

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROPHETIC BOOK OF DANIEL

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I'm Marian Berry. Welcome to Christian Concerns. One of our great concerns is that we should be able to understand the Bible correctly. And so today we're going to look at the Book of Daniel, at the the structure of the book, and we're going to take a perspective that will give us a bird's eye view. First of all, what is in the Book of Daniel? There are stories such as Daniel in the lion's den. There is the story of the three Hebrew worthies as they were cast into the burning fiery furnace. And there's the story of the handwriting on the wall in the palace of Belshazzar. There are also chapters that give us historical reference points.

For example in chapter 1, the nation of Israel is captured by the Babylonians. In chapter 5, the Babylonians are captured by the Medo-Persians. And in Chapter 8, the Medo-Persians fall under Grecia. So as we look at these historical references, we are brought to view also the forward visions of Daniel. The prophet was taken in vision, and four times he saw the history of the world from his day down to the end of time. The whole Book of Daniel is actually a story of the rise and fall of nations. And so we're going to look at the four visions in some detail seeing how they align with each other and how they are interlocking, and it will give an interesting view of, by using the chart, it will give us an interesting view of these lines of prophecy, four outlines.

[silence] Let us look at the chart. We have four outlines here of the history of the world of the days of Daniel right down to the end of time. First of all, the symbolism in chapter 2 is found to be that of an image. It had a head of gold, which represented Babylon, arms of silver, which represented Medo-Persia. It had a belly and thighs of glass, which represented Grecia. There were iron legs, which represented Rome, and then Rome broke up into the nations of Europe. And then he is carried in time clear down to the great stone which was to represent the Kingdom of Jesus Christ established on earth.

Now we'll look at the second vision. Here in the second vision we find that instead of an image, there are four beasts. And the first is the lion that has eagle's wings. And if you go to New York City you will see that the lion is pictured there on the Ishtar Gates of Babylon. Everyone who went in and out of Babylon knew exactly who the winged lion was, that it represented Babylon. So you see the two visions start with the same empire, Babylon. Then here Medo-Persia, represented by the two arms, is represented by a bear that has the two sides. Then there is Grecia that follow and Rome and then at last we have the nations of Europe, the ten toes or the feet of iron and clay mixture. And the ten toes are the same as the indescribable beast that has the ten horns. And then one additional feature is brought to view.

You see there are four empires in the first vision, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. Then in the second vision there are those same four empires, but an additional empire is added, one that reigned over Europe for 1,260 years. So we come down and at last it says that the saints receive the kingdom. The kingdom is given to the saints of the most high. That is in alignment here also. Then we come to the third vision. Here he sees a ram and a he-goat. By the time he wrote this vision, Babylon had passed off the scene, so we begin with Medo-Persia, and it shows Grecia overcoming Medo-Persia. And then immediately he begins to speak of the little horn that is mentioned here in chapter 7. And it says that the investigative judgment begins also by the 2300 day time line. And then it says that the little horn is broken without hand. It also brings us to the end of time.

In the fourth vision down here, we see the, we see that the Daniel 11 starts out with the kings of Medo-Persia. Said there will be three more kings in Medo-Persia. There will be a fourth king that would stir up all the realm against Grecia. And from there on we have the story of the rise and fall of kings in perfect sequence and continuity all the way down until it speaks of the last king, who it says will come to his end and none shall help

him. And as we look at these visions, we see that there is an alignment.

This is very important to understanding these visions correctly because we align Babylon in the first and second vision. We align Medo-Persia, the two arms of the image with the two sides of the bear with the two horns of the ram. And then there is Grecia, Alexander the Great, in the three visions, and the kings are also aligning right all through chapter 11. So we come right down through here to the time of the end and the end time, and we come right down.

And so we are looking at these four visions. It's very important that we understand that these visions align because if we take for example the ram and the he-goat and try to put them down here at the end of time, it destroys all the logic of what we are doing in prophetic exposition.

So we want to be careful to keep each thing in it's proper order within the interlocking four lines of prophetic history. Now actually, prophecy is simply history written before it happens, and the prophecy is, the scripture is actually self-interpreting. And so it is either self-interpreting through the one book, Daniel and Revelation interpreting each other, or it is through the timelines and the lines of prophecy of outlines that are interlocking with each other. They interpret each other.

Now we're going to talk a little bit here about the prophet language of the book. You see, the book of Daniel is written in both literal and symbolic language. So we need to look at this very carefully how will we approach the book. And so we're going to look at a hermeneutic rule. And the hermeneutic rule is found in the Great Controversy page 599. We're going to let a prophet, if we can have brought up on the screen. We'll look at the hermeneutic principle which is called the literal approach. It says, the language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious, that means its literal meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Now, this is so important because the book of Daniel is written in both figurative and literal language. It's a very important rule because the parts of Daniel must be kept in context.

If it's a literal context we need to know that the whole of the text there even the times that are mentioned are literal. And if it symbolic we need to be very careful to use the year date principle in order to interpret it correctly. Now we need to look at another hermeneutic principle here, and it is from second Peter 1:20. It says, knowing this first, in other words this is the first and the most important principle that no prophecy, that is no prophetic symbol, is of any private interpretation or to be decoded any other way than through the scripture itself.

