

The Visions of Daniel: A Framework for Predictive Prophecy

Introduction

Opening considerations

Daniel was written by Daniel around 536 B.C.

Main theme: God is sovereign.

Two errors:

Omitting the study of prophecy altogether.

(Brian McLaren) “I see Biblical prophecy in terms of warnings and promises, which are different from prognostications. If I had to put a name on my eschatology, I suppose I would call it ‘Participatory’ - meaning that God invites us to participate in God's ongoing work in the world, leading to the ultimate victory of all that is good and the ultimate defeat of evil. Beyond that, there are a lot of eschatological details I was much surer about twenty years ago when I read the Bible less and popular end-times books more!”¹

Assuming we have correctly interpreted every detail of the text!

Daniel 8:27b: “I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.”

Daniel 2: The statue

Daniel 2:1-2

Daniel 2:16-18

Daniel 2:26-29

“latter days”

Daniel 2:31-35

Daniel 2:36-45

¹ See <http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/2008/03/brian-mclaren-r.html>. From an interview with Brian McLaren posted on the blog *TallSkinnyKiwi*.

Table 1:

	Statue Part	Identification in Chapter 2	
1st Kingdom	Head of gold	Babylon (605 – 539 BC).	Babylon: 605-539 BC
2nd Kingdom	Chest and arms of silver	Not identified, but they represent a kingdom inferior to Babylon.	Medo-Persia: 539-333 BC
3rd Kingdom	Belly and thighs of bronze	Not identified, but this kingdom will rule over the entire earth.	Greece: 333-63 BC
4th Kingdom	Legs of iron Feet and toes of iron and clay	Daniel spends most of his time discussing this kingdom. It is powerful, “crushing and shattering” all things. The toes are kings. Compare v. 43: “ <i>they</i> will combine with one another in the seed of men” with v. 44a, “in the days of <i>those kings</i> .” “Combine with one another in the seed of men,” suggests these kings try to ally through intermarriage to form a single kingdom, (v. 42 “ <i>some of the kingdom</i> will be strong and part of <i>it</i> will be brittle”), but they won’t “adhere” i.e. be fully united.	Rome: 63BC-480 AD (west) -1453 AD (east)
5th Kingdom	Stone that becomes a mountain	God will end the reign of these kings and their confederation of iron and clay when he sets up his kingdom. This is represented by the stone crushing the entire statue.	God’s kingdom

- The order of the kingdoms here reflects what actually happened in the Ancient Near East: the Medo-Persian empire replaced the Babylonians, Alexander the Great’s Greek empire replaced the Medo-Persians, and Rome replaced them all as the dominant power in the ancient world.
- If you compare the visions in Daniel 2, 7, and 8 side-by-side, it appears that Medo-Persia and Greece are the second and third kingdoms.
- The fourth kingdom that we identify with the Roman Empire is not named anywhere in Daniel, but is referred to in chapter 11.
- Daniel’s description of the fourth kingdom having powerful legs of iron that crush and shatter all things is a fitting description of Rome.

Two important questions:

1. Has God’s kingdom as described here arrived already, or is it yet to come?
Acts 1:6,7: So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority...
2. How could the fourth kingdom be Rome if the arrival of God’s eternal kingdom puts an end to it?
What if the 4th kingdom appears in two phases separated by a gap in time?
“Rome 1” (2:40): The Rome of history. It was much more powerful than the kingdoms before it (“...crushes and shatters ...”). This is a good description of the Roman Empire, which followed the Greek empire.

“Rome 2” (2:41-43): A future 10-king alliance related in some way to the old Roman Empire arising just prior to God’s eternal kingdom. It will be a single “kingdom” (2:41) but with component parts, symbolized by “toes” that don’t adhere well to each other. According to 2:42, “some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle.” The phrase “combine with one another in the seed of men” implies these kings will attempt to form alliances with each other through intermarriage, but they won’t adhere—they won’t enjoy true unity.

For now, consider this:

- The 4th kingdom is symbolized by *two different parts of the statue* with two different compositions: *legs of iron* and *feet/ toes of iron and clay* (2:33).
- The 4th kingdom has within it two different kinds of kingdoms. Compare 2:40 with 2:41-44. Daniel first describes the entire kingdom as “strong as iron” (2:40), but later says “some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle” (2:42).
- The interpretation of a similar vision in Daniel 7 says the 4th kingdom will give rise to a later one ruled by 10 kings.
- A comparison of the visions in Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 9 reveals a gap in time between the first and second phases of the 4th kingdom.

