

LESSON 10

In what will probably prove to be our author's shortest lesson of the current series, this week he explores "more Bible texts that will help solidify us in our understanding of this key teaching, which, when properly understood, reveals to us *in grander light* the wonderful saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (stress supplied). Let me respond at once, though, that he leaves himself wide open to the charge of *arrogance*. Does Seventh-day Adventism really have a *better* grasp of the Plan of Salvation than *every* other Christian organisation!? In an *exclusive* dogma at that!?

Which is echoed in this highly *sectarian* question posed by our author in closing his whole lesson: What does it mean "to hold doctrines that most other Christians don't accept(?) Should this bother us?" *Oh yes it certainly should!!* In this regard, interested readers may care to revisit relevant comments in my General Introduction.

Our Author's Polemic

Our author continues to emphasise such *sectarian* sentiments in his Introduction:

[T]he 1844 pre-Advent judgment is a crucial doctrine of the Adventist Church; not only does it explain the disappointment of 1844, it helps us understand who we are today and why we exist as a movement. With so much at stake, *our enemy is constantly at work to undermine us*, and if he can undo our belief in 1844, he will greatly succeed. Thus, it is important that we as Adventists be firmly rooted in this teaching, as well as be *prepared to answer challenges against it*. [stress supplied]

To save time, my instant reply is that, while some of these issues are too broad for adequate coverage in this review, my Addendum B will touch on those salient here.

For study on **Sunday**, 27th August, our author treats the fact that Rome is the only one of Daniel's four world empires not named. His prime appeal is to Jesus' reference to pagan Rome's destruction of Jerusalem, *albeit implicitly*, in Mt. 24:15 and Lu. 21:20f., "following the Protestant formula of the Bible being its own interpreter".

Jesus linked the Roman Empire to the book of Daniel. Jesus, therefore, not only points to Rome but places it within Daniel itself. Phrasing linked to "the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Jesus, in reference to Daniel, occurs three times in Daniel (Dan. 9:27, 11:31, 12:11). Thus... Rome is that great power that arises in Daniel 2, 7, and 8, after Greece and extends to "the end."

As for the towering, Reformation principle, *sola scriptura*, I have said quite enough already throughout this series for my readers to decide for themselves whether or not our author *practises what he preaches* by and large, mindfully or otherwise. Likewise, as for his confident invitation, "Look at how *clear and unambiguous* these prophecies are" (stress supplied), I can only refer my readers to most of my previous reviews for *copious* evidence that *his claim is either naïve or wilfully deceptive*.

As for the identity of Daniel's fourth great empire, not all exegetes agree that this is Rome. So I have invited one skilled dissenter to offer us in Addendum A the option which our author fails to detail. Not that I accept all that our learned guest asserts. Indeed, I demur in certain salient points. But most details need not detain us here.

For study on **Monday**, 28th August, our author is at pains to demonstrate not only that the Little Horn of Dan. 7 equates with that of 8, but also that it depicts Rome:

1. Both are depicted by the same symbol, a horn (Dan. 7:8, 20; 8:9).
2. Both are persecuting powers (Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:10, 24).
3. Both are self-exalting and blasphemous (Dan. 7:8, 20, 25; 8:10, 11, 25).
4. Both target God's people (Dan. 7:25, 8:24).
5. Both have aspects of their activity delineated by prophetic time (Dan. 7:25; 8:13, 14).
6. Both extend until the time of the end (Dan. 7:25, 26; 8:17, 19).
7. Both will be supernaturally destroyed (Dan. 7:11, 26; 8:25).

When you have two powers represented by the same prophetic symbol and who carry out the same basic actions in the same time slot in the flow of visions, it seems more than obvious that we are talking about the same power. Also, considering the descriptions of this power, the burden of proof lies heavily on those who interpret this power as anything other than Rome.

In due course I will evaluate our author's confident assertion about Rome. In concurring in general, though, with his conclusion that Daniel recognises just a *single*

Little Horn, these two points may be included at once. First, to be more specific on one of our author's salient details, there is no room for more than **one** great, end-time persecutor of God's saints! Secondly, he is quite remiss not to mention that Daniel's final vision also treats the Little Horn at length. The details should count.

For study on **Tuesday**, 29th August, our author speculates on why Rome was not named. Since this adds very little if *anything* at all to this study, we may move on.

For study on **Wednesday**, 30th August, our author warms to the subject to occupy the rest of this lesson, the debate over Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the Little Horn. Since this is important, he should have detailed more fully the option he rejects. This void is adequately filled by our guest exegete as portion of my Addendum A. Yet, at the risk of attracting the charge of ignoring important material myself, I will assume that our author's passing defense of the early date of Daniel is adequate for most of his pupils. Whatever, I for one see **no** light in any late date for this book.

