

Chapter Four

The Little Horn

In this chapter we are going to concentrate on the person Daniel described as “the little horn.” We will find that he is a future character on the stage of world events. Despite claims to the contrary and theories about who this person may have been historically, Scripture aligns him with Daniel’s 70th week, Jesus’ description of the end and His return, and the future events of the book of Revelation.

The English term “Revelation” is a translation of the Greek word “*apokalupsis*” (Ἀποκάλυψις), from the proposition “*apo*,” or “from,” and “*kalupto*,” or “to cover.” So, the meaning of “*apokalupsis*” is “to take the cover off” and was transliterated into English as “apocalypse.” The Revelation is an uncovering, or unveiling of Christ in His true glory and kingship.

The key to understanding the Book of Revelation is chapter 1, verse 19 --

"Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. "

All three stages of time – past, present, and future - are represented in John’s writing.

The authorship date of the Revelation is not certain, but according to the Christian father Irenaeus (c. 130-202), John was banished to Patmos toward the end of the Roman Emperor Domitian’s reign. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, wrote that he received his information from people who knew John personally. In his volume *Against Heresies* (A.D. 180-199), Book V, Chapter 30, he wrote, "[John's vision] was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign." Domitian ruled from 51 to 96 AD. As a consequence, most conservative scholars place the date of John’s writing around 92-95. So that date becomes the relative benchmark.

The vision of Revelation chapter 1 was of Jesus in His spectacular presence, in the midst of seven candlesticks, holding seven stars. John was instructed to record the whole image – “Write the things which you have seen.” That command may also include the intimate first-hand knowledge John had of Jesus’ ministry, which he recorded in the gospel that bears his name.

In chapters 2 and 3, Jesus pronounced blessings and judgments against seven historic churches in Asia. We will not deal with them specifically at this juncture

except to say that the seven churches Jesus named actually existed in John's day and several were founded by the Apostle. As the bishop of Ephesus, John had the oversight of the churches to which he wrote. The seven churches represented the things "which are," contemporary with John's writing. After Jesus dealt accordingly with them, John recounted -

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." (Rev. 4:1)

The balance of the book of Revelation is taken up with things that were future to John. And lacking any compelling proof of their fulfillment since 92-93 AD, they remain future to us.

The Beast of Revelation 13

Enter the dragon –

Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. ... And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Rev.12:3,9)

The great red dragon is a major player in the events of Revelation 13. He is the power behind the evil events that will unfold on Earth. As we will see as we progress through this vision, the seven heads represent the seven kingdoms that oppress God's chosen nation, Israel. The seven crowns represent the leaders of those kingdoms. And the ten horns, symbols of power, represent the ten-nation kingdom that will rise up in the last days, similar to Daniel's ten-toed confederacy. The driving force behind these kingdoms is the dragon, called the Devil and Satan. In the last days, Satan will raise up one final world leader, a man described by familiar language and imagery.

And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns *were* ten diadems, and on his heads *were* blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like *those* of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. (13:1-2)

"The sands of the sea" is a reference to the people of the earth, just as in Daniel 7:2-3. A beast, this time a combination of all Daniel's beasts, rises up from the populace, identifying him as a man. He has seven heads and ten horns,

connecting him inextricably to the dragon. But, the number of crowns has changed from seven to ten. That's helpful. The dragon, Satan, rules over seven kingdoms, culminating in the ten-nation kingdom. His seven crowns represent the seven kings that the dragon empowers. But, in the case of the final world ruler – the seventh, Daniel's Little Horn - he rules over ten nations, the ten horns, and the leaders of those nations, the ten crowns.

This final world ruler is the living embodiment of Satan. On the forehead of his ten heads is the name of blasphemy. This is a direct contrast to the plate of pure gold that Aaron, God's first high priest, wore on his forehead. On the golden plate was engraved "Holiness to the Lord" (Exod.28:36). But, the beast's principles of rulership and religion will be blasphemy against all that is Godly.

John described the beast's primary form as that of a leopard, identifying him with Alexander's kingdom. His feet were like a bear, placing him geographically in the area of the Medo-Persian Empire. And, he spoke as a lion. This is most interesting. The lion hearkens back to the Babylonian Empire.

The mystery religions of Babylon, from the earliest Tower of Babel to the ancient sun worship of Baal, along with the groves and vineyards dedicated to gods of stone and wood are condemned universally throughout the Old and New Testament. The most pernicious false systems of worship and the religions that led away Israel time and again find their roots in Babylon. Even today, most of the non-biblical customs and traditions that have infiltrated the Christian Church, such as the Christ-mass in December and the Ishtar feast in the Spring, find their origins in Babylon. And, it is from there that the beast speaks.

Satan gives this man great dominion and power, and he will rule over the ten heads, or ten kingdoms. An important nuance of this vision is not to be overlooked: This beast image contains no direct reference to the Roman Empire. The beast is an amalgam of the Greek, Medo-Persian and Babylonian symbols, culminating in the ten-nation kingdom.