If we accept a two-phase understanding of the 4th kingdom, a timeline showing the rise and fall of empires in Daniel 2 would look like this:

Timeline 1:



Daniel 5: The fall of Babylon

Daniel 2:39a: “after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you.”

Daniel 5:27b, 28b: “you have been weighed on the scales and found deficient,” and, “your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”

The Medo-Persian empire is the second kingdom after Babylon.

Daniel 7: The four beasts

Daniel 7:1

Daniel 7:2-3

Daniel 7:15-18

Notice that the beasts represent “kings” (7:17) and the kingdoms they represent (7:23).

The winged lion: Babylon

Daniel 7:4

The lopsided bear: Medo-Persia

Daniel 7:5

“resembling a bear raised up on one side” “three ribs were in its mouth” “arise, devour much meat”

The winged leopard: Greece

Daniel 7:6

“after this”

The fourth beast: Rome

Daniel 7:7-8

Daniel 7:19-25

Table 2:

The Vision (7:7-8)		The Interpretation (7:19-25)
“the fourth beast”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dreadful and terrifying• extremely strong• large iron teeth• devours other beasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 4th kingdom following the 3rd.
“ten horns”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Horns” in the Bible often symbolize kings (see Ps 112:9; 132:17; Jer. 48:25; Zech 1:21; Rev 13:1; 17:12).• Grow out of the head of the 4th beast.• May parallel the 10 toes of the statue in chapter 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 kings coexisting at the same time.• Will come “out of” the 4th kingdom (see v. 24a), suggesting two phases.
“the little horn”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not one of the 10 horns. It is “another one” coming up “among them.”• Starts out small, but grows and uproots 3 other horns.• Possesses eyes and a mouth—a hint that the horn is human.• Arrogant. It vocalizes its own greatness for all to hear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A king who will subdue or uproot three of the ten kings (see v. 24b).• He will “speak out against the Most High.”• He will “wage war with” and “wear down the saints”—a reference to God’s people.• “They (the saints) will be given into his hand for time, times, and half a time.”• He will “intend to make alterations in times and in law.”

The beast itself:

The ten horns:

The 10 horns come “out of” (7:24a) the 4th beast, implying the 4th kingdom has two phases, the kingdom itself and the 10 kings that arise “out of” it.

The little horn “came up among” (7:8) the 10 horns, implying the 10 kings will exist at the same time.

The little horn:

Daniel sees “another horn, a little one, come up among them [among the 10 horns]” (7:8)

The interpretation confirms that the “little horn” is a king who arises during the reign of the 10 kings and uproots three of them. He will wage war with the saints and overpower them” (7:21), “speak out against the Most High,” (7:25) and “wear down the saints of the highest one” (7:25). From this we gather that the little horn will persecute God’s people (saints). “Wear down” implies that this may go on for some time. Daniel was probably distressed as he watched this all happen.

The phrase “they will be given into his hand” (7:25) is ominous. The little horn will be given free reign for a time to do what he wants to God’s people. Fortunately, this period of persecution will come to an end after “time, times, and half a time.” (v. 25)

Comparing Daniel 2 to Daniel 7

Table 3:

Kingdom	Daniel 2	Daniel 7
1st Babylon	Head of gold	Winged lion
2nd Medo-Persia	Chest and arms of silver	Bear raised up on one side
3rd Greece	Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with 4 wings and 4 heads
4th Rome	Legs of iron Ten toes = a 10-king confederacy “In the days of those kings, God will set up a kingdom” (Dan. 2:44).	Terrifying, strong beast with iron teeth; devours, crushes, tramples Ten horns = 10 kings A “little horn” The little horn’s “dominion will be taken away.” God’s kingdom “will be an everlasting kingdom” (Dan. 7:26,27).
5th God’s Kingdom	Stone that becomes a mountain	God’s “everlasting kingdom”

- Both visions describe the rise and fall of four human kingdoms.
- Both visions spend a disproportionate amount of time describing the fourth kingdom.
- Both visions hint that the fourth kingdom has two parts or phases.

Daniel 2: The 4th kingdom is made up of two different statue parts (LEGS and FEET/TOES), with two different compositions (IRON legs; feet and toes of IRON & CLAY), which have two different qualities

(STRONG and BRITTLE).

Daniel 7: The 10 kings come “out of” (Dan. 7:23,24) the fourth kingdom. This implies a sequence of events: first the 4th kingdom appears; then the 10 horns/kings come from it.

- Both visions describe how the eternal kingdom of God will destroy and replace the 4th kingdom and all the kingdoms that come before it.
Daniel 2: The 10 toes/kings will be present just before the arrival of God’s kingdom (Dan. 2:44 “*in the days of those kings* God will set up a kingdom”).