Directly tied with this attempt to date the book of Daniel centuries after it dates itself is the attempt to link the identity of the little horn in Daniel 8 with an ancient Greek ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes. Most students today accept this interpretation; almost any modern commentary will use that interpretation. As we'll see, *it cannot possibly be correct. Many who accept this interpretation do so not realizing the rationale behind it*, which is that Daniel was not written when it says it was but much later. Either way, because this view is prevalent, we need to look at it. [stress supplied]

Because this controversy occupies the remainder of this lesson, I will permit our author to speak for himself at length, as he seeks to counter each major objection:

Read Daniel 8:5-8, the vision of the he-goat, and then Daniel 8:21, 22, Gabriel's interpretation of the he-goat. According to the prophecy, what was the fate of the he-goat?

History bears testimony to the amazing accuracy of this prophecy. The he-goat, of course, was ancient Greece, and after the death of Alexander the Great, the empire split apart, for a time, into "four kingdoms" (Dan. 8:22) under four generals. One of the kingdoms was the Seleucid, which lasted from about 301 B.C. until about 146 B.C. Among these kings, one was named Antiochus Epiphanes. He was the eighth Seleucid king (175-164 B.C.); twenty more followed after him. Through the conquests of his predecessors, he, for a short while attained control of Judea, defiled the temple in Jerusalem for about three years, and persecuted the Jews. He died, apparently from natural causes, in a later campaign (164 B.C.) after being driven out of Jerusalem. He is the one who most interpreters believe is the little horn.

1. The Medo-Persian ram became "great" (vs. 4); the Grecian goat "very great" (vs. 8); the little horn became "exceeding great" (vs. 9). How does this description and comparison of empires automatically disqualify Antiochus as the little horn?

2. According to Daniel 8:17, 19, 26, the prophecy dealt with end-time things, and the little horn was the last power presented in the vision. Because he died in 164 B.C., why can Antiochus not be the little horn?

3. According to Daniel 8:25, the little horn would be "broken without hand," a phrase we saw earlier that—through parallelism with Daniel 2:34, 45—depicted a supernatural, cataclysmic destruction. Why, given what's written above about his demise, does Antiochus not fit again? [Thursday]

For **Friday**, finally, our author exposes any mere lay student diligent enough to explore his objection to quite a challenge: the grammar/syntax is relatively complex!

Another attempt to make *the impossible fit* of Antiochus centers around the argument concerning the origin of the little horn in Daniel 8:8, 9. "Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." Arguing for Antiochus, some say that the little horn arose from one of the "four notable ones," meaning the nations that arose after the death of Alexander the Great. That would be, they claim, Antiochus, not Rome. [stress supplied]

The argument falls apart on a few grounds. First, the word them in the last phrase of verse 8 refers not to "four notable ones" but "four winds of heaven." Immediately after, the text says that out of "one of them" came forth a little horn. One of what? The closest phrase is "the four winds of heaven," *the obvious choice*. (Some argue that horns grow out of horns, not winds, though when was the last time anyone ever saw a horn grow out of another horn?) [stress supplied]

Sorry! Resist the temptation as I may, I cannot avoid bemoaning our author's *trite* objection. *This is imagery!* Neither are there winged lions or leopards! Secondly,

Hebrew grammar, with feminine and masculine nouns, works very well linking the "one of them" with the "four winds of heaven"; *it doesn't work at all* linking it with the "notable ones." [stress supplied]

Finally, even if that argument about origins had some validity, the other factors would show the *impossibility* of the Antiochus interpretation. [stress supplied]

Evaluation

When all is said and done, this lesson is so short that *it really covers no more than one broad, salient, exegetical point*: the identity of Daniel's fourth great empire. Even then, around one half is devoted to the debate over Antiochus IV Epiphanes. My response will therefore be briefer than normal, even when extended slightly by occasional reference to our guest exegete's contribution, which I cannot review here. Indeed, to be perfectly frank, I feel a little embarrassed having so little to offer my patient readers. I can do no more, though, than work with what our author supplies.

Rome in Daniel's Thinking?

With due regard to the latter, I see no compelling cause not to accept *pagan* Rome as Daniel's fourth great kingdom. I say *pagan* since I have already rejected our author's insistence that pagan Rome transmutes into papal Rome in Daniel's imagery. This should clarify even further as, in reviewing his Lesson II, I attempt as fully as possible to identify the Little Horn. Above all, I remain convinced that *our Lord is referring to the specific fulfilment of the relevant prophetic details in his stern caveat in Mt. 24:15*. If not, in pointing to "the prophet Daniel", why his eloquently forceful, digressive edict: "let the reader *understand*"? As I have explained sufficiently already in reviewing Lesson 3, his *specific* reference is to Daniel's motif of comprehension in 12:4, 8-10 in these terms: *his entire book would be sealed against all mastery until the time of the End*. It follows that this edict scarcely labels this prediction any mere future, *secondary* application of a forecast fulfilled *in toto* long centuries ago! But *it makes perfect sense if intimating that the Master is explaining Daniel's prime intent*.

