

Daniel 8 – The Dream of a Ram and a Goat

Hebrew¹ – Modified Translation of NAS95

Dan. 8:1 In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously.²

Belshazzar, Son of Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.)³ 549-539 B.C.

Dan. 8:2 I looked in the vision, and, while I was looking, I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam. I looked in the vision, and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal.⁴

Dan. 8:3 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.

Dan. 8:4 I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other animals could stand before him. Nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself.

The Medo-Persian Empire, specifically Cyrus⁵
Darius the Mede over Babylon⁶ 539-331 B.C.
539-530 B.C.

Dan. 8:5 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.⁷

Dan. 8:6 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.

Dan. 8:7 I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him. Then, 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

¹ Daniel 1:1-2:4 is written in Hebrew, along with 8:1-12:13. The rest of Daniel, 2:5-7:28, is written in Aramaic.

² Belshazzar took over central control of Babylon from his father in 549 B.C., when the latter moved to Teima, an important Edomite city, for the last ten years of his life. Thus, the third year would be 546 B.C., and Daniel experienced and explained the previous dream in 549 B.C. in chapter 7.

³ Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman Middle East Messianic
According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, Nabonidus, who was the actual king of Babylon, entrusted to his son Belshazzar the responsibility to rule over the city and empire while he campaigned in North and Central Arabia.

⁴ Susa was located on the western side of the Zagros Mountains, 160 miles east of the Tigris River, and just north of the Persian Gulf, in what is now Iran. The modern town of Shush is on the ancient city.

⁵ The Medo-Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great (559-529 B.C.) and his son Cambyses (529-523 B.C.) conquered the Lydian Kingdom in Asia Minor (Turkey) in 546 B.C., the Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C., and the Egyptian Empire in 525 B.C. Thus, no other “animals,” i.e., kingdoms in the Middle East were able to survive the powerful conquest of the Persian Empire.

⁶ This is not the same as Darius the Great, i.e., Darius Hystaspis, who ruled Persia from 522-485 B.C. Apparently, there is no explicit evidence outside the Bible for this man, but he is most likely a “king” of Median descent, who was appointed ruler of the Babylonian region by Cyrus the Great, much like Herod the Great and his sons who were appointed by the Roman Senate and Emperors as rulers of the area of Israel and granted the title “king.” The word *dara* means king in Avestan Persian, allowing us to conclude that Darius was an honorific title much like even the Hebrew Messiah.

⁷ The word “horn” seems to refer to a specific ruler who obviously dominates the kingdom/empire symbolized by the animal. This was the case in the dream of the fourth beast of Daniel 7.

from his power.⁸

The Greek Empire of Alexander the Great alone 334-323 B.C.
 He begins overtaking the Persian Empire in 334 B.C.

Dan. 8:8 Then, the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. However, as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken. In its place, there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.⁹

Death of Alexander the Great in Babylon 323 B.C.
 Lysimachus – Attalid in Thrace/Asia Minor
 Seleucus – Syria, Babylon, to the Indus Valley (initially)
 Ptolemy – Egypt, Israel, and Cyprus (initially)
 Diodotus – Greco-Bactria in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan

⁸ Starting in 334 B.C., Alexander the Great began his attack of the Persian Empire, and three years later, after the important battles of Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.), and Arbela (331 B.C.), he had conquered it.

⁹ Again, the horn represents a specific king. In this case, it is Alexander the Great. He, as a large horn, i.e., a powerful king, who had conquered the mighty Persian Empire, disappears suddenly and is replaced by four other kings. The “four winds of heaven” symbolize the four directions of north, south, east, and west.

After spreading his empire as far east as Afghanistan and the Indus Valley in 327 B.C., Alexander died suddenly in Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of thirty-three. After the Battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.) and depending upon what source one consults, the number of kingdoms that resulted from Alexander the Great’s Empire is either four or six. Most commentators take the list of four and use it to interpret the four horns. They are, going from west to east, the Cassandrian/Antigonid Kingdom in Macedonia and Greece, the Lysimachian/Attalid Kingdom in Thrace and Asia Minor, the Seleucid Kingdom in Syria east to the Indus Valley, and the Ptolemaic Kingdom in Egypt, Israel, and Cyprus.

However, other sources list two other kingdoms as more important than the first two above. They are the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, and the Indo-Greek Kingdom in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Greco-Bactrian Empire existed from 250-125 B.C., and the first king was Diodotus, when he seceded from the Seleucid Kingdom. The expansion of the Greco-Bactrian Empire into modern day India resulted in the Indo-Greek Empire (180 B.C.-A.D. 10), whose first king was Demetrius I.

