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Book Reviews
Approaching the Old Testament

Alan R Millard

Much contemporary criticism still relies on the conclusions of earlier scholars who tended to study the Old Testament in isolation from its own world of the ancient Near East. Alan Millard, as an Assyriologist, here indicates some of the shortcomings of such an approach, and suggests ways in which the Old Testament may be more responsibly studied in the light of its historical context. Mr Millard is Rankin Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Ancient Semitic Languages at the University of Liverpool.

Old Testament studies, like New Testament studies, are separated by some from their companion disciplines of ancient languages and history on the ground of their theological content. The writer does not believe this is acceptable. Primary questions of textual history and criticism, literary and stylistic analysis, historical evaluation and exegesis, demand the same methods of investigation for the biblical texts as for the other ancient documents. The Bible differs in conveying an abiding theological message, but that message comes to us through the text. That message is an extra gift which other texts do not bring to their readers (and it can be rejected like any 'free gift'). The fact of the message does not change the technique of examining the text. Even when a writer had a theological purpose, there is no reason to suppose he worked in any abnormal way.

Accordingly, the subsequent paragraphs comment upon several levels of approach to the Old Testament literature (which inevitably overlap). Where the Word of God is concerned we shall employ every ability to achieve some understanding of it, recognizing that it remains above and beyond us. We should listen to it before we speak about it. Our concern in this paper, then, is chiefly with the first stage of the hermeneutical process, exegesis.

Textual criticism

'These things were written' describes any ancient text—genealogy, love-song, letter, or ration-list, treaty, law, or history, whether in the Bible or without, Israelite or 'Gentile'. To discuss the beginnings of writing in the ancient Near East, the development of various scripts there, and the use made of them, is outside our present purpose, but some appreciation of these matters should be acquired by all who study any document that survives.¹ How scribes performed their task is a more immediately relevant question. When faced with a manuscript or its reproduction we inquire how accurately it was written. Scribal error is a well-attested phenomenon that has been subjected to adequate study in the classical and New Testament texts,² but it currently needs review as regards Hebrew in the light of the Dead Sea Scrolls and of writings contemporary with the Israelite Scriptures. Beside the commission of error should be set the care that is equally evident. Counting verses and similar checks were not rabbinic inventions; Babylonian scribal tradition encouraged the counting of lines from early in the second millennium BC. Why a scribe copied this manuscript or that may no longer be known, nor why some show corrections while others do not.

The properly critical scholar may suspect a corruption in a text, words omitted, misplaced, or mis-spelt, a phrase or sentence wrongly construed. Then he may propose an emendation to obtain a grammatical form or sense more satisfactory to him. However acceptable the reconstruction may be, it cannot be more than a reconstruction, and so will be hypothetical until a text of good quality is found that gives support. (Even then there should be envisaged the possible action of an ancient scribe making the same alteration as the modern scholar!) Any text, indeed, may contain error, and those may be resolved with the aid of other manuscripts. When the oldest form or most authoritative text is in question only suggestions can be made.

We are saying no more than that the text we receive from antiquity has primacy over our ideas of what it ought to say. When we feel it should give a different sense, we should attempt to reach the new reading only in the light of habits and conditions known to have been in force during the text's history.³ Particular care is necessary to avoid any change in a text to support a theory of its form or

¹ See, for the present, 'The Practice of Writing in Ancient Israel', Biblical Archaeologist 35 (1972), pp. 98-111.
metre, or putative content, however that is reached.

Evidence from early translations is frequently invoked to aid understanding of the Hebrew text. Indeed, these may indicate a different and superior underlying original, giving an acceptable emendation. Nevertheless, translations are to be used with great caution, for translations did not replace the original in Judaism. As a result, translators enjoyed greater liberty to interpret or paraphrase than modern ideals might envisage. Current research into the Septuagint emphasizes the need to evaluate it book by book, avoiding general conclusions. Moreover, growing ability to separate various recensions of the Greek Bible calls for caution in using them to emend the Hebrew; that may have been done tacitly by the ancient translator. Furthermore, since the Dead Sea Scrolls have revealed a variety of Old Testament texts in Hebrew immediately prior to the fall of Jerusalem, it becomes apparent that ancient translations may represent traditions differing from the Massoretic Text, so these can hardly be used to correct the Massoretic Text. Great attention is rightly paid to these deviant texts, for they may tell of earlier phases in textual history, but they should not blind us to the predominance of Massoretic Text type manuscripts amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls. Here is an area for further exploration.

Literary criticism

With a text before us to interpret, what position are we, the interpreters, to adopt for our task? Two levels of interpretation are possible: firstly, what the text is about, what it meant to the man responsible for its present form, that is, its intended meaning; secondly, what the text can reveal about that man and his contemporaries, his sources, and any earlier history the text may have had.

Our Old Testament is the final product of a long period during which the documents may have been edited, revised, translated. Much labour has been spent by Old Testament scholars in attempts to trace this story, starting from the fixed form of the texts as they have been handed to us. Regrettably, the fruits of this labour are often unsatisfying. The cause lies in the subjective nature of the arguments used. That may be excusable in part because of the closed nature of the evidence. Yet even taken within their own horizons, the literary arguments used can be seen to be superficial and inadequate. Several scholars have indicated this.5

There is, however, some material to provide a standard for testing the approaches made to the Old Testament texts. While the damp soil of Palestine is unlikely to yield lengthy literary texts on parchment or papyrus from the Monarchy period (although one scrap of papyrus has survived from the seventh century BC in a cave near the Dead Sea), the long-established cultures of Egypt and Babylonia have given us many texts. It is reasonable to draw analogies from these documents, for there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the scribal art was carried out in a similar way all over the area of the biblical world.

Written literature already existed in Babylonia in the mid-third millennium BC and in Egypt almost as early, as existing manuscripts witness. Our following observations are drawn from the Babylonian material. Two processes can be traced in the transmission of these ancient texts. On the one hand, some compositions current c. 2500 BC were being copied almost a millennium later with very little change. (Modernization of spelling and grammar was normal, though not mandatory. Through the innate conservatism of writing, these two always lag behind the state of the spoken language, as occasional lapses show.) Other works written out about 1600 BC were still being copied in the seventh century with little change. On the other hand, the effects of revising and editing, and of different streams of tradition, can be seen in many cases. This is possible because copies of basically the same texts made centuries apart have been found. Thus we may read an account of the flood in a copy written soon after 700 BC and its ancestor written almost a millennium earlier, and trace the differences. In series of omens first compiled early in the second millennium BC there is little organization in comparison with the ‘canonical’ versions of the first millennium BC where a desire for consistency and completeness has been indulged (e.g. balancing a phenomenon of the left-hand by one for the right).6

For the Old Testament it is impossible to go far beyond the first century BC in so objective a way—there are no earlier manuscripts. Any hints that the cuneiform texts may give as to the reason for the observable differences between earlier and later

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4 This last comment should be followed through the essays of D. W. Gooding, e.g. TSF Bulletin 56 (1970), pp. 8-13; Reise of Ancient Exegesis (Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series 4, Cambridge University Press, 1975). When the currently live question of re-interpretation (rêlecture) within the Old Testament is considered, this should be kept in mind, too.


texts may be of value, therefore, as guides in building hypotheses about stages in the development of the Old Testament text. So far no clearly traceable practices have been observed, but study of textual history is still in its infancy in Assyriology. Striking lessons may be drawn from some exercises that have been conducted on the basis of texts extant from one period alone. An important prayer to the goddess Ishtar was known from a Neo-Babylonian copy (c. 600 BC). By studying its literary form, a leading scholar was led to assign a date for its composition towards the end of the second millennium BC. Then an exact duplicate and a Hittite translation were recovered, copied c. 1400 BC, that indicate a date just before the middle of the second millennium BC as the time of composition. At various times scholars have claimed to trace different sources in the Babylonian flood story on the basis of varying elements and names involved, but with the recovery of additional texts the criteria are proved illusory. To predict the early state of a text on the basis of a later copy alone is risky, if not inadmissible.

Recovery of manuscripts of ancient texts copied at different times may allow us to discern some patterns in the way scribes of the Old Testament period handled their literature. When this can be done there will be a satisfactory model available for literary analysis of the Old Testament. Theories of literary criticism that import attitudes to texts quite unattested in the biblical world or fail to recognize and allow for known ancient practices should be accepted no longer.

The golden calf passage of Exodus 32 can serve as an example (in limited and abbreviated form). A recent article lists 'the more noticeable inconsistencies', and concludes 'the composite nature of the chapter' is 'so apparent'. 'The most significant problem is the uncertainty as to who actually made the calf': Aaron at the people's request, according to verses 1 to 6, or the people themselves, verses 8, 20, or Aaron and the people, verse 35, cf. Dt. 9: 16, 20. In an ancient text just unearthed these variations would present no problem. Shifts of subject are quite in order, especially where an authority and an agent are concerned. In Assyrian royal records great claims are made by the kings, but occasionally it is made clear that a campaign was conducted by one of the generals, not by the monarch himself.

We may suspect this was so on other occasions. One version of Sennacherib's records carefully relates the suppression of a rebel in Cilicia by a force despatched from Assyria; another, later, text attributes the conquest to the king himself. Neither is wrong, nor is there inconsistency; the troops and their commanders were agents of the king's will. In other examples fluctuation of person, between first and third, singular and plural, is not significant, on the same grounds. So the problems over the making of the calf resolve themselves. The idol was made for the Israelites, at their bidding, under the guidance of Aaron (verses 1-6). That is the initial narrative. Then Moses in the mountain is informed of the sin, in general terms. Why should Aaron be specified here, verse 8, or in verse 20? He was the agent of the people; in effect they had the calf made, which differs little from making it in a situation like this.

Form criticism
Credit for emphasizing the relevance of the ancient texts in comparative literary study belongs to H. Gunkel. He observed particular areas of content linked with particular formulations, firstly in Genesis, and notably in the Psalms. Analogous patterns were traced in Egyptian and Babylonian religious poetry. The general theory is very sensible; Gunkel's classification of the Psalms gives some helpful insights. Another successful application is to be seen in the study of the covenant form during the past two decades. Recognition of the basic pattern and its concomitants has clarified many passages, and the writer is convinced that yet more can be gained from research into this matter. What is to be specially noted is the order in which the pattern was discovered, first of all in the Hittite texts by V. Korosec in 1931, without any reference to the biblical material, then, long after, applied to the Hebrew sources by G. E. Mendenhall (1954), K. Bultzer (1960), and many others.

Besides using such parallels, Gunkel applied wholesale to the Old Testament premises and techniques developed by students of Indo-European folk-lore. While general comparisons may be in order, each argument deserves a proper test on several ancient Near Eastern traditional tales. As developed in biblical studies, form criticism has tended to become far too rigid and extreme. At least three propositions advanced may be questioned: first is the ascription of priority to poetry over...
prose; second is the assertion that the older the material the briefer it will be; third is the demand for consistency within a unit of composition (a requirement shared by classic literary criticism). Application of these three criteria is an exercise comparable with the mathematical process of discovering the lowest common denominator. A striking case is the form-critical reconstruction of the Ten Commandments. Four commands are short, rhythmic, each with four stresses, and a negative frame, according to the form-critics, so the remainder are reduced and re-cast until they have an identical appearance. Yet the scribes and authors of antiquity were no more bound to a rigid consistency than we are. True, they may have been more strongly tied to traditional forms, but they could use them flexibly. Greetings from one king to another in the Amarna Letters exemplify the sort of variation seen in the Commandments as they stand, as do several other texts. Further, differences between prose and poetic accounts of a single event do not necessarily reveal a development of tradition from the poetic to the prose, as is often believed. Both accounts may have been written simultaneously for differing purposes. Egypt and Assyria provide examples of that, in the Qadesh inscriptions of Ramesses II and in the poem known as the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta compared with his 'annals'.