But, John was not alone in taking this leap; the line from Greece to the Little Horn was first laid out by Daniel.

The Ram and the Goat

Daniel chapter 8 continues to narrow our focus to a battle between two particular kingdoms. The vision occurred in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar, two years after the vision from chapter 7. Starting at verse 3, the account reads --

Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns *were* long, but one *was* longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no *other* beasts

could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified *himself*. While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a conspicuous horn between his eyes. He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. Then the male goat magnified *himself* exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous *horns* toward the four winds of heaven. (Dan. 8:3-8)

Fortunately, the angel Gabriel also supplied Daniel with the exact interpretation of these characters --

"The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat *represents* the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. The broken *horn* and the four *horns that* arose in its place *represent* four kingdoms *which* will arise from *his* nation, although not with his power. (Dan. 8:20-21)

The first ram was the symbol of the Medo-Persian Empire and the two horns were its kings, Darius and Cyrus. And, just as the latter horn rose higher than the first, Cyrus overcame Darius to become the dominant ruler in the kingdom. Historically, the Medo-Persian Empire advanced its dominion in every direction except eastward. And, as regards the use of a ram to represent that great empire which was unassailable for nearly 200 years, Keil observes --

"In the Bundeheesch, the guardian spirit of the Persian kingdom appears under the form of a ram with clean feet and sharp-pointed horns, and ... the Persian king, when he stood at the head of this army, bore, instead of the diadem, the head of a ram."ⁱ

After that, Daniel saw "a male goat," or literally "buck of the goats," charging in from the west. He had a single horn of power, identified as the first Grecian king, Alexander. Here again we find Alexander's conquests described as being with great speed and awesome power. The goat conquered and destroyed the power of the Medo-Persians.

History tells us that the Persians had been attacking the Grecian-held territories in an effort to expand their influence, but now it was the time of Alexander's revenge. So, the goat was moved with tremendous anger. But at the zenith of his power, while still a young man, Alexander died and his territories were divided

up among his generals. Still, just as Daniel predicted, none of them had the power that had inhabited Alexander.

The symbol of a horn is used throughout Daniel's prophecies not only to identify a particular earthly ruler, but also to denote the power that drove these ancient rulers. The breaking of "the large horn" signified the breaking of his extraordinary power, which brought Alexander's reign to a sudden end.

What was that power? How did a man as young as Alexander conquer such a large portion of the known world with the speed and savagery that he exhibited? Was that merely human effort? Or, was Alexander driven by a power larger than himself? And, does that power have any connection to the power that drives the beast of Revelation 13?

In chapter 10, Daniel received a vision during the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. Daniel had been mourning and fasting for three full weeks. And on the 24th day of the first month, a heavenly messenger visited him. The description of the "man" is so Christological that some have speculated that Daniel was meeting a Christophony, or pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Himself. The natural men that were with Daniel did not see the vision, but a great, quaking fear fell over them and they fled and hid. Daniel was so overwhelmed that his strength left him and he fell to the ground face-first. But, a hand touched him and set him upon his knees and the palms of his hands.

He said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding *this* and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." (Dan.10: 11-13)

Here we find an answer to our question. The kings of Persia and Media were not merely men with great substance, leadership ability, or force of personality. They were demonically empowered and controlled. A mere mortal could not withhold the angelic messenger from Daniel's side for 21 days. The battle in the heavens included Michael, one of chief angels, and he kept the demon spirit of the Medo-Persian ruler at bay while the new vision was brought to Daniel. But, at the conclusion of their conversation, the messenger added --

"Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against

these *forces* except Michael your prince. (Dan. 10:20-21)

Having completed his task, when the messenger returned to Michael they would do away with the demon influence that gave the Persian Empire its authority. But, as soon as that happened, into the vacuum would come the next evil power: the prince of Greece. Secular history has always been at a loss to explain how Alexander the Great accomplished the overwhelming feats of destruction and dominance that his brief reign entailed. Only when we see those events from the Biblical perspective do we begin to glimpse the real battles that ensued in the heavenly realm and were played out on the stage of human history. However, just as decisively as the angelic princes brought down the kings of Medo-Persia, so Alexander's "large horn" was broken and he perished in his early thirties outside the gates of Babylon.

Now let's return to the vision of Daniel chapter 8 and see the conclusion of the ram and the goat. We will pick up at verse 9, after the four notable ones have divided up the Grecian domain.

Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful *Land*. It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over *to the horn* along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform *its will* and prosper. (Dan. 8:9-12)

Here again we encounter the "little horn," or as the NASB calls him, "a rather small horn." The description of this character is consistent with what we have already learned about him. He is an evil, ruthless leader who will attack the holy city Jerusalem and take away every vestige of their religion. But he is also spoken of as waging spiritual warfare, not unlike the Prince of Persia. He is said to raise himself against the very inhabitants of the heavenly realms and to pull down some of the stars – angelic beings (Rev.1:20) - and exert his power over them. He will "magnify" himself to the Commander, or prince, of the heavenly host, an obvious reference to Christ. And a company of people is given to follow him to complete God's plan of the end.

But, the key point at this juncture is to recognize his lineage. He rises out of the four generals who divided up Alexander's kingdom: "Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn..." Also, as we noted before, this person does not make his appearance until the end of this age. That crucial concept is iterated in verse 17 -

When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. And I heard the voice

of a man between *the banks of Ulai*, and he called out and said, "Gabriel, give this *man* an understanding of the vision." So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end." (Dan. 8:15-17)

This is vital. Failure to grasp this one concept has led to years, decades, even centuries of debate over the name and possible historic personage of this little horn. We will get to some of the theories and popularly-named candidates in a moment, but we must acknowledge that the word of God spoken by Gabriel only allows that this leader will appear at "the time of the end."

He said, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for *it* pertains to the appointed time of the end." (Dan. 8:19)

God declared that there would be an end to the indignation of this blasphemous ruler. His demise will occur at exactly the time that God has appointed. And accompanying this final indignation will be "the end." The final gasp of history as we know it will occur when this demonic ruler is destroyed.

Next, Gabriel interpreted the ram and the goat, as we saw above, and designated four kingdoms standing up out of the Grecian Empire, but not in Alexander's power -

"In the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run *their course*, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. His power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform *his will*; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify *himself* in his heart, and he will destroy many while *they are* at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency." (Dan.8:23-25)

Gabriel described a fierce, angry person who will impose brutal laws and regulations. He will be powerful, but not by his own power. His is a demonic power, like his predecessors from Persia and Greece. He will conquer and destroy at will and his evil intentions will grow and prosper. No one will be able to stand before him. The highest religious ranks will fall before him and the people of Jerusalem will be cut down. He will be a clever, crafty person, full of ego and self-glorification. He will make pacts (such as the confirmed covenant with the Jews, which he will break mid-week), and he will use false peace as a means to conquer and destroy. He will even oppose Christ; perhaps a reference to his station as being *anti-* (or substitute) Christ. But, he will ultimately be

defeated without human intervention when Christ returns to set up His own everlasting kingdom.

"The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, for *it* pertains to many days *in the future*." (Dan. 8:26)

The King of the North & The King of the South

As if Daniel had not already supplied us with enough detail to convince us of the miraculous accuracy of his visions, and though we would have enough biblical evidence to draw several firm conclusions about the ten-nation kingdom and its "little horn" ruler, we get an even more focused and detailed account of this character in chapter 11. This particular vision came to Daniel in the first year of Darius the Mede, about 539 BC, and the vision starts with the Persian succession of rulers. This is the revelation that was held up for 21 days as the Heavenly princes wrestled with the Prince of Persia.

"And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all *of them*; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole *empire* against the realm of Greece." (Dan. 11:2)

Although it was future to Daniel, history records four rulers who followed Cyrus:

Cambyses (529-522 BC)
Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521 BC)
Darius I Hystaspes (521-486 BC, mentioned in Ezra 5,6)
Xerxes I (486-465 BC, Ezra 4:7).

And with characteristic accuracy, the fourth of Daniel's predicted kings, Xerxes, was the climactic Persian king who used his great riches to gather a monumental army of hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies of the ancient world, to launch a military campaign against Greece in 480 BC. It was disastrous and Xerxes never recovered, ushering in the beginning of the decline of the Persian Empire.

"And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his *own* descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and *given* to others besides them." (Dan. 11:3-4)

The parallels are so obvious that we have no problem identifying this mighty king as Alexander the Great. And just as his large horn, the symbol of his power and

authority, was broken, Alexander died in his youth. Without the strong arm of central rule that Alexander provided, his kingdom was divided to his four generals:

Lysimachus ruled over Thrace and Bythynia.

Cassander ruled over Macedonia and Greece.

Seleucus Nicator controlled Syria, Babylonia and territories as far east as India.

Ptolemy Lagidae ruled Egypt, Southern Palestine and Arabia Petrea.

These kings were established around 301 B.C., after the overthrow of Antigonus in the battle of Ipsus, 22 years after Alexander's demise.

At that point in Daniel's prophecy, he introduces the terms *The King of the North and the King of the South*. They are specific titles given to the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires. The north and south designations refer to their geographic locations with respect to Jerusalem, the center of the entire prophecy. In modern terms, the Northern Kingdom includes Lebanon, Syria, southern Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and the northern portions of Palestine. The Southern Kingdom is Egypt. And so the saga of history in advance continued.

"Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with *one* of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain *will be* a great dominion *indeed*." (Dan. 11:5)

As Alexander was dying, one of his generals, Antigonus, sought to rule by placing Alexander's posterity in a puppet regime. Alexander had two sons:

Hercules, whose mother was Barsina

Young Alexander who was born posthumously of Roxana.

Hercules was murdered by Polysperchon before he ever claimed rulership and Young Alexander was murdered in 310 BC. Meanwhile, Antigonus drove Seleucus I Nicator (312-281 BC) from Babylon and out of the main eastern portion of the kingdom. Seleucus took refuge with Ptolemy I down in Egypt. Ptolemy gave Seleucus soldiers and with their combined strength they returned and defeated Antigonus, paving the way for Seleucus to control the entire area from Asia Minor to India. In time, Seleucus became stronger than the king of Egypt.

So, in accordance with Daniel's words, Ptolemy I was the king of the south, whose prince, Seleucus, became stronger than he and acquired a great dominion. And Alexander's posterity failed to rule.

"After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful

arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who sired her as well as he who supported her in *those* times.” (Dan. 11:6)

Years passed. Kings died and new kings arose. The king of the south decided that intermarriage would be politically expedient. But, there was a problem; the king of the north was already married. Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC) had a daughter named Berenice and he insisted that the king of the north, Antiochus II Theos (261-246 BC), put away his current wife, Laodicea (or, Laodice) and enter this political union. However, within a few years of the marriage Ptolemy II died. At that, Antiochus put away Berenice and took Laodice back. But, Laodice was not that easily appeased. She murdered her husband and his Egyptian wife and the infant son of Antiochus and Berenice. So, Berenice was given up, and her father died, and her husband and son were killed.

"But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against *their* army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display *great* strength. Also their gods with their metal images *and* their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from *attacking* the king of the North for *some* years. Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his *own* land.” (Dan. 11:7-9)

Berenice’s brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 BC) – a descendant of her line -- upset at how his family had been treated, prevailed militarily against the new king of the north, Laodice’s son, Seleucus Callinicus (247-226 BC), who fled and hid behind the Taurus mountains while Euergetes carried off princes as hostages and ransacked their gold, silver and idols. The actor in verse 9 is the king of the north, who was the subject at the end of verse 8. Later, in about 240 BC, Seleucus mounted a return attack on Egypt, but he was defeated completely and was forced to “return into his own land.”

"His sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his *very* fortress.” (Dan. 11:10)

The sons of Seleucus rose up, after Antiochus II Theos had been killed and Seleucus Callinicus had been routed by Egypt. Seleucus III (226-223 BC) perished in battle in Asia Minor, and was succeeded by Antiochus III Magnus, or “the Great” (223-187 BC). Antiochus the Great was successful in carrying out several campaigns against Egypt and, because the Egyptian ruler, Ptolemy Philopator (221-203 BC), was largely indolent, Antiochus restored to Syria the territory as far south as Gaza.

"The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but *that* multitude will be given into the hand of the *former*." (Dan. 11:11)

The movement of Syrian armies that close to the Egyptian border finally inspired the Southern King to take action. He raised an army of 75,000 men. Antiochus brought 78,000 men to do battle at Raphia. The Egyptian army was directed by Ptolemy, accompanied by his sister-wife, Arsinoe. The ensuing battle resulted in a complete victory for Egypt. As Antiochus lost his entire army and was almost captured, he fled into the desert.

"When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail." (Dan. 11:12)

True to his indolent nature, when he had routed the Northern armies, Ptolemy sat on his good fortune rather than occupying the territories and taking advantage of his victory. He returned to his home and Antiochus began rebuilding.

"For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment." (Dan. 11:13)

In the period between 212-204 BC, Antiochus advanced east to the borders of India and as far north as the Caspian. Ptolemy Philopator and his queen died mysteriously in 203 BC and were succeeded by their infant son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes. In 201 BC, Antiochus assembled another great army and turned his attention toward Egypt.

"Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down." (Dan. 11:14)

This cryptic bit of detail was fulfilled when a large number of Jews entered into a league with Antiochus the Great against Egypt. They participated in his attacks on the garrison that the Egyptian General Scopas had left in the citadel of Jerusalem. But, they were defeated. Interestingly, the angel recounting history in advance told Daniel that, though they were acting of their own initiative and volition, these Jews would nevertheless be establishing and fulfilling the vision, completing this very prophecy. When the Jewish readers compared the acts of their own fellow countrymen at this juncture in history, they should have recognized God's sovereign hand in their affairs and realized that these rebels were most certainly doing that which God had ordained to be done.

"Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand *their ground*, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a

stand. But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will *be able to* withstand him; he will also stay *for a time* in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand.” (Dan. 11:15-16)

As these kings were struggling for dominance, a new threat to them both had begun emerging in the West: the Roman Empire. Meanwhile, Antiochus III forced Scopas to surrender at Sidon, their well-fortified city.” This victory (198 BC) gave Syria dominance over all of Palestine as far south as Gaza. But, with the impending threat of Rome hanging over them, Antiochus realized that he needed a diplomatic settlement with the Egyptian rulers or they would both be overcome.