Now, this does not mean that you don't have a right to make it your own opinions regarding prophetic exposition, but you have no right to try to decode a prophet symbol. And there's actually no committee nor church nor denomination that has the right to decode the symbols of scripture. They must be decoded by the Bible itself. And we'll keep that in mind as we continue to look through the book of Daniel. Visions one, two, and three are actually written in symbolic language, but the fourth vision is written in literal language. And we want to make some observation also of the forward progressive movement of the book of Daniel. And here I want to just simply say that time is linear. In other words, you can't go back and live yesterday over again, neither can you jump into the future.

So what we need to realize is that time goes on steadily in sequence and continuity, and so it is with the history of the world. The history of the world, the historical events of the world are all happen in the sequence of time. And as we look at the way that the prophecies are written in these prophetic historical outlines, everything within those outlines is in sequence and continuity. That is, we can't take a verse out there and put it back it there or put it forward. We have to keep the verses in sequence and with continuity, and this is true in all four of the timelines to correctly apply them.

By the way, there's a difference between interpreting and applying or making application. In interpreting we are dealing completely with symbolism. Like you would interpret one language into another. That is interpretation.

But when we are simply taking the decoded information and then applying it to history. We are making an application.

So we are going to look at the applications that are brought to these four visions of Daniel in these four chapters. Now, we want to be very careful not to violate the order in which we are going to precede, and I'm going to look at this chart again in regard to the date-able time. Let us look at the title of this chart. The title of the chart is a diagram of the forward progressive movement of the book of Daniel. Now you can date Babylon. It was 606 BC. You can date Medo-Persia. It was 538. Grecia, 331. Rome was 168 to 476, but when Rome broke up, that fourth empire that was in 476 and after that date, we cannot date the nations of Europe because they were continually in a process of formation and reformation. And so we can only date this first vision in Daniel 2 as far as 476 AD.

But when you come to the second vision, we are in chapter 7, we are looking here are at a timeline in 725 which speaks of a 1,260 year period. And we know that that began in 538 and ended in 1798, and therefore we have moved forward in time, date-able time, from 476 to 1798. That's over a thousand years that we have moved forward from the first vision to the second vision. And in each one of these visions, the information becomes more specific and more detailed regarding information that is in the history of the nations.

Then we come to the third visions right here, and there is also a timeline there of the 23,000 days. That's Daniel 8:14, and we know from the computation of the 23,00 days that that brings us to the date 1844. So now we have moved forward from 476 to 1798 to 1844. When we come to the fourth vision of Daniel, we find here that it speaks of the time of the end. However, we should also realize that that is end-time because in verse 40 it tells about the time when the king of the north and the king of the south would battle against each other. And all of our pioneers, James White and Uriah Smith, all of the pioneers understood very well that that was future to their day long after 1798 or 1844.

So we come down to the time of the end-time. Now with this forward movement, it is very apparent that the whole book, the structure of the whole book is moving forward. And we come then to the last chapter, chapter 12 which is actually an epilogue, and it has in it some intriguing time lines. And we're going to give them very special attention here. It brings us down to the end of this earth's history. Now we're going to look at the fourth vision in particular Here the historical drama and the curtain comes down. Four times Daniel has seen the history of the world from his day or thereabout clear down to the end of time. And the drama of the history of the rise and fall of nations is complete. And as we look at this, then we need to understand that the last few verses of chapter 12 are actually an epilogue that follows the drama that has been seen in the first four visions.

So we're going to look now at a verse from Daniel 12 verse 4. And this indicates that the four visions are finished and complete. It says, but thou oh Daniel shut up the words and seal the book. And so now we're going to look at the epilogue, the last part of the book, and we need a definition right here of an epilogue. What is the definition of what, well really we'll look at Webster's Dictionary for that. It says it's a speech or the like addressed to the spectators. That is if there's a drama and there are spectators sitting all about. This speech is directed to them and spoken after the conclusion of a play serving to complete the plan of the work.

So Daniel was asking a very interesting question. He says, I don't understand. Now after these four visions, I don't really understand how this is all to be finished off. He says, what is going, how is this struggle between good and evil all going to be brought to completion, and so Daniel 12:5 reveals the very last events that will happen in the history of the world right down at the very end of time. Now we need to look at what is the time of the end. You see, in Daniel 11 verse 35 it speaks of the time of the end as a time appointed. Now, that we understand referred to 1798 because the time appointed was actually appointed in the timeline of Daniel 7:25 when it refers a time, times, and a half a time that was allotted to the little horn power.

And it appointed by that timeline that it should come to an end in 1798. Therefore we are looking at a timeline being a time appointed. The beginning of it was appointed, the end of it was appointed, and here it says that was

the time of the end. And that is in verse 35, and we understand that to refer to 1798. But when we move on, and as I mentioned the outline is always in sequence moving forward in time. By the time we come to Daniel 12, there, I'm sorry to Daniel 11 verse 40, there we see a great struggle between the king of the north and the king of the south. Now our pioneers until 1860 and even beyond were wondering what the meaning of that is because it speaks there that at the time of the end the struggle would occur.

