

# An Historicist Exposition of Daniel 8,

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*In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first. 2 And I saw in the vision; and when I saw, I was in Susa the citadel, which is in the province of Elam. And I saw in the vision, and I was at the Ulai canal. 3 I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great. 5 As I was considering, behold, a male goat came from the west across the face of the whole earth, without touching the ground. And the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. 6 He came to the ram with the two horns, which I had seen standing on the bank of the canal, and he ran at him in his powerful wrath. 7 I saw him come close to the ram, and he was enraged against him and struck the ram and broke his two horns. And the ram had no power to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled on him. And there was no one who could rescue the ram from his power. 8 Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven. 9 Out of one of them came a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land. 10 It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them. 11 It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. 12 And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper. 13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" 14 And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state." 15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. And behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end." 18 And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. 19 He said, "Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end. 20 As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king. 22 As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. 23 And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise. 24 His power shall be great-- but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. 25 By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he*

*shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken-- but by no human hand. 26 The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true, but seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now." 27 And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it." (Dan 8:1-27 ESV)*

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## Setting the Stage

The prophecy contained in Daniel 8 is a difficult prophecy to make sense of without extremely careful attention to the details of wording and the details of the history which this prophecy describes through the use of symbolism.

The first symbol, occupying verses 3-4, is a ram with two horns. In verse 20, the angel, Gabriel, explains the interpretation of this symbol--that the ram represents the Empire of the Medes and the Persians (Medo-Persia to historians).

The second symbol, in verses 5-8, is a goat with a large, single horn. Subsequently, the horn is broken off and replaced by four horns in its place. In verse 21, Gabriel explains that the goat represents the Empire of the Greeks, and the prominent horn is its first king--known to historians as Alexander the Great. Verse 22 adds that after Alexander, the empire will be split up into four kingdoms. History shows that this was settled after the Battle of Ipsus in 301BC where Seleucus, Ptolemy, Cassander and Lysimachus were the final successors to Alexander's empire, founding kingdoms of their own.

## Identifying the Antagonist: When Did He Appear?

Verses 9-12 describe the third important symbol, another horn, which grows out of one of the four kingdoms which succeeded Alexander's empire. It does not replace one of the kingdoms; it *grows out of it*. In verse 23, Gabriel explains that this will be another kingdom that emerges "at the latter end" of the kingdoms of Alexander's four successors.

This detail is important to note. It means that if we can trace the four kingdoms which inherited Alexander's once vast empire, and see when the last of them finally fell, that will give us a frame of reference for when this other, off-shoot of the Greek's domains would rise up.

- The Seleucid Kingdom was annexed by Rome in 63BC
- The Macedonian Kingdom (Cassander's) became a province of Rome in 149BC
- The Kingdom of Pergamon (Lyssimachus') was bequeathed to Rome in 133BC.
- The Kingdom of Egypt (Ptolemy's) became a Roman province in 30BC upon the death of Cleopatra

These four kingdoms carried the Greek (Hellenistic) culture forward, centuries after Alexander's death. Even under Roman government, this Hellenistic Greek culture in some of these territories survived, reestablished under Constantine in the Greek-speaking Byzantine Empire centred in

Constantinople after 324AD. This Greek Kingdom did not finally come to an end until it was sacked by the Ottomans in 1453AD.

The “latter end” (verse 23) of this Greek-speaking legacy of Alexander’s Empire, then, could easily be understood to occupy the entire history of the Byzantine Empire, from 330AD to 1453AD. So we should look for the emergence of the off-shoot kingdom (verse 23) sometime during that period. I say “off-shoot kingdom” because in verse 9, this kingdom (under the symbol of a horn) is seen, not growing out of the Greek goat--the lands and territories once ruled by Alexander, but out of the side of one of the four successor kingdoms: the Seleucid, Macedonian, Thracian, or Egyptian kingdoms.

Before continuing this exposition, I want to admit that, at this stage, some will object that the phrase in verse 23, “at the latter end of their kingdom”, cannot possibly point to any period after the fall of the last of the four kingdoms which together succeeded Alexander’s empire.

Accordingly, this would place the emergence of the off-shoot kingdom sometime before Cleopatra’s death in 30BC. That argument finds favour with people who want to make this prophecy centre around a person like Antiochus Epiphanes or some other figure well before the birth of Christ. But there is another argument to be made in the other extreme: that the repetition of temporal clauses (descriptions of a time period) must place the rise of the fast-growing, fifth kingdom long after the fall of the Byzantines in 1453AD. Notice these phrases:

- “the vision is for the time of the end” (verse 17)
- “I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation” (verse 19a)
- “it refers to the appointed time of the end” (verse 19b)
- “at the latter end of their kingdom” (verse 23)
- “seal up the vision, for it refers to many days from now” (verse 26)

One might be excused for guessing that Gabriel is trying to tell us something. On the one hand, some people assert that this prophecy all gets fulfilled sometime before the birth of Christ. On the other hand, others claim this prophecy isn’t finally fulfilled until the future, very end of this age. I would point out one important detail, borrowed from the previous chapter--a vision given to Daniel two years earlier--which strongly suggests to me that neither extreme interpretation is correct, that the truth lies between these extremes of ancient past and elusive future. Because Daniel 7:12 changes how we should interpret the succession of kingdoms and empires. “As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.” (Dan 7:12 ESV) The “other beasts” Daniel 7 refers to symbolize, according to that chapter, the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The “goat” in Daniel 8 also symbolized the Greek Empire. Therefore, even after Rome has overthrown Greek rule and even after lands once belonging to Alexander’s four successors are no longer ruled by Greeks but Romans, or Byzantines, or whoever, the point of Daniel 7:12 is that the now powerless body that was the Greek Empire continues to exist, although now being trampled by whichever powers rose afterward.

It’s for this reason that the phrase in verse 23, “at the latter end of their kingdom” is wonderfully suited to the period of the history of the Byzantines. Notice that verse 23 does not say, “their

kingdoms” (plural) but “their kingdom” (singular). The lands that were divided between the four Greek successor kingdoms ranged from the Peloponnese Peninsula to Iraq and down around to Egypt. Particularly in the region known today as Turkey, the language and much of the culture of the Greeks survived more than 1400 years after Cleopatra’s death and the fall of the Ptolemies to Rome. As long as the Greek language remained the lingua franca of the Byzantine Empire, something of Alexander’s legacy, and of the remnants of the four Greek successor kingdoms--that is, something of the “goat” endured. I think these facts weigh heavily in favour of interpreting “the latter end of their kingdom” as describing the time of none other than the Byzantine Empire.