Gunkel’s work assumed the literary analysis of the Pentateuch crystallized by Julius Wellhausen, and both approaches underlie the development from form criticism made by A. Alt and M. Noth in investigating the traditions of early Israel. In the works of these two scholars there appear strongly the demands for consistency already criticized. Alt took an interest in ancient Near Eastern documents and their value to Old Testament research, yet allowed his work to be controlled by ‘interests of exact analysis’ and ‘ideal patterns’ of what can have happened constructed on grounds of historical analogy. Here, too, texts are forced into an alien mould.

Historical criticism

Reading the Law caused Wellhausen great perplexity; there seemed to be so little relationship between its ideals and the impression given by history and prophecy once Israel was settled in her land. So he reached the conclusion ‘the law is later than the prophets’. He expounded his ideas so compellingly, utilizing the literary analysis of the Pentateuch and the optimistic notions of progress in human behaviour that had grown during the nineteenth century, that his work has held the field through its brilliant logic and the satisfying way Israel’s career can be fitted into a human view of history. Judged on the points already considered, however, his thesis falls: the criteria of literary criticism he used as a basic tool are unsatisfactory, the approach to the text and content arbitrary (especially in the light of ancient Near Eastern material), expecting from them a rigid and consistent thought-world similar to his own.

But another question deserves consideration at this juncture: the completeness of the writings, or otherwise. Perhaps it is a disadvantage that the canon of Scripture encourages a feeling of completeness, an assumption that adequate answers to every problem should be obtainable from within it. True as this may be theologically, there are no reasons for assuming it in the historical, linguistic, or literary spheres. Acquaintance with contemporary writings unearthed in the lands around Israel soon brings realization of how small a proportion of the material once committed to writing does survive. Often what we can read presents a partial picture only, composed for a single purpose. Even when two accounts of one event are in our hands, it may be impossible to align them exactly because we lack some vital clues. Consequently, reconstructions based upon such incomplete data can be helpful in stimulating further research only so long as they are treated as hypotheses and not as facts. When new information is made available that calls the reconstructions into question, they are not to be treated as a drowning man’s last hope, clung to at all costs. The new may well aid penetration of the old. In many cases of supposed contradiction or discrepancy within the text, improved understanding of Hebrew language and style may also point to satisfactory solutions.

In reading any text it is a grave matter to state the presence of an error without positive proof. Frequently the text in question will be the only

source of evidence and so if it is ‘corrected’ or treated with suspicion the evidence is destroyed or adulterated with speculation. Where there is only one source of evidence a sceptical attitude towards it may be maintained, but not as a pretext for erecting theories that conflict with that only witness. In the happy circumstance of two texts surviving there may be incongruencies. If so, one does not have to be forced to agree with the other. The danger of the difference being in the mind of the reader deserves consideration continually. Harmonization on the basis of known ancient processes is the next, quite legitimate, historical method. To answer ‘I do not know’ is no less respectable academically than politically if the alternatives are unsatisfactory!

Without denying that the ancients made false claims and mistakes we should be extremely reluctant to allege the existence of them, in particular (to repeat) when the supposedly misleading information is our only source, rendering any alternative reconstruction completely speculative. Thus Babylonia supplies one case of fairly well-proved forgery, a document appearing to be several centuries older than it really is, providing for a temple's maintenance.itic Likewise, the recovery of several accounts of a certain battle enables us to see how the Assyrian version has turned a defeat into a victory. But both examples can be demonstrated through the aid of other ancient sources, not from themselves alone.

Wellhausen was convinced his opinion was right. The possibility that the canonical works had been written and selected so as to avoid unnecessary repetition was not allowed, nor any weight given to the maxim ‘absence of evidence is not evidence of absence’, problematic though it may be in application. Clearly the prophets were aware of various aspects of the Priestly laws, so since Wellhausen’s day even the most extreme have come to agree upon the high antiquity of some passages ascribed to the exilic or post-exilic 'P'.

Again, arguments from language and style are employed, but the effects of such re-evaluation on the underlying view of Israelite religion have yet to be spelt out. While attested ancient practices are not conclusive proof of their equally ancient existence in Israel, the recovery of parallels to one and another of the Priestly requirements supports the possibility of their presence early in Israelite history. All views sceptical of a highly organized religious element in early Israel stem from the view that her career saw a development from simple to complex forms over a long period. As Dr Kitchen has shown forcefully, that cannot be substantiated.

Towards a balanced criticism

To depart so far from the accepted methods of Old Testament study may seem radical. To discount the work at which the majority of Old Testament students have laboured may seem ungrateful. That is not so. We shall not close our eyes to the achievements of the past, so long as we can test and approve their foundations by modern techniques. Where the foundations are found to be insecurely laid, the wall will have to be rebuilt. Some of the old bricks may be re-used, some may have to be jettisoned completely. Again, there is no reproach involved. In every active field of study the same action occurs, whether an entire revolution such as Copernicus fathered, or a radical re-appraisal such as Darwin's work has suffered, or a completely new approach such as has been accepted in Homeric studies. The ancient Near East has been plundered for a century or more to provide 'illumination' for the Bible when, rather, the Bible should be read within its ancient horizons so far as textual, literary, and historical matters are concerned. Old Testament studies cry for release from their chains, and the hammers lie ready!

If the fetters are snapped, which paths lead from the prison to profitable places? Here are seven roads, some already opened, that may prove helpful:


2. Examination of Hebrew style from the texts themselves, without concern for criteria for dating or distinguishing sources; cf. E. König, Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1900) and the papers of W. J. Martin and A. Hurwitz, nn.5,16 above.

3. Exploration of new approaches to literature; e.g. structuralist—P. Beauchamp, Création et sépara-


41 TSF Bulletin 64 (1972), pp. 2-10.

4. Application of form criticism without attention to ‘source’ analysis that might cut across the forms.

5. Evaluation of biblical themes and practices as they stand in the light of the ancient Near East (e.g. supposing the tabernacle and laws of Leviticus to be phenomena of the thirteenth century BC).

6. Demonstration of the common cultural heritage Israel shared with her contemporaries in many spheres (cf. the paper cited in n.1).

source of evidence and so if it is 'corrected' or treated with suspicion the evidence is destroyed or adulterated with speculation. Where there is only one source of evidence in form of a biblical attestation, it may be maintained, but not as a pretext for erecting theories that conflict with that only witness. In the happy circumstance of two texts surviving there may be incongruencies. If so, one does not have to be forced to agree with the other. The danger of the difference being in the mind of the reader deserves consideration continually. Harmonization on the basis of known ancient processes is the next, quite legitimate, historical method. To answer 'I do not know' is no less respectable academically than politically if the alternatives are unsatisfactory!

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Again, language and style are employed, but the effects of such re-evaluation are underlying view of Israelite religion have yet to be spelt out. While attested ancient practices are there is a similarity with the False Decretals of the medieval church. See E. Solberg, 'The Cricufom Monument', Jaqerth... orl Euax 20 (1967-8), pp. 50-70.


On the question of 'foreign levites' see D. A. Hubbard's entry in NDB, pp. 1025-34.

are not conclusive proof of their equally ancient existence in Israel, the recovery of parallels to one and another of the Priestly requirements supports the view that some of their parallels in later history. All views sceptical of a highly organized religious element in early Israel stem from the view that her career developed from simple to complex forms over a long period. As Dr Kitchen has shown forcefully, that cannot be substantiated.

Towards a balanced-criticism

To depart so far from the accepted methods of Old Testament study may seem radical. To discount the work at which the majority of Old Testament students have laboured may seem ungrateful. That is not so. We shall not close our eyes to the achievements of the past, so long as we can test and approve their foundations by modern techniques. There the literal approach cannot be securely laid, the wall will have to be rebuilt. Some of the old bricks may be re-used, some may have to be jettisoned completely. Again, there is no reproach involved. In every active field of study the same action occurs, whether an entire revolution such as Copernicus fathered, or a radical re-appraisal such as Darwin's work has suffered, or a completely new approach such as has been accepted in Homecric studies. The ancient Near East has been plundered of its 'living-string' for the Bible when, rather, the Bible should be read within its ancient horizons so far as textual, literary, and historical matters are concerned. Old Testament studies cry for release from their chains, and the hammer lies ready!

If the fettlers are snapped, which paths lead from the prison to profitable places? Here are seven roads, some already opened, that may prove attractive and helpful:


2. Examination of Hebrew style from the texts themselves, without concern for criteria for dating or distinguishing sources; cf. E. König, Sylistik, Rhetorik, Poetik (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1900) and W. J. M. Martin and A. Hurwit, nn.5,16 above.

3. Exploration of new approaches to literature; e.g., structuralist—P. Beauchamp, Création et sépara-


Robert Gurney's article was originally intended to stand alone as an exegetical study, and he has not seen the two following articles. He has kindly agreed to have them published for the starting-point for this symposium, even though it was not designed for this purpose. It is a product of many years of study of Daniel (soon to be published in book form) while Dr Gurney has been a medical missionary working among Muslims at Moyale in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya.

The following articles, by our Associate Editor for Old Testament studies and by Dr Gordon Wenham, Lecturer in Semitic Studies at the Queen's University of Belfast, were specially commissioned to draw out some of the critical and theological issues involved in evangelical study of the book of Daniel.

The four kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7

Robert J M Gurney

The visions of Daniel and world history

My basic thesis with regard to Daniel's prophecies is that Daniel was primarily looking forward to the first coming of Christ. He predicted both the historical setting (in chapters 2, 7, 8, 11 and 12) and the date (in chapter 9) of the first advent. The four 'kings' of Daniel 2 and 7 are, I believe, to be identified with Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece. The Greek empire is described in special detail because it immediately preceded the kingdom of heaven. Christ was born around 4 BC, very probably during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Greek empire in 27 BC, when Egypt was made a Roman province. The destruction of the Greek empire was the first step in the process of setting up the kingdom of heaven, and it began in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. In fact the special sign that God had begun to destroy the fourth kingdom—

As I pointed out in an earlier article, Daniel 11:2 describes the first four powerful kings of Persia, from Cyrus to Xerxes, corresponding to the four kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7. A vital obliteration of Antiochus Epiphanes himself. A Note on Daniel 11: 40-45 in TSF Bulletin 47 (1967), pp. 10-12.
is a detailed description of the Greek empire from Alexander to Antiochus Epiphanes, corresponding to the specially important fourth kingdom. I suggest that there is a detailed description of the destruction of the Greek empire by Rome, corresponding to the destruction of the body of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:11, 26. To be more precise, they describe the annexation of Syria by Scipio Africanus in verses 44 and 45 and describe the unsuccessful campaign of Crassus against the Parthians in 54 BC.

