

Dani’el 8 – Refuting the Anti-Christ Claim

Today we will explore Christianity’s claim of the anti-Christ in Dani’el 8.

The Anti-Christ Claims

Claim #1: The eleventh horn in Dani’el 7 refers to the Anti-Christ. (Dani’el 7:1-14, 20, 25)¹

*Dani’el 7:8-10: While I was gazing upon these horns, a new little horn sprouted up among them; three of the older horns were uprooted to make room for it. There were eyes in this horn like those of a man, and a mouth that spoke arrogantly. As I looked on, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took His seat. His garment was like white snow, and the hair of His head was like lamb’s wool. His throne was tongues of flame; its wheels were blazing fire. A river of fire streamed forth before Him; thousands upon thousands served Him; myriads upon myriads attended Him; the court sat and the books were opened.*²

Christianity claims that the “Ancient of Days” is in fact Jesus coming to judge the world. This is of course a completely wrong interpretation.

The “Ancient of Days” is in fact God. While God does not have a physical form, there is already an established fact that prophetic visions may contain metaphoric semblances of God.

*Yehezqel 1:4, 26: I looked, and lo, a stormy wind came sweeping out of the north – a huge cloud and flashing fire, surrounded by a radiance; and in the center of it, in the center of the fire, a gleam as of amber. ... Above the expanse over their heads was the semblance of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and on top, upon this semblance of a throne, there was the semblance of a human form.*²

The reason for calling God the “Ancient of Days” comes from the idea that He is eternal.

The argument goes that if the figure in Dani’el 7 is the “Anti-Christ” then the future ruler presented in Dani’el 8 must be the same end-time figure. The eleventh horn in Dani’el 7 – so Christianity believes – is the same as the goat’s horn that is depicted in Dani’el 8.

Christianity tries to force a comparison between these two visions. The claims are:

1. The Anti-Christ will start as a little horn (Dani’el 7:8, 8:9) and will become a large horn (Dani’el 7:20, 8:9).
2. The Anti-Christ will enlarge his territory in three directions (Dani’el 7:8, 8:9).
3. The Anti-Christ will wage war against the “saints” (Dani’el 7:25, 8:24).¹

Claim #2: Yehezqel prophesied that a wicked leader will rule over Yisrael until God ends the iniquity and gives the throne to the right leader. (Ezekiel 21:30, 32 [21:25, 27])¹

Yehezqel 21:30, 32: *And to you, O dishonored wicked prince of Yisrael, whose day has come – the time set for your punishment ... Ruin, and utter ruin I will make it. It shall be no more until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs; and I will give it to him.*²

According to Christianity, it is the Anti-Christ who is the wicked man and false ruler. Jesus is the rightful king of the world and will come and depose the Anti-Christ and take his rightful throne.

In fact, the prince referred to in verse 30 is Zidqiyahu, the last king of Yehuda. The use of the term “ruin” three times refers to the three rightful monarchs who never ruled due to the exile. However, Zerubbavel did eventually gain some limited power to rule over Judah.

Claim #3: Dani’el 9:27 is a prophecy foretelling of the Anti-Christ who will stop the daily sacrifices just like the horn in Dani’el 8:11 will do.¹

Dani’el 9:27: *During one week he will make a firm covenant with many. For half a week he will put a stop to the sacrifice and the meal offering. At the corner [of the altar] will be an a ppalling abomination until the decreed destruction will be poured down upon the appalling thing.*²

This prophecy foretells the seven-year agreement between the Romans and the Jews to continue to offer sacrifices at the Temple. After only 3 ½ years, the agreement will be broken and Titus will then destroy the Temple.

Claim #4: The last horn according to Christianity can only be the Anti-Christ since he magnifies himself (Dani’el 8:11) above God. (Dani’el 11:36)¹

Dani’el 11:36: *The king will do as he pleases; he will exalt and magnify himself above every god, and he will speak awful things against the God of gods. He will prosper until wrath is spent, and what has been decreed is accomplished.*²

This is in actuality a prophecy about Constantine who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity – so it was foretold – will speak against God and raise itself above God and His laws.

It is clear that none of these claims regarding the foretelling of an Anti-Christ are true.

What does Dani’el 8 really foretell?