### **Identifying the Antagonist: Where Did He Come from?**

Without more clues, however, it would be difficult to say which of these four kingdoms gave rise to an off-shoot which fits the description of this latter kingdom predicted in verses 9-14 and 23-25. But there are a number of clues in this text to help identify this “horn”:

1. Daniel 2:4 to the end of Daniel 7 was written in a Gentile language, Chaldean (or Aramaic), while Daniel 8 to the end of the books resumes the use of Hebrew. As Guinness pointed out in *Light for the Last Days*, chapter 12, this is because the subject of the visions in chapters 2-7 pertains to the “times of the Gentiles”, the duration of the trampling of Jerusalem by Gentile powers, but the main characters during this time are Gentile, not Jewish. The empires are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greek and Rome; the principal antagonist is “the little horn” of chapter 7, which wages its war against, not the Jewish nation, but the Gospel-professing, Christian, and Protestant churches. The little horn is the dynasty of the Roman Catholic Popes, first at the head of a so-called “Christian” Empire, then finally confined to the little nation-state, the Vatican. Aramaic is the language of these visions. Then, with the switch to Hebrew, Daniel sees the same period of time not focused on the Christian Church and its strife, but on the Jewish nation. Here, though the time period, “2300 days” (verse 14), spans the entire time of the four Greek successor kingdoms, all the way to after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, and is marked by milestones of history relating to those Gentile nations, the main interest of this prophecy is none other than the city of Jerusalem. During most of this period, Jerusalem was suffering its “desolations” during the long scattering of the Jews around the nations of the Earth following the events of 70AD. The perspective, though focused on the city and not its scattered population, is Jewish, not Gentile. So the language for this prophecy, and the ones to follow, is Hebrew.
2. In verse 9, this anti-semitic kingdom is said to grow “exceedingly great” toward the south, east and in the direction of the land of Israel. From the birthplace of this kingdom then, the land of Israel is not to the east or to the south, but to the north, or west, or northwest.
3. In verse 10, the direction of the growth of this kingdom is described geographically as toward “the host of heaven”. Verse 10 pictures this kingdom warring against the “host” or armies “of heaven” in its conquests, and throwing down “stars” and trampling on them.

These aren't spiritual battles being described; they are symbolic. In such a highly symbolic passage, "stars" must represent something. A clue is found in Daniel 12:3, the only other place in Daniel where the word "stars" occurs. Here, those people who are "wise" and shine brightly, and "turn many to righteousness" are pictured as "stars". Dan 8:10 even shows that these "stars", who "turn many to righteousness" are closely related to the armies "of heaven". I think the picture forming is of hostilities against a Christian nation--"hosts" or an army of "citizens of Heaven", that is, *Christians* (c.f. Phil 3:20)--who preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who "turn many to righteousness", who are attacked by this off-shoot kingdom. This again points to the Byzantine Empire, home of the Greek-speaking Patriarchs and the Eastern Church of the Middle Ages. So if Jerusalem, "the beautiful land" (verse 9) is to the north and west of this hostile kingdom, then Byzantium is to the far north. The purpose of verse 10 is to show the extent of the conquests of this kingdom as it "grew great".

4. Verse 11 is a bit confusing (I have had to revise some of my opinions on this verse more than once!) because of the tendency of several English translations to arbitrarily capitalize the word "Prince" or "Commander". Not to mention the common insertion of the word, "himself" (e.g., "magnified himself" or "itself") in an attempt to translate the Hebrew hiphil stem as reflexive when it probably isn't intended that way. (If it were, the more natural grammar would be the hithpael stem.) So a more literal translation could be, "It made to become great..." But regarding the "Commander of the Host", there is no reason this should be understood as talking about Jesus or some other commander of God's armies. (But also see my take on verse 25 later on for the phrase that occurs there.) The phrase "commander of the host" occurs 9 other times in the Hebrew Old Testament: 1 Samuel 17:55; 1 Kings 1:19, 1 Kings 11:15, 1 Kings 11:21, 2 Kings 4:13, 2 Kings 25:19, 1 Chronicles 19:18, 1 Chronicles 27:5 and Jeremiah 52:25. Not one of these "commanders of the army" are anything more than mortal men. Verse 11 is simply saying that this growing, hostile, anti-semitic kingdom grew in power until it rivaled the military strength of the "commander" of the armies of the Byzantine Empire. This would be necessary in order for the invading kingdom to succeed in what follows:
5. "The regular burnt offering" is removed and the "place of his sanctuary" is overthrown. Until recent times it had been long forgotten that before Omar built his famous Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount in Jerusalem, there was a Byzantine Christian church on the site. Archaeology has "turned-up" evidence that a once impressive structure, almost certainly a church given the dominance of Christianity among the Byzantines and the significance of the Temple Mount, stood on that location during Christian times, before it was demolished and replaced by a mosque in 687AD.<sup>1</sup> This fits the overthrow of the "place of his sanctuary" when it is kept in mind that the word "temple" in Hebrew does not appear at all in this chapter. Rather, this phrase, "m'kon

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<http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Was-the-Aksa-Mosque-built-over-the-remains-of-a-Byzantine-church>

miqdashu” could also just mean “the foundation of his sanctuary”, “the ground where his sanctuary sits”, etc. In other words, merely the site of Temple Mount, since this is not the natural wording for the temple itself, which was destroyed in 70AD.