In the previous verses 'the king of the north' has always been a Greek king of Syria. The words 'at the time of the end' (verse 41) indicate, however, that the identity of the king of the north has changed. Daniel has already shown that at the time of the end Greece will be destroyed, following the death of Antiochus Epiphanes—a fact that will precede the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

Since this section follows a description of Antiochus Epiphanes, precedes a description of the kingdom of heaven and is introduced by the words 'at the time of the end', we should expect it to concern the destruction of Greece. If we take it that it is describing this, it is reasonable to assume that the destroying 'king of the north' here is some new non-Greek character. In view of the fact that the description here reflects a more general idea of a king of Syria, but does apply perfectly to the nation which destroyed the Greek empire, it may be that it is more than reasonable. The correct translation throughout the chapter should be a king of the north, not a god of the earth. This simply indicates a king to the north of Israel. The period of history between verses 39 and 40 is irrelevant and therefore not described (cf. the gap in time between Xerxes and Alexander, 11:2-3).

The final book, Daniel 11, which describe the unsuccessful campaign of Crassus against the Parthians, are relevant for at least two reasons: (a) they show that the fourth kingdom was not the Roman empire, and (b) they explain how Daniel 7:12 was fulfilled.

(a) They show that the fourth kingdom was not the Roman empire. Firstly, they draw attention to the fact that the Roman armies were not invincible. In this case Rome was badly defeated when still in her prime and her armies were defeated. Secondly, they draw attention to the fact that the Romans did not by any means tread down 'the whole earth'. The Parthians ruled a very large part of the former Babylonian empire, and in the context of the book of Daniel 'the whole earth' must surely include the area covered by those empires. The Roman empire was essentially an empire of the West, and Palestine lay right on its eastern border. All the land to the immediate east of Palestine (including Babylonia, Media, and Persia) lay across that empire. It is clear that some success against the Parthians many years after the time of Christ (and after the establishment of the kingdom of heaven) and he incorporated part of their empire into the Roman empire; but his successors in large measure ignored or displaced those victories and conquests. Most of the Median empire and about half of the Persian and Greek empires were never at any time within the Roman empire. Media and Persia themselves were never within the empire.

(b) They explain how Daniel 7:12 was fulfilled. Because of Rome's failure to surround Babylonia, Media and Persia all remained outside the Roman empire. Their dominion was taken away, but they were independent of Rome.

Radical authors always identify the four kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, while conservative authors usually identify them as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. One of the reasons radical scholars give for their belief is a second century BC date of authorship is the fact that the Greek empire is described very accurately and in much greater detail than the preceding empires. They believe that Daniel's first three kingdoms correspond to the history of Media and Persia, but that his description of them is inaccurate. I believe that both the radicals and the conservatives have missed the truth. Daniel's four kingdoms are an accurate, true-to-history description of Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Greek empires. Conservative scholars claim that a major objection to this interpretation is found in the statement that the heavenly kingdom was to be set up in 'the days of those kings' (Dn. 2:44). They argue that this is an inaccuracy of the Greek empire. I suggest, however, that the fourth kingdom was destroyed by the pre-incarnate Christ, and this destruction was part of the process of setting up the kingdom of heaven. A key verse supporting this interpretation is 2 Cor. 6:25 (cf. Dn. 2:34; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

This interpretation does justice to both visions. The vision of the image indicates that the setting up of the heavenly kingdom began with the destruction of the fourth kingdom. The stone struck the feet of iron and clay before it became a mountain and filled the earth. The vision of the four beasts indicates that the fourth kingdom was destroyed before the image was described as having the feet of iron and clay. Many passages in the New Testament indicate that these visions (of the stone becoming a mountain and the one like a son of man receiving the kingdom) found their primary fulfillment around the time of Christ (Mt. 16:28; 28:6; Lk. 22:28; 18:24; Acts 5:7; Rom. 8:16; 17:1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:20-22; 2:6; Heb. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 1:5; 6; 3:21; 5:13-19 Rev. 12:5).

This interpretation also does justice to the fact that the fourth kingdom is so detailed and accurate a picture of the Greek empire, that radical scholars believe the author lived during the time of that empire after the events had taken place. It also does justice to the visions of chapters 8, 11, and 12, where the fourth kingdom and Antiochus Epiphanes are described, the descriptions corresponding very closely to those of the third and fourth kingdoms and the 'little horn' described in chapters 2 and 7. In chapters 8, 11 and 12 Persia and Rome are mentioned only very briefly, whereas Greece and Antiochus Epiphanes are described in immense detail. Likewise, the fourth kingdom and its 'little horn' are described in far greater detail than the other kingdoms, and Daniel takes a special interest in them (7:19-20).

This interpretation also agrees with the way in which the Median origin of 'Darius the Mede' is emphasized (5:31; 9:1; 11:1), and the way in which he is depicted as the successor of the kings of the three previous empires, indicating that the kingdom of Darius was the Median kingdom—I am merely suggesting that the book of Daniel uses Darius to get across the idea that Media was the second of the four world powers.

The interpretation also gives full weight to the twice-repeated statement that the vision of chapter 8 concerns 'the time of the end' (8:17; 19; cf. 11:35, 40 and 12:1-4), as well as to the New Testament passage that indicates that 'time of the end' and 'the last days' began around the time of the first advent (Lk. 18:31; 21:22; Acts 2:15-17; 3:24; Heb. 1:1; 2:9; 26; 1 Pet. 1:20).

So much for the basic thesis. In the following paragraphs I want to argue that Daniel's first three kingdoms are accurate, true-to-history descriptions of Babylon, Media, and Persia. I shall not deal with the fourth kingdom in detail, because the way in which it corresponds to the Greek empire is already well known and has been described by many authors.

The image (Dn. 2)

The image has a head of gold, and Daniel interprets it as a king 'of kings', the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the power of the people of the race of the holy one of the most High. Thus we are told that the head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon rose to a position of pre-eminence.
is a detailed description of the Greek empire from Alexander to Antiochus Epiphanes, corresponding to the specially important fourth kingdom. I suggest that it is a description of the destruction of the Greek empire by Rome, corresponding to the destruction of the body of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:11, 26. To be more precise, they describe the annexation of Syria by Scipio Africanus. But verses 43 and 44 describe the unsuccessful campaign of Crassus against the Parthians in 54 BC.

In the previous verses 'the king of the north' has always been a Greek king of Syria. The words 'at the end' (verse 10) indicate, however, that the identity of the king of the north has changed. Daniel has already shown that at the time of the end Greece will be destroyed, following the death of Antiochus Epiphanes. That is what will precede the coming of the kingdom of heaven.

Since this section follows a description of Antiochus Epiphanes, precedes a description of the kingdom of heaven and is introduced by the words 'at the time of the end', we should expect it to concern the destruction of Greece. If we take it that is describing this, it is reasonable to assume that the destroying 'king of the north' here is some non-Greek character. In view of the fact that this character destroys the fourth kingdom of the north, he must be a personage important in Jewish history, who is of a kingdom other than Greece, but does apply perfectly to the nation which destroyed the Greek empire, one might say it is more than reasonable. The correct translation throughout the chapter should be a king of the north, not a Greek king.

The final two verses (verses 11-12) describe the unsuccessful campaign of Crassus against the Parthians, which are relevant for at least two reasons: (a) they show that the fourth kingdom was not the Roman empire, and (b) they explain how Daniel 7:12 was fulfilled.

(a) They show that the fourth kingdom was not the Roman empire. Firstly, they draw attention to the fact that the Roman armies were not invincible. In this case Rome was badly defeated when still in her prime and glory. Secondly, they draw attention to the fact that the Romans did not by any means tread down 'the whole earth'. The Parthians ruled a very large part of the former Babylonian empire, and in the context of the book of Daniel 'the whole earth' must surely include the area covered by those empires. The Roman empire was essentially an empire of the West, and Palestine lay right on its eastern border. All the land to the immediate east of Palestine (including Babylonia, Media and Persia) lay almost entirely outside the Roman empire and had enjoyed some success against the Parthians many years after the time of Christ (and after the establishment of the kingdom of heaven) and he incorporated part of their empire into the Roman empire; but his successor Antiochus Epiphanes (a few years later) conquered the eastern part of the empire. Most of the Medean empire and about half of the Persian and Greek empires were never at any time within the Roman empire. Media and Persia themselves were never within the empire. Because of Rome's failure against Parthia, Babylon, Media and Persia all remained outside the Roman empire. Their dominion was taken away, but they were independent of Rome.

Radical authors always identify the four kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greek empires, while conservative authors usually identify them as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and Media. One of the reasons radical scholars give for their belief in a second century BC date of authorship is the fact that the Greek empire is described very accurately and in much greater detail than the preceding empires. They believe that Daniel's first three kingdoms correspond to Babylon, Media and Persia, but that his description of them is inaccurate. I believe that both the radicals and the conservatives have missed the truth. Daniel's four kingdoms are an accurate, true-to-history description of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman empires. Conservative scholars claim that a major objection to this interpretation is found in the statement that the heavenly kingdom was to be set up 'in the days of those kings' (Dn. 2:44). It is not clear how this.destroys the fourth kingdom of the Greek empire. I suggest, however, that the fourth kingdom was destroyed by the pre-incarnate Christ, and this destruction was part of the process of setting up the kingdom of heaven. A key verse supporting this interpretation is Daniel 8:25 (cf. Dn. 2:34; Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

This interpretation does justice to both visions. The vision of the image indicates that the setting up of the heavenly kingdom began with the destruction of the fourth kingdom. The stone struck the feet of iron and clay before it became a mountain and filled the earth. The vision of the four beasts indicates that the fourth kingdom was destroyed before the stone. Many passages in the New Testament indicate that these visions (of the stone becoming a mountain and the one like a son of man receiving the kingdom) found their primary fulfillment around the time of the New Testament (Mt. 16:28; 28:18; Lk. 22:69; Acts 7:56; Rom. 8:16; 17:1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:20-22; 2:6; Heb. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 1:5; 6; 3:21; 5:13-19 RV; 12:5).

This interpretation also does justice to the fact that the fourth kingdom is described accurately as a picture of the Greek empire, that radical scholars believe the author lived during the time of that empire after the events had taken place. It also does justice to the visions of chapters 8, 11 and 12, where the Medean, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, and Antiochus Epiphanes are described, the descriptions corresponding very closely indeed to those of the third and fourth kingdoms and the 'little horn' in chapters 2 and 7. In chapters 8, 11 and 12 Persia and Rome are mentioned only very briefly, whereas Greece and Antiochus Epiphanes are described in immense detail. Likewise, the fourth kingdom and its 'little horn' are described in far greater detail than the other kingdoms, and Daniel takes a special interest in them (7:19-20).

This interpretation also agrees with the way in which the Median origin of 'Darius the Mede' is emphasized (5:31; 9:11:11), and the way in which he is depicted as the successor of the kings of Babylon and Persia showing that the kingdom of Darius was the Median kingdom—I am merely suggesting that the book of Daniel uses Darius to get across the idea that Media was the second of the four world powers.

The interpretation also gives full weight to the twice-repeated statement that the vision of chapter 8 concerns 'the time of the end' (8:17;19; cf. 11:35, 40 and 12:1-4), as well as to the New Testament passages which say that 'the time of the end' and 'the last days' began around the time of the first advent (Lk. 18:31; 21:22; Acts 2:15-17; 3:24; Heb. 1:1; 2:9; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20).

