

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10–12: APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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The understanding and interpretation of the last three chapters of the book of Daniel have always been a challenge for scholars and readers of the Bible. Particularly, the interpretation of the central prophetic content of Daniel 11:2b–12:3, referring to the mysterious kings of the north and the south, has been obscure.¹ This section either has been studied superficially or ignored totally in Adventist literature. However, during the last twenty years there has been a change of approach in understanding this prophecy.²

- ¹ Zdravko Stefanovic proposes three approaches to the prophecy in ch. 11. (1) One can consider the chapter too difficult to interpret. (2) On the other extreme, there is the temptation of claiming that one can figure out the precise meaning of every single minute detail. Finally, Stefanovic suggests a (3) “more balanced approach”: “one may keep in mind the obvious fact that the details of the text are vague and even obscure and consequently maintain a relative vagueness even at the level of interpretation.” Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise; Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 395, 396. Unfortunately, it is not a well-balanced approach. This paper assumes that the section under review, chs. 10–12, is a divine revelation and contains the word of God. Therefore, the clear meaning of this prophecy can be interpreted through good exegesis. This research gives guidelines for responding to the challenge presented by Don W. Leatherman: “I only urge that such an interpretation [the comprehension of Daniel 10 to 12] be sought. By collaboration, by diligent study and by sincere prayer, we may hope eventually to find such an interpretation. And it is to this task that I would exhort the ministry and the academicians of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Don W. Leatherman, “Adventist Interpretation of Daniel 10–12: A Diagnosis and Prescription,” *JATS* 7.1 (1996): 137–138.
- ² Samuel Nunez, *Las profecias apocalipticas de Daniel* (Mexico City: Datacolor Impresiones, 2006); Humberto Raul Treiyer, *Enigmas Descifrados: Conozca los fascinantes misterios de Daniel Capítulos 11 y 12* (Mayaguez, Puerto Rico: Antillian College Press, 2006); Carlos Elias Mora, *Dios Defiende a su Pueblo: Comentario exegetico de Daniel 10 al 12* (Montemorelos, Mexico: Adventus, 2012); Roy Gane, “Methodology for Interpretation of Daniel 11:2–12:13,” *JATS* 27.1–2 (2016): 294–343; Koot van Wyk and Sook-

The present study recognizes the basic importance of grammatical and syntactical work in the exegetical enterprise. Furthermore, it demonstrates that structural analysis provides a better comprehension of the passage and the flow of thoughts contained in it. These guidelines give a structure for understanding Dan 10-12.³

1. Guideline I: Model of Repetition and Enlargement

There are evident similarities in the four prophetic lines in the book of Daniel.⁴ It should be noted that Dan 10-12 has a similar structure consisting of a prologue, prophecy, explanation, and epilogue.⁵ Therefore, one can find the same interpretation for the four prophetic lines in Daniel.

Section	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8, 9		Daniel 10-12
Prologue	2:1-30	7:1	8:1, 2	9:1-20	10:1-11:2a
Prophecy	2:31-35	7:2-14	8:13-14	9:24	11:2b-12:3
Explanation	2:36-45	7:15-27	8:15-26	9:25-27	12:4-12
Epilogue	2:46-49	7:28	8:27	-	12:13

Chart 1. The basic outline for the four prophetic lines in Daniel.

In order to attain a better understanding of chs. 10-12, it is necessary to use one of the most basic interpretive principles for Bible prophecy taught

Young Kim, "The Qvo Vadis Problem and Solution in Historicism in Daniel 11," *IJHSS* 5.9 (2015): 99-135.

³ Hans K. LaRondelle, *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible: A Biblical-Contextual Approach* (Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997), 11, 12.

⁴ We assume that ch. 9 is an explanation of the time question, which was not resolved in the previous chapter. Chapter 11 is not a vision but a prophetic discourse (11:2b-12:3). Verses 4 to 12 of ch. 12 are the commentaries of the heavenly beings about the end time.

⁵ See Desmond Ford, *Daniel*, vol. 1 of *Anvil Biblical Studies* (Nashville, TN: Southern, 1978), 252-253.

by Adventist pioneers, namely, “parallelism.”⁶ Daniel 2, 7, and 8 show the same period in history and add new elements to the message of the book. There is a switch from a secular power in ch. 2, to a religio-political power in ch. 7, and then to the sanctuary and its cleansing in ch. 8.⁷ Each chapter helps interpret the others. With this idea, we can see the following chart that shows the basic sections in each prophecy.

Here are the symbols and the interpretation of the first three prophetic lines of the book, to which we will later add the fourth line.⁸

Event	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon	Head of gold	Lion with eagle's wings	-
Media and Persia	Chest and arms of silver	Bear with three ribs in its mouth	A ram
Greece	Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with four wings of a bird	A male goat
Greek kingdoms	-	Four heads	Four horns
Pagan Rome	Legs of iron	A dreadful and terrible beast	Little horn
Papal Rome	-	Little horn	Little horn
Europe	Feet partly of iron and partly of clay	Ten horns	-
Judgment	-	Judgment scene	2,300 days
Second coming	A stone cut out without hands	The kingdom given to the saints of the Most High	-

Chart 2. Comparison of the interpretation of Dan 2, 7, and 8.