6. But what about “the regular burnt offering” being removed in verse 11? Again the choice of wording used in most translations is misleading. The single Hebrew word translated as “regular burnt offering” is this: *hatamid*, or literally, “the continuance” (Holladay Lexicon). Usually the word *tamid* occurs as an adverb, meaning “regularly” or “continually” and so also, “ritually”. But sometimes it occurs as a noun, for example in Numbers 4:7 meaning the temple bread; in Numbers 4:16 as the grain offering; in Numbers 28:10, yes, as the burnt offering. Without more of a context, it is a big leap to take this as “the regular burnt offering”. Most often in Scripture, however, the word shows up more generally in reference to worship, or “the constancy of personal devotion”<sup>2</sup>, such as in Hosea 12:6, Psalm 34:1, Psalm 72:15, and 1 Chronicles 16:11. So it’s not a stretch at all, and is likely a safer, less interpretive translation, to read *hatamid* as “the regular worship”. And that is what was removed, not only each time the Temple was destroyed--by the Babylonians in 586BC and then by the Romans in 70AD--but also when that lost Christian church of the Byzantines was razed in order to make way for Omar’s mosque. Moreover, the regular worship of God in churches across the Byzantine Empire was removed by the time Omar’s kingdom eventually grew to overthrow Constantinople, in 1453AD, converting the famous Hagia Sophia from the worship of Jesus Christ, to the worship of Muhammad’s god, Allah. You see where I’m going with this, right?
7. Verse 12 at first doesn’t seem to add much in the way of a clue to this study: it’s not surprising that Daniel would foresee that a “host”, and army, would be “given over to”, or conquered by, this kingdom--or for that matter, that the *tamid*, the “regular worship” would also become a casualty of this evil conquest. What is notable, is that verse 12 specifically says, this happens “because of transgression”. First, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD by the Romans, and the subsequent “desolations” of the city of Jerusalem while the Jews were scattered over the face of the Earth, was in fulfillment of various prophecies in the Old Testament, including Leviticus 26 and Daniel 9, as well as explicitly foreshadowed in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple 600 years earlier at the hands of the Babylonians: 2 Chronicles 36:14 explicitly describes that destruction as the consequence of transgression. “...the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations” (2Ch 36:14 ESV) and for that reason, “the wrath of the LORD rose against his people” (verse 16), Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed (verse 19), the people taken into captivity in Babylon (verse 20), to fulfill God’s Word while the land lay “desolate” (verse 21). In 586BC, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed because of the Jews’ transgression. In 70AD, Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed because of the transgression of the Jews in rejecting their Saviour and Messiah. Following 636AD, and the Battle of Yarmouk, Jerusalem and Temple Mount again changed hands, this time falling to Muslim Arabs.

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<sup>2</sup> Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

And again, though still during the time of the scattering of the Jews and the desolations of the Jewish nation, this destruction was due to transgression. Byzantium was sometimes home to a truly Christian, Gospel-centred faith, and sometimes an oppressor of evangelical Christianity. In 606, just 30 years before the final fall of Byzantine rule in Jerusalem, the Emperor Phocas, in Constantinople, decreed the Pope of Rome the authoritative head of all Christian churches in the world. Many Historicists<sup>3</sup> consider this the beginning of the 1260 years' persecution of true Christianity at the hands of the Popes.<sup>4</sup> Not only the demise of the Jews in Jerusalem, but also the demise of the Byzantines in Jerusalem, were preceded by systemic corruption and religious nominalism, i.e., "because of transgression".

8. From that point forward, from the collapse of the Christian Levant, the building of Omar's Al-Aqsa Mosque on Temple Mount, the expansion of the Muslim Arab Empire and the later rise of the Muslim Ottoman Empire, these Islamic powers, more than any other candidate in history, accurately and comprehensively fulfilled the predictions of these verses, and particularly these words of verse 12, "it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper." Revelation 9 pictures the rise of Islam as a great smoke rising from an Abyss, the symbolism showing that the Islamic religion clouds out the light of truth and confuses the people it oppresses so that God's truth is lost to spiritual blindness. Revelation 9 also symbolically predicts the military expansion born out of Islam's rise and spread, as well as the conquests of Muslim armies which would besiege and invade the cities and lands of the then "Roman Empire" ruling from Constantinople in the Byzantine Era--it grew from its birthplace in Mecca, in the Arabian Peninsula, to extend its domains to the south (dominating the whole Arabian Peninsula by 632AD), to the east (as far as Persia) and to the north and west, around the Mediterranean from Tripoli in the west, around the coast to Jerusalem, and north to the edge of the Black Sea and the borders of the Byzantine heartland by 661AD (c.f. Dan 8:9). By the year 750AD, the empire of the Umayyad Caliphate stretched as far west as Spain and as far east as India.

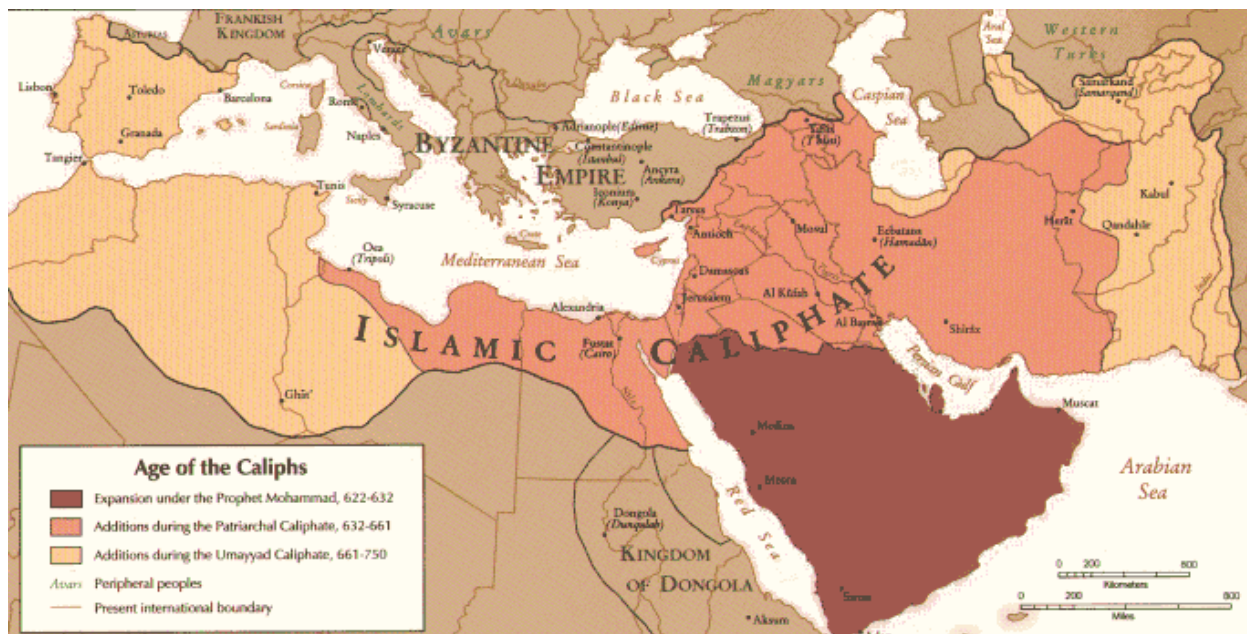
It is worth noting that this detail of the prophecy in verse 9 is precisely accurate when seen as fulfilled by Islam's expansion: "to the south, to the east, and toward the glorious land" (ESV). This not only describes the directions of Islam's early expansion, but also the order of its expansion, first led by Mohammed, and then by the caliphs after him. After securing the region of Mecca and Medina, Islam next spread south along the whole west coast of Arabia, then east, to secure the south-east "toe of the boot" of the Arabian Peninsula, then north-east and north-west toward modern-day Iraq and Israel respectively.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For an introduction to the "historicist" interpretation of Bible prophecy, see [www.historicism.com](http://www.historicism.com) and click "Tour" from the main menu. Using the "next" button at the bottom of each page in the Tour will guide you through a basic introduction to this school of interpretation.

