

ANTIOCHUS IV AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL 7-12: THE GREATEST HISTORICAL LABEL?

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ABSTRACT

This paper will defend the thesis that Antiochus IV Epiphanies deserves a minimal role in the prophetic sections of Daniel 7-12. In order to support this thesis, our study will draw from ancient and modern historical sources to adequately evaluate the events described during his reign. Due to lack of space, this paper will not give an exhaustive account of the life of Antiochus IV but will focus mainly on the events described in the book of 1 and 2 Maccabees which consequently have been read into the book of Daniel by historical-critical scholars. After we briefly look through the historical context of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, we will then proceed to a grammatical and literary analysis of the main passages in Daniel where he has been read. These passages will be drawn mainly from the prophetic section of Daniel 7-12. Thus through a historicist method of interpretation, this paper aims to show based on a historical study of the life of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, and a grammatical and literary study of the prophecies in Daniel 7-12 that Antiochus IV cannot be the major adversary described in these prophecies.

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INTRODUCTION

In one of the greatest works of Russian literature, *War and Peace*, Count Leo Tolstoy wrote, “In historical events great men –so called – are but the labels that serve to give a name to an event, and like labels, they have the least possible connection with the event itself” (TOLSTOY, 2006, p. 553). Tolstoy’s critique of a positivistic view of history that emphasizes the significance of historical individuals could easily be applied to Antiochus IV. Similar to Tolstoy’s concept of historical “labels”, Antiochus IV has been the greatest label given by historical critical scholars in recent years when interpreting the prophecies of Daniel 7-12 through a Preterist framework².

Contrary to a historical-critical interpretation, this paper will defend the thesis that Antiochus IV Epiphanies deserves a minimal role in the prophetic sections of Daniel 7-12. In order to support this thesis, our study will draw from ancient and modern historical sources to adequately evaluate the events described during his reign. Due to lack of space, this paper will not give an exhaustive account of the life of Antiochus IV but will focus mainly on the events described in the book of 1 and 2 Maccabees which consequently have been read into the book of Daniel by historical-critical scholars.

After we briefly look through the historical context of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, we will then proceed to a grammatical and literary analysis of the main passages in Daniel where he has been read. These passages will be drawn mainly from the prophetic section of Daniel 7-12. However, due to lack of space, we will not be able to cover all of these, especially the time prophecies, but mainly those where the historical figure of Antiochus IV is considered present (by historical criticism). Thus through a historicist method of interpretation, this paper aims to show based on a historical study of the life of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, and a grammatical and literary study of the prophecies in Daniel 7-12 that Antiochus IV cannot be the major adversary described in these prophecies.

HISTORICAL STUDY OF ANTIOCHUS IV IN ANCIENT SOURCES

Presently in Daniel studies, as Arthur Ferch has pointed out, the “majority [of scholars] hold a view [...] that the book of Daniel was composed...in the second century B.C during the religious persecution of the Jews by the Seleucid monarch Antiochus Epiphanies” (FERCH, 1983, p. 129). As a result, the book of Daniel “was used to express the almost ‘encyclopedic’ learning of early- Hasidic and Essene- apocalyptic” (HENGEL, 184). This supposed Hasidic author of Daniel 7-12 would probably be someone opposing

² In this paper historical critical and preterist will be used interchangeably since the latter is the method of interpreting prophecy used by the former.

the religious policies of Antiochus IV. Although these claims might sound compelling at first, they must be compared first with the primary accounts of Antiochus IV Epiphanes which are recorded in Polybius and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The Greek historian Polybius is one of our main sources for events dating to the reign of Antiochus IV. In his *Histories* Polybius, first, gives a rather caricatured portrait of Antiochus in line with his Roman audience. According to him, Antiochus IV was nicknamed *Epimanes* for his actions (AUSTIN, 2006, 407)³. In addition to this, Polybius reports that Antiochus invaded Egypt and after being confronted by an ultimatum to leave Egypt, “he led his forces away to Syria, burdened (βαρυνόμενος) and anguished (στένων)” (POLYBIUS, 1983). Polybius also reports that after Popilius’ Roman troops intervened in Egypt, “they (Popilius and his colleagues) sailed up (ἀνέβησαν)⁴ to Cyprus (ἐπὶ τῆς Κύπρου), wanting to cast out the existing troops from the island speedily” (POLYBIUS, 1893). As can be seen from the previous examples, Polybius depicts a portrait of an Antiochus who is constantly having his military plans foiled by the Romans.