”He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand *for him* or be on his side.” (Dan. 11:17)

Wanting to rule over both the Syrian and Egyptian domains, setting up his own princes and having kingship over them all, Antiochus III the Great gave his daughter, Cleopatra, to the young king Ptolemy V Epiphanes in 192 BC. Ptolemy was a mere 7 years old and Antiochus expected that this marriage would ruin his former opponent. But, Cleopatra did not stay true to her father. She stood with her husband and suggested that they make an alliance with Rome to ensure their own safety.

”Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn.” (Dan. 11:18)

Over in the Macedonian section of the divided Grecian Empire, the Romans defeated Philip of Macedon on their march eastward. Thinking that he could take advantage of that fact, Antiochus advanced into the Macedonian/Thracian area attempting to conquer some of the islands. Antiochus came into contact with a Roman consul, a commander named Lucius Scipio Asiaticus. Antiochus treated him scornfully at a meeting in Lysimachia, declaring that Asia was no concern of Rome’s and that he was not subject to their orders. That reproach was the beginning of the downfall of Antiochus at the hands of Rome.

Antiochus set out to equal the conquests of Alexander the Great by conquering Greece. He was defeated in 191 BC at Thermopylae, north of Athens and again in 189 BC at Magnesia on the Maeander River southeast of Ephesus by soldiers of Rome and Pergamum, under the leadership of the Roman general Scipio. Scipio compelled Antiochus to surrender to Rome all the land that he had west of the Taurus Mountains. Rome also exacted a tax that Antiochus would collect from his people to pay for the wars.

"So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more. (Dan.11:19)

Antiochus III the Great should have gone down in history as one of the mightiest warrior/conquerors of the Syrian Empire. But, in his last days, defeated by Rome and unable to be content without conquering Greece, he returned to his own territory a broken man. He was killed in a religious uprising as he was trying to plunder the temple of Jove in Elam.

"Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of *his* kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle." (Dan. 11:20)

The next Syrian king was Seleucus IV Philopator and, because of the oppression of taxation by Rome, he imposed the burden of excessive taxation on the inhabitants of Israel. He assigned a special tax collector, Heliodorus, to secure the taxes from the Jews under his domain. Heliodorus was dispatched to plunder the temple and soon afterward Seleucus was suddenly and mysteriously poisoned, probably by Heliodorus himself. He was "shattered (destroyed), though not in anger nor in battle."

Now, up until this point history accurately accounts for every detail of this particular prophecy. History and prophecy converged perfectly in Daniel's account. But, starting at verse 21, history has a problem. The details that follow do not describe any historic person or situation - and the details count!

Still, there has been considerable confusion. Some scholars and commentators have suggested a person they consider to be the fulfillment of the rest of this chapter. He is the next successor in the line of Northern Kings --

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

Probably more than any other historic character, Antiochus Epiphanes is pointed to as the fulfillment and embodiment of Daniel's "little horn." However, the details of Antiochus' career do not match the details of Daniel's prophecy.

At the time of Antiochus the Great's death, the most legitimate heir to rulership would have been Demetrius, the young son of his brother Seleucus IV. There was also a younger son of Seleucus IV, also named Antiochus, who was yet a baby in Syria. Antiochus IV, the brother of Seleucus IV, was in Athens when his brother died. When he received word that Heliodorus had murdered his brother Seleucus, he posed as the guardian of young Antiochus, who was in Syria. But, through intrigue, Antiochus managed to secure the Syrian throne for himself. Young Antiochus was murdered by Andronicus, whom Antiochus IV then killed. And, thus began the reign of one of the Middle East's most wicked rulers. From 175 to 164 BC, Antiochus IV earned a place of infamy in Jewish history.

The books of First and Second Maccabees, inter-testamental chronicles considered by Jews and Protestants as “apocryphal” or “not inspired” books, are historic accounts of the Maccabean rebellion against the terror of Antiochus Epiphanes, and are included in most Catholic Bibles. This is of utmost importance in understanding how Antiochus IV Epiphanes has come to be confused with “the little horn.” Catholic scholarship and liberal “higher textual criticism” has concluded that the book of Daniel is a forgery, not to be considered as genuine prophecy, but rather as a fake written to inspire Jews during the occupation of Jerusalem by this very same Antiochus.