<sup>4</sup> For an explanation of this belief, see this page, <http://historicism.com/tour/tour2.htm> and then click "next" to read the following page as well.

<sup>5</sup> See this map: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Muslim\\_Conquest.PNG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Muslim_Conquest.PNG)



[image source:

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Age\\_of\\_the\\_Caliphs\\_\(2709972663\).jpg?uselang=en-gb](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Age_of_the_Caliphs_(2709972663).jpg?uselang=en-gb)]

9. So the question remains, which of the four successor kingdoms to Alexander's Empire gave rise to the Muslim "kingdom" founded by Muhammad, as predicted in Dan 8:8-9? Again, if you notice the wording in verse 9, you will see that this last "kingdom", symbolized by a horn, does not grow out of the Greek Empire itself, pictured as the goat with four horns. So this kingdom is not to be found within the boundaries of Alexander's old Empire. Otherwise, this kingdom would be symbolized as a horn growing up out of the head of the goat alongside the other four horns (as the "little horn" in Daniel 7:8 grew up among the other 10), or perhaps replacing one or all of them (as the four replaced the single prominent horn in verse 8). But this phenomenon, of a horn growing out of the side of another horn, is not found in any other prophecy in the Bible. It's unique. If you will allow me to push the details of these symbols a bit, let's consider for a moment how a horn grows? I'm no expert, but I imagine the first thing one needs is blood vessels to supply blood and life to the growing horn.

This simple picture can help us imagine how a kingdom could grow out of the "side" of another kingdom instead of simply "in place of" the former entity. Picture a kingdom, located next to an uncivilized wilderness populated unorganized bands of natives. With no economy to speak of, no resources being produced, no trade happening with their neighbours, these bands have no reason to organize, to establish any unified government, and so on. But as trade begins to happen, as an economy emerges, as new ideas take root and leadership emerges to manage all this activity, it is conceivable



that a new kingdom might sprout up over time, and be described as “growing out from the side of the neighbouring kingdom”.

This is precisely what happened with Mecca. Wikipedia’s article states,

By the middle of the 6th century, there were three major settlements in northern Arabia, all along the south-western coast that borders the Red Sea, in a habitable region between the sea and the great mountains to the east. Although the area around Mecca was completely barren, it was the wealthiest of the three settlements with abundant water via the renowned Zamzam Well and a position at the crossroads of major caravan routes.<sup>6</sup>

Sitting at the crossroads of trade routes connecting Africa to Iraq and northern Arabia to southern Arabia, with an abundant water source and a religious shrine revered by regional tribes, Mecca grew. New ideas were imported along with goods along those trade routes. Both Judaism and Christianity became known to the locals, and caught the attention of one young man in particular: Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim. “Muhammad”, at the age of 40, claimed to have a vision of the angel Gabriel, entrusting him with new revelation from God. By the time of his death, Muhammad had succeeded in unifying all of Arabia under his theocratic kingdom. And the rest, as they say, is history.

10. Verses 11-12 contain the central concern of this entire vision: the interruption of the true worship of God and the trampling of the city of Jerusalem including Temple Mount. Appropriately written in Hebrew instead of Gentile Aramaic, this chapter deals with vast sweeps of history as those events affect Jerusalem and the worship of the God of Israel and His Messiah. More than a century ago, Guinness wrote,

Careful students of Scripture, who have reflected at all on these topics, must have observed that in the book of Revelation there is comparatively little about the Jews and their restoration, that subject having been fully treated in the Old Testament. The Saracenic invasion and the Turkish overthrow are indeed predicted in Revelation, for the fifth and sixth, trumpets are universally recognised as prefiguring the sore "woes" which were inflicted on the apostate Christian Church of the East by these desolating powers. But the Mohammedan conquests are there viewed in connexion with the Christian Churches of the East, and not in connexion with Syria and the Jews. Yet they stand in a most important relation to Israel also, and in this connexion they are presented in [Daniel 8]. It is as the desolater of Jerusalem, and the ruler of Judæa for twelve centuries, that this Moslem power principally affects Israel; it occupies the Holy Land and treads down Jerusalem, and has done so ever since AD. 637, when the Caliph Omar first brought the country under subjection to Mohammedan despotism.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca#Early\\_history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca#Early_history)

<sup>7</sup> <http://historicism.com/Guinness/Light/light12.htm>

## The 2300 Days of Indignation

It's no shock, then, from a historical point of view, that the antagonist in this story is Islam. The tragedy of the history pictured so compactly in these symbolic events is voiced with grief in verses 13-14:

"Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" 14 And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.'" (Dan 8:13-14 ESV)

The question Daniel hears, in verse 13, regarding the "sanctuary and host"--the Temple Mount and the "armies"--i.e., the military domination of Jerusalem and its environs by Islam--is familiar to readers of the Gospel of Luke. Jesus said, in Luke 21:24, "[The Jews] will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." (Luk 21:24 ESV) According to Jesus' words, there would be no military dominance for the Jews, and no Jewish autonomy over Jerusalem, until "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled". Of course, Historicists generally agree that the "times of the Gentiles" is the same period as predicted by the great statue King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his terrifying dream in Daniel 2: outlining the fates of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, pagan Roman and Papal Roman Empires, spanning the course of 2520 years--"Seven Times" the standard prophetic unit of 360 "days" where each day in the prophecy is interpreted according to the scale of a "day for a year"<sup>8</sup> (c.f. Dan 9:24-27 and its fulfillment in the 486.5 years' prophecy--69.5x7-- to the death of Christ; based on the interpretive principle laid down in Scripture, found in Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6, and possibly an allusion in Isaiah 34:8).