So much for the basic thesis. In the following paragraphs I will show that Daniel's first three kingdoms are accurate, true-to-history descriptions of Babylon, Media, and Persia. I shall not deal with the fourth kingdom in detail, because the way in which it corresponds to the Greek empire is already well known and has been described by many authors.

The image (Dn. 2)

The image has a head of gold, and Daniel interprets it at the end of the vision as the king of Babylon, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the sons of men, and the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them—all, you are the head of gold. Thus we are told that the head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon rose to a position of power and influence.

The breast and arms of this image are of silver and Daniel interprets as follows: And after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you. In my opinion, Daniel is here describing the Median empire, which was next in rank to the Babylonian empire, but after the defeat of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 BC it became the stronger of the two, because the power and wealth of Babylon immediately declined. Babylon was still a power, but the scales had tipped in favour of the Medes. Remember that the head of gold symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel says, 'And after you (Nebuchadnezzar) shall arise another kingdom inferior to you.' Following the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Media was the major power for at least twelve years until it was united with Persia in 550 BC under the rule of Cyrus. The Median empire did not, however, have the glory and magnificence of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon—it was of inferior quality.

It is often objected that the Median empire did not really follow after the Babylonian empire—it was contemporaneous with it. It may be replied, however, that the order in which the kingdoms are given is the order of their rise to the height of power and prominence. Daniel does not say that each kingdom exists only from the time of destruction of the preceding kingdom to the time of its own destruction. The order of the kingdoms is the order of their existence—it is the order of their occupation of the seat of supreme power: in other words, the order in which they held the title of 'top nation!' This is confirmed in the vision of the four beasts, because the kingdom of Babylon has been destroyed, the first three kingdoms continue to exist for a while together, although their dominion is taken away from them. This clearly indicates that they are to some extent contemporaneous.

The assertion that there was no Median empire between the Babylonian and Persian empires seems to be based on a misconception. This misconception is the idea that Persia succeeded Babylon as the dominant power before the fall of Babylon in 539 BC. Persia in fact became the dominant world power some years before Babylon fell. Cyrus built up a very large and powerful empire which outstripped the Babylonian empire several years
before he got round to conquering the latter empire. If he is admitted, and so it must, that Persia lay in ruins when the actual fall of Babylon, it can also be admitted that Media may have been the dominant world power before Persia.

Babylon and Media were the two great rivals for world power, and after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, it seemed inevitable that Media would overthrow Babylon. This was the state of affairs for a few uneasy years. But suddenly, events took an unexpected turn. Unknown and unbeknown to one of his own vassals, the brilliant Persian king, Cyrus. Cyrus united the Medes and Persians as allies under his own rule; but from this time Persia was on the ascendant. For some years the two peoples held the reins of power together, but the Persians had the edge on the Medes and increased their power until they were completely dominant.

Daniel continues the interpretation as follows: ‘... and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over the three of them’. The third kingdom is symbolized by the image’s belly and thighs of bronze and is to ‘rule over all the earth’. The characteristic of this third kingdom is the immense area over which it rules. This is the perfect description of Persia, because the most striking aspect of that empire was the huge area it covered—it was by far the vastest empire the world had seen. The following Greek empire was in fact slightly smaller than the Persian empire. In all respects inferior to the Persian empire, Alexander’s Greek empire either fell short of or failed to extend beyond the limits of the Persian empire.

Cyrus himself created the largest empire the world had seen up to that time; but his successors continued to push the frontiers outwards until the Persian empire was truly breathtaking in size. In a series of brilliant campaigns Cyrus annexed the entire Median empire, the large and powerful kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, much territory in the East—and then the Babylonian empire. His successors added all Egypt, a chunk of Europe and more territory in the East.

Note also that in which Daniel groups together the second and third kingdoms. The second kingdom is passed over quickly with a brief and belittling remark, possibly indicating that its term of supreme power is comparatively insignificant and shows the short-lived nature of its wealth and magnificence. It is grouped with and closely followed and overshadowed by, the world-ruling third kingdom. The whole description is strongly suggestive of the Medo-Persian situation, because the comparatively insignificant Median empire was absorbed and eclipsed by the subsequently enor- mously strong empire that followed it in the period spoken of (it Meda) had itself surpassed Babylon. The description of the second and third kingdoms fits the Median and Persian empires far better than it fits the huge, wealthy, long-lived Persian empire and the rather smaller Greek empire.

The four beasts (Dn. 7)

Daniel recounts, ‘The first was like a lion and had eagles’ wings’. Then as I looked its wings were plucked off, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand upon two feet like a man; and the mind of a man was given to it.’ The winged lion is familiar in Babylonian art. The eagle was a symbol of swiftness and the lion one of strength and nobility (2 Sa. 1:23). The eagle was the king of birds, and the lion the king of beasts. They correspond to the image’s head of gold, the metal which was regarded as the noblest and most valuable of all metals. Almost all are agreed that this beast represents Babylon and that the change which comes upon it probably symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar’s madness and subsequent exile. Note also that there is something like a time of Nebuchadnezzar is strongly indicated. The Bible repeatedly describes Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans of his time as being like both an eagle (Dn. 2: 49–51; 2 Kings 25: 11–14) and a lion (Ps. 5: 5–20; 4: 4: 6, 7, 13, cf. 25: 9, 13-17; 49: 19, 22; 50: 17, 44). These creatures were used to convey a picture of Nebuchadnezzar coming from afar against the Jews and their neighbours and enemies. The name given to Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel always associates the glory and magnificence of Babylon with Nebuchadnezzar (Dn. 2: 37, 38; 4: 22, 30, 36; 5: 18, 19).

It is a historical fact that Nebuchadnezzar was largely responsible for the glory of the Neo-Babylonian empire. He came to the throne when his father died in 605 BC, soon after the final obliteration of Assyria—an event which Nebuchadnezzar helped to bring about. During his long reign of 43 years, Babylon was practically invincible. Moreover, he lavished immense wealth and architectural skill on his capital city, making it world-famous for its magnificence and strength. Nebuchadnezzar was both a great soldier and a great builder. After his death, his successors were unable to continue his policies, and his splendid buildings fell into ruin. But the image of the lion—the image of the kingdom—remained, and Daniel used it to forecast the future of the Medes under the leadership of Cyrus.

The Medes led the Medes and Persians as allies under his own rule, but from this time Persia was on the ascendant. For some years the two peoples held the reins of power together, but the Persians had the edge on the Medes and increased their power until they were completely dominant.

Daniel continues the interpretation as follows: ‘... and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over the three of them’. The third kingdom is symbolized by the image’s belly and thighs of bronze and is to ‘rule over all the earth’. The characteristic of this third kingdom is the immense area over which it rules. This is the perfect description of Persia, because the most striking aspect of that empire was the huge area it covered—it was by far the largest empire the world had seen. The following Greek empire was in fact slightly smaller than the Persian empire. In all respects inferior to the Persian empire, Alexander’s Greek empire either fell short of or failed to extend beyond the limits of the Persian empire.

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great rival, Media, the position was now reversed. Daniel continues, 'And behold, another beast, a second, came up...'

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meaning of the four heads is eminently suitable, because Persia's main period of expansion and aggression was comprised of the four first kings— Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes (Pseudo-Smerdis being merely a short-lived imposter). Between these four first kings created the Persian empire in all its vast extent and wealth; and it was through them that the decline of the empire began. Xerxes' small gains in Greece were lost within a few months; but the empire reached the pinnacle of its power, wealth and size during his reign. Each of these four kings had a part to play in the formation of the enormous empire. It was not the work of one man, and the four-headed beast is a perfect picture of this.

Note that the four heads have nothing to do with the four horns of Ezekiel (8). The four heads appear to be a feature of the beast's great dominion, whereas the four horns of Greece are connected with a loss of dominion (cf. 11: 4). In 11: 2-4 the number four is mentioned twice—in connection with Persia, and once with Greece. The reference to Persia speaks of an initial phase of conquest and power, whereas the reference to Greece speaks of a second phase of division and loss of territory and power. If the third kingdom is the Persian empire, it also follows that the fourth kingdom (the Roman empire) is not the same thing as the unequal sides of the beast (7: 5). There is a connection, however, since in both cases the inequality has something to do with the partnership between the head and the beast.

We can see therefore that whatever resemblance the third beast might have to any other empire, it was fulfilled in every respect by the Persian empire. Let it again be pointed out that the only thing said about this beast was that it was to have dominion—which corresponds to the fact that the bronze kingdom was to rule over all the earth. This was by far the most striking aspect of the Persian empire. It was several times the size of any previous empire. The Greek empire on the other hand, was no larger than the Persian, and was probably in fact slightly smaller. Moreover, the Persians maintained their vast empire for over two hundred years, whereas the Greek empire was broken up and reduced in size only nine years after its foundation. Note, however, that both the third kingdom and the fourth kingdom are said to rule over or tread down 'the whole earth' (2 : 39; 7 : 23), and this is the impression that the fourth kingdom crushes the first kingdom, which we have already noted (2 : 4; 7 : 23). We have already noted that Rome was defeated by the Parthians, and that Babylonia, Media and Persia all remained outside the Roman empire. Greece, on the other hand, rapidly crushed and took over the entire Persian empire (apart from some border areas), including Babylonia, Media and Persia. Thus the third and fourth kingdoms both rule over 'the whole earth', and regarding this, we note that Greece ruled over almost the same vast area (both in size and location) as Persia. Note also that the third kingdom rules over the whole earth, but the fourth kingdom destroys it, and tramples it down and breaks it to pieces. The Persians ruled over their great empire for over two hundred years. Alexander smashed it rapidly and thoroughly, but he died soon afterwards, before he was able to organize it into as closely cohesive a system as that of the Persians. His successors were unable to maintain it, and it split up into a number of separate kingdoms and was reduced in size. This is all vividly portrayed in Daniel's fourth kingdom, but I am not dealing with that kingdom here in any detail.

I shall, however, summarize very briefly the ways in which Greece fulfilled the visions of the fourth kingdom. Rome did not—leaving out of consideration the idea that the Roman empire (in its 'feet of iron and clay' stage) is still in existence or is to be revived at the end of the present age. (1) The Greek army of Alexander were invincible, whereas the Roman army he had was '7, 19'. (2) The Greek empire was divided in a very clear-cut way into an initial period of invincible strength and a second period of division and weakness, whereas Rome was not (2: 41, 42). (3) Daniel 2: 43 was fulfilled very exactly by the Greek attempt to fuse East and West through intermarriage, and intermarriage, whereas Rome provided no such fulfillment. (4) The western nation of Greece was very different from the oriental nations of Babylonia, Media and Persia, whereas Rome was in many respects very similar to Greece (7: 23). (5) In the context of the book of Daniel, Greece can be said to 'have destroyed the whole earth' and to have crushed the first kingdom, whereas this cannot be said of Rome (7: 23). (6) The horns of the fourth beast found a very precise fulfillment in the kings of the Syrian part of the Greek empire from Seleucus Nicator to Antiochus Epiphanes (nearly all of whom are described in chapter 11), whereas Rome provided no such fulfillment. (7) The Greek empire was destroyed before Christ was glorified, whereas Rome was not (2: 34, 55; 7: 11, 13, 14; cf. the verses quoted earlier comparing the gentile church to a mountain and the one like a son of man received the kingdom and saw the time of the first advent. Note that the Roman empire reached its greatest extent and was at the zenith of its power during the reign of Trajan, many years after the time of Christ. At this time Christianity had already spread to most parts of the empire and far beyond.)