A greatly verbose paraphrase of Jesus' words would sound something like this: "Here we are in the very *time of the End!* So Daniel's book of prophecy is *open* at long last! And this is what he *really* meant by one cardinal detail, so salient that it appears fully three times – *the destructive paganism about to imperil all of you!!*"

Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Daniel's Thinking?

In his material for study on Wednesday, our author is quite remiss to equate a belief in Antiochus IV Epiphanes and any late date for penning the Book of Daniel. For example, this Seleucid tyrant would be an extremely tempting, *eventual* option for the Little Horn in the thinking of any exegete who accepts that its forecasts are *conditional*, except for our Lord's decisive, counter testimony in Mt. 24:15, above all.

However, our author does better in his material for study on Thursday. Greece certainly broke into four kingdoms after Alexander the Great, Dan. 8:8b. And, although our guest does an excellent job in summarising Antiochus IV Epiphanes' remarkable achievements, it is still rather doubtful whether these can credibly be deemed "exceedingly great", 9, NRSV, in direct comparison with any similar list of Alexander the Great's achievements, which are also termed "exceedingly great", 8a, NRSV.

Having just discussed the uncertainty which the *conditionality* of Bible prophecy casts over its interpretation, I may permit our author's second objection to rest and move on to his third. The pity is that he could have bolstered his sound deduction with very little extra effort! For it is striking that the Hebrew verb rendered *destroyed*, 8:25c, is *šābar*; just as in 7, 8 and 22. *Such implicit continuance of the horn imagery invites the inference that a tacit comparison is being drawn between the deaths of Alexander the Great and Antiochus IV Epiphanes*. Both died untimely deaths due to medical emergencies. Therefore, despite our guest's strenuous objections, why should the latter's demise *alone* be attributed indubitably to supernatural causes?

It remains for me to assess our author's appeal to the Hebrew grammar/syntax of Dan. 8:8f. The difficulty, though, is that English speaking lay Christians are often unfamiliar with the notion of *noun gender* so common in almost every other tongue. This is complicated by the fact that OT Hebrew works this concept harder than most others. Note, for example, that the *masculine* noun *šābûa*^c takes the *masculine* ending – *šābu*^c*îm* – in Dan. 9:24-27 but the *feminine* ending – *šābu*^c*ôt* – in Deut. 16:9.

What counts here is that the noun *rûah* behind *winds*, Dan. 8:8, is either *masculine* or *feminine*; the noun *qeren* rendered *horn*, 8, is *feminine*. So, since the pronominal suffix *em* back of *them*, 9, is *masculine*, strictly speaking, its antecedent is *winds*. Yet *this is far from decisive!* For one thing, *masculine* plural suffixes often serve as *feminine*. For another, the numeral *one*, 9, derives from *ʔahat*, the *feminine* form of *ʔehād*. So it may refer to *either qeren or rûah*. There is no “obvious choice.” Our author is quite remiss to assert that the former option “doesn’t work at all”. In these terms, at least, therefore, Antiochus IV Epiphanes is not “the impossible fit”.

Summary

Such rash confidence apart, in my opinion, our author has adequately defended his stance that (*pagan*) Rome was the fourth of the great empires which Daniel envisaged initially. Above all, I for one can read Jesus’ urgent interpretation in Mt. 24:15 of the book’s paramount fiend as indubitably *primary*. However, although I happen to agree that Antiochus IV Epiphanes never graced Daniel’s prophetic *blueprint*, by no means has our author verified that this popular option “cannot possibly be correct.”

Addendum A

Rome in Danielic studies

By Eduardo Martínez-Rancaño (slightly edited)

Prominent among the various views about the specific identities of the different world powers presented in the book of Daniel by means of various symbols (particularly in chs. 2, 7 and 8) is the notion that Rome is the last villain presented in the relevant visions. Although the contrary view has been gaining an ever-increasing measure of support for many decades now, defenders of the Roman view, most of whom are entrenched Seventh-day Adventist historicists, usually resort to the following methods to propagate their conviction to inexperienced Bible students:

1. Using history books to show the importance of the Roman Empire in antiquity. This is the usual procedure for people whose knowledge about ancient empires is quite limited.
2. Parading the manifest relevance of the Roman Empire in NT times, and the particular involvement of Roman authorities in the crucifixion of our Lord.
3. Using direct or indirect NT references to Daniel to buttress the notion of a sinister Roman prominence in the book of Daniel.
4. Claiming that Rome is the only world power that can somehow reach the end of the world, according to their interpretation of such passages as Dan. 2:44.
5. Ignoring all contrary evidence.

Actually, the first two points are quite irrelevant for this investigation, since scholars who reject a prominent role for Rome in the book of Daniel have never tried to play down the importance of Rome for the history of mankind. Apart from showing a few cases where the fifth point is manifest, the rest of this addendum will deal with points 3 and 4.