Because of the Middle Eastern centric nature of the dreams in Daniel, it is more reasonable to assume that the four horns or kingdoms are, going from west to east, the Lysimachian/Attalid Kingdom in Thrace and Asia, the Seleucid of which Syria remained a permanent area, the Ptolemaic of which Egypt remained a permanent area, and the Greco-Bactrian east of Persia in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. These four are more Middle Eastern than the others and figure prominently in the history of Israel and the Middle East. For example, eventually the Islamic Ottoman Empire takes over the Thrace and Asia Minor area of the Attalid Kingdom, and, certainly, the Greco-Bactrian area. With its Islamic characteristics, it had a relatively strong influence on Israel’s affairs, especially in modern times. The Indo-Greek Kingdom of Afghanistan/Pakistan is a definite candidate to be included in the four, but the area of the Attalid Kingdom of Asia Minor is historically more important to Israel, because it eventually comprises the same area as the Ottoman Empire with its capital in Istanbul.

In addition, the Hebrew word that typically gets translated as Greece in Daniel 8:21; 10:20; and 11:2 is יָמִן, which the Septuagint translates as Ἐλλάνιον. Most likely, it is because of the Septuagint word that English translators feel free to translate the Hebrew word with Greece, rather than with the transliteration Javan, which is the word used in other OT verses where يָמִן appears (cf. Genesis 10:2). See the longer explanation in the note for v. 21, as well as the note for Daniel 2:40, but the point is that, because the area of modern Turkey was considered an important part of יָמִן, and the interpretation of this dream includes the name יָמִן, the Attalid Kingdom in specifically the Asia Minor area is a more likely interpretation of one of the horns than the Indo-Greek Kingdom of Afghanistan/Pakistan.

I also think that it makes sense that the Attalid Kingdom is a stronger candidate than the Indo-Greek Kingdom because it came into existence sooner after Alexander the Great’s death (305 B.C. vs. 180 B.C.). However, we must always be careful, because in the dreams of Daniel, close proximity of time does not seem to be a huge factor in determining importance. For example, the fourth kingdom of the statue of Daniel 2 is a chronological jump over the Roman Empire to the Islamic Caliphate. Plus, there is an obvious break at Daniel 11:36 that constitutes a large jump in time from the 2nd century B.C. to some time future to us. Yet, clearly, the Man of Lawlessness, who will appear in history just prior to the return of the Messiah, is very important to the story of the Jews and Israel.

Dan. 8:9 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.¹⁰

Dan. 8:10 It became great as far as the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall onto the earth, and it trampled them down.¹¹

Dan. 8:11 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 cast aside.¹²

¹⁰ Two options for who this “rather small horn” is – 1) Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), who eventually rises to power out of relative obscurity in the Seleucid Kingdom, which existed from 312-63 B.C. and who extended his authority south from Syria towards Egypt through the land of Israel and east towards the Indus Valley; 2) The Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13, who lives just before the return of the Messiah.

Allowing for the fact that large jumps in time are permissible in interpreting the dreams of the book of Daniel, and that it is said of this horn in v. 11, he “magnified [himself] to be equal with the Commander of the host,” i.e., with God, just as the apostle Paul says of the Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, that he will “exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so as to sit in the temple of God by proclaiming that he himself is God,” this small horn in Daniel 8 could be this man in the far distant future relative to Daniel.

Plus, Daniel 11:37 indicates of this future man, “Nor will he show regard for any other god, because he will magnify himself above them all.” While it does seem that the Man of Lawlessness will think so highly of himself as to claim to be God, I wonder if his self-exaltation is his claim to be the Shiite twelfth imam of Islam who it is believed will share God’s attributes and actions and, therefore, will be the most important Muslim in their history.

Also, this “small horn which grew exceedingly great” in Daniel 8 also turns his attention to the Jews and the land of Israel, such that the next verse talks about how much he will be able to influence their existence there.

In spite of the various similarities to the Man of Lawlessness at the time of Jesus’ return, I am inclined to think that the “small horn” in this part of Daniel 8 is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, because the events ascribed to this horn do fit the historical record of Antiochus. Nevertheless, we can see him as the appropriate prototype of the Man of Lawlessness of the future kingdom of the Islamic Caliphate. In other words, the “horn” and source of power of the man of Daniel 8 points to the ultimate “horn” and power over the Jews, the individual of the Beast of Revelation 13, in the last days before Jesus returns.