These conclusions are reinforced when we take chapters 8, 11 and 12 and other matters into consideration. I think, however, that enough has been written here to show that the case for identifying Daniel's four kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece is very strong indeed.

The book of Daniel: three issues

John G Goldingay

1. An exegetical issue

My concern in this note is to formulate an approach to some of the problems in Daniel, which is at some points parallel to that of Dr Gurney (I shall not try systematically to note the parallels and differences) but I shall not attempt to carry it much further. Like him, however, I am concerned to interpret the book of Daniel in a way that does justice to its place in the canon of Scripture. Like him, I believe that Daniel's fourth empire is Greece, not Rome. Unlike him, however, I see the book as originally God's message to Jews in Maccabean times, and, indeed, as written in that period.

The two main ways of interpreting the four empires (Dn. 2 and 7) and the seventy weeks (Db. 9) are represented, for instance, by Driver and Heathon on one hand, and by Young and Lodge on the other. The first concludes that the fourth empire and the seventieth week refer to the Greek period and specifically the Maccabean crisis; but that this means that Daniel got his history wrong both in implying that there were separate Median and Persian empires between the Babylonians and the Greeks, and in suggesting that sixty-two 'weeks of years' passed between the restoration and the Maccabean period. The other main view is that if we are to abide by a belief in the inspiration of Scripture, we must see the climax of the visions as referring to the Roman period; they look forward to the first coming of Christ, and beyond that to his second coming.

I find neither of these views entirely satisfactory. First, both general and specific considerations suggest that these visions focus historically on the Maccabean crisis.

(1) It is desirable to argue from the known to the unknown; as one would put it theologically, we interpret Scripture by Scripture. Now we know from the two other major visions of the book, the ram and the he-goat (Dn. 8) and the appalling abomination (Dn. 10-12), that Daniel is concerned with the Maccabean crisis. We would expect the same concern to be behind the other visions, though we will not want to force the interpretation of the former on to the latter. Nevertheless the whole vision series has a degree of unity if its consistent main concern is to reassure God's people who will receive the monstrous

(2) Further reflections in fact reinforce this preliminary understanding. There are several specific resemblances between the promised deliverance from Antiochus described in chapters 8 and 10 and the fall of the fourth empire described in chapters 2 and 7. The simile 'little horn' (7: 8) which is obscure and problematic on the alternative interpretation, becomes intelligible, for 8: 6-11 speaks of Antiochus as a 'little horn' (such a phrase comes nowhere else in the Bible) which ‘magnified itself’ (cf. ‘speaking great things’ in

* Some understand the main reference to be to Christ's first coming (so Young, Daniel, pp. 213-19), others to his second coming. We are not, therefore, to look for a clear parallel between Whittaker in NBD, but for the purpose of this article these may be regarded as variants on the same type of approach.

* Part of this vision looks beyond Antiochus, of course, but there is no dispute that he is the primary historical reference of 11: 11.

* Cf. Harrison, p. 1130.
meaning of the four heads is eminently suitable, because Persia's main period of expansion and aggression coincides with the first four kingdoms—Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes (Pseudo-Smerdis being merely a short-lived im- postor). Between these first four kings created the Persian empire in all its vast extent and wealth; and it was the rapid decline of the empire. Xerxes' small gains in Greece were lost within a few months; but the empire reached the pinnacle of its power, wealth and size during his reign. Each of these four kings had a part to play in the foundation of the enormous empire. It was not the work of one man, and the four-headed beast is a perfect picture of this.

Note that the four heads have nothing to do with the four horns of Ezekiel (9). The four heads appear to be a feature of the beast's great dominion, whereas the four horns of Greece are connected with a loss of dominion (cf. 11: 4). In 11: 2-4 the number four is mentioned twice—in connection with Persia, and once with Greece. The reference to Persia speaks of an initial phase of power and wealth, whereas the reference to Greece speaks of a second phase of division and loss of territory and power. If the third kingdom is the Persian empire, it also follows that the fourth kingdom, the Roman empire (8: 3-4, 20) do not signify the same thing as the unequal sides of the beast (7: 5). There is a connection, however, since in both cases the inequality has something to do with the partnership between the beast and Greece.

We can see therefore that whatever resemblance the third beast might have to any other empire, it was fulfilled in every respect by the Persian empire. Let it again be pointed out that the only thing said about the Persian empire was that it was to have dominion—which corresponds to the fact that the bronze kingdom was to 'rule over all the earth.' This was by far the most striking aspect of the Persian empire. It was several times the size of any previous empire. The Greeks were afraid of the Persian empire on the other hand, was no larger than the Persian, and was probably in fact slightly smaller. Moreover, the Persians maintained their vast empire for over two hundred years, whereas the Greek empire was never broken up and reduced in size only nine years after its foundation. Note, however, that both the third kingdom and the fourth kingdom are said to rule over or tread down 'the whole earth' (2: 39; 7: 23), and the same compression that the fourth kingdom crushes the first three in a way which should be 'as a mountain' and 'the one like a son of man received the kingdom immediately at the time of the first advent. Note that the Roman empire reached its greatest extent and was at the zenith of its power during the reign of Trajan, many years after the time of Christ (1: 20). At this time Chris- tianity had already spread to most parts of the empire and far beyond.)

These conclusions are reinforced when we take chapters 8, 11 and 12 and other matters into consideration. I think, however, that enough has been written here to show that the case for identifying Daniel's four kingdoms as Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece is very strong indeed.

The book of Daniel: three issues

John E. Goldingay

1. An exegetical issue

My concern in this note is to formulate an approach to some of the problems in Daniel, which is at some points parallel to that of Dr. Gurney (I shall not try systematically to note the parallels and differences) but independently. Like him, however, I am concerned to interpret the book of Daniel in a way that does justice to its place in the canon of Scripture. Like him, I believe that Daniel's fourth empire is Greece, not Rome. Unlike him, however, I see the book as originally God's message to Jews in Maccabean times, and, indeed, as written in that period.

The two main ways of interpreting the four empires (Dn 2 and 7) and the seventy weeks (Dan 9) are represented, for instance, by Driver and Heaton on one hand, and by Young and other scholars on the other. The first concludes that the fourth empire of Daniel is the Roman empire and the Maccabean crisis; but that this means that Daniel got his history wrong both in implying that there were separate Median and Persian empires between the Babylonians and the Greeks, and in suggesting that sixty-two 'weeks of years' passed between the restoration and the Maccabean period. The other main view is that if we are to abide by a belief in the inspiration of Scripture, we must see the climax of the visions as referring to the Roman period; they look forward to the first coming of Christ, and beyond that to his second coming. (1)


2. Part of this vision looks beyond Antiochus, of course, but there is no dispute that he is the primary historical reference of Dn 11.


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I find neither of these views entirely satisfactory. First, both general and specific considerations suggest that these visions focus historically on the Maccabean crisis.

(1) It is desirable to argue from the known to the unknown; as one would put it theologically, we interpret Scripture by Scripture. Now we know from the other major visions of the book, the ram and the he-goat (Dn 8) and the appalling abomination (Dn 10-12), that Daniel is concerned with the Maccabean crisis. We would expect the same concern to be behind the other visions, though we will not want to force the interpretation of the former on to the latter. Nevertheless the whole vision series has a degree of unity if its consistent main concern is to reassure God's people that he will preserve a system as in his trans

(2) Particular considerations in fact reinforce this preliminary understanding. There are several specific resemblances between the promised deliverance from Antiochus described in chapters 8 and 12 and the fall of the fourth empire described in chapters 2 and 7. The enigmatic 'little horn' (7: 8) which is obscure and problematical on the alternative interpretation, becomes intelligible, for 8: 610 speaks of Antiochus as a 'little horn' (such a phrase comes nowhere else in the Bible) which 'magnified itself' (cf. 'speaking great things')
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dred years, whereas the Greek empire was broken up and reduced in size only nine years after its foundation. Note, however, that both the third kingdom and the fourth kingdom are said to rule over or tread down 'the whole earth' (2:39; 7:23), and one can hardly express the impression that the fourth kingdom crushes the first kingdom, which is impossible in the case of 2:4–7; 23). We have already noted that Rome was defeated by the Parthians, and that Babylonia, Media and Persia all remained outside the Roman empire. Greece, on the other hand, rapidly crushed and took over the entire Persian empire (apart from some under-areas), including Babylonia, Media and Persia. Thus the third kingdom and fourth kingdoms both rule over 'the whole earth', and regarding this, we note that Greece ruled over almost the same vast area (both in size and location) as Persia. Note also that the third kingdom rules over the whole earth, but the fourth kingdom devours it, and tramples it down and breaks it to pieces. The Persians ruled over their great empire for over two hundred years. Alexander smashed it rapidly and thoroughly, but he died soon afterwards, and before he was able to organize it into as closely cohesive a system as that of the Persians. His successors were unable to maintain it, and it split up into a number of separate kingdoms and was reduced in size. This is all vividly portrayed in Daniel's fourth kingdom, but I am not dealing with that kingdom here in any detail.

I shall, however, summarize very briefly the ways in which Greece fulfilled the visions of the fourth kingdom and Rome did not—leaving out of consider-

ation the idea that the Roman empire (in its 'feet of iron and clay' stage) is still in existence or is to be revived at the end of the present age. (1) The Greek armies of Alexander were invincible, whereas the Roman armies he had defeated (7, 19, 20). (2) The Greek empire was divided in a very clear-cut way into an initial period of invincible strength and a second period of division and weakness, whereas Rome was not (2:41, 42). (3) Daniel 2:43 was fulfilled very exactly by the Greek attempt to fuse East and West through intermarriage and intermarriage, whereas Rome provided no such fulfillment. (4) The western nation of Greece was very different from the oriental nations of Babylon, Media and Persia, whereas Rome was in many respects very similar to Greece (7:23). (5) In the context of the 'book of Daniel, Greece can be said to have 'devoured the whole earth' and to have crushed the first three kingdoms, whereas this cannot be said of Rome (2:41, 42). (6) The horns of the fourth beast found a very precise fulfillment in the kings of the Syrian part of the Greek empire from Seleucus Nicator to Antiochus Epiphanes (nearly all of whom are described in chapter 11), whereas Rome provided no such fulfillment. (7) The Greek empire was destroyed before Christ was glorified, whereas Rome was not (2:34, 35; 7:11, 13, 14; cf. the verses quoted earlier concerning that the mountain is an 'immovable mountain' and the one like a son of man received the kingdom of the time of the first advent. Note that the Roman empire reached its greatest extent and was at the

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I find neither of these views entirely satisfactory. First, both general and specific considerations suggest that these visions focus historically on the Maccabean crisis.

(1) It is desirable to argue from the known to the unknown; as one would put it theologically, we should interpret Scripture by Scripture. Now we know from the two other major visions of the book, the ram and the he-goat (Dn. 8) and the appalling abomination (Dn. 10–12), that Daniel is concerned with the Maccabean crisis. We would expect the same concern to lie behind the other visions, though we will not want to force the interpretation of the former on to the latter. Nevertheless the whole vision series has a degree of unity if its consistent main concern is to reassure God's people who were living under this enormous threat.