Rome, Revelation and Daniel

Historicists usually take it for granted that the easy identification of the sea beast, [Rev. 13:1ff.](#), with Rome will lead all doubters to concede that the horrible beast of Dan. 7:7ff. *must* likewise be Rome. However, this is a classical *non sequitur*, because the sea beast, in reverse order:

- “had a mouth like that of a lion” (2), the first beast of Dan. 7, which no historicist will ever claim was Rome;
- “had feet like those of a bear” (2), the second beast of Dan. 7, which no historicist will ever claim was Rome;
- “resembled a leopard” (2), the third beast of Dan. 7, which no historicist will ever claim was Rome;
- “had ten horns” (1), like the fourth beast of Dan. 7, the *only* one historicists claim was Rome.

Now, if, in the case of the lion, the bear and the leopard, John the Seer felt authorised to re-employ for Rome Danielic symbols representing heathen nations *other than Rome*, his use of the fourth Danielic beast for Rome does not prove Daniel foresaw Rome as the fourth kingdom any more than it would prove the lion, the bear or the leopard were also Rome. In fact, logic would advise suggesting a nation *other than Rome* as the *alter ego* of the fourth Danielic beast. Moreover, John adds one addi-

tional detail to his composite beast *not* found in Daniel: it had “seven heads” (1), elsewhere associated with seven hills and seven kings (Rev. 17:3, 7).

The nature of John’s borrowing from Daniel is manifest: God’s timely message to his children through his prophet announced the doom of a contemporary power that was the very personification of *all* heathen nations of antiquity; so Rome is depicted as embodying the traits of Babylon, Persia, Macedon and the fourth Danielic world power, whose identity will be revealed in the course of this addendum.

The Gospels, the Abomination that Causes Desolation, and Daniel

Historicists also rely heavily upon the directive of Matt. 24:15: “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’, spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—...”, a manifest reference to the Roman army (*cf.* Luke 17:20). The parallel passage of Mark 13:14, while not mentioning Daniel by name, also speaks of “the abomination that causes desolation,” a Danielic expression appearing in the following passages:

Reference	Hebrew	Transliteration	Translation
Dan. 9:27	שְׁקוּצִים מְשׁוֹמֵם	<i>šiqqûšîm m^ešômēm</i>	desolating abominations
Dan. 11:31	הַשְּׁקוּץ מְשׁוֹמֵם	<i>haššiqqûš m^ešômēm</i>	the desolating abomination
Dan. 12:11	שְׁקוּץ שׁוֹמֵם	<i>šiqqûš šômēm</i>	desolating abomination

Although the specific vowel points vary slightly from text to text, the expression is basically the same in all three cases, the plural noun being the most remarkable peculiarity in the first case, though followed by a singular poel participle from the root שָׁמַם. The plural probably indicates a collective noun, therefore, employed as a singular. The noun שְׁקוּץ is used elsewhere in the OT for abominable idols, such as that of Milcom (1 Ki. 11:5; 2 Ki. 23:24), or the abominable practices of heathen worship (Nah. 3:6). The equivalents in the Septuagint and Theodotion for all three Danielic references are as follows:

Reference	Septuagint	Theodotion
Dan. 9:27	βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων abomination of the desolations	βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων abomination of the desolations
Dan. 11:31	βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως abomination of desolation	βδέλυγμα ἠφανισμένον disfigured abomination
Dan. 12:11	βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως abomination of the desolation	βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως abomination of desolation

The reasoning behind historicist claims is that if our Lord applied the “abomination that causes desolation” presumably to a Roman desecration of the temple precincts in his future, then it cannot possibly have had an earlier fulfilment. There are several problems with this line of reasoning.

First of all, it is to be noted that two of the passages that mention the “abomination of desolation” are located in the last two chapters of Daniel, rarely expounded in Seventh-day Adventist literature, fond of dwelling on chs. 2, 7 and 8. It is true that the reference 9:27 is at the close of the famous 70-week prophecy, but it is significant that the destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary mentioned in verse 26 immediately *before* the last “week” is presented cannot possibly be made to fit with A.D. 70 while maintaining that the 70 “weeks” themselves end in A.D. 34!

The fact remains that the “abomination of desolation” passages belong in portions of Daniel not primarily connected with the standard historicist claims of chs. 2, 7 and 8.

Secondly, there is the issue of what exactly NT quotations of the OT entail. It is well known by the average Bible student that the NT frequently quotes the OT in a non-exegetical manner, very much following the practice of *midrash* literature. The question can be asked, Is there any evidence whatever that NT writers, or possibly Jesus Christ himself, quoted an OT passage in such a way, reapplying to their times or the future some texts that had already met their fulfilment? If the answer to this question were yes, the whole effort of shaping our understanding of Daniel or any other OT books from later applications would prove fruitless.