This 2520 year period then, known to Jesus as the "times of the Gentiles", lasts from the captivity of Jerusalem in the 6th century BC until modern times. Daniel's visions relating to the "times of the Gentiles", in chapters 2, 4 and 7, were written in Aramaic, showing the relation of those prophecies to the Gentiles and the Christian Church. Now in chapter 8, though here from a Jewish perspective, the duration of this "indignation" and the trampling of Jerusalem seems to be finished at about the same point as the "times of the Gentiles". This is consistent with the wording of the prophecy in Dan 8:14. The duration of this state of affairs, Daniel is informed, would be "2300 evenings and mornings". This echoes the phrase repeated six times in the account of Creation in Genesis 1: "and there was evening and there was morning..." The parallel with Creation Week suggests to my mind, at least, that with the completion of these "2300 days",

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<sup>8</sup> The "year-day" principle is well established in countless Protestant writings since the Reformation. For a summary of this principle, see this excerpt by Dr. H. Grattan Guinness from his 1879 book, *The Approaching End of the Age*: <http://historicism.com/Guinness/Historicism-year-day-system.pdf>

interpreted and fulfilled as 2300 years (on the year-day scale, see above), some particular work of God is finished--just as with the six days of Creation, God finished His work and rested.

Guinness, writing in 1888, did not arrive at any solid conclusions regarding the precise timing of the end of the 2300 year prophecy, or of the 2520 year "times of the Gentiles". But he did have some idea about the kind of events one should expect to see at the close of the those two inter-related prophetic periods:

It is, however, useless to speculate as to the detail of future events, even when the occurrence of the events themselves is distinctly predicted, and is near at hand. We may know that certain things will happen, because the Scriptures distinctly predict them, and we may know when they will happen, because the time of their occurrence has been revealed; but we may yet be entirely ignorant as to how they will be brought about, because the mode has not been revealed. That the sanctuary will be cleansed, or Syria freed from Moslem domination, at the close of this cycle of twenty-three centuries, there seems little room to doubt; but how the deliverance will be effected, or with what immediate results, it is not for us or for any one to say: time will declare. The ultimate result is clear: the rapid restoration of a considerable number of the Jewish people to the land of their fathers, where they will repent and be converted, led to say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" and be thus prepared to welcome their long-rejected King, Messiah.<sup>9</sup>

Before we can put all these pieces together, one last piece of the puzzle is required: to show where in the events predicted in Daniel 8, we should choose the starting point for the measurement of this important period of 2300 years. This starting point should, if Guinness is right in his expectation above, lead us to an ending point during which time Jerusalem and the region of the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Israel, should be freed from Muslim domination and become home, once again, to a returning population of Jews from the nations of the Earth to which they had been scattered for nearly 2000 years. Broadly speaking, it is immediately obvious that the entire 20th Century saw an incredible series of events including a surge of Jews returning to their ancient homeland in the land of Israel, to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, to the expansion of the borders of Israel in the miraculous victory over a coordinated attack of allied Muslim Arab states in 1967, and regional military dominance by the Jewish state ever since. That all happened in the 20th Century. 20 centuries plus 3 centuries equals 2300 years. So we would not likely be far off to expect the starting point of the 2300 years to be found sometime around 300 years before Christ, or 300BC.

The objection will for sure come up at about this point, if it hasn't already, that with such a highly symbolic chapter of prophecy, we could probably make almost any set of historical events match up close enough to what we expect to find based on Daniel 8. And that is a real risk of interpreting prophecy according to the Historicist method. Nonetheless, the historicist principle of interpretation is that once prophecy is fulfilled in real history, then it becomes recognizable for

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<sup>9</sup> <http://historicism.com/Guinness/Light/light12.htm>

what it is. Jesus Himself said, "And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe." (Joh 14:29 ESV) Since, therefore, according to the words of Jesus, and according to the essence of predictive prophecy after all--as history pre-written--we should expect to be able to recognize historical events after the fact when they fulfill ancient prophecies, the risk of error must not prevent us from the attempt. But I am fully convinced that if we pay careful attention to the words of each prophecy, like Daniel 8, and look for strong, exegetical reasons for our conclusions we can do much to avoid arbitrary guess work and superficial assumptions.

With that caution in mind, which symbolic events in Daniel 8 are most likely to be the starting point for the 2300 year countdown to the liberation of Jerusalem and the hope of verse 14? Guinness argued in the same chapter quoted above, that since Daniel 8 opens with depictions of the Medo-Persian Empire, which happened to be the era of the beginning of Daniel 9's "seventy week" prophecy, that we should work forward from the dates connected with the beginning of the 70 weeks. The possible dates for a starting point in the Persian era, then, Guinness lists as 480BC, 457BC, 444BC, 432BC, 408BC, and 395BC. But no matter which calendar is used for counting out the 2300 years (lunar years of 354.19 days, Jewish years of 360 days, or our modern solar years of 365.25 days), all of the ending points are found prior to 1906AD, at which time Jerusalem remained in the control of the Muslim Ottoman Empire. So if the starting point of the 2300 years is not to be found in the Persian era (during the period described, and the events symbolized by the Ram with two horns, in verses 1-4), what textual evidence is there for placing the starting point during the Greek period--symbolized by the goat in verses 5-12?

I would suggest the following evidence from the last portion of Dan 8 for your consideration.

1. Verse 1 places Daniel in Babylon, modern day Iraq, since King Belshazzar was the last of the Babylonian kings before that empire fell to Darius of Persia. But as soon as the vision starts, Daniel's attention is drawn far to the east from Babylon, to consider the capital city, Susa, of the Medo-Persian Empire which was very shortly about to overthrow Babylon. Daniel watches as Persia, under the symbol of the Ram with two horns, grows its empire "westward, northward and southward" (verse 4). So standing on the banks of the Ulai Canal, Daniel is looking to the west as he watches the progress of the Persian Ram. From a Jewish perspective, as this chapter is written in Hebrew, it seems unlikely that the beginning of the "indignation" (verse 19) would be placed in the era of the Persian Empire. Because it was under the Persians that Ezra and Nehemiah were allowed to restore Jerusalem. It was under Persia that Jeremiah's 70 years prophecy of captivity came to an end, and the Jews returned home. It was under the Persians that Queen Esther found reprieve for the Jewish people. It was under the Persians that the Temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt and worship resumed. No, the Persian era is not the fitting start of the "indignation"; it is the calm before the storm.
2. And the storm came in the form of a goat from the far west in Greece (verse 5). From a Jewish perspective, this is a fitting era to mark the beginning of "the indignation". This is the era of Antiochus Epiphanes, the desecration of the Jerusalem Temple with the

sacrifice of a pig on the altar--a particularly Greek insult to the Jewish faith. From a Jewish perspective, as Daniel finds himself in his vision standing just outside of Susa, looking west, he is not upset and disturbed by what he sees in Persia; he is sickened and appalled (verse 27) by what he sees *next*, after Persia. Persia returned the worship of God to Jerusalem; Greece profaned it. That was just the beginning.