(2) Particular considerations in fact reinforce this preliminary understanding. There are several specific resemblances between the promised deliverance from Antiochus described in chapters 8 and 10–12 and the fall of the fourth empire described in chapters 2 and 7. The enigmatic 'little horn' (7:8) which is obscure and problematical on the alternative interpretation, becomes intelligible, for 8:16–17 speaks of Antiochus as a 'little horn' (such a phrase comes nowhere else in the Bible) which 'magnified itself' (cf. 'speaking great things' in...
7: 8). Further, Antichrist is to be broken by no human hand (8: 25); similarly, the feet of the image (representing the fourth empire) are to be broken by a stone, a human hand (2: 34). Again, the 'time, two times, and half a time' of 7: 25 invites equation with and explanation by that of 12: 7 and the 1,290 days of 12: 11, which certainly refers to the Antichrist persecution.

It is difficult to believe that the same language is several times used to describe events that are the prelude to the bringing in of God's kingdom with the events being different in some passages from what they are in others. This is confusing enough to us now, let alone what it would have been to the first hearers.

So the book of Daniel forms a more coherent whole if the empires in chapters 2 and 7 are those of the Babylonians, Medes, Persians and Greeks. Does this somehow tally with the idea that the author misunderstood the historical outline of the period? Pointers elsewhere in the book show that he recognized that there was only one Medo-Persian empire. Daniel speaks of the Babylonian kingdom being given to the Medes and Persians (5: 28) and of the 'law of the Medes and Persians' (6: 8, etc.), apparently one law. He symbolizes the Medo-Persians as one animal (8: 20), though it has two horns which might again suggest that he saw it as having two elements.

Since Daniel speaks elsewhere of one Medo-Persian empire, why does he divide it in chapters 2 and 7?

The four-empire scheme resembles a pattern which appears in Greek, Latin, and Persian writings, whereby four successive ages are symbolized by metals of diminishing strength or value, as in Daniel 2; the oldest certain occurrence of this symbolism comes in the eighth century Greek poet Hesiod (Works and Days, 16-201). This parallelism suggests that Daniel's fourfold scheme pictures post-exilic history according to a common pattern. Probably it is more than merely a literary device: it makes a polemical point, like the use of near-

Eastern mythological motifs elsewhere in the Old Testament. It expresses the conviction that Yahweh is the God who is really putting his will into effect in history. He is in control even of the degeneration which man can introduce. He controls the human image of four empires to the period of history with which he was concerned. This began with the Babylonians and ended with the Greeks, who thus hopefully have to be the first and last members of the scheme. What about the interest focussed on the Maccabean crisis and encourages God's people to believe that they will see evil defeated and punished, and righteousness established and rewarded.


But the eschaton was not ushered in by the Anti-

christ crisis. There is here a more serious issue of biblical theology to be considered—one raised, indeed, by the book even if the above approach to these particular chapters is incorrect. The book seems to promise the imminent establishment of God's kingdom; but the kingdom does not so arrive, unlike with the exegesis, the 'liberal' and 'conserva-
tive' views of this question of Daniel's eschatological beliefs present us with what I believe to be a false alternative. The former assumes that Daniel was simply mistaken. The latter suggests that at crucial points such as the end of chapter 11 Daniel's reference to the proconsular crisis is the final one, rather as Jesus in Mark 13, distinguishes between the crisis of his own ministry and the fall of Jerusalem on one hand, and that day and hour which no one knows (v. 32) on the other. Similarly, the prophets are sometimes thought of as leaping from some present historical crisis to the millennium.

There is, of course, a profound sense in which it is true that it prophesies refer to events far beyond the prophecy's own time; more precisely in what sense, I shall try to suggest below. But the text itself rarely implies a distinction between what was historically imminent and what belongs to the distant future; nor do I guess that 'the time of the end' (Dan. 11: 35, 40) is thousands of years after the events related in the rest of the chapter; it naturally implies the end of the crisis which the rest of the chapter refers to. The descrip-

tion that follows in the last paragraph (vv. 40-45) is of the same kind of events as have been referred to in earlier part of the chapter. Even when the transition to a more other-worldly picture comes in 12: 1-3, the events now described happen 'at that (same) time. At least one of the references to timing of these events in the book's closing verses explicitly alludes to the Antichrist crisis (12: 11).

But this delivereance was not historically the prelude to the resurrection; hence exegetical attempts to find parallels to the advent of the kingdom from referring to the one to referring to the other.

But descriptions of an imminent consummation of God's final judgment and salvation do occur often in the Bible. In Genesis God declares that Adam's death will be the fruit of a certain tree. In Exodus God says he is about to fulfill his promise of such material and spiritual blessing that the whole world will be aroused to envy and jealousy in the northern kingdom that Yahweh's day of judgment is imminent; Zechariah then asserts the same in the south. Jeremiah promises a new covenant. Ezekiel promises the exiles a new heart. Zechariah says the world will flock to Jerusalem in a new kingdom given to Israel. Jesus declares God's kingdom is here. Paul says the eschaton is round the corner.

In a literal final sense, these expectations are not fulfilled. We thus find the question asked, 'Were the exiles of the Babylonian exile to be eschatologically suggest that the eschaton was imminent?' If these passages are discussed in isolation from one another, however, the point is missed that they are actually examples of the same recurring phenomenon in the Bible. Thus, in a metaphorical sense, at least, it becomes important that we understand the crisis, each judgment, each victory, each blessing as the embodiment in time of the ultimate struggle between right and wrong, chaos and cosmos, in which evil ever threatens to be victorious, but God constantly regains the upper hand. Revelation eventually crystallizes the conviction—that how early, opinions will differ—that the ultimate achievement of this victory will only come at the end; though it is of the same time somehow a victory won finally at the beginning, when Adam wretchedly chose the evil, was cut to pieces. Within history, however, there are recurrent partial realizations of that ultimate achievement—of which the greatest came through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is of course no argument for a false eschatology; there was a notable deliverance—was one such realization. It was not the final breaking-in of the eschaton. But it was the breaking-in of the eschaton.
Further, Antiochus is to be broken by no human hand (8:25); similarly, the feet of the image (representing the fourth empire) are to be broken by a stone not a human hand (2:34). Again, the "time, times, and half a time" (7:25) invites equation with and explanation by that of 12:7 and the 1,290 days of 12:11, which certainly refers to the Antiochian persecution.

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there is no space here for a discussion of the verses' intended meaning, which is usually liable to be applicable to the Maccabean deliverance or to the world and its destruction, which is said to be awaiting anointing of a most holy place, for instance, with anything but oil. 12:4


On this paragraph, see G. B. Caird's comments on eschatology in Exp T 74 (1962-63), p. 84.
logical God. It was not the fulfillment of God’s final purpose but it was an **arabâh** of that fulfillment, and (we can see with hindsight) pointed forward to it.

By virtue of their all constituting temporal embodiments of the ultimate conflict these events are also linked to each other, and are described in similar terms. Indeed Jesus can pick up the description of Antiochus’s ‘apollâphos’ and apply it to an incident to occur as part of the coming fall of Jerusalem.14 This is not the event to which Daniel directly refers, but it is a parallel realization of the same sacrilegious arrogance of evil.

And if Daniel (or Paul) is not careful to distinguish too sharply between the present crisis or opportunity and the ultimate one, then he has something to teach us. We would do well to look at what happens to us as individuals and to the church as part of the struggle between chaos and cosmos which is the world’s story from its beginning to its end, and to see these things as the dealings of the eschatological God. In all the power, holiness, and love that belong to creation and to the end, he is with us in each crisis, and we can experience another foretaste of the final victory.

3. A critical issue

But when did the eschatological God give this revelation about his intervening in the Maccabean crisis? The book asserts *prima facie* that he gave it to a man named Daniel in the sixth century, a man whose book was to begin with a history of ‘seven weeks’ history described in chapters 2, 7, and 9— which, then, must have been revealed to him ahead of time by the God who was in control of it.

Most (non-‘conservative’) scholars date the book of Daniel much later than the time of its hero, evidence. The possibility of God having revealed these events to Daniel in the sixth century must be granted. But on the other hand, the assertion that ‘if pseudonymous and ex eventu, then fraudulent’, is surely without adequate foundation.

Pseudonymity is a complex phenomenon. Its motivation is equally complex: Metzger28 mentions fear, shame, financial greed, malice, respect, modesty, dramatic concern, and desire for credence. It was evidently quite possible for an author in good faith to publish under a false name. Other scholars mention the perils of everyone else; Metzger instances the Neo-Pythagoreans who, centuries after Pythagoras, attributed their

Daniel: the basic issues

**Gordon J Wenham**

There is a great gulf between the simple conservative view of Daniel and the liberal understanding of the book. The one holds that its stories tell of real events in which God’s power was demonstrated and real prophecy disclosing his knowledge of the future: the other that its stories are parables, perhaps with some historical core, and that its prophecies are by and large interpretations of past history. The conservative believes that the book was written by a real Daniel living in the sixth century BC; the liberal understands his pseudonym. In interpreting the book the two sides differ on various issues: the most important being the identity of the four kingdoms in chapters 2 and 7. Does the last kingdom (i.e. the clay feet of the image, 2:41ff; the fourth beast, 7:17ff) represent...
how this history was going to develop; his lordship is certain. Therefore he can be trusted in the crisis of the present situation to control historical events that really are future human history's perspective.

In justification of this approach, scholars com-
monly refer to questions of historical accuracy
(Daniel is thought to be strangely unreliable in his
description of events in the exile for a man who
allegedly lived to the age of 92) and of the language (in
Driver's often quoted tag, 'the Persian writings
presuppose a period after the Persian empire had
been well established; the Greek words demand, the
Hebrew supports, and the Aramaic permits' a date
after 332), and of history of ideas (did apocalyptic
appear in full flower in the sixth century?). Some
of these points are not very impressive.17 The point
to be made here, however, is that underlying these
detailed reasons is another, often unstated, Daniel
did not prophesy in the sixth century because this would be impossible and irrelevant.
And the 'corresponding' underlying response to
to many prophecy is by no means
clear if you believe in God. To exclude it is
ultimately rational. And the relevance of it lies
not in the sixth century but in the second, for
the function of the book in the second century was
to assure people that God was in control by showing
how he will foresee the situation long before. And
further, for it to make this possible its historical
features are important.18 What are we to make of this conversation? The
comfort that the book would have been to the
believers of the second century may be granted.
Further, the danger of rationalism is real. It is easy
to be beguiled by the world's assumptions and to
refuse to let these be corrected by Scripture's own
evidence. The possibility of God having revealed
these events to Daniel in the sixth century must
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of 'pseudonymous and ex eventu, then fraudulent',
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Prophecy is a complex phenomenon. Its
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treatises to him rather than ascribe to themselves the glory
of their inventions.