⁶ Víctor Casali, *Historia de las doctrinas Adventistas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones SALT, 1991), 93.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁸ William H. Shea presents the direct relationship that exists between Dan 2 and 7. William H. Shea, “Unity of Daniel,” in *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, vol. 2 of *Daniel and Revelation Committee Series* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1986), 170–175. He does the same with chs. 8 and 9. *Ibid.*, 185–192, 201–203, 208–219, 234–239. Finally, he does the same work of comparison and establishes connections among chs. 8, 9, and 11. *Ibid.*, 220–222, 245–247.

Chart 2 leads us to some conclusions. It shows four universal empires,⁹ which form the structure of the prophecy. The starting point, which is fundamental to the interpretation of all the prophetic tables of the book of Daniel, is the definition of the four universal empires which are found in the Danielic oracles.¹⁰

In addition, one can appreciate the fact that each succeeding prophecy adds elements and gives more details to the preceding ones. For example, ch. 7 adds the new power of the little horn and the heavenly judgment, while chs. 8 and 9 add the date of its beginning, besides the new details concerning the three last universal empires and the new religio-political power (the little horn) of the seventh chapter. It is therefore expected that the prophecy of 11:2b–12:12 will retain the same scheme, amplify the previous elements, and also add new concepts to the prophetic panorama.

Determining the parallelism of the last prophetic line of Daniel should not be done superficially; instead, the internal elements of the passage, as well as their connections with the details of the preceding visions, must allow the elaboration of this correspondence. It is important to establish this parallelism in order to interpret the prophecy in an appropriate way.

Before proposing an interpretation of Dan 11, it will be useful to appreciate the connections between the last three prophetic lines of the book. Some scholars have shown the parallelism between chs. 7, 8, and 11,¹¹ and this parallelism will be useful in portraying the intimate correspondence between these sections of the book of Daniel.

⁹ In ch. 8, Babylon is excluded, because it was at its end when the prophecy was written. A very similar situation is given in ch. 11 when the Babylonian Empire no longer existed.

¹⁰ The critical approach suggests that the four universal kingdoms in Daniel are Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. See, for instance, C. Caragounis, "History and Supra-History," in *The Book of Daniel: In the Light of New Findings*, ed. Adam van der Woude, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), 387–397. William H. Shea shows why the critical approach about the four kingdoms is wrong. See Shea, "Unity of Daniel," 173, 174; William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, vol. 1 of *Daniel and Revelation Committee Series* (Lincoln, NE: College View, 1982), 53.

¹¹ Ford, *Daniel*, 265; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *The Message of Daniel for You and Your Family*, vol. 1 of *God Cares* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1981), 295; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 154–155; Gerhard Pfandl, "The Latter Days and the Time of the End in the Book of Daniel" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1990), 227–228.

Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Daniel 10-12
Media and Persia The bear (7:5): It raised up itself on one side	Media and Persia The ram (8:3, 4, 20): One horn was higher than the other and it became great	Media and Persia Four kings: They were rich and the fourth one should be far richer
Greece A leopard Four wings of a fowl	Greece A male goat A big horn The horn that was broken did not touch the ground	Greece A mighty king shall stand up His kingdom shall be broken
Greek kingdoms Four heads (7:6)	Greek kingdoms Four horns (8:8)	Seleucides and Ptolemaics: "and shall be divided towards the four winds" (11:4)
Pagan Rome A fourth beast, dreadful and terrible	Pagan Rome A horn (8:9-12) Toward the glorious land	Pagan Rome In the glorious land
Papal Rome The little horn He thinks to change times and laws (7:25) He shall wear out the saints of the Most High (7:25) "until a time and times and the dividing of time" (7:25)	Papal Rome The horn Takes away the daily The place of his sanctuary was cast down (8:11) "And it cast down the truth"(8:12) He prospered (8:12) The transgression of desolation (8:13) For at the time of the end (8:17) The transgressors are come to the full (8:23) Shall be in the last end of the indignation (8:19) But not by his own power (8:24) He shall destroy the mighty and the holy people (8:24)	Papal Rome Takes away the daily (11:31) Shall place the abomination that maketh desolate (11:31) He shall work deceitfully (11:23) He shall do according to his will and prosper (11:36) The abomination (11:31) At the time appointed (11:27, 29, 35), at the time of the end (11:40), the wicked shall do wickedly (12:10)

<p>His look was more stout than his fellows (7:25) "He shall speak great words against the most High" (7:25) "They shall take away his dominion" (7:26)</p>	<p>"He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand" (8:25) He shall magnify himself in his heart (8:25) "He shall stand against the Prince of princes" (8:25) "He shall be broken without hand" (8:25)</p>	<p>He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished (11:36) He shall become strong with a small people (11:23) They shall fall by the sword, by flame, by captivity (11:33) "For a time, times and a half" (12:7) "He corrupts by flatteries" (11:32) He shall exalt himself (11:36) and magnify himself above all (11:37) "He shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods" (11:36) "He shall come to his end.... None shall help him" (11:45)</p>
<p>"My cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me" (7:28)</p>	<p>The vision is true (8:26) Shut up the vision (8:26) For many days he did not understand it (8:27)</p>	<p>The vision is true (10:1) "Shut up the words" (12:4, 9) "For many days" (10:14) He did not understand it (12:6, 8)</p>

Chart 3. Similarities between Dan 7, 8, and 10-12.

