

NOTES ON APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

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Ezekiel 26:7-14 — Nebuchadrezzar will destroy Tyre
Ezekiel 29:17-20 — Nebuchadrezzar could not destroy Tyre

Zechariah 9:9-10 — he shall command peace to the nations
Zechariah 9:11-13 — wield you like a warrior's sword
against the Greeks . . . they shall drink their blood

Zechariah 13:3-6 — Inconsistent, inaccurate, worthless
prophecies resulted in the death of prophets/prophecy

Zechariah 14:1-21 marks the introduction of the apocalyptic
seer with bad news (14:1-2) for Jerusalem, followed by
good news (14:3–21) for Jerusalem but bad news for
Jerusalem's enemies. Mountains and plains would be
rearranged, the Spring of Gihon (גִּיחֹן) would be
stopped up, continuous daytime, Jerusalem's rivers flow
continuously, universalism and monotheism, a plague of
body-rot and bloody sword (13:7-9). Annual pilgrimage to
Jerusalem to observe the feast of booths becomes
mandatory for all survivors. "Holy to the LORD." No temple
commerce! Judah and Joseph will become mighty warriors
(10:3b-7a).

Daniel 7:1-27 is a pre-apocalyptic vision about

(1) a lion (= Babylon), a bear (= Medes), a leopard (= Persians), and a dragon-like ten horned beast (= Greeks, i.e., Alexander the Great, the ten rulers who succeeded him, with the 'little horn' representing Antiochus IV Epiphanes). The dragon-like fourth beast was killed and cremated;

(2) a *human-like* figure — in contrast to the *animal* figures — which symbolically represented the "saints of the Most High," i.e., the righteous Jews. The *human-like* figure appeared before the "Ancient of Days" who had convened a heavenly court which granted the *human-like* figure "everlasting dominion and glory and kingdom" (7:14).

Daniel 7:21-27 addressed the warfare of the 'little horn' (Antiochus IV) against the 'saints of the Most High' (i.e., against the *human-like figure* = the righteous Jews). This warfare would result in the heavenly court (7:26) terminating the dominion of Antiochus IV and transferring dominion to

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“the *people* (a masculine singular noun) of the saints of the Most High.” *His* (a masculine singular pronoun = ‘people’= ‘the saints of the Most High’) kingdom shall be everlasting.

Daniel 8:3 and 8:21-25

- the ‘ram with two horns’(8:3-4) symbolized the Medes and the Persians;
- the ‘one-horn he-goat’ (8:5-8) symbolized Alexander the Great;
- the four horns which replaced the ‘one horn’ Alexander (8:8) were Alexander’s successors: Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy
- the ‘little horn’ (8:9)(coming out of Selucus) was Antiochus IV who violated the Jerusalem temple and prohibited the practices of Judaism (8:11-12)

Daniel 9:30-20 — Daniel’s confession, in prophetic style, of nation sin which resulted in Jerusalem’s calamity and his prayer for God’s mercy.

Daniel 9:1-2, 21-27 — Daniel’s reinterpretation of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 wherein 70 years becomes the 490 years it will take for Daniel’s prayer to be answered.

- Daniel’s first *apocalyptic* vision began with a visit by the *man* Gabriel (= “*man* of God”)
- 49 years — from the start of rebuilding the Temple to coming of an anointed prince (Zechariah 3:6-10, 4:6b-10a and Zechariah 4:1-6a, 4:10b-14)
- 444 years — Second Temple era and its troubled times for Jerusalem
- 7 years — an anointed leader will be cut off and Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed
- 3½ years of the 7 year period will involve the abomination of desolation until the desolator is destroyed.¹

Daniel 10 — The prologue to vision in Daniel 11

- 10:5 a heavenly messenger (Gabriel ??) stated: I have come because of your words (10:12)
- 10:13 and 11:1 speak of Michael, the patron prince of Judah, the patron prince of the Medes (possibly Gabriel [9:21], the patron prince of Persia, and the patron prince of Greece fighting among themselves (10:20)
- 10:14 “latter days . . . yet to come”