3. The final half of chapter 8 is the part where Daniel is helped to understand the vision (verses 15-26). And this section is, with the exception of a single verse (verse 20), focused only on the Greek era and the subsequent kingdom of the final horn. The bridge between the confusing vision and the explanation to help him understand the vision, is the interlude in which the 2300 year duration of the "indignation" is announced (verses 13-14). Again, the emphasis of the chapter draws the reader's attention to the history of the Greek Empire and afterward. Persia is all but ignored, with just the brief mention in verse 20. So it would seem most appropriate to place the beginning of the "appalling" and "sickening" 2300 year indignation somewhere in the Greek era.
4. Right after the 2300 year duration is announced in verse 14, Daniel "sought to understand it" (verse 15). Gabriel is instructed to make Daniel understand the vision (verse 16). And he tells Daniel, "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end" (verse 17). The Persian era was imminent for Daniel on that day, but he is informed in no uncertain terms that this is about the "time of the end". Therefore, it is again unlikely that the beginning of the 2300 years would occur so shortly as sometime during the Persian era. Gabriel emphasizes that the understanding he is providing is about "what shall be at the latter end of the indignation" referring to "the appointed time of the end" (verse 19). Next, Gabriel very briefly mentions the whole career of the Persian Empire in 8 words (in Hebrew) in verse 20. Then he likewise summarizes Alexander the Great's entire career in 11 Hebrew words (verse 21). Finally he slows down and picks up the meat of his explanation to Daniel, focusing on the four successor kingdoms to Alexander's Empire (verse 22), and, significantly, uses a nearly identical phrase to the "latter end of the indignation" (from verse 19). Gabriel next gives a starting point implied in his explanation about the time of the rise of the Muslim kingdom. He says, in verse 23, "at the latter end of their kingdom", and again, "when the transgressors have reached their limit". What transgressors is Gabriel talking about? The Greeks. The goat. The 2300 years, I suggest, starts at the beginning "of their kingdom" (verse 23). Now there are two possibilities in this text from which the 2300 years might start.
  - a. The first, and most obvious, is from the beginning of the Greek Empire. So when Gabriel says in verse 23, "at the latter end of their kingdom", he could be referring to the whole entire Greek kingdom--first under Alexander, then the four successor kingdoms, then eventually the Byzantines. So whenever the Greek Empire under Alexander began, the 2300 years begin counting down. What year was that? Alexander became King of Macedonia in 336BC after the death of his father. But it wasn't until after he became commander of Greece's armies that he set out on his first conquest, the Achaemenid Empire, in 334BC. It was after this that

Alexander began a series of campaigns that ultimately broke the power of the Persian Empire.

- b. But there is another possibility, dating from the four-kingdom / four-horned succession to Alexander's Empire. The prophetic symbol of a "horn" usually personifies a dynasty of kings under the representative, singular, "king". (So, for example, in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar is told, "you are the head of gold", but the rest of the Babylonian kings in his dynasty are also included in the symbol.) The Greek goat is notable because of its "prominent horn"--Alexander's dynasty. That horn was finally "broken off" when Alexander's only living heir, his son Alexander IV, was assassinated at the age of 13 by order of Cassander, in 309BC. That was the end of the "prominent horn" but not quite the beginning of the "four horns" who rose up after. This second possibility is that the 2300 years could be measured from when Alexander's united Empire was irrevocably divided into four kingdoms. That four-way division of the Greek Empire is a candidate for what Gabriel meant by the phrase, "their kingdom" (verse 23).

The event which made it impossible to go back to a single Greek emperor over Alexander's domain, was the Battle of Ipsus in 301BC. After that, borders were drawn and the struggle for power came down to four contestants: Alexander's four generals, Seleucus, Cassander, Lysimachus and Ptolemy. This year could also, therefore, mark the beginning of the 2300 years.

Whichever starting point is used--when the goat with the "prominent horn" began racing across the earth (verse 5), or when the four horns replaced the broken off single horn (verse 8)--It is the conquest of Jerusalem by the Muslim Omar in 637BC (verses 11-12), and the subsequent centuries of Islamic rule over "the glorious land" (verse 9), which mark the "latter end of the indignation" (verse 19) and second half of the 2300 years.

5. The seriousness of the indignation of the Islamic dominion over Jerusalem, for almost 1300 years in history, is underscored by the description of Islam's despicable beginnings (verses 23-25). When the Greek-Byzantine Empire is in decline (having "reached their limit"), "a king of bold face" (not a compliment!), "one who understands riddles" (have you read the Quran?) "shall arise" (verse 23). The picture here is of Islam's founder, Muhammad. His demeanor is arrogant, not humble; his knowledge is not wisdom from God, but puzzling riddles and confusing sayings received, he claimed, from Gabriel (the same angel, ironically, who explained this vision to Daniel). But in all likelihood it was probably a demon, if not Satan himself, who gave Muhammad his "revelations" in the cave outside of Mecca. It bears repeating that Revelation 9 symbolizes the rise of Islam, not as light from Heaven, but as smoke from the Abyss.
6. Verse 24 briefly comments that Muhammad's power--and afterwards the power of his theocratic kingdom and its caliphs, right down to the Ottoman emperors--is not human power, but demonic. In spite of his success, the destruction he wreaks is not glorious,

but fearful. His victims are people Gabriel refers to as “the saints”. Verse 25 adds that Muhammad is a cunning liar, puffed up in his mind. Vindictive. And that following in the footsteps of his own arrogant, blasphemous pride, his heirs will claim that he was equal with Christ, the King of kings, and “Prince of princes”. While the first half of the chapter focused on the military conquests of Islam, these final verses of chapter 8 emphasize the religious apostasy and blasphemy of Islam. Daniel 8 closes with the oppressive reality, from the perspective of the Jews, that this has been, up until the 20th Century, the spiritual darkness of the Islamic subjugation of Israel for 1300 years. But as surely as Islam’s dominion over Jerusalem and Israel would be broken, says Gabriel, it would not come about by human effort: it would be the work of God (verse 25).