In the introduction to the Book of Daniel found in *The New American Bible, translated by Members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, sponsored by the Bishops’ Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*, we read:

“This book takes its name not from the author, who is actually unknown, but from its hero, a young Jew taken early to Babylon ... Strictly speaking, the book does not belong to the prophetic writings but rather to a distinctive type of literature known as “apocalyptic”, of which it is an early specimen. Apocalyptic writing enjoyed its greatest popularity from 200 BC to 100 AD, a time of distress and persecution for Jews, and later, for Christians ... This work was composed during the bitter persecution carried on by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167-164) and was written to strengthen and comfort the Jewish people in their ordeal.”ⁱⁱ

With that sweeping, unsubstantiated generality, the Catholic interpreters do away with Daniel’s phenomenal accuracy in foretelling the history of the Middle-Eastern world and, in so doing, find fulfillment for the entire account in the person and reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Unfortunately, this anti-biblical interpretation enjoys a wide audience in our confessing Evangelical circles and is a lynchpin in Amillennial, Postmillennial and Historic Premillennial theology.

Antiochus Epiphanes (which means “glorified”, a name Antiochus took to himself in an effort to make himself deity) broke the back of the Jewish nation by undermining their religious system of worship. He is widely known for having sacrificed a pig, one of the Old Testament “unclean” animals, on the altar of the temple and spreading the blood on the walls, desecrating the sanctuary. The cleansing and re-dedicating of the temple, after the Maccabean victory, is commemorated each year as the Feast of Hanukkah or Feast of Lights.

Inasmuch as Antiochus was the historic successor to the Syrian dynasty and his short, tumultuous reign did include this attack on the Jewish religion, he is a convenient figure to impose on the following verses. But we must ask the question: Can Antiochus IV Epiphanes be the “little horn,” the culmination of the demonic rulers who will persecute the Jews?

The answer is: No. He cannot.

At best, he is Satan's counterfeit, designed to muddy the waters and confuse the prophecy. But he cannot be the final, apostate world ruler whose reign ends with the second appearance of Christ. The official Catholic interpretation notwithstanding, he just does not fit the details. He loosely resembles some of the activities, but there are far too many holes in the actual history of Antiochus to make him a serious contender for this dubious honor.

For instance, in Daniel 8:23 we read,

“In the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run *their course*, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue.“

But, Antiochus was not in the latter time of the old Grecian Empire. He came to his end more than 100 years before the Grecian Empire fell. Nor are we able to say that roughly 160 years before Christ even walked the earth “the transgressors have run their course.”

As well, there are several references stating that the “little horn” will make war with the “Prince of Princes,” undeniably a reference to Christ. But, no such battle can be found in connection with Antiochus. He was gone a full century and half before Christ appeared. The Christian religion was utterly unknown during his reign. And it is pointless to attempt “spiritualizing” these references to imply that Antiochus did somehow battle Christ. There is no Biblical or exegetical imperative that demands, or even allows, such an interpretation.

But most convincing is the single fact of Christ's own reference to Daniel found in Matthew 24:15. Daniel described an idol that will be set in the temple by the “little horn.” He called it “the abomination of desolation” in 11:31 and 12:11. Jesus spoke of this very same event, saying -

“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.” (Mat. 24:15-16)

Jesus spoke of this event as occurring in the future, sometime past His own ministry. As such, any theory concluding that Antiochus IV Epiphanes is the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy is patently wrong and must be set aside as unbiblical, lacking both historic and theological scholarship.

The Despicable Person

So, what are we to make of the conclusion of Daniel chapter 11? The key is in the very next verse --

"In his [Seleucus IV Philopator's] place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue." (Dan. 11:21)

From verse 20 to verse 21 we leap over "the gap." Daniel's prophecy, without skipping a beat, drew a connecting line from ancient Greece to the last days. Out of the estate of the Kings of the North this final demonic leader will arise. This is perfectly consistent with what we saw with the Ram and the Goat. Out of the four generals who ruled Alexander's domain comes the "little horn." And, as the focus narrows in chapter 11, we find that it is out of the Seleucid portion specifically that this ruler emerges.

Just as the primary visage of the beast in Revelation 13 was as a leopard, likening it to Alexander, it is out of one of his general's territories that the final ruler comes. Daniel told us that the last kingdom would be a loose confederation of 10 kings, three would be uprooted and the other seven would give the "little horn" the power. He will make a peace pact with Israel, reconfirming the covenant to build the temple. He will "come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue."

"The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant. After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small *force of people*." (Dan. 11:22-23)

Though he comes in talking peace, he rules mercilessly. The phrase "the prince of the covenant" probably refers to him directly. The English Standard Version of the Bible renders that phrase "even the prince of the covenant," making the identification more clear. In that case, it is likely a reference to Dan. 9:27 -- "And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week." But, after that league he will work dishonestly with them, "and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

"In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest *parts* of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but *only* for a time." (Dan. 11:24)

At the end of verse 23 we read that he will "gain power with a small *force of people*." The italicized words are not in the original text and were added by the translators. In this instance, I think they change the original meaning too dramatically. The original reading would have indicated that he gained power

with “the small people.” In that case, the reference to “them” in verse 24 would take us back to the “small people.” They would be the recipients of the spoil and goods that were plundered from the richest parts of the realm. Unlike his predecessors, the despicable person will share the wealth, increasing his fame and popularity among the little people, the poor, and the have-nots.