Daniel 11:2-39 — Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius I, Xerxes I [or Daruis III or Artaxerxes] will be followed by Alexander the Great, the his kingdom being subdivided [8:22], with attention given to the Syrian kings of the north (Seleucus I, II, III, IV and Antiochus I, II, III, IV) and the Egyptian kings of the south (Ptolemy I, II, III, IV, V)

Daniel 11: 40-43, 45a — fiction/unfulfilled predictions about Antiochus IV.²

Daniel 12:1-13 — Michael, the patron of Judah, will be unable to prevent the troubles inflicted by Antiochus IV. But the troubles will be limited to 1,150 days (3½ years), or to 1,290 days, or 1,335 days (12:7-11). The good news is “your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.” Then comes the announcement of resurrection, final judgment to everlasting life or to everlasting contempt (12:2-3).

Mark 13:3-37; Matt 24:4-36; Luke 21:8-36 (I Thess 4:16ff.)

- Temple to be destroyed, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, persecution of believers, desolating sacrilege, tribulation, false prophets and messiahs no light from sun and moon, falling stars, Son of Man coming in the clouds, angels gather the elect.
- “Truly, I say to you this generation shall not pass away before all these things take place.” Compare I John 2:18, “it is the last hour . . . antichrists *have* come”
- Luke 21:16 “some will be put to death” *versus* 21:18 “not a hair shall perish”
- Luke 21:19 “by your endurance you will gain your lives”

NOTES

1. In 167 B.C., Apollonius, Antiochus IV's chief tax collector, was dispatched with 22,000 men and attacked Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Most of the male population was killed and the women and children enslaved; those few who could left the city. The city walls were demolished and the old city of David re-fortified (the Akra) and furnished with a military garrison (1 Macc 1:29–36; 2 Macc 5:24–26). There followed the prohibition of all Jewish rites and the rededication of the high

temple to Olympian Zeus. A monthly check was made, and anyone found with a copy of the Book of the Law or a child who had been circumcised was put to death (1 Macc 1:54–64; *Ant* 12.5.4–5 §§248–64). In December 167 B.C. (on 25 Kislev) the first pagan sacrifice was performed on the altar to Zeus which had been erected over the altar of burnt offering in the temple: this is “*the abomination of desolation*” alluded to in Dan 11:31 and 12:11 (cf. 1 Macc 1:54; Mark 13:14 in a Gk version).

Antiochus’ decree, promoted vigorously throughout all his domains (2 Macc 6:8–9), was met at first only with passive resistance from the Jews, although of the most heroic kind (2 Macc 6:10–7:42; further elaborated in *4 Maccabees*). Open defiance, however, soon followed, first at Modein, a village NW of Jerusalem, where the priest Mattathias refused to obey the local Syrian commissioner and sacrifice to the heathen gods. He killed the commissioner, overturned the altar, and fled with his sons to the hills (1 Macc 2:1–28; *Ant* 12.6.1–2 §§265–72). They were joined by others but many were massacred in a Syrian attack when they refused to defend themselves on a Sabbath (1 Macc 2:32–38; *Ant* 12.6.2 §§272–78). Mattathias persuaded the survivors that the right of self-defense had to take precedence and he was now joined by many of the Hasidim. His guerrilla bands traveled Judea, defying the prohibitions and harassing the Syrians (1 Macc 2:42–48).

When Mattathias died (166/165 B.C.), the leadership was taken over by one of his five sons, Judas Maccabeus, advised by his brother Simon. As the Jewish forces grew more confident, Judas continued his father’s successes. These culminated in the rout of one Syrian force under Apollonius, whom Judas himself killed, and then another larger army under Seron, the local commander-in-chief (1 Macc 3:10–24; *Ant* 12.7.1 §§287–92)

2. Antiochus, after quelling the revolt of Artaxias of Armenia (165 B.C.), had invaded Elymais (Elam), where he was foiled in an attempt to sack the temple of Artemis (Aphrodite in some accounts). He withdrew to Tabae in Persia and died there in late 164 B.C. of consumption (according to Appian, *Syr.* 66), although several lurid accounts of his death through divine retribution are given by 1 Macc 6:1–17 (cf. *Ant* 12.9.1 §§354–59) and 2 Macc 1:13–17 and 9:1–29.