We can see the parallelism of these prophetic lines in Daniel. Each empire has its correspondence in the other chapters. And we can also notice that each kingdom and the main events are in the same order. The three prophecies use similar words and expressions. Therefore, we observe that

there are connections between the four prophetic lines and there is a clear parallelism between them.¹²

2. Guideline II: Historical-Prophetical Flow in Daniel 11:2b–12:3

Alonso Tarigan, in his PhD dissertation, summarized the historical flow that is evident in the prophecy of Dan 11.¹³ These markers in the text provide a structure for building a solid interpretation. These markers are signs on the road of interpretation that do not allow anyone to go in a direction other than where the text leads. Tarigan's summary is presented in the following chart¹⁴ that I have slightly modified.

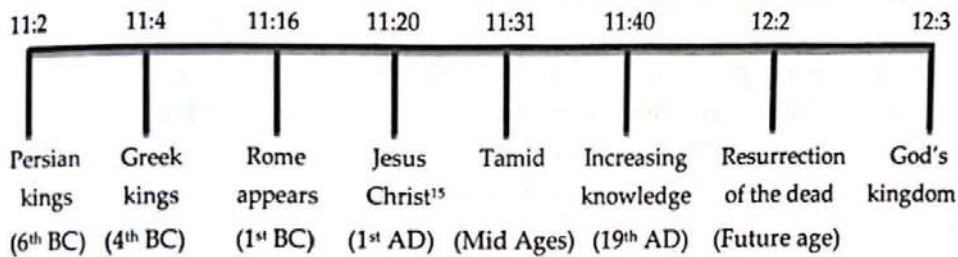


Chart 4. Historical-prophetical flow in Dan 11:2–12:3.

¹² "This literary form lends further support to the idea that the later prophetic chapters of Daniel explain the earlier ones." Shea, *Selected Studies*, 45.

¹³ Alonso Tarigan, "Eschatological Time of Trouble of Daniel 12:1: An Intertextual Analysis and Theological Implications" (PhD diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, 2014), 53–66.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁵ The "prince of the covenant" (11:22) cannot be Jesus. See Doukahn's interpretation of this point rather than Shea's interpretation. Shea, *Selected Studies*, 48; Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 145, 146. Daniel 11:20 would be the indirect reference to Jesus in his human condition. During the time the tax collection decree was issued by Cesar Augustus, Jesus Christ was born. In this case, every prophetic line in Daniel alludes to Jesus in a different situation: his birth in 11:20; his death in 9:24–26; his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary in 8:11; his intervention in the antitypical Day of Atonement in 7:13–14; his intervention in the eschatological days in 12:1; and his second coming in 2:44–45.

It is evident that there is a linear development in history as well as in prophecy. The highlighted events are obvious in the text, and there is a general agreement among Adventist scholars about their interpretation. There can be disagreements in the details but the general lines are well accepted.

These main events along chs. 11 and 12 are like landmarks along the road of interpretation to bring us back to the right track if we take a wrong path in our understanding of this oracle.

3. Guideline III: There Are Words That Are Signs in the Interpretation of the Prophecy

We can divide the prophecy into two great sections. Remember, we have mentioned that v. 20 is very important. It alludes indirectly to the birth of Jesus because it points to Caesar Augustus and his census and tax decree (Luke 2:1). Therefore, the first twenty verses refer to the pre-Christian era and the following verses continue with the Christian era.¹⁶

This division of the prophecy, 11:2-20 and 11:21-12:3, is also supported by arguments within the text. First of all, one may notice the use of some Hebrew expressions, which support the splitting of this prophecy into two sections.

Expressions found only in the first section, 11:1-20		
Daughters given in marriage "the daughter of the king of South", 11:6 "And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it", 11:17	11:6, 17	-
"Multitude"	11:10-13	-
Expressions found in both sections		
"Your people"	11:14	12:1
"The king of the south"	11:5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15	11:25, 40
"The king of the north"	11:6, 7, 8, 11, 13	11:40
"Fortress"	11:10	11:24, 31, 38, 39

¹⁶ Joyce G. Baldwin, "Daniel: Theology of," *NIDOTTE* 4:503; Maxwell, *The Message of Daniel*, 293-294; Ford, *Daniel*, 266. W. Sibley Towner applies the section from v. 20 onward to Antiochus IV Epiphanes. W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox, 1973), 157-164. See also Louis F. Hartman, *Daniel*, The Jerome Biblical Commentary (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 287, 294-295.

Precious treasures of Egypt	11:8	11:43
The glorious land	11:16	11:41
"Do according to his will"	11:3, 16	11:28, 30, 32
Expressions found only in the second section, 11:21–45		
Vile, contemptible	-	11:21
"The prince of the covenant"	-	11:22
"Holy covenant"	-	11:28, 30, 32
"The abomination"	-	11:31
A time appointed, at the time	-	11:27, 29, 35, 40
His fathers	-	11:24, 37, 38
"By flatteries"	-	11:21, 32, 34
"God," "gods"	-	11:36–39
"The east"	-	11:44

Chart 5. Distribution of the main expressions in Dan 11.

One may note that there are specific expressions that appear exclusively in one of the halves of the chapter.