Now, there is ample evidence that, more often than not, this is precisely the way the NT quotes the OT. There are actually too many cases to illustrate this, so two examples must suffice to illustrate this non-exegetical employment of the OT by NT writers.

During the Council of Jerusalem, James expressed his conviction that the time had come for the Gentiles to be a part of God's people. After mentioning the commencement of the ministry to the Gentiles through Peter, James stated, "The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'" (Acts 15:15-18). Now, this quotation comes from the badly translated Septuagint of Amos 9:11f., whose Hebrew text conveys these thoughts:

"In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name," declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Despite James' use of the LXX translation of this verse to uphold the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, there is nothing in Amos 9:11f. to suggest this. Actually, after predicting Israel's ruin (9:1-10), Amos, a prophet of the northern kingdom of Israel, is announcing its future restoration (11-15), and this entails *political* dominion of Edom and of all other territories where God's name has been heard! This is one prime example, surely, of the *conditional* nature of prophecy (cf. Jer. 18:7-10). Through God's grace, this passage, which announced national conquest for the seceded northern kingdom of Israel, was turned into something entirely different: the opening of the gospel message to the Gentiles. But this re-application cannot possibly make us blind as to what it originally meant.

The second example comes from the mouth of Jesus himself. Explaining why he used to speak using figures of speech, our Lord said: "This is why I speak to them in parables: 'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand'" (Matt. 13:13). Jesus was quoting from Deut. 29:4; Jer. 5:21; and Eze. 12:2. But then he goes on to say:

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them." (14f.)

The passage Jesus was quoting is Isaiah 6:9f. The exegesis done by our Lord was entirely correct, because God's words through Isaiah were indeed very fitting for many of Jesus' contemporaries. However, there is a significant detail regarding this OT passage: it comes from Isaiah's very calling to the prophetic ministry. Just before the quoted passage, we have: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' He said, 'Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving'" (8f.). So, obviously, as far as chronology is concerned, these divine words met their *complete* fulfilment more than seven centuries before Christ, "in the year that King Uzziah died" (1).

So, the problem for those wishing to enforce a Roman reading on Daniel based on Matt. 24:15 is that the attested phenomena of non-exegetical and non-chronological re-applications of OT passages must be taken into account. Since Jesus saw fit to reapply Isaiah's previously fulfilled prophecy to his own contemporaries, his re-application of Daniel's שְׁקִיץ שָׁמַיִם to the future military desecration of the temple need not contribute *anything* to designating the armed forces that originally defiled "the temple fortress," vetoed "the daily sacrifice" and set up "the abomination that causes desolation" (Dan. 11:31).

Rome and the *Eschaton* in Daniel

As for the third point, historicist claims must of necessity ignore:

- Explicit indications in the book of Daniel itself in the sense that *all* world powers survive until the *eschaton* (Dan. 2:34f., 44; 7:11f.). Nowhere does Daniel intimate that the fourth power is the only surviving empire at the time of the *eschaton*. He explicitly states that *all* components of the statue in chapter 2 are "broken to pieces at the same time" (2:35) and that God's kingdom supersedes "all those kingdoms" (2:44), obviously meaning the only kingdoms the seer has mentioned so far, i.e., those represented by the gold, the silver, the bronze and the iron. Furthermore, immediately following the presentation of the judgment scene described in 7:9f., Daniel states: "Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped

of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time)” (11f.). So, it is manifest that:

- All previous kingdoms are presented as alive during the judgment scene;
- The fourth kingdom itself meets its doom not centuries before the little horn, but as a *result* of the latter’s death sentence.

If the *eschaton* is thought of as reaching the end of the world, by no stretch of the imagination can this be made to fit with the history of the Roman Empire, which is long gone.

- Explicit indications in the book of Daniel itself that the “time of the end” (עֵת קֶשֶׁת, *‘ēt qēṣ*) involves geopolitical and historical situations entirely out of sync with the modern world and the foreseeable future: “At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand” (11:40f.). Such warfare and the long-gone nations described here bespeak the past, not the future.
- Although the realisation may come as a shock to them, Seventh-day Adventist historicists do not actually believe that “[i]n the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people” (2:44), or that this kingdom would “become a huge mountain and [fill] the whole earth” (35), for authoritative statements by Ellen White claim that there will be a hiatus after the downfall of human kingdoms before the actual establishment of God’s kingdom on this earth. This hiatus will be nothing short of a millennial desolated Satanic kingdom! So much for coherence in prophetic exposition!

Of course, none of these observations will by itself disqualify Rome as playing some type of role in the book of Daniel. It is theoretically conceivable that, even after the debacle of the whole historicist scenario, Rome could still be perceived as fulfilling its purported prophetic role way back in antiquity. But, as I say, that is only theoretical, and the perception that Rome plays an important role in Daniel is purely subjective, being derived from history books, not from rigorous exegesis of the book of Daniel itself.