We have no hard information, only guesses, as to
the motivation or psychology that lay behind Daniel's pseudonymous apocalyptic.20 The
possibility that these authors, too, wrote in good
faith cannot be denied. At least one of their works
is quoted with approval in the New Testament (see
Jude 14); this may suggest that we are mistaken to
treat Daniel's literature as identical to the truths of the matter. In the case of Daniel, then, too, whatever idiom or
mode of expression he would use in ordinary
speech must surely be allowed him when moved by the
Holy Spirit.21 The synoptists' 'plagiarizing' of one
another is a clear enough proof that we cannot
apply our literary conventions and morals to the
Bible, and the fact that the theory involves an
appeal to pseudonymity ought not in itself to
be allowed to rule out the possibility of a second
century date.22

For the sake of argument, let us grant that what
we might call the argument from theological
propriety against a second-century date (namely,
that such a date involves the appearance of pseudo-
ny in the Bible) is not necessarily conclusive;

but also, on the other hand, that prediction of the
second-century events in the sixth century is both
teologically possible, and pastorally relevant to
the second century; and furthermore, that the
historical arguments against a sixth-century date
are not necessarily conclusive. The question we
might then ask is not 'could God?' but 'would
God?' It seems to me to be at least arguable that
the God who is revealed elsewhere in Scripture
would not. He does not give signs and reveal
dates. His statements about the future are calls to
decision now; he is not the God of prognosticators.23 He
calls his people to naked faith and hope in him in
the present, and does not generally bolster their
faith with the kind of revelations that we are
thinking of here. He does sometimes grant evi-
dences to those who cannot believe without them,
and thus we dare not exclude the possibility that
this was the case with the book of Daniel. But
the presumption is by no means in favour of
this possibility.

Dating Daniel in the sixth century, indeed, brings
not more glory to God but less. It makes it a less
impressive and helpful document. It makes it seem
more alien to me in my life of faith, for God does
not need me this way. But if in the book of Daniel
God is revealing himself to his people in the
second century, and calling them in that situa-
tion, by means of this strange literary form, to faith
in him? Who is Lord despite the evidence
to the contrary, then this God I recognize both in
Scripture and in experience. He is the one who
says, 'Blessed are those who have not seen and
yet have believed.'24

See recent comments of George Steiner in

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17 See the survey by D. S. Russell, The Method and
127-39. Russell himself appeals to the notion of 'corporate
personality', but this is itself a dubious concept.

18 Metzger, p. 22. The reason why Daniel alone was
included in the canon was that the one origin story and
other apocalypses, invites the responses (1) Have you
read the other apocalypses? (2) Why weren't Paul's other
letters included in the NT? (3) Perhaps Daniel's was the
original.

19 I have discussed these issues more generally in an
article on 'Inspiration, Infallibility, and Criticism' in The
Churchman 90 (1976), pp. 6-23.

20 See the remarks of George Steiner in After

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17 See the survey by D. S. Russell, The Method and
127-39. Russell himself appeals to the notion of 'corporate
personality', but this is itself a dubious concept.

18 Metzger, p. 22. The reason why Daniel alone was
included in the canon was that the one origin story and
other apocalypses, invites the responses (1) Have you
read the other apocalypses? (2) Why weren't Paul's other
letters included in the NT? (3) Perhaps Daniel's was the
original.

19 I have discussed these issues more generally in an
article on 'Inspiration, Infallibility, and Criticism' in The
Churchman 90 (1976), pp. 6-23.

20 See the remarks of George Steiner in After

21 See the recent comments of George Steiner in
Daniel: The Basic Issues

Gordon J. Wenham

There is a great gulf between the simple conservative view of Daniel and the liberal understanding of the book. The one holds that its stories tell of real events in which God’s power was demonstrated and real prophecy disclosing his knowledge of the future: the other that its stories are parables, perhaps with a historical core, and that its prophecies are by and large interpretations of past history. The conservative believes that the book was written by a real Daniel living in the sixth century BC; the liberal by an unknown writer using Daniel as his pseudonym. In interpreting the book the two sides differ on various issues: the most important being, the identity of the four kingdoms in chapters 2 and 7. Does the last kingdom (i.e. the clay feet of the image, 2:41ff.; the fourth beast, 7:19ff.) represent

the Greek empire founded by Alexander (the liberal view) or the Roman empire (the traditional view)?

The articles by Gurney and Goldingay represent attempts to bridge the gulf between naive conservatism and liberal scepticism. Gurney argues that the fourth kingdom is indeed Greece, but that the book of Daniel was written in the sixth century and is therefore true predictive prophecy. Goldingay admits virtually the whole liberal position, but denies that this affects belief in the inspiration or canonicity of the book. How far do they succeed?

The issues surrounding the book of Daniel are certainly more complex than the uninitiated realize, and it may be helpful to set the Gurney/Goldingay proposals in a wider context. What are the arguments for a sixth-century date, and for a secondcentury date? And what are the difficulties with each view?

Arguments in favour of a sixth-century date

(1) The book’s claim to be predictive prophecy. This is made on many occasions (2:29ff.; 4:24; cf. 31ff.; 5:24-30; chapters 7-12). Several times Daniel is told to write his visions down and seal them up (8:26; 12: 4, 9). This old prophetic custom was designed to demonstrate to sceptical audiences that God was indeed speaking through the prophet. When later something happened, they could check the sealed prophetic records to see what the prophet had said beforehand. If his word proved accurate that would suggest he was inspired (Is. 8:16; 29:11; 30:8; Je.30:2; 32:14; 36; Hab. 2:2ff.; cf. Dt. 18:22). Daniel explicitly compares his work to that of Jeremiah (9:2ff.).

(2) The book’s claim that the chief character and author lived in the sixth century BC. Daniel was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562), Belshazzar (556-539) and Cyrus (539-530) (2:1; 5:1; 10:1 etc.).

(3) The author’s knowledge of Babylonian history is unequalled by later authors. Dougherty wrote: ‘the fifth chapter of Daniel ranks next to cuneiform literature in accuracy... The total information found in all available chronologically-fixed documents later than the sixth
century BC... could not have provided the necessary material for the historical framework of the fifth chapter of Daniel.¹

**Difficulties with a sixth-century date**

(1) **Language.** Despite his famous dictum quoted by Goldingay, S. R. Driver admitted that linguistic evidence did not absolutely compel one to accept a late date for Daniel.² The study of K. A. Kitchen,³ endorsed by the famous Aramaic scholar E. Y. Kutscher,⁴ disposed of the linguistic argument for good.

(2) **Historical inaccuracies.** For example, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were supposedly Babylonian names (1:7) but no suitable etymologies could be suggested for them. But now a satisfactory explanation has been offered.⁵

Another problem is that contemporary texts know nothing of Darius the Mede ruling as king in Babylon (5:31; 9:1; 11:1). Various suggestions have been made: two have some plausibility. One is that Darius is an alternative name of Gubaru, the governor of Babylon appointed by Cyrus.⁶ The other is that Darius is an alternative name of Cyrus himself (cf. 6:28).⁷ Neither seems wholly satisfactory, and this is one of the weaker points in the conservative view.

(3) **The apocalyptic character of the book of Daniel.** It is argued that since most works of apocalyptic date from the second century BC onwards, Daniel should be dated then too. This does not necessarily follow. First, Daniel is not pure apocalyptic. Second, the apocalyptic style may be partly inspired by Daniel and therefore the other works could be later than our book. Third, some other OT passages, e.g. Isaiah 25-27 and Zechariah 9ff. have apocalyptic features yet can hardly be dated as late as the second century.

(4) **Daniel 11.** Verses 21-39 describe the career of Antiochus Epiphanes in some detail, but the following verses (40-45) appear less accurate. Therefore it is argued that chapter 11 was written during the life-time of Antiochus. Up to verse 39 is retrospective historical narrative, but the closing verses are unfulfilled prophecy.

This is the most telling point against a 6th century date. But it rests on the assumption that the same people are being spoken of in verse 39 as in verse 40 and that there is no change of personnel (such as between 11:2 and 11:3, where there is a gap of some 130 years presupposed, between Xerxes and Alexander). Gurney believes that verses 40ff. refer to the exploits of the Romans in the East.

[p.51]

⁶ J. C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974).
Traditional exegetes believe these verses must be linked with chapter 12 and therefore refer to the last times. There does not seem to be enough information in these verses to decide between the various proposals.

**Arguments in favour of a second-century date**

These have already been eloquently expounded by John Goldingay, so it is hardly necessary to restate them in detail. Furthermore some of the difficulties facing a sixth-century date serve as arguments in favour of the second-century date, and conversely arguments in favour of a sixth-century origin are objections to a second-century date. Again I shall just pick out three arguments in favour of and four against the second-century date.

(1) *The emphasis on the Greek period in the prophecies.* All agree that the deeds of Alexander and his successors are described quite fully in chapters 8 and 11, but that the Romans are not discussed in detail unless the fourth kingdom refers to them. The prominence of Greece has been explained by Gurney. The Greek empire was the true precursor of Christ’s coming: the Roman empire was contemporary with it. Incidentally to accept the Greek view together with a sixth-century dating is not a new view; it was held by various conservative Christians, including the Westminster divines, long before the Greek view became the hallmark of liberal orthodoxy.

(2) *The Maccabean age is the ideal Sitz im Leben for Daniel.* The book is designed to encourage men to remain faithful to the law even when persecuted. Few would doubt that Daniel proved very popular in Maccabean times, for it does record some remarkable deliverances in the face of oppression. It is not so clear, however, that it wants people to take up arms against godless rulers as the Maccabees did: Daniel and his friends seem to be passive resisters, not freedom fighters. For this reason von Rad argued that Daniel was written by opponents of the Maccabees, not their supporters. One may ask whether Daniel would have provided much comfort to those suffering Antiochus’ wrath, if it was not believed to be old and authentic. A book of new parables would have carried less conviction.

(3) *Prophecy is not long-range.* This is generally true but not a universal rule. While most prophetic teaching does deal with the immediate situation facing the people of God, more distant visions cannot be ruled out. Otherwise Isaiah’s prophecies of Christ’s birth and ministry or even our Lord’s remarks about his second coming have to be explained away.

**Difficulties with a second-century date**

*The historical Antiochus Epiphanes was unlike the Nebuchadnezzar and the Darius described in Daniel.* Yet on the second-century view these figures should reflect the character of the great persecutor Antiochus. Whereas Antiochus deliberately attempted to root out the Jewish religion, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius persecuted faithful Jews only inadvertently and they were both converted after they had discovered their mistakes (see chapters 2, 3 and 6). Perhaps, though, the author of Daniel was more sanguine about Antiochus’ salvation than appears from his prophecies.

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(2) The closing of the canon. A recent study⁹ has concluded that the OT canon was closed in Maccabean times, not at the end of the first century AD as is often asserted. Should this view win scholarly acceptance, it will become the more difficult to explain how Daniel was ever accepted into the canon if it was written in the second century BC. It is a surprise to find an allegedly pseudonymous work being accepted as holy Scripture at all; it would be startling if it were accepted as Scripture as soon as it appeared, when everybody would at least have realized its novelty.

(3) The prophecy of the 70 weeks (9:24-27). It is impossible to squeeze in 490 years between the decree of Cyrus (538 BC) and the Maccabean period, c. 170 BC. Messianic interpreters argue that if the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra 7 (458 BC) is the starting point, this prophecy gives a fairly accurate date for Christ’s crucifixion c. AD 32. But more probably 490 is a symbolic number, equal to ten jubilees (Lv. 25).

(4) Theology and pseudonymity. Goldingay makes a case for supposing that pseudonymity is not incompatible with inspiration. Conservative theologians might accept this if it were proved that pseudonymous writing was an accepted convention which deceived none of its original readers. What worries me is not so much the alleged pseudonymity but the claim that Daniel’s God, unlike the gods of Babylon, knows and reveals the future (2:27ff.). The idea that God declares his future purposes to his servants is at the heart of the book’s theology. If, however, Daniel is a second-century work, one of its central themes is discredited, and it could be argued that Daniel ought to be relegated to the Apocrypha and not retain full canonical status as part of OT Scripture.