In addition to Polybius, the next remaining primary sources for analyzing the events in Antiochus’ reign are 1 and 2 Maccabees. They mention one invasion of Antiochus to Egypt in 168 B.C (1 Macc 1:19), his looting of the Temple in 167 B.C (1 Macc 1:20-24; 2 Macc 5:5-21), his prohibition of Jewish laws (1 Macc 1:44-50), and his setting up of an abomination (1 Macc 1:54). However, these references must be taken with caution since “there are several weighty disagreements among these sources about the details and order of events during this period” (FERCH, 1983, p. 133). Among these disagreements include the date of Antiochus’ death. The overall picture 1 and 2 Maccabees paint of Antiochus is of the tyrant who enacted a religious persecution of the Jews that reached “apocalyptic” proportions. However, this begs the question, “how reliable are these sources for an understanding of life during the reign of Antiochus IV?”

LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS OF ANTIOCHUS’ REIGN

Therefore, when attempting to draw all these events together and paint a picture of Antiochus, one must bear in mind Jürg Egger’s warning that a “historical analysis of the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes has to deal with one major problem, namely the lack of sufficient primary sources” (EGGLER, 1989, p. 133). The first major problem facing scholars’ attempts at the reconstructing history of Antiochus, is their lack of sufficient

³ Among these actions Polybius notes Antiochus habit of bathing in the common pool, pretending to be a stranger and having the masses in the marketplace crown him senator.

⁴ The subject of the verb “ἀνέβησαν” in the text is οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν Ποπίλιον καταστησάμενοι which literally could be translated as “those that had been appointed around Popilius” or more loosely those around Popilius. This subject clearly refers to the Romans sailing up to Cyprus.

historical data.

As a result of this difficulty, in an unpublished paper⁵, Jürg Egger has critically assessed

the different attempts at reconstructing the events in the life of Antiochus IV. After evaluating the different theses that have been proposed for Antiochus' persecution of the Jews, Egger concludes, "[...] As a result of limited sources which are hard to utilize there is a wide range of interpretations of the persecution of the Jews during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanies" (EGGLER, 1989, p. 38). After showing the difficulties in reconstructing the events of this period⁶, Egger finalizes his argument by showing that modern scholarship is divided between two views. The first view suggests that "Antiochus was the initiator of the persecution... [And] his motives were either his great cultural devotion to Hellenism...or his political interest in unifying his crumbling kingdom" (EGGLER, 1989, p. 38). The other alternative, as Egger points out, is that "modern scholarship holds to the second view, that Antiochus was not the initiator of the persecution of the Jews" (EGGLER, 1989, p. 38). As Egger's comment shows, scholars have questioned the reliability of the Maccabean sources for tracing a historical picture of Antiochus' reign.

Aside from the lack of adequate trustworthy sources, the second challenge for the historian is to evaluate the extent and influence of the reign of Antiochus. For instance, for an historian such as Peter Green, Antiochus IV was a powerful monarch very well capable of fitting the description of Daniel 7-12. Green goes so far as to say: "By the end of his [Antiochus IV] comparatively short reign he was regarded as the most powerful Greek monarch of his time, despite his failure to achieve much more than the maintenance of 'a precarious *status quo*'" (GREEN, 1990, p. 438). Although Green tries to overrate the significance of Antiochus' reign, he agrees that Antiochus only "maintained the *satus quo*" (GREEN, 1990, p. 438). Green's statement is complemented, on the other hand, by R. Malcom Errington who sees the reign of Antiochus IV as the beginning of the end for the Seleucid Empire⁷ or as he puts it "The collapse of Anthiochos' Egyptian plans also marked the beginning of a much speedier disintegration of Seleukid control over central parts of the empire" (ERRINGTON, 2008, p. 268).

