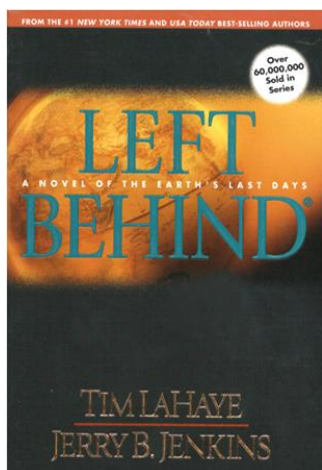


MisUnderstanding Daniel

What do Pope Francis, Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and Vladimir Putin have in common? They have all recently been identified as the Antichrist! Most Bible interpreters do not embrace such identifications but a system of interpretation has become popular in the last 100 years that, I believe, is foreign to God's intent through Daniel. The vision of the fourth beast with the little horn in chapter 7 is commonly understood to be speaking of a future, end of time, Antichrist arising out of a reconstituted Roman empire that will persecute Jewish people for 3 ½ years in the time of the



Great Tribulation. Yet, according to those same interpreters, the vision in chapter 8 is commonly understood to be speaking of a past 3 ½ year persecution of the Jewish people by Antiochus Epiphanes around 165BC. Then, the vision in chapter 9—Daniel's famous 70 weeks—is said to again be speaking of a future 3 ½ year persecution by the Antichrist. Sixty nine weeks of that prophecy are said to have already occurred, and we're currently in a gap waiting for that 70th week—the Tribulation period. Then, the vision in chapters 10–11 is said to be

speaking again of the past persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. But chapter 12, part of the same vision, is said to be referring to the end times Antichrist and Tribulation period again.

If your head is beginning to hurt, that's understandable. What I think you'll see as we go through these chapters in their context is that they are all referring to events that are in our past but were in Daniel's future. In all his visions, Daniel speaks of events that describe the great persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes that occurred between 168/167 BC and 165/164 BC. "Scripture interprets Scripture" and "Context is King" must be remembered as we consider these visions together.

Today's popular scheme of interpretation just cannot be born out of the context. Notice the parallels with the visions in chapter 7 and 8:

1) The goat in chapter 8, referring to Greece is said to conquer the Medes and Persians by trampling them under its feet (8:7). This is the language used of the 4th beast in 7:7. This would exclude the fourth beast in chapter 7 from being Rome because the Roman empire never conquered the region or the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians. They did not break them in pieces and stamp what was left with their feet. That is what Greece did, clearly identified for us in chapter 8.

2) Of course there is also the clear parallel between this little horn, mentioned in both chapters, that will cause great offense to God and bring severe persecution to the people of God for roughly 3 ½ years. Continuity of context would tell us that this is the same horn, and the same king. The law will be changed, the sacrifices will be stopped, the temple will be made desolate—these are clear themes in both visions. And this little horn will be judged and destroyed by God. So what we have here in chapter 8 is a vision to clarify what was in the vision given in chapter 7.

3) There is also a parallel when in 7:19–20, Daniel wished to know more about the fourth beast and the little horn that made war against the saints. That is, he wanted to know more about the end of the vision, this little horn, and his destruction before God setup his kingdom. Then here, in chapter 8, it says that this vision is concerning the time of the end (8:19). Why is this a significant parallel? According to the common modern approach, the four beasts of Daniel 7 are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, then Rome. And this vision in chapter 8 is speaking of the middle two beasts of Medo-Persia and Greece. But that can't be seen in the context. Chapter 8 is concerning the *end*, not the *middle*. It is concerning this time of indignation (8:19), this great persecution of the Jews before God destroys this little horn. After this God sends his Messiah, his King, to establish the kingdom of God.

For these reasons, the common modern understanding, fails to be faithful to the text as written and should be abandoned. We should forsake the never ending quest to identify *the* Antichrist and this revived Roman empire and rather see in God the one who declares the end from the beginning. God is reigning over every beastly kingdom and even in the darkest of moments for his people—his kingdom will never be conquered or destroyed.