Rome in Daniel

Although there are far too many details whose accurate analysis would demand more space than currently available, let the following highly summarised line of reasoning suffice. Throughout his book Daniel’s basic theme is the same: Although, for a time, human rulers may be in control of the affairs affecting God’s children, in the end they will all be superseded by God himself. The different chapters depict various aspects of this principle. Chs. 2 and 7, particularly, speak of four vast empires succeeded by God’s kingdom. Ch. 8 presents almost the same thing, although the first empire does not appear and the fourth power, having been derived from the third empire, is presented not as a beast, like the second and third empires, but as a horn, which had surfaced in the previous chapter as a part of the fourth empire. The 70-week prophecy of ch. 9 focuses upon the restoration of Jerusalem and the re-consecration of the sanctuary after the sacrilege committed by the evil ruler who was to come (26). Ch. 11 adds much more detail to the prophetic forecasts of the previous chapters.

It is curious that Seventh-day Adventist presentations of prophecy consistently fail to do justice to Dan. 11. In contrast to how Dan. 2, 7, 8 and 9 are treated in the current Sabbath School Quarterly, Dan. 11 is ignored for its 1844 polemic. Ch. 11 is very explicit about “a contemptible person” (21) who was the successor on the throne of the “king of the North” who sent out “a tax collector to maintain the royal splendour” (20). This evil king of the North is said to do everything chs. 7 and 8 attribute to the little horn! The paramount action crowning his infamous reign is presented in 31f.: “His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.” His God-ordained end “at the time of the end” is also presented in 40ff. Naturally, the divine intervention in his demise does not entail fireworks, as Dr Clifford Goldstein might like. Divine intervention may simply consist of acute irreversible infectious disease, just as in the case of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:19-23).

Now, the problem for historicism is that Dan. 11 is so precise, carefully following the dynastic rulers of the main two kingdoms that were split from the formerly unified kingdom of “Javan” (Greece or, more properly, Macedon) (verse 2). No mention whatever is made *anywhere* in this chapter that a foreign empire or nation replaces either of the leading actors in this secular fight between the king of the South and the king of the North. So injecting Rome into the character of the king of the North cannot be achieved successfully. However, Rome does appear in ch. 11. Our English versions of the Bible say:

At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favour to those who forsake the holy covenant. (29f.)

Instead of *ships of the western coastlands*, the KJV has “ships of Chittim.” Now, Chittim is believed to be the Cypriote town of Kition, although a *ship of Chittim* is thought to be a certain type of ship, more particularly, a galley. It is interesting that the LXX (not Theodotion) for Dan. 11:30 says this:

καὶ ἥξουσι Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ἐξώσουσιν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐμβριμήσονται αὐτῷ · καὶ ἐπιστρέψει καὶ ὀργισθήσεται ἐπὶ τὴν διαθήκην τοῦ ἁγίου · καὶ ποιήσει καὶ ἐπιστρέψει καὶ διανοηθήσεται ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ, ἀνθ’ ὧν ἐγ-κατέλιπον τὴν διαθήκην τοῦ ἁγίου.

In plain English:

And the Romans will come and will drive him out. And he will be moved to anger, and he will return and be furious against the holy covenant. And he will act, and return and reach an understanding with those who are against and abandon the holy covenant.

So, Rome is *not* the evil king of the North after all; only the power that expelled him from Egypt on the occasion of his second invasion of that country! Most commentators believe the actual armies of the Republic of Rome had already appeared in verse 18, where the commander that puts an end to Antiochus III’s insolence is Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, the Roman Consul in command of the legions that defeated the Syrians at Magnesia, near Pergamum.

Now, this must be shocking news for Seventh-day Adventist historicists, but they had better get used to it. It’s the truth. Rome’s role in Dan. 11 is *not* insignificant, but, most certainly, it is not one of the leading roles. The leading roles are those of the king of the North and the king of the South, that is, the king of the Seleucid Empire, and the king of Ptolemaic Egypt. The geographical setting is that of the former realm of Alexander the Great, not Western Europe. The time setting is that of Hellenism, not the Middle Ages or contemporary or even future history. It was all in the past before Jesus was born.

Of course, this analysis is quite devastating for historicist claims, and it can be extended to all previous chapters of Daniel, and even to ch. 12. For instance, the true historical setting of the “seed of men” of Dan. 2:43 (KJV) has *nothing* to do with the marriage alliances between the various European monarchies in the days of Queen Victoria, but *everything* to do with the marriage alliances between the Hellenistic kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, as indicated in Dan. 11:6, 17, well attested historically.

In short, the divided fourth kingdom of Dan. 2 has nothing to do with Rome’s demise and the appearance of the European nations, but everything to do with the feuding Hellenistic kingdoms, an echo of the divine forecast that “his empire will be broken up and parcelled out towards the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others” (Dan. 11:4).