“He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. As for both kings, their hearts will be *intent* on evil, and they will speak lies *to each other* at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still *to come* at the appointed time.” (Dan. 11:25-27)

Being yet future, we cannot explain these passages with the same exactness with which we addressed the earlier portions of this chapter. But some details are clear. He will make deals and break deals. He will engage in battle against Egypt and apparently emerge victorious because of in-house plots devised against the king of the South. The two kings will lie to one another at the very same table. And, again in verse 27 we read: “for the end is still to come at the appointed time.” God remains in utter control, even as wickedness erupts and Israel lies in the balance.

“Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be *set* against the holy covenant, and he will take action and *then* return to his *own* land. At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before.” (Dan. 11:28-29)

His heart turns against the “holy covenant,” which we know he will break three-and-a-half years into his pact with Israel. Despite his victories, “at the appointed time” he will attack Egypt a second time, but things will not turn out as he plans.

“For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.” (Dan. 11:30-31)

The New International Version of the Bible renders the expression “ships of Kittim” as “ships of the western coastlands.” That interpretation may have been influenced by the fact that the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that the Essenes community believed that the Kittim (or Kitti'im) referred to the Roman Empire. So, fearful that Western forces are aligning against him, the despicable person

returns to his home area and focuses his ire against Jerusalem, making deals and paying special attention to those Jews who will join him as he dismantles his agreements. He will send out forces to desecrate the temple (proof that the temple must be rebuilt) and interrupt the regular course of sacrifices. And they will set up the abominable image that Christ warned about.

"By smooth *words* he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for *many* days. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because *it is still to come* at the appointed time." (Dan. 11:32-35)

Flattery will be his stock in trade. Those Jews who join him will worship him and act in opposition to the seven-year pact. But those who know God will accomplish heroic exploits. They will teach and encourage the faithful, although hypocrites will infiltrate them. They will suffer death by wounding and by burning. Jerusalem will be held captive and plundered and those who fall will receive only little help. But they will be refined in the fires, purged and purified, until the entire series of prophesied events reaches its culmination, because the end is still according to God's set time.

"Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done." (Dan. 11:36)

Even though this evil king will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and speak things against the God of gods, he will only survive until the indignation is accomplished, in accordance with God's own sovereign plan -- "for that which is decreed will be done." Despite the king's perdition and wickedness, God remains in control and carries out His will as the era draws to a close and the reign of Christ appears on the horizon.

"He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any *other* god; for he will magnify himself above *them* all." (Dan. 11:37)

The corrupt king will break with the religious traditions of his past, not worshiping the gods of his progenitors, not "the desire of women." That phrase is most likely a reference to Messiah. Hebrew women, knowing the promise of the coming Deliverer, desired to be the chosen mother of that long-awaited prince. So, collectively, Daniel tells us that the wicked king will have no regard for any

religion, any god, or Christ Himself. He will set Himself as the only object of worship.

"But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor *him* with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with *the help of* a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge *him* and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price." (Dan. 11:38-39)

What's important to understand is that the religion of this ruler will not be the religion of Israel. The despicable king will rely on "a foreign god" as he build his armaments and amasses military might. Those who worship him will receive honor. And, if history is any indication, the promise of promotion, power, and honor is a great motivator, regardless of how treacherous the cause.

"At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow *them* and pass through. He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many *countries* will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon." (Dan. 11:40-41)

"At the time of the end" the king of Egypt will push at him and the kings of the 10-nation confederacy will fight back. The final king of the North will enter Palestine and successfully conquer at will. However, the mountain areas of Edom, Moab and Ammon will be protected and rescued from his onslaught.

This bit of detail is essential to understanding Jesus' later warning to the residents of that area, adjuring them to be ready to flee and dropping the hint about where they should run --

"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short." (Mat. 24:15-22)

So, when the residents of Judea see the figure of the pagan ruler set up in the temple, where should they flee? To Edom, Moab, and Ammon, just as Daniel assured them in advance.

"Then he will stretch out his hand against *other* countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians *will follow* at his heels." (Dan. 11:42-43)

The little horn will defeat Egypt as he overthrows nations one by one. The Libyans and Ethiopians will join the fight as he dominates the Middle East and North Africa.

But news from the East and North will worry him and he will go on a rampage of terror and destruction, finally establishing himself near the temple mount in Jerusalem.

"But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him." (Dan. 11:44-45)

But he will be destroyed and none will be able to help him when that destruction commences.

Now, with those pieces in place, we can go back to the book of Revelation and look closer at the beast of chapter 13.