The “Beautiful” here probably refers to the land of Israel, literally the “ornament” of God, the land which He promised to Abraham’s descendants in Genesis 12.

Cf. **Daniel 11:16** “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.”

Cf. **Daniel 11:41** “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.”

¹¹ Cf. Exodus 12:41, “And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the Lord (**תִּלְכָּדְתִּים**) (**πάσα** ἡ δύναμις κυρίου) went out from the land of Egypt.” We see in this verse in Exodus that **תִּלְכָּדְתִּים** (=hosts) refers to human beings, i.e., to the Jews. The Septuagint translates **תִּלְכָּדְתִּים** and this reference to people as ἡ δύναμις (=the power), which sounds strange to us, but, assuming the Septuagint translators understood **תִּלְכָּדְתִּים** to be referring to people, they must have had in mind that the Jews, who were being brought out of Egypt, were God’s demonstration of His power over the creation (a metonymy of cause – the cause being put for the effect).

In the same way, this dream in Daniel 8 is saying that Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), as the prototype of the future Man of Lawlessness, becomes so great in the ANE that he exercises his power and authority over the Jews to the extent that he suppresses greatly their worship of God. Indeed, he tramples on them and kills them, so that they fall onto the ground. How many exactly? We are not told.

Then, when the Man of Lawlessness arises in the future, he most likely tries to force the Jews in Israel to convert to Islam, which many will do to avoid death. Nevertheless, a number of Jews will also die and “fall onto the ground” so to speak, because they will for whatever reason reject this man’s tyrannical rule and authority over them.

¹² In 168 B.C., after being turned back from invading Egypt by the Roman general Popilius Laenas, Antiochus took his frustration out on the Jews and had his commander Apollonius enter Jerusalem on a Sabbath, seize the temple, erect an idol of Zeus in it, and sacrifice a pig on the altar. Antiochus also suspended the morning and evening offerings commanded by God in Numbers 28:3 and then destroyed the altar and ransacked the temple. Thus, it could be said that he made himself equal with God by taking control of God’s temple, even though he worshiped Zeus and never claimed to be God Himself. He was on a mission for Zeus and acting as Zeus would act.

In this way, Antiochus becomes the prototype of and original Man of Lawlessness, who will do much the same thing just before the return of the Messiah. The latter will worship no one but the God of Islam and, claiming to be the

Dan. 8:12 And on account of transgression, the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice. It will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.¹³

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

175-163 B.C.

pointing to

The Man of Lawlessness

future to us

Dan. 8:13 Then, I heard a holy one speaking. And another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?”

Dan. 8:14 He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then, the holy place will be properly restored.”¹⁴

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

175-163 B.C.

Judas Maccabaeus – rededication of the temple
The first Hanukkah

December, 165 B.C.

pointing to

The Man of Lawlessness
Messianic Kingdom

future to us
future to us

twelfth imam who acts on His behalf with His attributes, will enter into the land of Israel, putting a stop to all worship of the biblical God of and by the Jews. Even if the actual temple does not exist, as it does not now, then this dream is pointing to the outcome of the spread of Islam into Israel whereby the temple mount is empty of Jewish worship sites, and the Man of Lawlessness considers himself greater than the God of the Jews.

Cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 as quoted above, he will “exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so as to sit in the temple of God by proclaiming that he himself is God.”

¹³ During the time of Antiochus IV, the Jewish leaders collaborated with him, thus causing them to become entirely subject to him, who prevented worship of Yahweh upon pain of death for three years (168-165 B.C.).

As the archetype of the future Man of Lawlessness, Antiochus simply runs roughshod over biblical truth, even as it exists in Israel among unbelieving Jews, including God’s designating them as His people, and this occurs for a set time. The Hebrew indicates that this is “on account of the transgression,” i.e., because the Jews have stubbornly refused to obey God because they lack circumcised hearts. Approximately 190 years later, they will also reject the very center of the biblical message, i.e., their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. As a result, God will eventually bring judgment on them during the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord just before Jesus’ return (cf. Malachi 4:5).

¹⁴ 2,300 mornings and evenings = 1,500 days. Therefore, from the time when Antiochus IV erected his statue of Zeus in the temple and abolished sacrifices to God in 168 B.C. and the restoration of worship in the temple under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus in December, 165 B.C. was approximately 1,500 days, which divided by 365 is a little more than 3 years.

