precludes Antiochus as the ultimate fulfillment, it also precludes him even as a double fulfillment. Some prophecies are said to have a “double fulfillment,” because they begin with language that is true of a contemporary situation, but then also include language that expands the prophecy to a larger, future fulfillment as well.
 - 2. It is important that see that Daniel's prophecy of the Antichrist prophecy is not that type of prophecy. When Daniel describes this individual, he does not begin by describing Antiochus as a historical figure and then enlarging his language to also include a final fulfillment in the Antichrist. In Daniel 8, and Daniel 11, He begins to describe the Antichrist with a description that Antiochus could never fulfill.
- E. Not only was Antiochus never a “little horn” he never did the very specific things that the little horn of Daniel 7 must do. He did not rise up as a small ruler among 10 other kings, nor did he depose 3 kings of a 10 king confederation to ultimately rule over 10 kings before whom he initially seemed insignificant.
- F. Not only does Daniel 8 introduce the Antichrist using language that never applied to Antiochus, he continues to describe his activities in language that cannot be applied to Antiochus.
 - 1. The Antichrist exalts Himself as high as the Prince of the host. Most conservative commentators take this as a reference to Messiah. However, Messiah did not appear before Antiochus, nor did Antiochus make Messianic claims. Therefore it was impossible for him to exalt himself as high as Messiah.

¹¹He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host... (Daniel 8:11a NKJV)

- 2. We are also told that Antichrist will trample down the sanctuary (temple).

¹¹...and the place of His [Messiah's] sanctuary was cast down. (Daniel 8:11b NKJV)

¹³Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the

transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?” (Daniel 8:13 NKJV)

- a. Daniel is told that a transgression will happen that leads to desolation. That desolation clearly applies to the temple which is why the sanctuary is cast down and trampled underfoot.
 - b. The language of “cast down,” “trampled underfoot,” and “desolation” is clearly interpreted for us in Daniel. In Daniel 8:7 Daniel saw a vision of the goat casting down and trampling underfoot the ram. That picture helps interpret the prophecy Daniel is given just a few verses later. Just as the goat violently cast down and trampled underfoot the ram, so too the Antichrist will cast down and trample underfoot the sanctuary.
 - c. He is also told there will be a “transgression of desolation.” In other words the Antichrist will perform a transgression or abomination that will cause desolation. Again, Daniel interprets desolation for us in Daniel 9 where desolation is used to describe the condition of the temple after the Babylonian invasion.
 - d. The individual being described in Daniel 8 must trample and bring desolation to the sanctuary. This is something that Antiochus never did. He defiled the temple, but did not make it desolate. Defiling the sanctuary is very different from trampling it down and causing desolation.
3. Daniel’s summary of the Antichrist’s reign of terror also does not apply to Antiochus.

²⁴His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. (Daniel 8:24 NKJV)

- a. We are told the Antichrist will be mighty, but not by his own power. Antiochus’ strength was entirely his own. He took the family throne and sought to build an empire as its king.
- b. We are also told that the king of Daniel 8 will also destroy mighty leaders and the holy people. While Antiochus persecuted the “holy people” fiercely, he did not destroy mighty and powerful leaders. He had a constant struggle with the Ptolemaic kingdom, backed down when threatened by Rome, and was ultimately challenged by the Parthians. He did not prosper and thrive against the mighty or “destroy them fearfully” in his failed attempt to build an empire.

4. Daniel also indicates that the Antichrist must actually challenge the “Prince of princes” and the tone of this prediction is that he will challenge Messiah in battle. Of course, Antiochus did not even have the opportunity to challenge Messiah with his military. When the Antichrist challenges the “Prince of princes” we also find that he will be broken without human means indicating that his death is a supernatural event where God directly intervenes. This also does not apply to Antiochus. Antiochus ultimately died after defending himself against a Parthian invasion. He did not die through a unique divine intervention due to the fact that he directly challenged the “Prince of princes.”