Daniel 7: The 10 horns and the little horn that comes from them will appear just prior to and be destroyed by the arrival of God’s kingdom (Read Dan. 7:26,27 “his [the little horn’s] dominion will be taken away... then... His (God’s) kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom”).
- Both visions imply the second phase of the 4th kingdom hasn’t appeared yet because it is terminated by the arrival of God’s kingdom.

Who is the little horn and when will he be active?

What will the second phase of the 4th kingdom be like?

A loosely unified confederacy:

2:41b: “it will be a divided kingdom” (not kingdoms)

2:43b: “they will combine with one another but they won’t adhere.”

2:42b: “some parts will be strong and some parts brittle” (2:42).

Somehow related to the first phase of the 4th kingdom:

7:23a,24a: “The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth... ‘As for the ten horns, *out of this kingdom* ten kings will arise...”

Terminated at the end of history by God himself:

2:44: “*In the days of those kings* the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed.

Daniel 8: A ram and a goat

Daniel 8:1-2

The ram: Medo-Persia

Daniel 8:3-4

Daniel 8:20

Table 4:

Kingdom	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8
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1st Babylon	Head of gold	Winged lion	
2nd Medo-Persia	Chest and arms of silver	Bear raised up on one side	<p>“The kings of Media and Persia”</p> <p>A ram with one horn longer than the other</p>
3rd Greece	Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with 4 wings and 4 heads	<p>“The kingdom of Greece”</p> <p>A goat with one horn that is replaced by 4 horns.</p> <p>“Out of one of them came forth a small horn”</p>
4th Rome	<p>Legs of iron</p> <p>Ten toes = a 10-king confederacy</p> <p>“In the days of those kings, God will set up a kingdom” (Dan. 2:44).</p>	<p>Terrifying, strong beast with iron teeth; devours, crushes, tramples</p> <p>Ten horns = 10 kings A “little horn”</p> <p>The little horn’s “dominion will be taken away.” God’s kingdom “will be an everlasting kingdom” (Dan. 7:26,27).</p>	
5th God’s Kingdom	Stone that becomes a mountain	God’s “everlasting kingdom”	

The goat: Greece

Daniel 8:5-8

“as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.”

Daniel 8:21,22

1. Antipater, and later Cassander ruled Greece and Macedonia.
2. Lysimachus controlled Thrace (south west of the Black Sea between Greece and Turkey) and most of Asia Minor;
3. Seleucus I Nicator ruled Syria, Babylon, and much of the Middle East (all of Asia except Asia Minor and Palestine);
4. Ptolemy I Soter ruled Egypt and North Africa.²

The small horn

²See Miller, S. R. (2001, c1994). *Vol. 18: Daniel*. Includes indexes. (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (200). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Daniel 8:9

“*Out of* one of them will come forth a rather *small* horn...”

Daniel 8:23

Daniel 8:10

Daniel 8:11-12

Daniel 8:23b-26

Characteristics of “the small horn”/king:

- He is “insolent,” or, as the KJV puts it “fierce-faced” or “fierce of countenance.” He is bold, aggressive, and dangerous.
- He is “skilled in intrigue,” wisely navigating his political environment.
- His “power will be mighty.”
- He “will destroy,” which means he will persecute God’s people and do what he wants
- He “will magnify himself” and even equate himself with God (v.11).
- He “will be broken without human agency.”

The small horn/king in Daniel 8 is Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Daniel 9: The prophecy of the 70 weeks

Daniel 9:24

“Weeks” = shabua, a set of seven days OR a set of seven years.

Genesis 29:26-30: Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. 27 ‘Complete the week (shabua) of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for *another seven years*.’ 28 Jacob did so and completed her week (shabua), and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. 29 ... and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for *another seven years*.”

Two reasons why Daniel 9:24-27 is referring to shabua of years:

1. In Daniel 9:25, during the first 69 shabua, Jerusalem is rebuilt. 69 weeks of days (483 days) is not enough time to do this. It took them over 46 years just to rebuild the Temple (see John 2:20)! It would have taken them many *years* to rebuild the city along with its fortifications.
2. Consider the context. Earlier in Daniel 9, Daniel is praying about Israel’s 70 year exile in Babylon. God sent the Jews into exile for 70 years because they had failed to give their land a rest (a Sabbath) once every seven years.

2 Chronicles 36:20,21: And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, *until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths*. All the days of its desolation it kept

Sabbath until seventy years were complete.