And since Antiochus’ career is pointing to that of the Man of Lawlessness, he, too, will wreak havoc in Israel for a little over three years before Jesus returns, crushes him, and sets up the Messianic Kingdom with its capital at Jerusalem during the millennium of Revelation 20. Thus, after being subject to the Man of Lawlessness for a relatively short period of time, the Jews will finally come under the rule of Jesus as their king and worship God properly with changed hearts during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

Cf. Romans 11:25,26a, “**11:25** Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, so that you are not presumptuous. A partial hardening has occurred to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. **11:26** And without further ado all Israel will be saved just as it is written,…”

Dan. 8:15 When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it. Behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man.

Dan. 8:16 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.”

Dan. 8:17 So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. Yet, he said to me, “Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.”¹⁵

Dan. 8:18 While he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand upright.

Dan. 8:19 He said, “Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, because it pertains to the appointed time of the end.”¹⁶

Dan. 8:20 “The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.”¹⁷

Dan. 8:21 “The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king.”¹⁸

¹⁵ Here is a clue to the effect that the dream ultimately is about the end of history prior to the return of the Messiah. While it aptly describes events performed by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 168 B.C., he as the prototype points to and “pertains to the time of the end of time.” Literally, the Hebrew reads that “the vision is to/for the time of the end” (לְעֵת־קָדוֹם), while the Septuagint says that it is “for/towards the hour of the season” (εἰς ὥραν καιροῦ). Thus, I think that Gabriel is saying that Daniel’s dream provides a model for the end of time by talking about the events of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, so that the Man of Lawlessness will be remarkably similar to him.

¹⁶ Like v. 17 above, Gabriel is saying that the history of the ANE and of Antiochus IV Epiphanes specifically points to the history that will involve someone just like him, the Man of Lawlessness in this same area, the Middle East. Therefore, “the final period of indignation” and “the appointed time of the end” will be much later than 168 B.C. and Antiochus IV Epiphanes. These phrases are clear clues that the dream is definitely pointing to the end of history just before the return of Jesus as the Messiah, who will destroy both the Man of Lawlessness and his government and will set up his own morally perfect government over Israel, the Middle East, and the whole world.

The phrase “at the final period of the indignation” (בָּאַתְּרִית הַנִּזְבֵּד) means that God will have finally come to the end of His anger towards the Jews, which will have arisen because of their unbelief and that leads to His plans to discipline them harshly by using outside invaders who cause them great suffering. This will be like God’s judgment and discipline of the Jews by the Assyrians in the 8th century B.C., by the Babylonians in the 7th/6th centuries B.C., and by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the 2nd century B.C. (as well as during other situations).

But while the Man of Lawlessness will cause much harm and suffering for the Jews on the land of Israel, it will mark the last time that such judgment and discipline will happen to them, because the only government that they will experience from that time on will be the shalom of the millennial and Messianic Kingdom of Jesus (cf. Revelation 20).

¹⁷ The words מְדֹאי וּפָרָס are fairly easy to interpret, in contrast to ιάννη in the next verse. These first two geographical areas are *Medai*, i.e., Media, and *Pharas*, i.e., Persia, respectively. Thus, these names refer to the land east of the Zagros mountains that approximately constitute the boundary between modern day Iraq and Iran. This land, then, is that of Iran, in ancient times Media in the north and Persia in the south.

¹⁸ The word ιάννη (Yavan) is translated with τῶν Ἑλλήνων (of the Hellenes) in the Septuagint. Obviously, we would think of modern-day Greece, comprised of the Peloponnese in the south, Central Greece, and Macedonia/Thrace in the north, as well as the various Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. We would not necessarily think of modern-day Turkey as part of Greece. However, this latter area at one time included multiple Greek city-states around the Black Sea and in Asia Minor (the latter being labelled Asia in the New Testament). By 500 B.C., the Persian Empire had gained authority over these eastern Greek city-states as far as Macedonia, the home of Alexander the Great. Persia then attempted to gain control of Central Greece but was defeated at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. and the Battles of Thermopylae, Artemisium, and Salamis in 480 B.C., forcing the Persians to withdraw completely from Greece proper and partially from Asia Minor. A hundred and fifty years later, in 334 B.C., Alexander the Great, “in his mighty wrath” (v. 6), launched his own counterattack on the Persian Empire and conquered it completely in just four years—by 331 B.C.