Second, there is a term that marks the beginning of a particular character in the prophetic discourse (i.e., "vile," "despicable" in 11:21; Heb. *nibžeh*).¹⁷ This new character points out the beginning of a different section. This expression is the key of the chapter, for it introduces a different monarch with the special qualification of "the wicked" (cf. Ps 15:4; Isa 53:3; Jer 22:28; Mal 1:7, 12), which is understood to be the king of the north in a different phase (he appears in opposition to the king of the south in 11:25). In connection to this characteristic, one may note that the title "king of the north" does not appear again until "the end of the time" in 11:40.

There are very particular actions that are only applicable to this king. He shows no respect to the customs and traditions of his ancestors (11:24, 37, 38), which suggests that he breaks all the rules of the former kings, especially all that had a relationship with the God of his fathers (11:36–39). Readers can get the same conclusion about his profane attitude when they read the second section of the chapter and find the connection with the term *covenant*. His attack is against the very "holy covenant" (11:28, 30). He seduces those who violate the covenant (11:32), with whom he clearly agrees (11:32). He corrupts by "flatteries" (11:21, 32, 34), something that his predecessors did not do in their battles and conquests and which shows his cunning character.

¹⁷ The word *person* is not in the Hebrew text. This is a biased translation based on the critical presuppositions that interpret this character as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a petty Greek monarch, a Seleucid who reigned from 175 to 164 BC.

Third, to this “vile” person is attributed the expression “he will do according to his will”; literally “he will do” (11:23, 28, 30), “and they will do” (11:32).¹⁸ The use of this phrase in this prophecy introduces a new power (11:3, 16). Note that in vv. 28 and 30, the phrase “he will do” is used in connection with the attacks against the holy covenant, which suggests that this is a new rule, but in a different realm—the religious and spiritual one. It is not only military and political. Based on this insight, we can understand v. 32 in a better way, where a particular “power” — “the people who know their God”—is presented as those who “shall be strong and do exploits.” It is the church under persecution, the “holy ones” of ch. 7, who are oppressed (7:25) but they will receive the kingdom at the end of the judgment (7:25, 26).

The apparition of the “abomination that causes desolation” in connection with this vile person in the last prophecy of Daniel is relevant. This allusion connects this oracle directly with Dan 8 and confirms the parallelism between these two prophetic lines in this crucial description of the antichrist. Moreover, it suggests that at this level of the prophetic narrative, this vile character should be related to the little horn of Dan 8 and an extension to that of Dan 7.¹⁹

On the other hand, there are expressions that are found in both sections of the chapter in a proportionate manner. The first of them is “behold,” which is located in the three sections of the prophecy. In the introduction of the vision, the “shining man” (10:5) is mentioned. Daniel 11:2 begins the prophetic discourse of the angel. And Dan 12:5 establishes the final section of the vision.

The phrase “your people” is also a clue (10:14, 11:14, 12:1). As indicated before, this prophecy covers a period of the history of the Jewish people, the people of Daniel, which is not included in the previous visions (in other words, the intertestamental period). Daniel 11:2–15 alludes to this period and these people. The exception would be in 12:1, where the context is clearly eschatological and refers to the people of God in the last days. Moreover, there are other expressions about the valuable treasures of Egypt (11:8, 43) and “the glorious land” (11:16, 41) which are also found in both divisions of the chapter.

¹⁸ The two citations in the first section (11:2–20) are “he shall do according his will” (11:3) and “he that comes against him shall do according to his will” (11:16).

¹⁹ See Shea, *Selected Studies*, 49–53.

4. Guideline IV: There Are Temporal Expressions and Allocutions related to Defeats That Are Signs for the Interpretation of the Prophecy

Another important detail is the use of expressions related to temporal events. We find eight different expressions that appear thirteen times in the prophecy (11:2–12:3). These phrases play an important role in the structure of the prophecy. They help build the outline of the chapter and find the beginning or end of the paragraphs.

1. 11:6 (2x), 14²⁰: “in those times”
2. 11:8: “years”
3. 11:13²¹: “at the end of some years”
4. 11:20: “a few days”
5. 11:24²²: “but only for a time”
6. 11:29: “at the appointed time”
7. 12:1 (2x)²³: “at that time”
8. 11:27, 35, 40²⁴: the use of the term *qetz*

There are also fourteen statements of failures and disasters in ch. 11 that use various words, as one can see below. This prophecy talks about wars and confrontations and it is unavoidable that one may find defeats.

1. 11:4: “shall be broken,” “shall be divided,” “shall be uprooted”
2. 11:6: “she shall not retain,” “neither shall he stand”
3. 11:12: “he will not prevail”
4. 11:14: “they shall fall”
5. 11:15: “shall not withstand,” “neither shall there be any strength to withstand”
6. 11:17: “but she shall not stand on his side”

²⁰ See Pfandl, “The Latter Days,” 220.

²¹ It is an obscure textual phrase. It leads towards a temporal age. Ibid., 221.

²² “The phrase *uhed-eth* seems to indicate that a limit has been set by God to the time the contemptible person can act.” Ibid., 230. In this way, we can understand the expression in v. 27.

²³ It is an allusion to the time of v. 40. See Pfandl, “The Latter Days,” 230–233.

²⁴ “Theologically, the word often appears in the context of divine judgment. Elsewhere, Daniel uses *qetz* to signify the eschaton, the end time of human history.” Andrew E. Hill and Gordon H. Matties, “qetz,” *NIDOTTE* 3:955. See also Pfandl, “The Latter Days,” 250–251.