The first 69 weeks

Daniel 9:25

FROM the issuing of A DECREE to restore and rebuild Jerusalem UNTIL Messiah the prince there will be SEVEN shabua and SIXTY-TWO shabua.

$7 + 62 = 69$ shabua

One shabua = 7 years

$69 \text{ shabua} \times 7 \text{ years/shabua} = 483 \text{ years}$

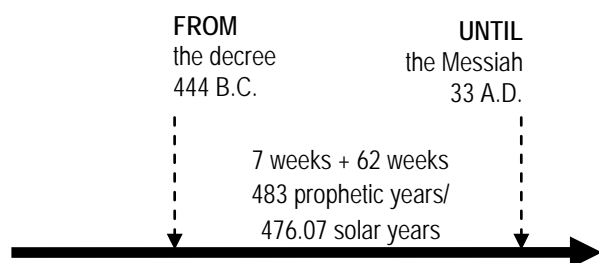
The best date for the decree year is 444 B.C.,³ but we can't simply add 483 years to 444 BC on a modern timeline to find out when the Messiah will appear. Daniel's "prophetic" years were 360 days long⁴ and have to be converted to solar years 365.24 days long.

$483 \text{ prophetic years} \times 360 \text{ days/prophetic year} = 173,880 \text{ days}$

$173,880 \text{ days divided by } 365.24 \text{ days/solar year} = 476.07 \text{ solar years (476 years and 25 days).}$

476 solar years forward from 444 BC is 33 A.D. Remember there is no "0" year!

Timeline 2:



Between the 69th and 70th weeks

Daniel 9:26

"the Messiah will be cut-off and have nothing"

Isaiah 53:8: "He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due."

"the people of the prince to come will destroy the city and sanctuary"

Luke 21:20-23: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near. 21 "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city; 22 because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled. 23 "Woe to those who are pregnant and

³ For a detailed discussion of each decree, see Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975), p. 121 ff. Artaxerxes reign began in 465 B.C. The month of Nisan places the decree in Nehemiah 2:1ff in 444 B.C.

⁴ These arguments support a prophetic year of 360 days: the flood lasted 5 months (compare Gen. 7:11 – "second month, 17th day of the month" to 8:4 – "seventh month, 17th day of the month") spanning 150 days (see Gen. 7:24; 8:3), which implies months of 30 days; 42 months = 1260 days in Revelation 11:2 and 11:3, implying months of 30 days and years of 360 days; John equates "times, time, and half a time" with 1260 days (compare Rev. 12:6 and 12:14) and the same phrase in Daniel 7:25 corresponds to a 42-month period in Revelation 13:5, implying 30-day months and 360-day years.

to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

“even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined”

Luke 21:24: and they [the Jews] will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*.

The 70th week.

Daniel 9:27

“The prince who is to come”

- He is a prince, a leader of some kind.
- He is related in some way to the Romans.
- He will make an agreement (“covenant”) with “the many.”
- He will commit the abomination of desolation.
- He will eventually be destroyed.

Table 5:

Kingdom	Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9
1: Babylon	Head of gold	Winged lion		
2: Medo-Persia	Chest and arms of silver	Bear with one side raised	Ram with 2 horns, one longer, one shorter	“from the decree” 444 BC
3: Greece	Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with four wings and four heads	Goat with one prominent horn replaced by four. Eventually a “small horn” -Antiochus IV Epiphanes	69 weeks
4: Rome	Legs of iron Feet and toes of iron and clay	Terrible beast Out of that kingdom, ten kings will arise), and then a “little horn” – the Antichrist.		“until Messiah” 33 AD Time Gap - Messiah cut off - Jerusalem destroyed (70 AD) - “even to the end war and desolations determined” 70 th week - The prince to come - Covenant w/many - abomination of desolation
5th Kingdom	Stone crushes and becomes a mountain.	The little horn is destroyed and God’s everlasting kingdom is established.		The prince is destroyed, bringing in “everlasting righteousness.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3-8: Let no one in any way deceive you, for it [the day of the Lord] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of

His coming...”