James White assumed that it was Rome that would fulfill that prophecy, and Uriah Smith thought that it would be Turkey. And so these two men, both of them having to do with the Review, the magazine that was published at that time about such things, both of them assumed that it would be some power in the future. Therefore our pioneers knew that in verse 30, verse 40 where it speaks of the time of the end, they knew that referred to their future. So we don't want to confuse the time of the end as it's spoken of in Daniel 11 and 12 and assume that it always refers to 1798 because that really is not so.

We need to look at the definition of the word end as it's found in Daniel 12 in a number of verses. Seven times he has referred to the end or the time when all things shall be finished, and therefore we'll look at a definition of the word end as it's used in Strongs Exhaustive Concordance. Here it says end as used in Daniel 12 in the Chaldean Dictionary, the word number is 7093, meaning utmost end, border edge, or extremity or termination. And this word comes from a primitive root which means to chop off as it would be used in the pruning of a garden. So when we're looking at the word end in the use that it has in Daniel 12, we need to understand that it is actually referring to the very end of time, like the border edge of time.

So there is also a very interesting quotation from testimonies to ministers page 114 where it says that twice Daniel inquired how long shall it be to the end of time. This is important. How long shall it be till the end of time? And the answer to this question that he asked twice is given by none other than Jesus himself who is spoken of as the man clothed in linen. And Jesus is talking about the answer to his question, and he gives him three timelines. And these timelines are so important for us to understand because they will give us insight as to what is going to occur at the end of time.

Now those three timelines if we look at them in depth, we need to understand some things that first of all this last part of Daniel, in fact from chapter 9 onward, there is no symbolism in the chapters. The language is completely literal. So we must keep things in context. There is a theologian that says, context is king, and we must always remember context is most important. This is literal context. There is no beast, no image, no horns, no heads, no eyes, no mouth, none of the symbolism that is used in the first three visions.

So as we're looking at this, we need to understand that we're looking at a literal time. These timelines are literal time. And we need to be careful not to interchange the language because there were those in the time of the reformation who took the symbolic time of Daniel 7 and looked at it and played with it, and considered it to be literal time. And when they did so, they said well that 1,260 day years of prophetic time is actually just literal time. And so then they put it into the future and called it futurism.

And in this way they did a terrible work of confusing not only all of Catholicism but also modern day Protestantism. And they have looked at this and discounted the 1,260 years in the medieval era. But when we look at Daniel 12 we're dealing with literal time. And this is so important that we not confuse it with symbolic time because if we were to do so and pretend that it's symbolic time and place it into the medieval era, then we would be doing almost a similar thing and would create what I would call an end-time pretorism. Putting it way in the past so it can't apply to us today.

Now we're going to look at events. And what these prophetic periods of Daniel actually have to say to us, we're going to look at a statement from the Review and Herald September 25 1883. It was written in 1883. And it says here that the prophetic periods of Daniel, extending to the very eve of the great consummation, throw a flood of light on events. That's not the day and hour, but events then to transpire. Now we need to look at this very

carefully to look at the words herein. It says the prophetic periods of Daniel extending to the very eve of consummation.

First of all, what is the great consummation? The great consummation is actually the second coming of Jesus. And not only that. It says to the very eve, now we know what Christmas eve is, and we know what New Years eve is. It's coming right up to the day itself. And yet this timeline does not throw light on the events that occur regarding the day and hour, but it shows the chronological placement of these events in the end-time.

So let's think about this again. The prophetic periods of Daniel extending to the very eve of the great consummation throw a flood of lights on events then to transpire. This was written in 1880, what did I say? 1883. If they were written in 1883, they referred to something future to that time. Now I'd like to ask a question. Did the prophetic period of Daniel 7:25 reach to the very eve of the great consummation? No. It ended in 1798. Well, what about the prophetic period of Daniel 8:14? Did that extend to the very eve of the great consummation? No. It ended in 1844. So what prophetic periods could be left? The only prophet periods that are left in the book of Daniel is actually the three prophetic periods in chapter 12.

Now we're going to look at chapter 12 in more detail in the following videos. We're going to looking at Daniel 11 with a bird's eye view. We're going to look at chapter 12 and those beautiful three timelines that will give us an understanding of where we are today in the stream of time. The structure and the meaning of the book of Daniel carries us right up to the close of this earth's history. It does not take us back to the medieval time, and I wanted to show you here on the chart one more time when we come to the last part of Daniel, this does not take us right to the very back here.

That's not the way the movement of the book is structured. It does not move us back into the medieval era, but it brings us forward in time to tell us about events that are yet to transpire. The book of Daniel is a wonderful unit. It is self-contained, and it tells us exactly where we are in the stream of time. Now it's true that our pioneers who lived way back at the time of 1798 to 1844 and somewhat beyond, that they thought that they were the last generation. They felt that the prophecy of Daniel 12 all had to be fulfilled within their day because they thought they were living in the end-time. But now 150 years from that date we know today that an answer to his question, how long shall it be to the end of time, that we have come to the real understanding of the last three timelines of Daniel 12. [music] [music] [music] [music] [music]