In the Bible, Yavan (or Javan) was the fourth son of Japheth, Noah’s oldest son, and some consider him to be the father of the Greeks, whether in Greece or in Asia Minor. Therefore, this is a longstanding name for the Greek people in

Dan. 8:22 “There is the broken horn, and four horns will stand in its place. Four kingdoms from the ethnic group will stand, although not with his power.¹⁹

The Greek Empire

331-63 B.C.

Alexander the Great

Successors to Alexander the Great in Asia, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, etc.

Dan. 8:23 “And in the last of their ‘kingdom’,

When the transgressors have reached their full limit, a king will arise,
Insolent and skilled in intrigue.²⁰

general, and Gabriel must be using it to capture the relationship of the shaggy, male goat to its ancient ethnic origins. Consequently, I think that it does make sense to interpret Javan here as the Greek Empire as it expands in 334 B.C. under the leadership of the big horn, its “first king,” Alexander the Great.

¹⁹ After Alexander the Great’s death in Babylon in 323 B.C., there was at least a forty-year period when different leaders sought to control parts of his empire. Eventually, the dust settled, and there were six kingdoms (Macedonia, Pergamum, Seleucid, Ptolemy, Bactria, and India) that stretched from Greece to India. The four kingdoms most important to Israel and the Middle East, and, therefore, the four to which this dream is most likely referring, were the Attalid Kingdom (Pergamum and modern day Turkey, i.e., Asia Minor), the Seleucid Kingdom (Syria and east to India), the Ptolemaic Kingdom (Egypt), and the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (northwest of India in modern day Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan).

Then, it is the second and third above, the Seleucid Kingdom and the Ptolemaic Kingdom, that figure most importantly in the history of the Middle East and, especially, of the land of Israel. Yet, all four of these can be considered to be Middle Eastern, which is why it fits to interpret not only the “large horn” as Alexander the Great, who remained and died in the Middle East, but also the four horns as the initial and subsequent rulers of these other four “kingdoms” respectively (Attalid, Seleucid, Ptolemy, and Greco-Bactria).

²⁰ The phrase “And in the last their ‘kingdom’” (**וּבְאַחֲרִית מֶלֶכְתָּם**) (καὶ ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῆς βασιλείας αὐτῶν) refers directly to the four kingdoms described in the above footnote that were the four, prominent Middle Eastern remnants of Alexander the Great’s empire. However, while the previous explanation describes mainly the Seleucid Kingdom that involves Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who sets up a statue of Zeus in the Jerusalem temple in 168 B.C., I think that Gabriel now skips ahead to the far distant future and talks about the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2 at the end of the present realm and just before the return of Jesus the Messiah.

Most other commentators consider the text to refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and I have included information about him to demonstrate the possible association of the text with him. Nevertheless, I believe that there is now a large jump in time between the Seleucid/Ptolemaic Kingdoms first mentioned in v. 22 and the “last of their ‘kingdom’” mentioned in v. 23, just as there is a large jump in time between the legs and the feet of the statue of Daniel 2 and between v. 35 and v. 36 of chapter 11. I also have translated **מֶלֶכְתָּם** as “their ‘kingdom,’” with single quotes around the word

kingdom, because I think that this phrase is referring to the same area over which the succession of kings ruled after Alexander the Great’s death. It is also the same area over which all sorts of “kings” and others (e.g., Caliphs and presidents) have ruled and are ruling right up to the time of the Man of Lawlessness, whose existence is still future to us. Therefore, the “last of their ‘kingdom’” is the far distant future of the Greek Empire, now no longer existent.

The first reason why it makes sense to interpret vs. 23ff. as referring to the Man of Lawlessness and not to Antiochus IV is Gabriel’s saying above in v. 19 both that “I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation,” and that “it pertains to the appointed time of the end” (**עַד מֵצֶה עַד**) (εἰς ὥρας καιροῦ συντελείας). This definitely sounds like the period of time just before the return of the Messiah and that involves the Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2 and the individual of the Beast of Revelation 13.