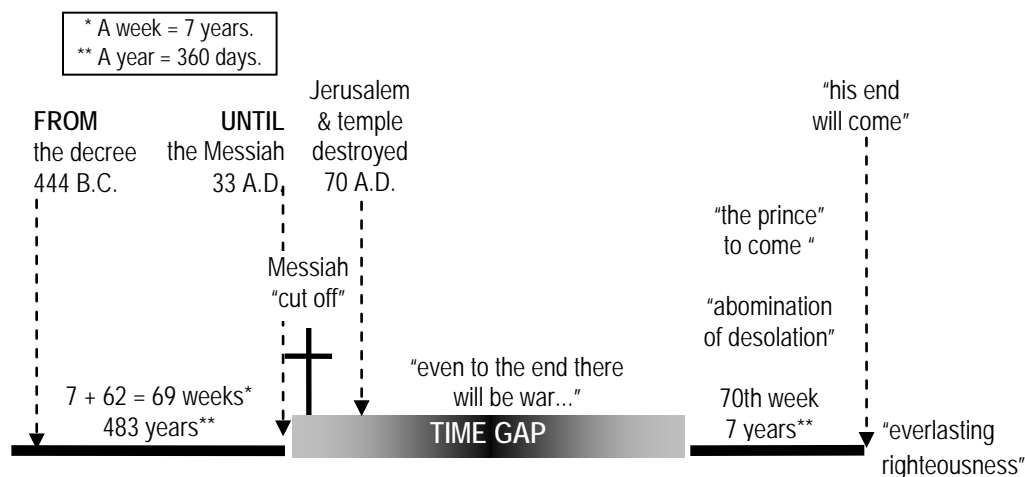
Revelation 13:5–7: There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

Look for the abomination of desolation!

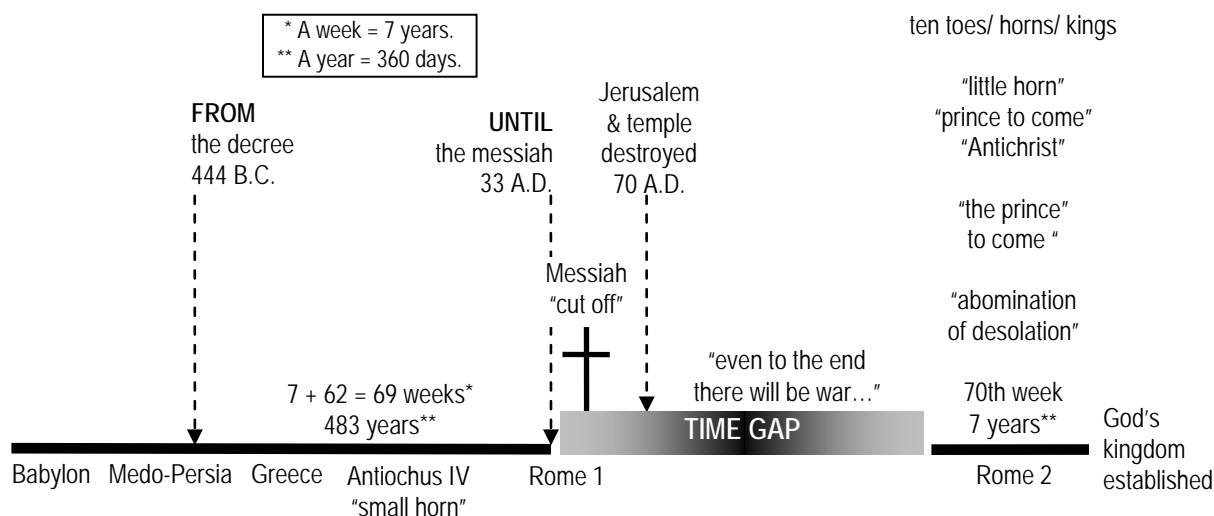
Matthew 24:14: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come. 15 Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains...”

“let the reader understand”

Timeline 3:



Timeline 4:



Daniel 11

Daniel 11:29-30a: “At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. 30 For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return...”

“He” is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the small horn of Daniel 8.

“Kittim”

(Livy) “[Antiochus] marched by easy stages towards Alexandria. After crossing the river at Eleusis, about four miles from Alexandria, he was met by the Roman commissioners, to whom he gave a friendly greeting and held out his hand to Popilius. Popilius, however, placed in his hand the tablets on which was written the decree of the senate and told him first of all to read that. After reading it through [Antiochus] said he would call his friends into council and consider what he ought to do. Popilius, stern and imperious as ever, drew a circle round the king with the stick he was carrying and said, ‘Before you step out of that circle give me a reply to lay before the senate.’ For a few moments he hesitated, astounded at such a peremptory order, and at last replied, ‘I will do what the senate thinks right.’”⁵

Conclusion

Mistakes:

“Nah, none of this will ever happen.”

“The Antichrist is _____.”

“Christ is coming back tomorrow and I’m freaking out!!

Revelation 1:8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Good ways to react to this material:

Don’t ignore prophecy. Study it carefully!

Christianity is true, so make your life count for God!

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⁵ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, xlv.12.

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