So then, if the period of indignation began with the Greek Empire and concluded with Islam; if Islam is the horn that grows from the side of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt through trade routes delivering wealth and cultural influence to Mecca, like blood vessels causing a horn to grow; if its end should see the liberation of Jerusalem from Gentile trampling the restoration of Jews to their ancestral homeland; if these events should be in connection with a decline of the Islamic political and military Empire, then what dates can we assign to its rise and its end? How does Islam’s career fit chronologically with the whole 2300 year period of indignation and trampling? And what is the parallel with the 2520 year “times of the Gentiles” spoken of by Jesus?

Following the year-day principle, and measuring the 2300 symbolic days as historical years, I’m suggesting the starting point for that period might be one, or both, of the following:

- The beginning of the Greek Empire in 334 BC under Alexander’s “prominent horn”. From that year, 2300 (solar) years later comes to 1967AD, the year of the modern State of Israel’s astounding victory in the Six Day War; the year all of Jerusalem, including Temple Mount, came under Jewish government once again after two-and-a-half thousand years.
- The beginning of the four kingdoms of the Diadochi who succeeded Alexander--the rise of the “four horns” in 301BC. From 301BC, 2300 (Hebrew) years also arrives at 1967AD.

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The calculation in solar years is straightforward since our modern calendar is the solar calendar: (2300-334) +1, because there is no year “0” between BC and AD, = 1967AD. But since this chapter is written in Hebrew, it’s fitting to also measure this period using the Hebrew calendar of 360 days per year, instead of our modern solar calendar which has 365.25 days per year (c.f. footnote #6). 2300 lunar, Hebrew years also works when starting from 301BC: (2300x360) ÷ 365.25 - 301 + 1, since there is no year 0 between BC and AD, = 1967 (actually 1966.94, but I’m

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<sup>10</sup> When I realized that both 334BC using the solar calendar, and 301BC using the lunar Hebrew calendar, plus 2300 years come to 1967, I wondered if that might be why the holy one says to Daniel, in Dan 8:14, that the time would be “2300 *evenings* and *mornings*”. That wording echoes Genesis 1, in which “evening and morning” is repeated six times, and about which it is said that the Sun (solar) would “rule the day” and the moon (lunar) would “rule the night” (Gen 1:16) and that they are both for “signs and for seasons, and for days and years” (Gen 1:14).

rounding up slightly since it is unknown when exactly in 301BC the Battle of Ipsus was fought. If that date was any time after January 18, then 2300 Hebrew years later is, in fact, 1967AD).

This is remarkable since it was in aftermath of the Six Day War that for the first time since Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, that city was once again under autonomous Jewish government. Jesus' words had been fulfilled: Jerusalem was no longer trampled down by the Gentiles--the "times of the Gentiles" also were fulfilled. (It might be argued that Temple Mount is still being trampled underfoot by the Gentile arabs who worship at the mosque now located on that site. But actually, during Jesus' ministry, for example, Jerusalem was under Roman government, even though the Jews were allowed to worship in their Temple there. The situation is now reversed: Jewish government controls Temple Mount, and they allow Muslims to worship there.) This is a very fitting period to mark the end of the 2300 years' indignation, accurately fulfilling the description of Dan 8:13--the "sanctuary and the host" are no longer "trampled under foot" by Gentile powers. It's true that the words of verse 14 don't quite match the reality on the ground in Jerusalem yet: "Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state." (Heb. lit., "then the sanctuary shall be put right".) As long as the Dome of the Rock and the mosque stand on that site, and as long as Jesus is still to be recognized and worshipped as the Messiah of Israel, "him whom they pierced" (Zech 12:10), it cannot quite be said that this "holy place" or "sanctuary" is "put right". But the end of the 2300 years in 1967 did see the end of Gentile governments trampling the Temple Mount underfoot. It's the end of the "times of the gentiles" but not yet the end of all that is foretold in chapter 8. Verse 25 predicts that the Islamic powers of the world will yet "be broken--but by no human hand"--not by war it seems, but by an act of God. I'm inclined to think this will be accomplished by the internal breakup and corruption of the Arab states, Iran and Turkey, and also by the miraculous conversions of a great many Muslims to Christ in the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, I expect the power of Islam to be finally broken by the intervention of God at the return of Christ. That day has not yet come. And there is no hint in this prophecy about when we can expect Christ to return.

### **Correlation with "The Times of the Gentiles"**

Finally, how does the end of the Gentile trampling of Jerusalem fit with the chronological measurements of the "times of the Gentiles"? Technically, this is the subject of other chapters of Daniel, chapters written in Aramaic and not Hebrew. But because the "times of the Gentiles" and the 2300 years' indignation both finish with Jewish autonomy in Jerusalem, it is appropriate to comment briefly on how those two timelines correlate. So in brief, the whole period of the "times of the Gentiles" covers the entire history depicted in Nebuchadnezzar's dream by a state representing Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and Roman Europe divided into 10 states (Dan 2). The chronological measure of that whole era covers "seven times", illustrated by Nebuchadnezzar acting like a beast for seven years (Dan 4). Dan 7:25 describes half that period as "a time, two times, and half a time" (3.5 "times"), defined more specifically in Revelation 11:2

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<sup>11</sup> See Tom Doyle's *Dreams and Visions*

([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0078FAA3M/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0078FAA3M&linkCode=as2&tag=historicismco-20](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0078FAA3M/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B0078FAA3M&linkCode=as2&tag=historicismco-20) ).



as “forty-two months”, and in Rev 11:3 as “1260 days”. So the calendar used for the measure of this period is the Hebrew calendar of 360 days, of 12 30-day months: e.g.,  $42 \times 30 = 1260$ ;  $3.5 \times 360 = 1260$ ;  $7 \times 360 = 2520$ . These periods are interpreted, according to the Historicist method, on the scale of a “year for a day” (see the earlier explanation). The whole measure of the entire “seven times” of the Gentiles, then, is 2520 Hebrew years. Half of that whole period, corresponding to the duration of the persecution of the saints by the “little horn” of Dan 7:25 etc., is equal to 1260 years. So what starting point should that period be measured from? Guinness and other Historicist writers have proposed many possibilities, especially pertaining to the tribulation of the Christian Church under the rule of the Popes of Rome from, for example, 606AD to 1866AD, i.e., from the year the Byzantine Emperor Phocas decreed the Pope the head of all Christian churches in the world, until the year that the papal armies were defeated and Italy seized Rome as its new capital, leaving the Popes with just the Vatican state to rule. But one other solution stands out to me as it relates to a Jewish perspective and concerns the fate of Jerusalem in particular--and so it is for this reason relevant to our study of Daniel 8.