Thus, despite our limited knowledge of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, the overall historiographical evidence suggests that "ever since his father's defeat Antiochus had lived in the ever-lengthening shadow of Rome" (FERCH, 1983, p. 135). Antiochus

⁵ This paper is courtesy of Dr. Martin Klingbeil who allowed me to have access to it. It is entitled EGGLER, Jürg. "A History of Antiochus IV Epiphanies: Paper in Partial Fulfillment of the course History of the Intertestamental Period." **Magazin Für Jüdische Geschichte**. no. 1. 1989: 3-41. (unpublished)

⁶ We will not attempt to give a full account of each of these distinct views due to the purposes of this paper. However, for a broader look into these views see EGGLER, Jürg. A History of Antiochus IV Epiphanies, pp.26-37. (unpublished)

⁷ It is interesting and almost ironic to note that Errington's description of the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes is in the beginning of a section of his work entitled The End of the Seleucids.

showed himself a weak ruler both in his dealings with Rome when attempting to conquer Egypt and in his dealings with the Maccabean uprising when attempting to subjugate Judea. Finally, his attempts to reclaim Parthia failed when he died from disease. As seen from the historical issues raised above, it would be a difficult task to fit this ruler into the depictions of Daniel 7-12.

ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANIES AND DANIEL 7-12

However, attempts at fitting Antiochus IV Epiphanies within the prophecies of the book of Daniel become even more complicated due to the grammatical and literary problems that arise from reading Daniel 7-12 in light of his persecution of the Jews in 168 (?). This paper will now turn to the major grammatical and literary issues facing a historical-critical interpretation of the prophecies in Daniel 7-12. These issues will be argued based on the historicist method of biblical interpretation which takes into account the literary and grammatical aspects of the Aramaic and Hebrew text and which is grounded on the presupposition of *Sola Scriptura*.

Daniel 7

The overall consensus today among historical-critical scholars when interpreting the beasts in the vision of Daniel 7 can be summarized by Klaus Koch's following statement: "A sure result of today's OT research is that Babylon, Median, Persian, and Macedonian [Grecian] empire are intended" (HASEL, p. 156). Behind this statement lies the assumption that Antiochus is the fourth kingdom, since "Daniel 7 was a prophecy dealing with the overthrow of a fourth human monarchy, the Makedonians, which had followed the earlier Assyrian, Median, and Persian empires" (EDDY, p. 221). However, this interpretation faces a series of difficulties. First of all, Antiochus cannot be identified with the fourth beast. H.C Leupold has seriously undermined this position by seeing in these verses, rather, the presence of the Roman Empire as the fourth beast with ten horns⁸ when he says: "[...] No one has ever ventured to assert, if he had an adequate knowledge of history, that Syria, roughly a fourth part of Alexander's empire, deserved to be mentioned in the same breath with Babylon, Persia, and the Greek empire of Alexander. Syria was definitely a second-rate power" (LEUPOLD, p. 296).

Leupold's somewhat commonsensical argument can be supported by further historical evidence seen previously in section 2.1 of this paper which showed that Antiochus IV Epiphanies was a minor ruler who was under the guise of the Roman Empire.

Secondly, although Hartman and Di Lella have tried interpreting Antiochus IV as

⁸ In mentioning Syria, Leupold is also mentioning Antiochus IV since he is the major ruler of Syria that has been identified as being the little horn as we have seen previously.

the tenth king in a series of Greek kings which begins either with Seleucus I or Alexander the Great, he does not fit this description⁹. In addition to this, this interpretation faces two main problems.

The first is historical since “if the list is begun with Alexander the Great, Epiphanies is the eleventh Greek king; if the list is begun with Seleucus I, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, he is its eighth king” (HARTMANN; LILLA, p. 214). Even John Collins agrees that the identity of the ten horns is obscure when he states that “Various attempts have been made to identify the ten horns, especially the three which were uprooted before Epiphanes” (COLLINS, p. 80). Secondly, this interpretation faces literary problems which have been adequately spelled out by Margrit Süring’s words when she said, “The attempt to make the ten horns of Daniel 7 represent a succession of ten individual rulers hardly does justice to the context for the *contemporaneity* of the ten is surely suggested by the fact that the ‘little horn puts down three of these ten (7:24)” (SÜRING, p. 339).