7. 11:19: "but he shall stumble," "and fall, and not be found"
8. 11:20: "but within few days he shall be destroyed"

It is very interesting that there are only three mentions of failure in the second part of the prophecy.

1. 11:25, 26: the king of the south in a triple fall before the vile person (11:21)
2. 11:33-35: the people of God, again in triple fall before the contemptible person
3. 11:45: the final failure of the terrible king of the north.

Three brief examples help us grasp the importance of these expressions. They are reliable markers, so we can be sure where a paragraph starts and finishes and what the main ideas are. Below is the structure of the paragraph of Dan 11:6-8 (time expressions are *italicized* and the failures are underlined).

A1 After some years they shall make an alliance,
B1 and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to ratify the agreement.
C1 But she shall not retain her power,
C2 and his offspring shall not endure.
B2 She shall be given up, she and her attendants and her child and the one who supported her.

A2 In those times

The two "time phrases" mark the beginning and the end of this section, while the "defeat expressions" are in the core of this section. It is very interesting that the section of Dan 11:32b-35 talks about the people of God under persecution.

A1 But the people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action. (*AN ACTIVE PEOPLE OF GOD*)
B1 The wise among the people shall give understanding to many; (*THE WISE*)
C1 for some days, however, they shall fall by sword and flame, and suffer captivity and plunder.
C2 When they fall victim, they shall receive a little help,
B2 and many shall join them insincerely. Some of the wise shall fall, (*THE WISE*)
A2 so that they may be refined, purified, and cleansed, (*A PASSIVE PEOPLE OF GOD*) until the time of the end, for there is still an interval until the time appointed.

The structure of 11:25–27 enlightens the interpretation of the prophecy. Note that in the core of the passage (B1, C, and B2), the expressions are connected with failure. In both extremes (A1 and A2), we find both kings fighting for power. The paragraph ends with a singular expression, “the time appointed.”

A1 He shall stir up his power and determination against the king of the south with a great army, and the king of the south shall wage war with a much greater and stronger army. (THE VILE AND THE KING OF THE SOUTH)

B1 But he shall not succeed, for plots shall be devised against him

C by those who eat of the royal rations. They shall break him,

B2 his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall slain.

A2 The two kings, their minds bent on evil, shall sit at one table and exchange lies. But it shall not succeed, (THE VILE AND THE KING OF THE SOUTH) *for there remains an end at the time appointed.*

This last temporal expression, “time appointed,” is very important for the understanding of the prophecy. It gives us a sequence of events in this section (11:21–40) that will be very helpful for the interpretation of the section. Daniel 11:25 says that this time is still in the future, and later 11:29 announces that a strong power will return in the time appointed. Daniel 11:35 suggests that the time appointed is still going on. Finally, 11:40 announces the time of the end, the end of the appointed time.

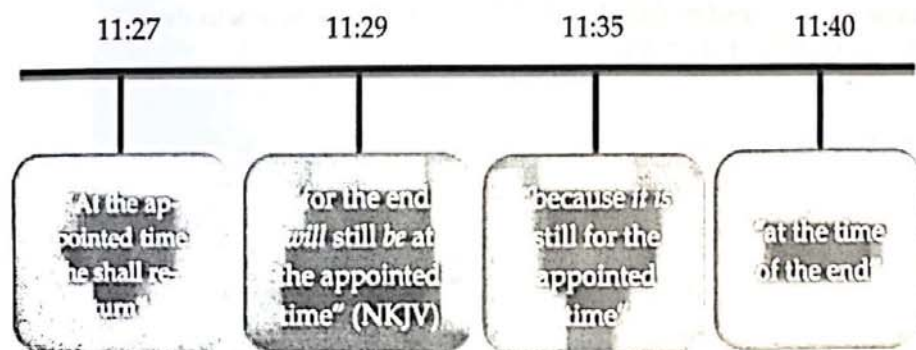


Chart 6. The temporal sequence of “the time appointed.”

Both expressions—temporals and those that are related to defeats and failures—mark important events of the prophecy and organize the structure of the writing. For instance, the eschatological section (11:40–45) starts with a significant expression of time (“at the time of the end”) and it concludes with the most important fall of the oracle of Dan 11, the defeat

and failure of the false king of the north (“yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him”).

5. Guideline V: There Are Some Hebrew Verbs That Are Markers for the Interpretation of the Prophecy

Finally, there are some Hebrew verbs that are repeated many times and their meanings are important in the interpretation.

āmad appears twenty-eight times and twenty of them are in the prophetic section. In the prologue and in the last section (11:4–12), *āmad* means “stand up,” but its use in the prophetic section is equivalent to “to reign, to dominate.” Sometimes it means “to resist” (11:8, 11, 13, 14), but its main meaning is “to reign” over the Persians (11:2), the Greeks (11:3, 4), the king of the south (11:7), the king of the north (11:20), and the contemptible (11:21). The last mention refers to Michael, “who stands over the sons of your people,”²⁵ in order to establish His eternal kingdom and reign forever.

bô’ appears twenty-five times in the last three chapters and nineteen times in the prophetic discourse. Its main meaning is “to conquer” (11:6, 7, 10, 13, 15–17).