Ezekiel's prophecy closes with a major vision of the glory of the Lord returning to the Temple in Jerusalem, except this Temple he sees is perfect, holy and glorious with the presence of the Lord. This vision, received in April, 573BC,<sup>12</sup> answered to Ezekiel's first vision in chap 1 when he saw God's judgement coming to destroy Jerusalem in July 593BC. Ezekiel's ministry began with the mission to warn of what was coming to Jerusalem; doom that did come just a few years later in 586. But the vision, in chaps. 40-48, finishes Ezekiel's ministry and anticipates the long-range goal of the Lord in the exile of His people. This vision looks ahead to a time when God finishes what he started during Ezekiel's exilic ministry. Ezekiel notes the symmetry of beginning and end; judgement and relief: "And the vision I saw was just like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and just like the vision that I had seen by the Chebar canal. And I fell on my face." (Eze 43:3 ESV) Furthermore, the purpose of this vision is to move exiles to repentance:

"As for you, son of man, describe to the house of Israel the temple, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and they shall measure the plan. 11 And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the temple, its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, that is, its whole design; and make known to them as well all its statutes and its whole design and all its laws, and write it down in their sight, so that they may observe all its laws and all its statutes and carry them out. 12 This is the law of the temple: the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple." (Eze 43:10-12 ESV)

So in 573BC, Ezekiel saw this vision of the Kingdom of God, of the Temple made glorious again, of iniquity removed, of the land healed, of worship restored, and of God living with His people. Almost 20 years earlier, in 593, he saw God coming in judgement (Eze 1); at last, in 573 (Eze

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<sup>12</sup> ESV Study Bible, “Dates in Ezekiel” (<http://www.esvbible.org/resources/esv-study-bible/chart-26-01/>).

40), he saw a vision of salvation finished. The punishment would end; God would be with His people, in the flesh (c.f. Eze 43:7).

The whole “times of the Gentiles”, 2520 regular, solar years, from “the first month” (around April) in 573BC, comes to approximately April, 1948AD. Israel declared independence on May 14, 1948. This is a remarkable correlation isn’t it? But it gets even more interesting: the half-way point of that period is also an important date in connection with the subject of Daniel 8. 573BC plus 1260 years, comes to 688AD, when Abd al-Malik began building the Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount. Exactly 1260 years later, a Jewish government and state was reborn in “the glorious land” (Dan 8:9). And by the end of the 2300 years, just 20 years later, the State of Israel regained sovereign rule over Temple Mount.

Literal Israel is not the real story though. The Temple Ezekiel saw in his vision was not the physical, Jerusalem Temple. It was a greater spiritual Temple—a vision of hope in something supernatural God would do. Likewise the restoration of the nation of the Jews, predicted in these and other biblical prophecies, is a vision of hope in something greater. God is not just keeping His covenant promises to natural Israel. He is, through the Gospel of His Son, gathering a holy nation for an everlasting inheritance. Not the natural children of Abraham but the spiritual children of Abraham, the Church of Christ comprised of believing Jews and Gentiles. Seeing these things, foretold of literal Israel, happen in our lifetime is supposed to warn and encourage us not that David's kingdom will be restored, but that God's Kingdom is coming. And as the New Testament assures its readers, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Cor 15:50). We don't know exactly when that day will come, though it seems the season is not far off. But by heeding these prophecies believers are exhorted to stay awake.

As Jesus said, “They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” And four verses later, “And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (Luk 21:24, 27-28 ESV)

## Answers to Objections

**Objection #1:** Isn't Antiochus Epiphanes a better fit for the details of the details in chapter 8? And isn't it true that even classical historicist writers from Calvin to Guinness thought this passage was about Antiochus Epiphanes?

**Answer #1:** It is true that most historicist commentators have seen this passage as referring to Antiochus Epiphanes. Even Guinness, though seeing Islam as the primary fulfillment of Dan 8, saw a sort of dual-fulfillment in which the career of Antiochus Epiphanes foreshadowed the much later rise and rule of Islam. But I don't think it's true that Antiochus is a "better fit" of the details in this prophecy for the following reasons:

- (verse 17) "...The vision is for the time of the end"; in what sense can we say that Antiochus, in the 4th century BC, ruled Jerusalem "in the time of the end"?
- (verses 8-9) There is a distinction between the four horns and the latter horn; Antiochus belonged to the Seleucid horn and was not distinct from that dynasty. Therefore he cannot also be a separate dynasty growing out of the Seleucid dynasty.
- Antiochus only ruled over the Jews for 9 years. Hardly significant, albeit cruel and wicked, when compared to the prelude of in this vision, of the Medo-Persian Ram (which covered 2 centuries), or to the similarly described "little horn" of chapter 7, whose career lasted 1260 years (according to common historicist interpretation). But even futurists agree that the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 depicts many centuries of successive Gentile empires. That's a problem of scale and proportion for any futurist identification of this "horn" in Daniel 8, or of the other "little horn" of Daniel 7, as individual persons. The scale of the prophetic symbols seems to best fit entire kingdoms, and not just individual, short-lived kings.

**Objection #2:** Isn't it true that the 2300 "evenings and mornings", taken as literal days, actually describes the 6 ½ years until the Temple was cleansed in 516BC?

**Answer #2:** I think this is a wrong interpretation of Daniel 8 for the following reasons:

- 1) the 2300 day interpretation given by the angel who appeared to Daniel is regarding the trampling, etc., of the sanctuary and worship (verses 13-14);
- 2) the trampling in question is performed by the latter offshoot horn (verses 9-12);
- 3) that offshoot horn arises AFTER the Greek Empire is succeeded by four kingdoms, since the offshoot grows out from one of the four (verses 8-9);
- 4) therefore, since the four way division of Greece did not happen until after 301BC, the 2300 days duration of it's trampling the sanctuary cannot possibly point to 516BC (more than 200 years earlier). Moreover, the king ruling during the whole 6.5 years prior to 516BC was Darius I (Ezra 6:15). The "third year of Belshazzar" (Dan 8:1) was 550BC. So if, according to this objection, the 2300 days should be measured from the third year of Belshazzar, and culminate in 516BC at the cleansing of the Temple, the number of days would be at least 12,240. Not 2300.