Finally, the third challenge in attempting to fit Antiochus IV Epiphanies within the prophecies of Daniel 7 is grammatical. This argument has been advanced by Margrit Süring. In her doctoral dissertation entitled *The Horn Motif*, Professor Süring analyses the usage of the Aramaic word ܩܢܝܢܐ (kingdoms). In her study, Professor Süring begins by saying that “the terms ‘kings’ and ‘kingdoms’ are used interchangeably in the book of Daniel” (SÜRING, p. 402). Having stated this and supported it through a series of lexical aids¹⁰, Dr. Süring goes on to say, “the context (Daniel 7:17;23-24) gives evidence not of individual kings being discussed but kingdoms” (SÜRING, p. 403). After delineating this principle, she then applies it to the interpretation of the little horn saying, “the ‘little horn’ which came up among the ten horns is a little king-dom—yet a kingdom of a different kind [...]” (SÜRING, p. 403). Consequently, Antiochus IV Epiphanies cannot be the little horn since the horn refers to a kingdom rather than to a single individual. Thus these brief examples just show the implausibility of fitting Antiochus IV Epiphanies into the prophecies of Daniel 7 due to historical, literary, and grammatical problems.

Daniel 8

Aside from Chapter 7, Chapter 8 is another instance where attempts to fit the events of the life of Antiochus with events described in Daniel’s vision face both grammatical and literary challenges. The first of these challenges is grammatical. A grammatical study of the syntactical structure of the Hebrew of Daniel 8:9-10 conducted

⁹ The list of these kings are : (1) Alexander the Great, 336–323; (2) Alexander Aegus, 323–312; (3) Seleucus I, 312–280; (4) Antiochus I, 280–261; (5) Antiochus II, 261–246; (6) Seleucus II, 246–226; (7) Seleucus III, 226–223; (8) Antiochus III, 223–187; (9) Seleucus IV, 187–175; (10) Antiochus IV Epiphanes, 175–16 taken from Hartman and Di Lella, *The Book Of Daniel*, 214

¹⁰ For a more thorough look at Professor Süring’s argument see her doctoral dissertation entitle *The Horn Motif*, pp 402–403 and for a full explanation of the horn motif in apocalyptic texts see pp 383–422.

by William Shea has seriously questioned the assumption that Antiochus IV Epiphanies is the little horn in verse 9. The Masoretic text of Daniel 8:9-10 reads the following

הַלְוִדְגָה הַנִּלְעַמּוֹ תוֹנָח עֲבֵרָא הִתְהַמַּת עֲבֵרָאֵל תּוֹחֹר
 סִימְשָׁה:
 תַּחֲאֵה־נְמוֹ סְהֵמ אֶצְיִי מִחֲא־וֹרֵק הַרִיעֶצֶמְ גִּמְן

The New King James Version reads “in place of it (the Great horn) four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came a little horn... (*The New King James Version*, Dn 8.8-9) Preterist scholars have generally interpreted “out of one of them” as referring to the little horn coming out of the four other horns as Antiochus’ coming forth from the breakup of Alexander’s empire. However, William Shea sees the horn coming from the winds. For Shea, “translated literally the sentence reads, ‘and from the one from them...,’ etc. The reason why it is important to notice this literal construction is that it provides a precise parallel to the gender of elements found in the last phrase of verse 8” (SHEA, 1992, p. 51). Shea justifies this argument with a recourse to a synonymous parallelism (SHEA, 1992, p. 31-67) where the third person masculine pronominal suffix *הָ* (them) refers back to the dual masculine plural antecedent *סִימְשָׁה* (heaven). In addition to this, Shea also sees the numeral *תְּחֵאָה* (one) modifying not the feminine singular word *וֹרֵק* (horn) but rather the feminine plural word *עוֹר* (winds) which would agree with the numeral. Thus, Shea maintains the grammatical structure of the Hebrew syntax, since a feminine singular noun like *וֹרֵק* cannot agree with a third-person plural masculine pronoun suffix *הָ*. Taking into consideration the aforementioned grammatical structures, the little horn could not have come up from the Grecian horns but rather from the winds. This would consequently imply that Antiochus IV Epiphanies cannot be that little horn.