šûb appears nine times in the prophetic section. It means to return home victoriously from the war (11:9, 28) or to repeat an attack to the enemy (11:10, 13, 30).²⁶

hāzaq appears thirteen times in the last three chapters of the book. Only in ch. 11 it appears eight times. It has the connotation of strengthening economically and politically (11:2, 5, 7, 21).²⁷ It also refers to the people who know their God (11:32).²⁸

²⁵ Literally, it means to “stand up.” “A more technical, somewhat idiomatic use of the verb *’md* relates to governing leadership, especially royalty, before whom persons ‘stand’ as messengers or ministers, prepared to take directives (Dan 1:4).” Elmer A. Martens, “*āmad*,” *NIDOTTE* 3:434.

²⁶ A theological sense is “to return to God” or “repent,” but in this biblical section it is not the case. J. A. Thompson and Elmer A. Martens, “*bô’*,” *NIDOTTE* 4:56–57.

²⁷ One more time, we should notice the importance of 11:21 as a turning point in the prophetic discourse and in the introduction of the “contemptible.” This verse uses three of the verbal roots that we have studied: *āmad*, *bô’*, and *hāzaq*. This occurrence in 11:21 is unique. In 11:6, we discover the same verbs, but they do not apply to the same subject, and some of them (*āmad* and *hāzaq*) are part of negative sentences.

²⁸ This verbal root has four great uses. Three of them appear in Dan 11. They are (1) “to strengthen” (11:5), (2) to receive strength (10:18, 19), and (3) strength or resolution (11:32). Robin Wakely, “*hāzaq*,” *NIDOTTE* 2:64, 68, 72.

A brief example of the importance of some verbs in Dan 11 is used in connection with “the vile.” Daniel 11:21–23 describes the irruption of this terrible character in the oracle. This is the only place in Dan 11 where one can find these three verbs (*āmad*, *bō*, and *hāzaq*) in the same verse. It means this power is relevant in the prophecy and is more than a simple emperor or king.²⁹ Verse 41 is also a good example. It mentions that “he shall enter the glorious land.” Humberto Raul Treiyer interprets this act of entering the glorious land as the peaceful friendship between the papal power and the United States of America in the last days,³⁰ but we have studied that the king of the north comes to conquer “the glorious land” in a negative way, not peaceful, according to the meaning of the verb *bō*.³¹

The root *‘āsāh* (“to do, to make”) in this oracle is connected with the emergence of a new power in the history. Be aware of these cases:

- 11:3 Alexander the Great and his empire
- 11:16 the irruption of the Roman Empire in the prophecy
- 11:23 the emergence of papal Rome (here it also appears as *āmad*, *bō*, and *hāzaq*; 11:21)
- 11:28 the papal Rome in the Middle Ages
- 11:30 the attack against the sanctuary
- 11:32 the people of God in the midst of troubles and persecutions

The next chart presents a summary of the different Hebrew verbs and their emergence in the different paragraphs of the prophecy. Note that the verbs are more common in 11:2–20 because they are connected with different kings, while in 11:21–12:3 the occurrences are diminishing and focusing more on the vile and the new “king of the north.”

²⁹ Many interpreters have considered Tiberius, the Roman emperor (AD 14–37), as the vile or the despicable of 11:21. Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1944), 1:255–256; Merling Alomia, *Daniel el profeta Mesianico* (Lima, Peru: Ediciones Theologika, 2008), 2:412–413; William H. Shea, *Daniel: A Readers’s Guide* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 248. Samuel Nunez declares, “We confirm that the contemptible man of Daniel 11:21 refers to the Roman Empire, because they crucified the Lord Jesus in the 31st year of our era.” Nuñez, *Profecias apocalípticas de Daniel*, 133.

³⁰ Treiyer, *Enigmas Descifrados*, 163.

³¹ “In conquest passages, *bō* becomes a technical term for land inheritance” such as in the conquest of Canaan (Deut 1:8, 4:1, 6:18, 8:1; Josh 1:11). Bill T. Arnold, “*bō*,” *NIDOTTE* 1:615–616. This is the main meaning in Dan 11. *Ibid.*

Section of the prophecy	<i>āmad</i>	<i>bō'</i>	<i>šûb</i>	<i>hāzaq</i>
A1 two great kingdoms opposing each other (11:2b–4)	11:2, 3, 4			11:2
B1 preeminence of the king of the south (11:5–9)	11:6, 7, 8	11:6, 7, 8, 9	11:9	11:5, 7
C1 wars between the south and the north (11:10–15)	11:11, 13, 14, 15	11:10, 13, 15	11:10, 13	
B2 preeminence of the king of the north (11:16–19)	11:16	11:16, 17	11:18, 19	
A2 thematic shift (11:20)	11:20			
A3 singularity of the new king of the north (11:21–28)	11:21, 25	11:21	11:28 (2x)	11:21
B3 a profane attack (11:29–32 ^a)	11:31	11:29	11:30 (2x)	
C2 the people of God facing hardships (11:32b–35)				11:32
B4 a blasphemous attack (11:36–39)				
A4 last effort of the king of the north to dominate (11:40–45)		11:40, 41, 45		
D1 the deliverance of God's people (12:1, 2)	12:1			
D2 a happy end (12:3)				

Chart 7. Appearances of key Hebrew words in Dan 11b–12:3.