The second reason why it makes sense to interpret vs. 23ff. as referring to the Man of Lawlessness is because “the transgressors have reached their full limit.” The limit could be a moral limit, but it could be instead a temporal limit, i.e., the limit of God’s patience before He unleashes His final judgment and discipline of the Man of Lawlessness on the Jews who are continuing to rebel against Him. And this will be just prior to God’s granting authentic belief to all the Jewish survivors when Jesus the Messiah reappears. Plus, because the book of Daniel focuses on the future kingdom of the Messiah, it makes more sense to understand the “transgressors” as Jews, including their leaders, in the far distant future just before the return of Jesus, not as Jews during the near future of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

The third reason why it makes sense to interpret vs. 23ff. as referring to the Man of Lawlessness is that Gabriel describes him in v. 25 as opposing the “Prince of Princes.” While this could be construed as referring to Antiochus IV Epiphanes who opposes God and, thereby, in theory opposes Jesus the Messiah even though he has not yet come on the scene, it makes more sense that he is talking about the Man of Lawlessness, who will oppose the second appearance of

Dan. 8:24 “His power will be mighty, but not by his own power,
And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree.
He will also prosper and perform his will.
He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.²¹

Dan. 8:25 “Through his shrewdness, he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence.
And he will magnify himself in his heart,
So that he will destroy many while they are at ease.²²
He will even oppose the Prince of Princes.²³
Yet, he will be smashed by the end of a hand.²⁴

Dan. 8:26 “The vision of the evenings and mornings, which has been told is true. However, keep the vision secret, As it pertains to many days.”²⁵

the “Prince of Princes,” Jesus as the Jewish Messiah of both Jewish and Gentile believers in the Middle East. In addition, this verse says that the Man of Lawlessness will be someone particularly gifted in deceiving people. ²¹ God will permit the Man of Lawlessness to exercise his powers over the Jews on the land of Israel and to kill many of them, i.e., the “holy people,” whom God has set apart in history from the time of Abraham to be His chosen people. The death of many Jews in the land of Israel may very well include those who are authentic believers. The phrase “not by his own power” (**בְּחָזֶקְנִי**) (καὶ οὐκ ἐν τῇ ἰσχύι αὐτοῦ) refers either to the power of Satan, to whom the Man of Lawlessness will submit, or to the power of God as the ultimate judge of the people of Israel for their rebellion against Him. I am inclined to think that it is the former as the existential source of this man’s whole evil agenda.

²² The Hebrew text reads **בְּמִזְמָרָה** (=“and in prosperity/security”), while the Septuagint reads δόλῳ (=“with deceit/cunning”). Either way, this man is very deceitful, arrogant, and successfully cruel towards his enemies.

²³ Certainly, by opposing God, Antiochus IV also in theory opposed the Jewish Messiah, the “Prince of Princes” (cf. “king of kings”). However, in line with all the clues already mentioned, it makes more sense to associate this statement with the Man of Lawlessness at the end of the present realm and just before the return of the Jesus as the Messiah. He will explicitly speak out and act against anyone who claims Jesus to be the Messiah, even killing them for their belief.

²⁴ The Hebrew יְמִינָה יְמִינָה (=“and by the end of a hand”) is a difficult phrase to interpret, made even more difficult by the Septuagint’s translation of the last part of the verse with καὶ ποιήσει συναγογὴν χειρὸς καὶ ἀποδώσεται (=“and he will make a gathering of the hand and be paid back”). In line with other references to the destruction of the Man of Lawlessness, such as in Daniel 7 and 11, the Hebrew could very well be saying that by means of God’s hand, which will be the Messiah’s hand, the Messiah will smash the Man of Lawlessness and bring about his sudden demise. In other words, the Hebrew is some sort of idiomatic expression describing the certainty and completeness of the elimination of this man by the Messiah.

Or, if the Hebrew is synonymous with the Aramaic **לֹא בִּידָנָן** (=“not with hands”) of Daniel 2:34, then it could mean “without human, earthly intervention” (cf. Complete Jewish Bible). Either way, the point seems to be that it is God alone through the return of the Messiah who destroys the Man of Lawlessness and his kingdom, the Islamic Caliphate, and his religion.

²⁵ This dream pertains to events that are both in the near future and far, far in the future. Therefore, many, many days will be involved in the fulfillment of this dream, lending strength to the interpretation that it involves events of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the 2nd century B.C. and of the Man of Lawlessness and Jesus the Messiah when the latter returns and that is still future to us.

And Daniel must have kept the vision secret until he wrote it down with the rest of the book.

Dan. 8:27 Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Afterwards, I got up and carried on the king's business. Nevertheless, I was astounded at the vision, and there was no one who really understood it.²⁶

²⁶ Here, Daniel is admitting that his companions and he understood the interpretation of this dream only to a degree. Because it pointed to and involved events both in the relatively near future and in the far distant future, they did not understand it completely. And it was another disturbing and exhausting vision for Daniel to experience and contemplate, especially it described suffering and pain for his own people, the Jews.