The Wounded Head

I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. (Rev. 13:3-7)

Much of this language sounds familiar now. Where Daniel described the earthly activities of the final world ruler, John the Revelator gives us a glimpse of the

spiritual powers that drive this king. Paul warned the Ephesian church of this very reality – spiritual forces at work in the world.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. (Eph. 6:11-12)

The Satanic dragon John described is pictured as having seven heads with ten crowns. The seven heads are symbolic of the seven world kingdoms that persecute God's people Israel. One of them has yet to appear. The ten horns with ten crowns, as we saw, are the ten kings that will make up the last-time confederacy, which will be overtaken by the "little horn." But, one of the heads is described as being "wounded to death."

Unfortunately, that phrase has led to all sorts of wild speculation. Any world leader ever wounded in the head was watched intently to see if he recovered. That's one of the hallmark signs by which the Antichrist will be identified, according to most of the sensationalistic prophecy books on the market. Just watch for a leader to take a bullet to the skull and recover, then you've got your man!

But in order for that interpretation to be legitimate, the world ruler would have to have seven heads and only get shot in one of them. The only way to understand this prophetic image is in context. If the seven heads represent seven demonic rulers, then the resuscitation of one of them indicates that one of the demon spirits that inhabited a former kingdom will be raised from its apparent demise and once again rule an earthly kingdom. This interpretation is supported in Revelation 17 -

... and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns ... The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, and on her forehead a name *was* written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not

and will come.” (Rev. 17:3b,7-8)

We will consider the woman a bit later. But, notice that the beast is described as “was, and is not.” John was writing during the Roman occupation of Israel. During the first century Roman rule, the wounded beast “is not.” But, he formerly “was.” Future to John, the beast will arise from “the abyss” and go into perdition, or unrestrained rebellion that leads to ruin.

All the inhabitants of the earth will be in awe of this leader, except those who were elected by God to salvation since before the worlds began, whose names are written in the Book of Life. The world will worship this man who is inhabited by the wounded head that “was (before John’s time), and is not (during John’s time), and will come (after John’s time).”

“And they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while.” (Rev. 17:10)

Six of the seven demonic kingdoms are accounted for by the time of John’s Revelation. Five are gone: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece. One is: Rome. But, the other “has not yet come.” That is an enormous clue! Whoever this world ruler is and whatever kingdom he dominates, it must occur after the Roman rule. And, he will only survive for a short time.

How long?

There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. (Rev. 13:5)

Three and a half years!

“The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is *one* of the seven, and he goes to destruction.” (Rev. 17:11)

Here we find the clear description of the demonic possession of this final world ruler. The wounded head - the beast that was, and is not - will be the eighth great ruler, but he is “of” -- part of, inside of, the power of -- the seventh.

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.” (17:12)

This ten-nation confederacy -- the ten-toed kingdom, the ten horns, the ten crowns -- are ten kings that “have not yet received a kingdom.” As of John’s writing, this alliance of kingdoms had not appeared on the stage of world history.

I am driving this point home because the angel of the Lord drove it home. Whatever we deem this kingdom to be, and however we finally understand it, we know that it must appear after 90 AD. And it has yet to appear in the last 1900 years. The last of the demonic rulers of this Gentile age will rule it and it will end when Christ returns to set up His kingdom. That much is certain! These ten kings will receive authority from the beast, but it will be short-lived.

"These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him *are the* called and chosen and faithful." (Rev. 17:13-14)

The ten kings are united in their support of the beast-leader and together they wage war, not only with the Jews (as we read in Daniel), but finally with Christ Himself. This is more than just an earthly battle. This is more than just a war of human ideals and political agendas. This is the great cataclysmic battle of Eternal Good vs. Consummate Evil. And the Lamb of God conquers all, making His enemies His footstool (Mat. 22:44). Plus, when He comes He brings an army with Him -- the called, the chosen, the faithful.

Or, as Jude put it --

It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 1:14-15)

Notice that the called, chosen, faithful saints are with Christ at His return for the battle. They are not on the earth waiting for His appearing. They come with Him, according to both John and Jude.

But, that's another subject for another chapter.

What We Know So Far

- Daniel's "little horn" is a future entity on the stage of human history.
- Daniel's visions trace the succession of power directly from the Grecian Dynasty, through Alexander's four generals, down to the king of the North and directly to the "little horn."
- The Apostle John saw a demonic world leader, characterized as a wounded head that was healed, who "was (prior to John's writing), and is not (during John's lifetime), and will come (at a date future to John)."

- One of the former demonic rulers, prior to Rome, who was conquered by Angelic intervention, will arise and possess the final world ruler.
- That ruler will arise from the Seleucid portion of the Grecian Empire and he will rule so wickedly that Christ Himself will return with His saints to conquer him.
- God foreordains all of this and it will all most certainly take place.

ⁱ 1 C.F Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel. Quoted in Walvoord, John F. Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation. (Chicago, Moody Press. 1971) Pg. 182.

ⁱⁱ The New American Bible. (New York, Catholic Book Publishing Co.1970). Pg. 1021.