6. Guideline VI: The Structure of Daniel 10–12

We can now propose a structure³² for the passage based on the previous guidelines, especially III to V. As with any literary text, Dan 11 shows harmony of thought and a logical sequence in the development of its ideas. This work is important because it reveals the different sections of a writing, based on the grammatical and syntactical work. The following structure shows the main paragraphs of the vision.³³

³² For the benefit of the structural work, see David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 42–44.

³³ For a detailed study of the structure, see Carlos Elías Mora, "Una análise gramático-estrutural de Daniel 10–12" in *O futuro: A visão Adventista dos últimos acontecimentos*, ed. Alberto Timm et al. (Sao Paulo, Brazil: Unapress, 2004), 57–74.

- A1 Two great kingdoms in contraposition (11:2b–4)
 B1 Preeminence of the king of the south (11:5–9)
 C1 Wars between the north and the south (11:10–15)
 B2 Preeminence of the king of the north (11:16–19)
- A2 Thematic whirl (11:20)
- A3 Singularity of the new king of the north (11:21–28)
 B3 A desecrate attack (11:29–32^a)
 C2 The people of God in tightness (11:32b–35)
 B4 A blasphemous attack (11:36–39)
- A4 Last intent of the king of the north to rule (11:40–45)
- D1 Deliverance of the people of God (12:1, 2)
- D2 A happy end (12:3)

Many commentators agree with this outline,³⁴ although they do not present their outline like above. We can see a double chiasm with paragraphs that show important elements for the interpretation of the prophecy. Consequently, based on these two elements—parallelism and structuralism—a proposal for the interpretation of Dan 11:2:b–12:3 would be as follows:

Sections of the vision	Historicist interpretation
Two great kingdoms in contraposition (11:2b–4)	Persia and Greece
Wars between south and north (11:5–14)	Seleucides & Ptolemaics
Preeminence of the king of the north (11:16–20)	The Roman Empire
Singularity of the new king of the north: the vile or contemptible (11:21–39)	Papal Rome in history
Last intent of the king of the north to rule (11:40–45)	Escathological events
Deliverance of the people of God (12:1–3)	Tribulation time and the second coming of Christ

Chart 8. Proposal for the interpretation of Dan 11.

At this point, it is suitable to have a panorama of the prophecies of Daniel. We can see their unity and we can appreciate the message more because of the new elements that ch. 11 brings to the prophecy.

³⁴ John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1989), 286–287; Ernest Lucas, *Daniel*, ApOTC (Leicester: Apollos, 2002), 264–265. For a special study, see F. W. Hardy, “An Historicist Perspective on Daniel 11” (MA thesis, Andrews University, 1983), 105–122.

Event	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Daniel 11, 12
Babylon	Head of gold	Lion with eagle's wings	-	-
Medo-Persia	Chest and arms of silver	Bear with three ribs in its mouth	A ram	Four Persian kings
Greece	Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with four wings of a bird	A male goat	A valiant king
Greek kingdoms	-	Four heads	Four horns	Kings of the north and the south
Pagan Rome	Legs of iron	A dreadful and terrible beast	Little horn	King of the north
Papal Rome	-	Little horn	Little horn	The vile person
Europe	Feet partly iron and partly clay	Ten horns	-	-
Judgment	-	Judgment scene	2300 days	-
Final events	-	-	-	11:40-45 ³⁵
The second coming	A stone is cut out without hands	Kingdom is given to the saints	-	Michael delivers the people of God

Chart 9. Comparison of the interpretation of the four prophetic lines of Daniel.

³⁵ There is an agreement between the different schools of interpretation that this is an eschatological section. Maxwell, *The Message of Daniel*, 297-298; Ford, *Daniel*, 274-277; William H. Shea, *Daniel 7-12, The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 212-213; M. R. DeHaan, *Daniel the Prophet: 35 Simple Studies in the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1947), 300-305; John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation; A Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1971), 270-280; Elvis L. Carballosa, *Daniel y el Reino Mesianico* (Barcelona: Publicaciones Portavoz Evangélico, 1979), 263-268; Leon J. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 307-314; Towner, *Daniel*, 164-169; Hartman, *Daniel*, 303-305; Paul A. Lederach, *Daniel: Believers Church Bible Commentary*, Believers Church Bible Commentary Series (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1994), 249-252.

7. Guideline VII: From the Cross Onward, the Geographic and Local References Should Be Interpreted Symbolically

This principle is crucial in the interpretation of the prophecy, especially in Dan 11.³⁶ Because of these guidelines, one does not end on the erroneous path of the dispensationalists or literalists. The latter days have begun with Jesus (Act 2:15; Heb 1:1, 2).³⁷

From this point onward, the cardinal references (north–11:40, 44; south–11:25, 40; east–11:44), the geographic places (Quitim–11:30; the glorious land, Edom, Moab, Ammon–11:41; Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia–11:42, 43), and the ethnical allusions (“the sons of your people;” 12:1) should be understood in a symbolic, spiritual manner, not literal.³⁸

8. Guideline VIII: The Scriptures Are Their Own Interpreter

This is the most important principle that one should adhere to when trying to find the meaning of the symbols in 11:21–12:13. It cannot be done either capriciously or with the newspapers in our hands.³⁹ The meaning of the different symbols of the prophecy cannot be attached to the headlines of the current events of our day.⁴⁰ One should go to the Bible itself in order to find the meaning of these symbols.