The second challenge in Daniel 8 with a preterist interpretation is literary. Such a challenge has been posed by Seventh-day Adventist theologian Gerhard Hasel. For Hasel, the description of the little horn performs two movements; they are a horizontal and a vertical. The first description “begins by portraying its origin and horizontal-earthly expansion (vss.9-10, 23-24)” (HASEL, p. 381). After this horizontal movement, “in its latter activities, or second stage (vss. 11-12, 25), there is a distinct vertical movement...” (HASEL, p. 381). Having underscored this vertical aspect, Hasel further defines this movement by saying, “It [the horn] moves upward to what appears as a purely heavenly sphere in the audition of the heavenly beings regarding the ‘cleansing’ of the sanctuary...” (HASEL, p. 381). As Hasel’s statement aptly shows based on literary arguments, Antiochus IV Epiphanies does not fit the descriptions of the little horn. Thus, both Hasel’s literary and Shea’s exegetical arguments undermine a historical-critical interpretation of Daniel 8.

Daniel 9

Daniel 9 is another instance where historical-critical scholars have tried to find parallels between “The prince” in Daniel 9:26-27 with Antiochus IV. Historical-critical scholars have tended to correlate the actions of this “prince” with those of Antiochus IV Epiphanies.

First of all, if one follows Hartman and Di Lella’s translation of verse 26, one could easily match it with the events described in the Reign of Antiochus IV. They translate verse 26 as, “and the soldiers of a prince will ruin the sanctuary” (HARTMANN; DI LELLA, p. 252). One could easily extrapolate these events to Antiochus IV’s desecration of the Jerusalem temple in 164 B.C. Secondly, it also says in verse 27 that “he (the prince) shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering”. This parallels Josephus’ statement that “the daily offerings which they [the Jews] offered to God according to the law, he forbade them (the Jews) from offering [...]” (JOSEPHUS, 12.5.22).

Though these arguments may look compelling at first sight, a thorough grammatical and literary study of this passage in its wider context will show this is not the case. First, the Hebrew word *שָׂרַף* is a third masculine singular imperfect verb from the root *שָׂרַף*, which in the *hifil* is translated by Holladay as spoil, ruin, or wipe out (HOLLADAY; KOHLER, p. 366, 367). These three possible translations of *שָׂרַף* are usually applied to a context of destruction. Therefore, the prince would not “ruin” merely in the sense of plundering like Antiochus, but would rather “destroy” the temple itself. This is clearly not the case with Antiochus, since, in 1 Maccabees 1:22, when summarizing Antiochus’ dealings with all of the gold in the Jerusalem temple, the anonymous author says that Antiochus “ἐλέεισε πάντα” (he stripped off everything) (MACCABAEORUM LIBER I, p. 49). The Greek verb ἐλέεισε is a third-person aorist singular of the root λείζω. The Liddell Scott Jones Greek Lexicon translated this verb as to peel off the husk, to skin, or to bark (LIDDELL; SCOTT, p. 1038). The Septuagint¹¹ translates the Hebrew *שָׂרַף* as φθερεῖ (*Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco*, p. 366). This verb comes from the root φθείρω and is translated in the Liddle Scott Jones Lexicon as destroy, corrupt, ruin, and spoil (*Susanna, Daniel, Bel et Draco*, p. 366). As the historical evidence has shown previously, Antiochus did not destroy the temple. The temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

Secondly, a literary study of Daniel 24-27 conducted by William Shea has seriously questioned the assumption that the prince refers to Antiochus IV. First of all, Shea sees the Hebrew expression *וְלִי אֶתְּרָא* in verse 26, which has been literally translated as

¹¹ The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

“and there will not be for him,” as an explicit “prophetic picture of the Messiah’s poverty” (SHEA, 1992, p. 164). This clearly contrasts with “Antiochus’ extravagant and senseless squandering of plunder, spoil, and other stolen riches upon his friends and supporters” (HARTMANN; DI LELLA, p. 295). In addition to this, in verse 27 it says, “in the middle of the ‘seven’¹² he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.” Shea sees here another allusion to the Messiah. Shea asks the rhetorical question, “who is the one putting an end to these sacrifices and offerings? The antecedent ‘He’ is the Messiah Prince [...]” (SHEA, 1992, p. 169); Christ’s death “was the spiritual end of the sacrifices in the theological sense that they were no longer necessary after the death of Jesus” (SHEA, 1992, p. 169).