The Paramount Villain in the Book of Daniel

At least since the days of Flavius Josephus, most scholars have identified the evil little horn or king of the North as Antiochus IV Epiphanes. In short, his “accomplishments” in Israel were the following:

- Promoting the peaceful Hellenisation of the country through the creation of:
 - a gymnasium, where priests and the general public were invited to participate naked, whereby their circumcision was manifest; a surgical operation to “decircumcise” their foreskin became fashionable;
 - a public, State-sponsored brothel;
 - frowning upon anything that looked Jewish;
 - eliminating all public figures that stood for Judaism; this included the rightful high priest, who was first supplanted by his ambitious brother, a firm supporter of Greek culture, and then assassinated.
- The demolition of Nehemiah’s wall. This was used to build the *Akra* in the heart of Jerusalem, where a permanent Syrian garrison was stationed. Archers used to fine-tune their aim against worshippers who dared to approach the temple. Part of the structure of the temple was also demolished so that it could not be used as a defensive wall by faithful Jews. Eventually, Jerusalem was abandoned by every Jew who wanted to remain loyal to their faith.
- Taking violent measures (under the penalty of death) consisting of:
 - banning the possession of copies of the Scriptures;
 - banning the observance of the Sabbath and other national festivals;

- proscribing circumcision for newborn boys; offending mothers saw their children hanged, were paraded with them hanging from their breasts or necks and then thrown to their deaths from the top of the wall of the Akra;
- forcing the Jews to eat pork in public and offer incense to heathen gods;
- eventually, proscribing the worship of Yahweh in any of its forms.
- Rededicating the temple of Jerusalem to Zeus. This involved the erection of a statue with the image of Antiochus himself. The altar of the temple was used for the sacrifice of sows. The temple precincts became the working place of prostitutes, who practised their trade there.
- Terrorising the people of Israel by means of “exemplary” public executions, basically consisting of:
 - crucifixion;
 - dismemberment;
 - frying people alive.

The above list, based on the evidence presented by Flavius Josephus and other older books, such as 1 and 2 Maccabees, gives an idea of the nature of the brutal onslaught that Antiochus Epiphanes meant for the people of Israel two centuries before Christ. It has *all* the earmarks of the deeds of the little horn.

Against this overwhelming evidence, all historicists can do is try and confuse incipient Bible students by means of half-witted historical and pseudo-exegetical considerations. Typical among these are:

- *Antiochus cannot be the little horn because the little horn will perish supernaturally at the time of the end, on the occasion of the second coming.* Answer: Nowhere does Daniel speak of the second or first coming of Christ. When he speaks of the time of the end, he merely speaks of the days when his predictions will meet their fulfilment, which need not involve the end of the world as such. Antiochus died very much like Herod Agrippa did two centuries later, and it was understood as supernatural even by heathen historians, like Polybius.
- *Antiochus cannot be the little horn because he was not great enough.* Answer: It is curious that a character called little should be said to be incompatible with someone who was not very great. Naturally, some petty character can be towering enough in some particular sense. Prophecy predicts that the little horn would grow “in power to the south and to the east and towards the Beautiful Land” (8:9). Nowhere does prophecy intimate that the little horn would be bigger than the eminent horn in the forehead of the he-goat of 8:5-8. In any case, Antiochus IV was one of the few foreign kings of all time who successfully conquered Egypt once (he captured Memphis), and, one year before his death, he recovered Armenia and Bactria (northern Afghanistan) for his empire. Both territories had become independent after his father’s defeat at Magnesia. Not bad, as far as military victories go! Of course, he was expelled from Egypt on the occasion of his second invasion, but that had been predicted too, as we have already seen. The major setback for a more prosperous reign was Israel, but that had been predicted, too.
- *Antiochus cannot be the little horn because he only reigned for twelve years, but we know the little horn would rule for at least 1,260 years.* Answer: We know nothing of the kind. The 1,260 years are a figment of the imagination of historicists. A rule of twelve years for Antiochus does not compare too unfavourably with Alexander’s thirteen-year rule.
- *Antiochus cannot be the little horn because he reigned shortly after the middle of the Seleucid line, whereas Dan. 8:23 specifies that he was to appear at the end of the reign of the Hellenistic kingdoms.* Answer: The original of 8:23 uses the word אַחֲרֵיתָא (*ah^harît*), which conveys the notion of the latter, or second part of something (cf. Job 42:12). In perfect agreement with prophecy, Antiochus IV did appear “in the latter part of their reign,” so a better fit would be impossible. Historicists have a more difficult task if they are to explain how on earth the pope managed to appear in the latter part of the Hellenistic kingdoms, considering the last one disappeared in 30 B.C. After all, in all historicist literature, the little horn is supposed to begin his reign of terror about A.D. 538. Perhaps he had appeared in the days of Mark Antony but then slumbered for five and a half centuries!
- *Antiochus cannot be the little horn because his activities cannot be mathematically demonstrated to fit the time periods mentioned in the Bible.* Answer: The people who present this objection do not really want to be cross-examined on mathematics. Never will they provide objective corroboration for their imaginary 22nd October, 1844 terminus for the 2,300 evenings and mornings. And they do not really want anyone to dig too deeply into their interpretation of the 70 “weeks,” their alibi for all this *massive fraud*. It just happens that *all* the dates in that “chain of evidence” (457 and 408 B.C., and A.D. 27, 31 and 34) are irrelevant non-events (there was no decree in the autumn of 457 to restore Jerusalem, for the city was already restored more than half a century before; nothing is known to