Verse one is the opening statement made by Dani’el where he states that this vision is an elaboration upon his previous vision. This vision focuses on the second and third kingdoms whereas the first vision focused upon the first and fourth kingdoms.

Verses two through four speaks of a ram with two horns. Dani’el sees this ram near the Ulay River near Shushan. The ram has two horns – one horn bigger than the other – who was goring west, north, and south. None of the other animals were able to withstand him.

This ram – more specifically the horns – represent the kingdoms of Media and Persia. Persia is represented by the longer horn because it lasted longer than the Median Empire. The goring in the three directions represents the fact that the Persians came from the East and conquered lands west, north, and south of Persia. None of the kings of these conquered lands were able to resist the Persian Empire.

Verses five through seven are a reference to a single-horned goat. This he-goat came from the west at such a fast pace that it appeared that he did not touch the ground. He charged the two-horned ram, breaking its horns and goring it.

The he-goat reference in these verses is in fact Alexander the Great. He moved so fast out of the west that his troops appeared to have never touched the ground. Darius attempted to appease Alexander with wealth after he realized that Alexander was too mighty for his army but this appeasement did not work.

Verses eight through 14 talks about the single-horned goat's four successors. The he-goat grew in might but at the peak of his greatness, his horn broke. In place of this horn, four more horns grew up in its place. Out of one of these horns came forth a small horn that proceeded to take over the south, east, and the "desirable land" (Yehuda). This small horn challenged God. It caused the daily sacrifices to cease and the Temple to be abandoned. The cessation of the sacrifices was to last "For twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings."

This small horn was Antiochus Epiphanes who ruled over the Seleucid Empire which encroached upon Egypt, Persia, and Yehuda. He attacked the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim and the daily sacrifices ceased. The reference to "twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings" refers to the number of months that Yehuda would be under Greek domination until the successful Maccabean revolt. This is a total of 180 years of Greek rule plus six years of the revolt.

Verses 15 through 27 shows the angel Gavri'el explaining the vision to Dani'el. Gavri'el explains that this vision is a time that is far off into the future. God will use this king to punish the wicked in Yehuda. The king will however defy God and in the end he will die without a hand being laid upon him.

The king in these verses refers to Antiochus who is used by God to punish the wicked in Yehuda. He continuously defies God and destroys the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim. In the end, he falls off a rooftop and dies – without a hand being laid upon him. It is quite clear that these verses refer to Antiochus and the time of the Greek domination of Yehuda.

Next, I will answer the objections to the Antiochus Interpretation

Objection #1: The last horn started small and became great but Antiochus did not greatly extend the Empire and he started out as a principal ruler in the Mediterranean area.¹

Dani'el 8:9-10: *From one of them emerged a small horn, which extended itself greatly toward the south, toward the east, and toward the beautiful land. It grew as high as the host of heaven and it hurled some stars of the [heavenly] host to the ground and trampled them.*²

The idea of Antiochus being a “small horn” refers to the fact that he usurped his older brother’s throne as did his father before him.

Objection #2: The last horn cast down the sanctuary but Antiochus did not destroy the Temple.¹

Dani'el 8:11: *It vaunted itself against the very chief of the host; on its account the regular offering was suspended, and His holy place was abandoned.*²

The “casting down” of the sanctuary does not mean an absolute, literal destruction of the Temple. The Temple had been desecrated and the sacrifices had been discontinued. Casting down simply refers to this defilement and un-usability of the Temple.

Objection #3: The 2,300 days does not fit into the period of Antiochus’ reign when the Temple was desolate.¹

The word “days” does not exist in the original Hebrew so the calculation often used by Christianity is not correct. As I have already stated, the 2,300 time period relates directly to the 180 years of Greek rule plus six years of the revolt which fits into the idea of the horn being Antiochus.

As I have clearly shown, Dani'el 8 has nothing to do with Christianity’s Anti-Christ claim and in fact clearly refers to Antiochus.

¹Ed Richard. “The Time When the Antichrist Will Appear.” *themoorings.org*. Bible Studies at the Moorings, 2012. [<http://www.themoorings.org/prophecy/future/Antichrist/anti.html>]

²David Stein (ed.). *JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999.