In addition to this, Daniel 9:26-27 also contains a clear allusion to the Messiah. Commenting on Jesus’ usage of the book of Daniel, N.T Wright states, “In so far as it is possible for us to reconstruct the way in which a first-century sectarian Jew would have read this passage, it seems likely that it would be taken as a prophecy of the destruction of the Temple, accompanied by the setting up of pagan symbols, and perhaps pagan worship, in its place” (WRIGHT, 1996, p. 350). This would clearly refer to the destruction of the temple by the Romans.

These literary arguments clearly contradict a historical-critical interpretation. The small amount of literary and grammatical evidence found in Daniel 9 strongly suggests that this is a prophecy that deals directly with God’s people and the coming Messiah, rather than an *ex-eventu* prophecy from the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanies.

Daniel 10-12

Daniel 10-12 is another instance where reading Antiochus into this prophecy faces several significant challenges. Scholars, both preterits and historicists alike, have usually tended to agree that “These chapters constitute one ‘Vision,’ the breaks introduced by our chapter divisions being fairly modern” (MONTGOMERY, p. 404). However, from this unit, it is the chapters 11:21-12:4 particularly that will be relevant to this paper since it has been the source of major discussion since historical-critical scholars have long used this last unit of the book of Daniel as an explicit reference to the work of Antiochus IV Epiphanies embodied in the “king of the North.” As a result of this assumption scholars

¹² Due to time we will not be able to cover the issue of the year day principle in depth. For now, it suffices to know that the year-day principle makes better sense of the time prophecies given in Daniel and that a method that interprets Jesus as being the “prince” also can account better for all of the numerology in Daniel. However, for further reading on this subject see Alberto Timm’s doctoral dissertation for a deeper look into the development of the historicist method of Biblical interpretation as espoused by Seventh-day Adventist in TIMM, Alberto. **Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series**. 5. Vol. The Sanctuary and the Three Angel’s Messages: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines. Berrien Springs: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1995. See also an article by the same author in TIMM, Alberto. “Miniature Symbolization and the Year-day Principle of Prophetic Interpretation.” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*. no. 1, 2004, p. 149-167. Wilson Paroschi also has a very good article describing the role of Stephen at the end of the seventieth week. See PAROSCHI, Wilson. “The Prophetic Significance of Stephen.” **Adventist Theological Society**. no. 1-2, 1998, p. 343-361.

have tended to analyze this passage in the following way: “21–24. Introduction, Antiochus’ accession and early years. 25–28. The first Egyptian War. 29–35. The Second Egyptian War, vv. 29, 30a, and the consequent trials of the Jewish Religion. 36–39. A description of Antiochus’ arrogance toward God and man. 40–45. An apocalyptic account of his end” (MONTGOMERY, p. 450). However, before jumping to Tcherikover’s conclusion that “[...] Daniel is a historical source of the highest importance [to the reign of Antiochus IV], (TCHETIKOVER, p. 474) one must carefully compare the textual material of Daniel with our knowledge of the history of Antiochus IV Epiphanies.

First of all, it is important to acknowledge the historical problems that come with trying to read Daniel 11:21-12:4 in light of Antiochus’ religious reforms. Among the problems that have not been solved include, “the cause of the religious persecution of the Jews, the precise time of Jason’s rebellion, the date of Antiochus’ death, and the matter of whether there was one campaign or whether there were two campaigns” (FERCH, 1983, p. 133). All these issues make it more difficult to see in Daniel an “eye witness” (FERCH, 1983, p. 133) account of Antiochus’ persecution of the Jews.

