meaning of the four heads is eminently suitable, because Persia's main period of expansion and aggression was comprised of four distinct kings—Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes (Pseudo-Smerdis being merely a short-lived impostor). Between them these four kings created the Persian empire in all its vast extent and wealth; and it was the fall of the last among them that signified 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 this 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 1:14. 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—once 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 it is a fact that it was to have division—which corresponds to the fact that the kingdom of Rome 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 Persians maintained their vast empire for over two hundred years before it was broken up in 334 BCE. The fourth kingdom, 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 the implication is that the fourth kingdom crushes the first domain which it overshadows (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 the Parthian areas), including Babylonia, Media and Persia. Thus the third kingdom and fourth kingdom 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 and fourth kingdom both rule over the whole earth, but one of the features of the Persian empire was the fact that it was not the work of one man, and the four-headed beast is a perfect picture of this.

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The book of Daniel: three issues

John E Goldberg

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 do intend to. 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 living 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 (Dn. 9) are represented, for instance, by Driver and Heath on one hand, and by Young and others 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.

Some understand the main reference to be to Christ's first coming (so Young, Daniel, pp. 213-19), others to his second coming (so Driver, The Book of Daniel (Cambridge: 1900); E. W. Heaton, The Book of Daniel (Torch Bible Commentary, SCM, 1956)).


2. A theological issue

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 to be true of the beast, if we take it 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 they live in a system with an enormous structure.

(2) Particular considerations in fact reinforce this preliminary understanding. There are several specific similarities 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 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 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.

4. A historical issue

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

Cf. Harrison, p. 1130.
Fur...
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 no human hand (2:34). Again, the 'time, 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 Antiochene persecution.

It is difficult to believe 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 occurrence of this symbolism comes in the eighth century B.C. Greek poet Hesiod (Works and Days 56-201). This parallel 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 some pagans can see in the common 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 had to have the first and last members of the scheme. What is important about the interlude focused on the Maccabean crisis and encourages God's people to believe that they see evil depose and punished, and righteousness established and rewarded.


But the eschaton was not ushered in by the Anti
checian 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 is to the literal end of the world, the final one, rather as Jesus in Mark 13, distinguishes between the crisis of his own ministry and the fall of Jerusalem on the one hand, and that day and hour of 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 the prophecies refer to events far beyond the prophetic age, and yet it is equally true that the text is concerned with the issue of God's command concerning the re-building in Jerusalem to the appearance of Christ, but the exegetical approach outlined above would suggest that here too, the reference is to the period lasting until the Antiociene deliverance.

The alternative to the mainstream approaches to these visions which I would therefore like to suggest is that the vision can only be so understood as referring to the Antiociene crisis, it is not necessary to infer that their inspiration is thereby imperilled. On the contrary, in as far as a more coherent and intelligible interpretation of them is made possible, it is preferable. The interlude focused on the Maccabean crisis and encourages God's people to believe that they see evil depose and punished, and righteousness established and rewarded.

On this paragraph, see G. B. Caird's comments on eschatology in Exe 7:94 (1962-63), p. 84.

9 Of course a further point of reference to the Medes, and in the mention of the Median Darius (especially if he is the same as the Darius of 10:21) is to be noted in Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel, London: Tyndale Press (1965), pp. 12-16) may be to desire the fulfillment of prorogued prophecy (cf. Daniel 8:26) to be applicable to the Maccabean deliverance or to the world into which Daniel looks (v. 6) and the never losing sight of the question why he is mentioned, whether the name.
10 NBCR, in loc. The non-literal interpretation of a round number is paralleled by the approach now usually adopted to the 480 years of 2 Ki 6:1.11

11 There is no space here for a discussion of the verses' intended interpretation of the 'time, times, and half a time' which is essentially to be applicable to the Maccabean deliverance or to the world into which Daniel looks (v. 6) and the never losing sight of the question why he is mentioned, whether the name.

13 On this paragraph, see G. B. Caird's comments on eschatology in Exe 7:94 (1962-63), p. 84.
logical. It was not the fulfillment of God's final purpose but it was an aresbôn 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 'apollis' mentioned here and apply it to an incident to occur as part of the coming fall of Jerusalem. 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 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 who lived and died in the beginning of the seventh. He was a priest, a member of the priestly line, and lived an eyewitness account of these events.

Yet there are many reasons to believe that Daniel prophesied in the sixth century that this would be impossible and irrelevant.

And the 'cosmological' underlying response to these points is that such prophecy is by no means impossible if you believe in God. To exclude it is ultimately rationalistic. 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 had foreseen the situation long before. And further, for it to make this point it is important that the book really comes from long before: if it does not, it is (however well-meant) a fraud.

What are we to make of this? The only comfort that the book could 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 may 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: Metzger mentions fear, shame, financial greed, malign respect, modesty, dramatic concern, and desire for credence. It was evidently quite possible for an author in good faith to publish under the name of someone else; Metzger instances the Neo-Pythagoreans who, centuries after Pythagoras, attributed their works 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 inter-testamental pseudonymous apocalyptic. 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 try to understand ourselves by the ethics of the matter. In the case of Daniel, then, one, whatever idiom or mode of expression he used would work in ordinary speech must surely be allowed him when moved by the Holy Spirit. 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.

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

Pseudonymity 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 theologically 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 arguably 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. 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 evidences 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 treat 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 situation, by means of this strange literary form, to faith in him as the one 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 known.'

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 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
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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 who was, at least more than two thousand 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 of this kind, however, and assume that, although the stories about him may well be ultimately based on fact, they have been at least extensively elaborated in a subsequent period in order to bring God's message to a later generation. The time to which the book finally belongs, according to this approach, is the period to which it refers and to which its message relates, namely the second-century Maccabean crisis. The declaration that the historical vision is a literary device, whereby evens of the history (which is nearly all in fact past from the perspective of the real writer) are declared to have been in the control of the God of Israel all along. He knew 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 events.

In justification of this approach, scholars commonly 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 through them), and of the language (in Driver's often quoted tag, 'the Persian writers 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.13 They may well be made here, however, that is underlying these detailed reasons is another, often unstated, Daniel did not prophesy the events of the sixth century because this would be impossible and irrelevant. And the 'conservative' underlying response to these points is that such prophecy is by no means impossible if you believe in God. To exclude it is ultimately irrational. 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 had foreseen the situation long before. And further, for it to make this prediction. The assumption that the book really comes from long before: if it does not, it is (however well-meant) a fraud.14

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 be granted. But on the other hand, the assertion that 'if apocalyptic and ex events, then fraudulent', is surely without adequate foundation.15

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