²⁵“Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means. (Daniel 8:25 NKJV)

- G. From looking at what Daniel 8 says about the Antichrist it becomes clear that Antiochus is not in view at all in this chapter. There is no doubt that Antiochus is one of the most brutal of “many antichrists” that have come (1 John 2:18), but he is clearly not the individual of Daniel 8. To be faithful to the text, we must interpret it the way we are intended to – as a sober warning about the man who must come at the end of the age. Once we see the futurity of this chapter and the implications of it both for the church and for Israel, we will respond to this vision in the same way that Daniel did:

²⁷And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it. (Daniel 8:27 NKJV)

III. DANIEL 11

- A. Daniel 11 introduces a “vile person” in Daniel 11:21, and when we consider the description of this individual, his rise to power, and the things he does we can see that Daniel is not talking about Antiochus.

²¹And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. (Daniel 11:21 NKJV)

- B. Because Daniel 11:2-20 describes events that occurred in antiquity and set the stage for the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BC, many have assumed that Antiochus is the individual highlighted in verse 20. However, this part of Daniel 11 serves two very important purposes – neither of which require the individual of verse 21 to be Antiochus.

1. First it emphasizes the divine nature of predictive prophecy. Daniel was given very intricate details of things that would happen within a few centuries of his death. These details serve as God's divine stamp of authentication on the book of Daniel. God predicted things that would happen shortly after the book was written to emphasize that, just as the historical details given were fulfilled in great detail, so also the prophecies relating to the end would be fulfilled in the exact same precision. God put His endorsement on the book of Daniel so soon after it was composed so that it would be taken seriously in every detail. This is one reason why it is so important to be true to the text of Daniel and realize just how many of the details in Daniel 11:21-45 do not match the reign of Antiochus.
 2. Secondly, by emphasizing events that related to the ancient Seleucid Empire, God is emphasizing this geographic region and its significance to the rise of the "little horn" of Daniel 8:9 and the "vile person" of Daniel 11:21. Daniel 11:2-20 connects the narrative of Daniel 11 to the prediction of Daniel 8:23 that says the Antichrist will arise in the "latter time" of the Greek or Seleucid Empire. Daniel 8 and 11 both emphasize that this region plays a significant part in the rise of the Antichrist's empire. Daniel 8:23 indicates a break in the storyline after the Greek Empire but before the rise of the Antichrist and Daniel 11:21 follows the same pattern. This is the same sequence of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 where the Antichrist empire is predicted as the fourth kingdom after the kingdom of Greece.
- C. It is important to notice that the same individual is in view from Daniel 11:21-45 and that there is a consistent sequence of specific events. In this section, Daniel records these events sequentially never hinting at a transition to a different or broader narrative. It is not a limited prophecy that suddenly takes on a larger scope, it is one consistent prophecy focusing on the actions of one specific individual. This means the individual that begins this section must also finish it and Antiochus' reign falls short of fulfilling the events described in this passage.
- D. It is also important to notice carefully how this individual emerges on the scene of history.
- ²¹And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. (Daniel 11:21 NKJV)***
1. First we are told a vile person will arise who will not be given the honor of royalty. This cannot refer to Antiochus because he was always given the honor of royalty. Even when imprisoned in Rome, he was in prison specifically because he was royalty and when he came to take the empire he was given the honor of royalty even beyond his birth position as he took command of an empire that should have gone to his brother's son. In contrast, the prediction of Daniel 11:21 is a parallel to the description of Daniel 7:8 and Daniel 8:9 that calls the Antichrist a "little horn" or someone who initially appears insignificant. In Daniel 11 we find that he is such a "little horn" that he's not initially given the "honor of royalty." This indicates that the Antichrist somehow emerges outside of the ruling class. Here again, just as "little horn" does not describe Antiochus, neither does being not being given the honor of royalty.

2. Secondly we are told that this person will come in peaceably (“in a time of tranquility” NASB) to seize the kingdom by intrigue. This shows a similarity to the way the Antichrist is described in Daniel 8:25 as securing his rule by cunning and deceit. However, this does not describe the way Antiochus took the kingdom. Antiochus took the kingdom by force. He was given an army by the king of Pergamum and used that army to take the kingdom by force from the usurper Heliodorus. While there could be some “intrigue” in the way that Antiochus was possibly responsible for the murder of his younger nephew who was the rightful heir to the throne, he did not come in or take the kingdom peaceably by intrigue.
- E. When we examine carefully what Daniel 11 says, we see, just as in Daniel 8, that Antiochus is not actually the individual in view. Not only is Antiochus not the primary character, we find that the prophecy does not even begin with Antiochus. It consistently describes the actions of one individual. Neither Daniel 8 nor Daniel 11 begin with a narrow focus and then expand to a larger interpretation. Both contain a consistent storyline.