³⁶ LaRondelle, *Understand the End-Time Prophecies*, 29–31; Francis D. Nichol, ed., *Comentario Bíblico Adventista del Séptimo Día*, trans. Victor E. Ampuero Matta (Boise, ID: Publicaciones Interamericanas, 1978–1990), 4:38–40.

³⁷ See Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 37–47. Hans K. LaRondelle calls this principle “the typological interpretation.” “Jesus’ typology, just as Israel’s prophecy, is characterized by its climatic fulfilment in eschatological time, in the ‘last days’ (Heb 1:1–2).” *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁸ Uriah Smith represents this kind of literal interpretation very well. He understood that the king of the north was the Ottoman Empire of his days because Turkey is at the north of Palestine. Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel*, 294–298.

³⁹ Gerhard F. Hasel, *La interpretación de la Biblia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones SALT, 1986), 115–116.

⁴⁰ A good example of this interpretation is the work of Koot van Wyk and Sook-Young Kim. In their article, after proposing some principles for the interpretation of Dan 11,

For instance, the main two characters of the prophecy, the king of the north and the king of the south, should be understood accordingly. From v. 5 to v. 20, the interpretation of these two cardinal points should be understood in relation to Palestine, the land of God's people. From v. 21 onward, they should be interpreted in the light of the theological meaning of these cardinal points: the north as the cardinal point of the Creator (Ps 48:1-3; Isa 14:13, 14) and the attempt of the vile (11:21) who pretends to be like God Himself (11:36-39). On the other hand, the meaning of the south should also be found in the Bible. We realize that the south was Egypt, an entity that opposed the Almighty and asserted that it did not know about Him (Exod 5:1, 2). This identification helps us understand that Egypt represents the powers and philosophies that are secular and atheistic.⁴¹

Another good example is the meaning of Moab,⁴² Edom, and Ammon in 11:41. The OT gives clear clues about these peoples. They were blood relatives of Israel, of God's people; they were their neighbors but they were always enemies of God's people. It is logical to understand these powers in

they conclude, "Finally, the methodology is clear: vv. 36-45 deals with an empire described as the second beast of Revelation 13 operating as a strong political power with attacks like 9/11 in the year 2001 in verse 40 to the taking of Saddam Hussein in 2003 (last part of verse 40) to befriending of Jordan, Egypt (1974ff.), Libya (March 2004 with Tony Blair and allies of the USA) and Ethiopia as friends (vv. 42-43), Iran as enemy and another power (ISIS or Russia?) in verse 44 and finally ending events in Israel near the temple-mount with a temple mount struggle between Jews and Arabs (as signal of the End) and coming to his own paradigm end inaugurating the Time of Trouble during which the resurrection takes place when Christ comes. A dragonic dictator-like New Order Power will take seemingly over from the USA or will the USA become dragonic socialistic and do religion the socialistic political way or manipulation, control, suppression, forceful submission, taking away the freedom of religion from the world." Wyk and Kim, "The Qvo Vadis Problem," 120. The writers apply every section to events of the first years of 2000. The time is passing by, the political leaders are changing, and interpretations like this create confusion and unbelief in many people, even those who are Christians.

⁴¹ Shea, *Daniel*, 264; Angel Manuel Rodríguez, "Daniel 11:40-45, the Exodus from Egypt, and the book of Revelation: Intertextual Exploration", in "The End from the Beginning": Festschrift Honoring Merling Alomia, B. Rojas et al. editors (Lima: UPeU Fondo Editorial, 2015), 247.

⁴² Moab and Ammon were Isaac's cousins (Gen 19:30-38) and Edom was the brother of Jacob (Gen 25:19-36, 36:1-43). They were closely connected with God's people. In spite of that, they always opposed Israel as recorded in history: (a) Edom (Num 20:14-21; 1 Sam 14:47; 2 Sam 8:14; 1 Kgs 11:15, 16; 2 Kgs 8:20, 22; 14:27; Ps 137:7; Ezek 25:12-14; Amos 1:11; Obad 10-13), (b) Moab (Num 22-24; 25:1-9; 31:24; Judg 3:12-14; 2 Kgs 3:4), and (c) Ammon (Deut 23:3, 4; Judg 11:13; 1 Sam 11; 2 Sam 10:1; Neh 2:10-19; Jer 49:1-6). Therefore, these powers should be institutions or peoples closely related with the remnant of the last days but in opposition to it. To try to find a geographical connection in today's context is to go beyond the prudent biblical interpretation.

the time of the end as entities closely related with the remnant of these days but in opposition to the message and work of the remnant.

9. Conclusion

In light of this study, one can conclude that Dan 11 presents the three last universal empires—Persia, Greece, and Rome—including the papal institution, represented by the vile of 11:21, that continues until the end of the prophecy (11:45). The last section points out the eschatological events (11:40–12:3) and presents the unique and detailed explanation that was given to Daniel in his later years.

The guidelines presented in this study can help one understand and interpret Dan 11 and 12 more accurately and at the same time avoid erroneous interpretations. It is true that interpreters may have differences in regard to specific details, but the foundational structure of the text is very clear. When one applies the principles that emerged from this study, the message of Dan 10–12 can be clearly understood. However, it is necessary to carefully follow these guidelines, to compare the results with the history of God's people, and above all to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit who leads one into all truth.