[p.52]

Conclusion

A brief summary cannot do justice to the complexity of the problems associated with the book of Daniel. If these articles have highlighted some of them, and saved conservatives and liberals alike from defending their pet theories with unjustified dogmatism, they will have served their purpose. They are a reminder that in many areas the ‘assured’ results of criticism need rethinking. In formulating his critical views the evangelical scholar must take with equal seriousness the explicit claims of the biblical writings (e.g. when they say they were written) and the implicit indications of a different date of authorship (e.g. historical imprecisions or late words). Simple-minded conservatives pay attention only to the former and forget about the implicit data, while naive liberals disregard the explicit claims of the biblical writings and base their theories solely on the latter. Those who believe that all Scripture is inspired by God should listen both to what Scripture says about its composition and to what it implies about its origins.¹⁰


http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/

¹⁰ I have discussed the theological implications of critical study in ‘History and the Old Testament’ in *History, Criticism and Faith*, ed. C. Brown (shortly to be published by IVP).
A bibliographical guide to the study of the reformation

Part 1: Beginnings

A Skevington Wood

In 1971-72 the TSF Bulletin carried three bibliographical articles covering the early and the modern periods of church history (TSFB 59, 60 and 63). A companion article on the Reformation was delayed, but we are now grateful to Dr A. Skevington Wood of Cliff College, near Sheffield, England, for filling the gap. We expect to publish Part II of his bibliography in about a year’s time.

Part I of this guide deals with the inception of the reform movement in Germany and Switzerland, with particular reference to the three key figures, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. Erasmus, whose influence is increasingly recognized, is also included, along with Melanchthon and Bucer. The spread of Protestantism will be reserved for Part II, as will the Radical Reformation which is engaging so much attention at present. The catalogue consists mainly of works written in English within the last thirty years and goes out of its way to urge the student to get at the primary sources, i.e. the products of the reformers themselves. Books are listed with the publisher’s name and the date of publication (occasionally the latest edition is recommended): the place of publication is London unless otherwise indicated.

1. Source material

The most comprehensive one-volume selection is still Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation, ed. B. J. Kidd (OUP, 1911), although students should be warned that whereas German is translated into English, Latin and Greek are not. The Reformation in its Own Words, ed. H. J. Hillerbrand (SCM, 1964) relates well-chosen extracts to the developing course of the movement and thus aims to provide a consecutive history rather than a mere anthology. Hillerbrand has collected items of more specifically theological interest in The Protestant Reformation (New York: Harper and Row, 1968). The wide-ranging documents in G. R. Elton’s Renaissance and Reformation 1300-1648* (New York: Macmillan, 1976) include much illuminating material. The writings of the reformers themselves constitute a major source and these will be indicated below. Concordia or Book of Concord: the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (St Louis: Concordia, 1957) contains the Augsburg Confession, the Schmalkald Articles, and Luther’s two catechisms. Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century, ed. A. C. Cochrane (SCM, 1966) covers twelve statements of faith from Zwingli’s
Sixty-Seven Articles (1523) to the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), with crisp introductions to each.

2. Reference works


3. General histories


4. Luther

a. Luther and the German Reformation

A first-class appetizer for the general reader is A. G. Dickens, Martin Luther and the Reformation (EUP, 1967). The same writer’s Birkbeck Lectures on The German Nation and Martin Luther (Arnold, 1974) reveal the reformer as leading a genuinely popular movement. Strong on the political side, but less impressive when dealing with theology, is V. H. H. Green, Luther and the Reformation, published in the University Paperbacks series (Methuen, 1969). J. Atkinson, The Great Light: Luther and the Reformation (Exeter: Paternoster, 1968) sees Luther as the focal figure in a distinctly religious renewal.

b. Luther’s works

The novice should start with Martin Luther, ed. E. G. Rupp and B. Drewery (Arnold, 1970)—a judicious and attractive anthology. As the editors explain, documents are quoted as fully as possible ‘rather than innumerable extracts marred by too frequent dots, which as all historians learn to fear often cover all manner of creeping things.’ Luther, ed. I. D. K. Siggins (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1972) contains selections freshly translated from the definitive Weimar edition, with hints on the critical treatment of sources. Already well established are Reformation Writings of Martin Luther, 2 vols. ed. B. L. Woolf (Lutterworth, 1952-55) and Martin Luther: Selections from his Writings, ed. J. Dillen-

c. Lives of Luther

The first of the Luther biographies was written by his close friend, Philip Melanchthon, and since then their name has been legion. For a review and assessment, see E. W. Zeeden, The Legacy of Luther (Hollis and Carter, 1954). We can only mention a few of the most recent. Authentic and delightfully readable is R. H. Bainton, Here I Stand (New York: Abingdon, 1950). Exhaustive, and not a little exhausting by reason of its massive erudition, is E. G. Schwiebert, Luther and his Times (St Louis: Concordia, 1950). This is an indispensable store of information. An authoritative summary is found in G. Ritter, Martin Luther: his Life and Work (Collins, 1963), while the breach with Rome is dealt with in H. Boehmer, Martin Luther: Road to Reformation (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946) and E. G. Rupp, Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms (SCM, 1951).

d. Luther's Theology

H. Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought (St Louis: Concordia, 1958) is dedicated to R. H. Bainton and admirably complements his biography. First published in Germany in 1947, it shows that the categories of Luther's teaching are valid for today. A pioneer survey in English was P. S. Watson, Let God be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Luther (Epworth, 1947) which retains its value. The most detailed and systematic treatment is found in P. Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966). Essential in-
sights are reflected in E. G. Rupp, The Righteousness of God (Hodder and Stoughton, 1953). G. Ebeling, Luther: an Introduction to his Thought (Collins, 1970) is an exciting analysis of Luther's dialectical method which tends to read too much back into the sixteenth century. Original research is evidenced in J. Wicks, Man Yearning for Grace: Luther's Early Spiritual Teaching (Washington: Corpus, 1968).

From a long list of studies dealing with specific themes in Luther we can pick out only a few. His handling of Scripture is crucial and in this area H. Bornkamm, Luther and the Old Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) is masterly. H. S. Bluhm, Luther, Creative Translator (St Louis: Concordia, 1965) is based on sound philological investigation. In J. M. Headley, Luther's View of Church History (New Haven: Yale University, 1963) the claim is made that the biblical interpretation of history found a major expression in Luther. V. Vajta, Luther on Worship (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958) is concerned with the theological presuppositions of liturgy, while R. Prenter, Spiritus Creator (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1956) is an outstanding treatment of Luther's teaching on the Holy Spirit. It leads neatly to J. J. Pelikan, Spirit versus Structure: Luther and the Institution of the Church (Collins, 1968) which in turn follows on from Obedient Rebels (SCM, 1964) by the same author. A neglected aspect of Luther—namely, his exposition of Christian ethics—is covered by G. W. Forell, Faith Active in Love (New York: American Press, 1954).

5. Calvin

a. Calvin and the Reformation in Switzerland

Part II of J. T. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism (OUP, 1954) deals with 'Calvin and the Reformation in Geneva'. J. Mackinnon, Calvin and the Reformation (Longmans Green, 1936) provides an over-all account which still has merit, as does W. Walker, John Calvin, the Organizer of Reformed Protestantism 1509-1564 (New York: Putnam's, 1906).

b. Calvin's works

A conveniently simple entrée is supplied by H. T. Kerr, Introduction to the Writings of John Calvin (New York: Association Press, 1960) in the Reflection Book series. The same editor was responsible for A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion (Lutterworth, 1964), which is an alternative to A Calvin Treasury: Selections from the Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. W. F. Keesecker (SCM, 1963). There is unfortunately no uniform set of Calvin's works in English to match the American edition of Luther. The Institutes has been translated


c. Lives of Calvin

Théodore de Bèze was the first in the line of Calvin's biographers and his account may be read in vol. I of *Tracts and Treatises*. E. Doumercq's monumental panegyric in French (8 vols., 1899-1927) lacks an English translator. An easily read trailer is T. H. L. Parker, *A Portrait of Calvin* (SCM, 1954), leading to the same writer's *John Calvin: A Biography* (Dent, 1975). J. Cadier, *The Man God Mastered* (IVP, 1960) treats Calvin as 'one of the great warriors of the Spirit,' while A.-M. Schmidt, *Calvin and the Calvinistic Tradition* (Longmans, 1960) places him in historical perspective as 'the second patriarch of the Protestant Reformation.' 'You animate history, you do not invent it,' was Doumercq's compliment to the litterateur, E. Stichelberger, author of *Calvin: A Life* (Clarke, 1959; German 1931). Doing double duty both as a biography and an introduction to Calvin's theology is F. Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of his Religious Thought* (Collins Fontana, 1965) which is commendably free from ideological preconceptions.

d. Calvin's theology

6. Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli has been dubbed ‘the great unknown of the Reformation’ but scholars are increasingly realizing his stature. A fully annotated German edition of his collected works was completed in 1969. The standard English translation is The Latin Works of Huldreich Zwingli with Selections from his German Works, 3 vols., ed. S. M. Jackson and C. N. Heller (Philadelphia: Heidelberg Press, 1912-29). In The Library of Christian Classics (SCM) there are selections in Zwingli and Bullinger, ed. G. W. Bromiley, 24 (1953), prefaced by a review of Zwingli’s life, work and theology. The most detailed German biography is that in four volumes by O. Farner yet to be done into English. There is, however, a translation of a much shorter popular life in O. Farner, Zwingli the Reformer (Lutterworth, 1952), reprinted in 1968. The most attractive non-specialist biography in English is J. Rilliet, Zwingli: Third Man of the Reformation (Lutterworth, 1964), presenting him as a prophetic figure ‘at once prudent and audacious’. For a concise analysis of Zwingli’s teaching the student should consult J. Courvoisier, Zwingli, A Reformed Theologian (Epping, 1964). R. C. Walton, Zwingli’s Theocracy (OUP, 1968) discusses the type of corporate government established in Zürich and the relationship between clergy and magistrates.

7. Erasmus

Erasmus of Rotterdam is nowadays regarded as a reformer in his own right. A new edition of his Latin works in twenty volumes was launched in 1969 from Amsterdam. His collected works in English are now being released in forty-five volumes, starting with The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1 to 141 (1484 to 1501), ed. B. Corrigan (University of Toronto Press, 1974). Ten major works of Erasmus are also translated separately, including Praise of Folly, ed. A. H. T. Levi (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), The Colloquies, ed. C. R. Thompson (Chicago University Press, 1965), and On Free Will, ed. E. F. Winter (New York: Ungar, 1961). The Enchiridion is in Advocates of Reform, ed. M. Spinka (Library of Christian Classics 14; SCM, 1953), together with an informative essay on ‘Desiderius Erasmus, A Humanistic Reformer’.


8. Melanchthon and Bucer

a. Melanchthon


b. Bucer

(CUP, 1970) regards this as ‘the pivotal doctrine’ in the writings of ‘the neglected reformer’. The fruits of the Bucer renaissance in Holland are reflected, for example, in G. J. Van de Poll, *Martin Bucer’s Liturgical Ideas* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1954). There are chapters on ‘Luther and Butzer’ and ‘Calvin and Butzer’ in W. Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation* (OUP, 1968).