IV. JESUS' INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL

- A. Besides the evidence in the text of Daniel, we also have to consider how Jesus interpreted the book of Daniel because He is, obviously, the foremost interpreter of the book of Daniel. In Matthew 24, Jesus gave us His interpretation of the events of Daniel 8 and Daniel 11.
¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), (Matthew 24:15 NKJV)
- B. Jesus highlighted the abomination of desolation, which is a central event in Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 and He placed it in the future. In doing that, He excluded Antiochus as a fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies because Antiochus had been dead for well over 150 years when Jesus spoke the words of Matthew 24. That alone should be enough to settle the issue because, as we have mentioned, each of these two chapters have one consistent story and has one specific individual in mind throughout the prophecy. The language in either chapter does not dramatically change in the middle of either chapter hinting at the possibility of a two-stage fulfillment, instead the language consistently tells the story of one man and, according to Jesus, the activity of that man would occur after the first century AD.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. If Antiochus is not the individual that God is focusing on in Daniel 8 and Daniel 11, how does he relate to the book of Daniel? Antiochus' attitudes and behaviors are remarkably similar to the individual in Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 even if he did not fulfill the prophecies in these chapters. This similarity is not a mere coincidence. While we must be faithful to what Daniel actually says, we must also be aware of how Antiochus serves as a prototype and a foreshadowing of the terrible man of Daniel 8 and Daniel 11. God wants us to see a picture of what this terrible man will be like and we see it in the person of Antiochus while understanding that the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 11 refer to another man even more terrible than Antiochus. This man will do things Antiochus never did – the things recorded in the book of Daniel.

- B. When we understand the focus of Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 it becomes apparent that God has invested a lot in prophecies about the Antichrist. He had Daniel write down specific events and introduce each prophecy specifically so that we would realize that God was emphasizing a specific individual that would come at the end and not an individual in ancient history.
- C. Daniel illustrates the dramatic power of prophecy. Though it contains some prophecies that have been fulfilled in exact detail, the majority of the book awaits future fulfillment. When the details predicted within the book of Daniel come to pass in the future, it will be a shocking display of the power of prophecy and that is why we must remain in the tension of staying faithful to Daniel's prophecies until they are fulfilled. God gave specific details and we will not have to guess as to whether the events are fulfilled. It will happen just as Daniel predicted it would. Understanding the futurity of Daniel's predictions is important both for the church and the world.
 - 1. We must hold to the futurity of these passages because God gave them for the church to be equipped for what will come. When we take what God has assigned to the future and assign it to the past, we disregard a key message God has given to the church.
 - 2. When we do not maintain the futurity of these passages we also fail to emphasize something that God has planned as part of His witness to the earth. God has, in large part, determined that fulfilled prophecy will be His primary apologetic for the Scriptures in the last days. When we do not emphasize the futurity and the literalness of Daniel's predictions, we are failing to hold before the earth God's primary apologetic for Scripture.
- D. Like Daniel we are called to tremble before the record of what is recorded for us. The fact that Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 describe a fully future reign of a wicked man should cause our hearts to tremble. The wickedness of this man has not been enacted in ancient history – it remains for the church in the future. It is our portion to understand this, prepare the church for it, and warn the nations of it. This is why Antiochus is not mentioned in the book of Daniel - this task is still ahead of us.
- E. God does not want us trying to determine which parts of Daniel's prophecy relate to ancient history and which relate to the future and, in that confusion, failing to understand a clear warning He gave of what is in front of us. This is why He left us with a clear record of future trouble. The fact that Antiochus was a prototype of the Antichrist and yet fell so far short of fulfilling any of Daniel's prophecies should emphasize just how terrible this coming man is. God went to great lengths to make sure we would not think the prophecy was fulfilled in Antiochus. A man more dreadful than Antiochus will emerge and he will fulfill what Daniel wrote concerning him in every detail. We must prepare the nations for his brief reign of terror.