have happened in 408 B.C.; there is no evidence that Jesus was baptised in A.D. 27; it is doubtful that he was crucified in A.D. 31; and there is no compelling evidence that A.D. 34 has anything to do with Stephen's stoning or Paul's conversion). In any case, and somewhat to the relief of the enquirer, whoever said that biblical periods must be mathematically precise according to modern systems of reckoning? To begin with, despite the "three days and three nights," our Saviour is generally believed to have been in the tomb for less than 72 hours! So much for mathematical accuracy. In any case, it just so happens that the historical evidence about Antiochus' deeds in Israel (mostly, time periods in Josephus) is in close agreement with the figures given by Daniel. It appears that the various time figures given by Daniel (2,300 evenings and mornings, possibly equal to 1,150 days, 1,290 days and 1,335 days) may refer to the celebration of various national festivals following the cleansing of the sanctuary (*Hanukkah*), and this can be documented far better than the 22nd October, 1844 mirage, which cannot possibly be documented *at all!*

Historicists have several more objections that, like the above, constitute an irresponsible exercise of obfuscation intended to keep believers away from the truth, but they are all reasonably easy to expose.

Conclusion

Rome's relevance for the study of various parts of the NT cannot be denied. However, her importance for the history of the OT in general, and for its prophetic portion in particular, or, more precisely, for Danielic studies, has clearly been blown out of proportion by historicist interpreters, whose agenda requires an arch-villain close to their own time to justify their dreamed-of prophetic stance. They maintain the fiction of injecting Rome into portions of Daniel whose parallel in ch. 11 manifestly presents a historical fulfilment of the seer's forecast *in the days of Hellenism*, not at the time of the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages or sometime during the existence of the European Union! Historicist counter arguments twist either the facts of history, the evidence of Scripture, or both, in order to maintain the fiction. Besides, they resort to non-exegetical NT quotations of the OT to inject the re-application to Rome that some NT authors make of certain OT symbols into a pseudo-exegesis of Daniel that agrees with the Seventh-day Adventist scenario they wish to advance.

On the other hand, actual historical evidence pertaining to the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the aftermath of his crimes is consistent with the specifications that can be exegetically derived from a careful examination of the book of Daniel. So much so that this is the most important of the reasons why most modern scholars accept the view that the book of Daniel itself was written *after* the events described in it had transpired! The present author does not share such a view, but is greatly impressed by the astounding precision of the prophetic forecast. Transplanting Daniel's prediction to a different geographical milieu (Europe) and to a different era (the Middle Ages, or ours) can only bring chaos to its exposition, as is painfully evident in Seventh-day Adventist literature in general and in the current Sabbath School Quarterly in particular.

Addendum B

It is with sincere regret that I have decided to take Dr. Clifford Goldstein, the author of the current Bible Study Guides, firmly to task for some of his rather disturbing comments introducing this Lesson 10. I do so in the interests of truth and integrity.

First, it is a great shame that he should resort to any facile, *devil-behind-every-tree*, scare tactics in defending what he parades as Seventh-day Adventism's cardinal, *raison d'être* dogma: "(O)ur enemy is constantly at work to undermine us". Indeed he is! It is ludicrously *flirting with a grave breach of God's Ninth Commandment*, however, to imply that – even if unwittingly – *its typical critic is an envoy of Satan!!*

Secondly, Dr. Goldstein appears to redeem himself somewhat in appending that, in accepting the burden of defending their Church's prime, sectarian dogma, its advocates must be "prepared to answer challenges against it." A noble, Christian sentiment! Yet Dr. Goldstein seems to have left himself somewhat open to a *grave charge of sheer hypocrisy!!* For to this very day, one cogent critic is still waiting for a reply to his lengthy critique, 8th November, 2004, of the last series on the Book of Daniel – fourth quarter, 2004 – which Dr. Goldstein edited. Granted, this was addressed to the author. But *an editor is almost equally liable*. Interested readers may evaluate the details for themselves here: http://truthorfables.com/Book_Daniel_Rancano.htm