Secondly, there are grammatical problems that pose a challenge to interpreting this text in light of the reign of Antiochus IV. When dealing with chapter 11, Shea’s grammatical study of this chapter has questioned the importance attributed to Antiochus IV Epiphanies as the king of the North. For instance, in Daniel 11:24-30, Shea sees another instance where Antiochus IV Epiphanies cannot fit with the Biblical Prophecy. For Shea, when verse 30 says “ships from Cyprus will come against him,” the preposition “against” is originally in the Hebrew written **ב** which is the preposition *be* plus the third person pronominal suffix. However, as Shea has pointed out, **ב** (BIBLIA HEBRAICA STUTTGARTENSIA, Dn 11.30) is never used in the sense of “against”, but always in the sense of “with” or “by”, since “when the Hebrew wants to say that one army is going *against* another, it uses the preposition *‘al*. However the text here uses *be* or *beth*, which means, “by,” “in,” “at,” “with.”” (SHEA, 1983, p. 257).

Another issue is the question of the Kittim in verse 30. Although for Hartman and Di Lella, the Kittim in verse 30 “refers to the Romans” (HARTMANN; DI LELLA, p. 270) this usage is inappropriate since, in Polybius, both Rome and Cyprus are clearly identified by different names. In Polybius’s *Histories*, the Romans sail up to take Cyprus and the verb Polybius uses to describe the Romans’ movement of “sailing up” (**ἀνέλθουσιν**) contains the preposition *ana* (**ἀνά**), which indicates an upward movement to conquer Cyprus. Polybius was clear in differentiating the Romans from the Cyprians.

Finally, Gerhard Pfandl’s study of the term **תַּעֲרֹךְ** (time of the end) in Daniel 12:4 has further revealed that the unit 11:21-12:4 refers not to Antiochus IV, but rather to the resurrection. Pfandl analyze the Hebrew words and terms used in Daniel 12:4 such as **וְנִשְׁמְרוּ**, (from those who are sleeping), **רֶגֶץ־תְּמִידָא** (dust of the earth), **וְצִיָּקִי** (they will awake), and

concludes that “[...] what is spoken of here is a partial resurrection when someone will receive eternal life and others everlasting contempt” (PFANDL, 1996, p. 145). Pfandl then proposes his argument that the “time of the end” cannot refer to Antiochus IV “since in the time of Jesus the great tribulation and the resurrection were still future... (Therefore) Daniel 11:35-12:4 cannot refer to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanies in the second century BC” (PFANDL, 1996, p. 145). He then finalizes his argument by saying, “Daniel’s time of trouble and the partial resurrection must come in the ‘time of the end’ as this *aeon* comes to a close before the commencement of the kingdom of God” (PFANDL, 1996, p. 145). Thus, Antiochus IV Epiphanies cannot be the king of the North in Daniel 11:21-12:4.

CONCLUSION

As was seen previously, this paper has selected just a few grammatical and historical problems with a historical-critical reading of Daniel 7-12, in order to show the implausibility of applying Antiochus IV Epiphanies as a hermeneutical filter to these chapters. A thorough look at each of these problems reveals that historical criticism’s reliance on a Preterist method of interpretation is grounded more in a *a priori* “belief in the omnipotence of reason” (McGRATH, p. 363), than on reliance on the sound grammatical and historical methods of interpretation. Although the purpose of this paper was not to answer all of these hermeneutical problems in the book of Daniel, it is clear based on the historical, grammatical, and literary evidence that Antiochus IV Epiphanies cannot be the little horn in Daniel 7 and 8 nor the prince in Daniel 9:26, nor the king of the North in Daniel 11:21-45. In addition to this, the historical evidence has shown that Antiochus IV Epiphanies was a minor king who lived in the ever-lengthening shadow of the Roman Empire. The view that he was responsible for enacting religious reforms among the Jews has been seriously questioned by scholars in the last decades. Finally, Antiochus’ influence in the production of the book of Daniel has been seriously questioned on historical and grammatical grounds. Thus, a historicist interpretation of Daniel 7-12 has allowed us to place Antiochus IV in his proper historical context, and to have set us on a better starting point for interpreting the prophecies of Daniel.

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