A New Look at the 2300 Days of Daniel 8
by Dan Bruce

The interpretation of one particular chrono-specific prophecy in the Book of Daniel, the one found in chapter 8, verses 13-14, is key to understanding all of the chrono-specific prophecies in Daniel. The reason why the interpretation of that prophecy is so all-important is that its fulfillment extends the efficacy of Bible prophecy from ancient into modern times. By so doing, it establishes the chronological context needed for accurately interpreting the remaining chrono-specific prophecies in Daniel, some of which also have post-biblical fulfillments, as will be shown in later chapters. In this chapter, though, the exposition of the prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, will receive our full attention, since the correct interpretation of that prophecy is fundamental to understanding everything else in Daniel.

The eighth chapter of Daniel can be divided into three parts. The first part is comprised of verses 1-12. Those verses set forth a prophetic vision predicting the history of the Jewish people for the immediate future—immediate, that is, from the standpoint of a Jewish person living in the Achaemenid Persian Empire during the reign of Darius III. The vision describes a ram with two horns pushing westward, northward, and southward. The ram is next seen standing still before a river while a he-goat with a notable horn comes against it from the west with fury. The he-goat then proceeds to smite the ram and break his two horns. Thereafter, nothing the ram is able to do can stop the he-goat from waxing great and casting the ram to the ground. However, when the he-goat has achieved greatness, his horn is broken, and four notable ones take his place. Out of one of the four notable horns, a little horn comes forth to wax great toward the pleasant land, and that little horn takes away the daily sacrifice, casts down the sanctuary and hosts to the ground, and prospers. So conclude the events described in the first part. The second part is comprised of verses 13-14, and it contains a cryptic chrono-specific prophecy foretelling that the aforementioned sanctuary will once again be “cleansed” (that is, will be restored to its rightful status). The third part is comprised of verses 15-27. Those verses provide a partial interpretation of the prophetic vision recorded in the first part. The ram with two horns is identified in verse 20 as the kings of Media and Persia, and the he-goat with the notable horn is identified in verse 21 as the first king of Greece. The little horn that arises from the four notable horns is not identified by name, but is described as a king of fierce countenance who destroys the holy people. Most

1 Daniel 8:13-14 from the King James Version (KJV) - Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.
2 Darius III Codomannus (r. 336-330 BCE), last king of the Achaemenid Persian Empire.
3 The sacred Temple Mount area (Mount Moriah) in Old City Jerusalem.
4 General reference to all Achaemenid kings from Cyrus the Great to Darius III.
5 Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 BCE), first king of unified Greece (all Greek city-states).
Bible expositors agree that the little horn is a reference to the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and most agree that the term “holy people” in verse 24 is a reference to the Jews living under his rule. A prediction of persecution of the holy people, a reference to a Jewish remnant who will remain faithful to the commandments of God, is revealed in part three, but that part closes with a reminder that the prophecy in part two—the prophecy in verses 13-14 foretelling that the sanctuary will be cleansed after 2,300 “evening-morning”(s)—will most certainly come true. It is the eventual fulfillment of that two-verse prophecy in part two that projects the context of Daniel from ancient into modern times.

**Interpretive Schemes**

Modern expositors usually assign the fulfillment event—the cleansing of the sanctuary predicted in chapter 8, verse 14—to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the Maccabean revolt. None of them allow for a modern-day fulfillment. In those expositions that assign fulfillment to the time of Antiochus, two main interpretive schemes are employed, one postulating that the 2,300 “evening-morning”(s) define a period of persecution of the Jews lasting 1,150 days (a calculation based on 2,300 twice-daily morning-and-evening sacrifices resulting in 1,150 twenty-four-hour days) and another saying that the 2,300 “evening-morning”(s) are 2,300 normal twenty-four-hour days. Those two competing interpretive schemes are popular primarily among conservative expositors who interpret the Bible literally and believe in predictive prophecy.

One often-quoted conservative expositor, the late Dr. Leon Wood, professor of Old Testament at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary for many years, correctly rejected the 1,150-day approach in his commentary on Daniel, saying:

> “The angel’s answer is a definite number of time units called ‘evening-mornings’ (‘ereb bôqer), literally, ‘evening-morning.’ Some expositors take the expression to mean 2,300 evenings and mornings totaled together, equaling only 1,150 full days. They find supporting evidence in the mention in the immediate context of regular offerings and the fact that the regular burnt-offerings came every morning and evening, asserting that the true intent is to designate 2,300 occasions of burnt offerings. The commentary on verse eleven [previously discussed in Wood’s book] has shown, however, that all ceremonial observances are in view in the context, not merely the regular offerings.”

Wood further dismissed the two-a-day sacrifice approach as follows:

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6 Antiochus IV Epiphanes (r. 175-164 BCE), king of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire.
7 ערב בקר (BHS) “evening-morning”(s), mistranslated as “days” in the KJV and other versions.
8 The Maccabees were a priestly family that led a revolt, beginning circa 167/166 BCE, against Antiochus IV, who was attempting to replace Judaism with Hellenism.
“Moreover, that two half-days are intended by the expression is not likely in view of the order of mention: evening-morning, rather than morning-evening. The order of evening-morning suggests that part of the twenty-four-hour period at which a full day closes and a new one begins—a part which comes only once every twenty-four hours. Twenty-three hundred of these parts would mean the elapse of 2,300 full days.”

On the other hand, Wood fails to point out the most serious flaw in that approach, namely, that counting 1,150 days from the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes on 25 Kislev in the 145th Seleucid year (or instead from the rededication of the Temple by Judah Maccabee on 25 Kislev in the 148th Seleucid year), the usual starting or ending points for those who espouse the 1,150-day approach, does not lead to any significant historical event at the other end of the count. Furthermore, since both the desecration and rededication dates are recorded in and verifiable from historical records, a quick calculation shows that the time between them is only 1,093¾ days, not the required 1,150 days, so using those dates as the two end points cannot be accepted as a valid interpretation. The result always ends up depending on an approximation of history as the interpretation when using the 1,150-day interpretive scheme, which is unacceptable as fulfillment of chrono-specific predictive prophecy.

After reviewing the shortcomings of the 1,150-day approach, Wood then offers his exposition of verse 14 using the 2,300-day approach, as follows:

“How are 2,300 days to be fitted into the history concerned? The answer is that this amount of time was the duration of Antiochus’ period of oppression of the Jews. Historical data available are insufficient for a precise reckoning to the very day, but an approximation is definitely possible [emphasis added]. The closing point of this period is indicated in the verse to have been the restoration of the Temple. The date when this was accomplished, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, was December 25, 165 B.C., according to Barnes, who refers to Prideaux. Figuring back from this date 2,300 days brings one to September 6, 171 B.C. [sic]; which should be, then, the day when an event occurred that was of sufficient significance to mark it as a beginning of these atrocities, and such an event could easily have occurred on that date.”

[emphasis added]

Perhaps such an event could have occurred, but if indeed it had occurred and if it had been truly biblically significant, it doubtless would have been recorded by some ancient scribe,

10 The twice-a-day burnt offerings are always referred to as “morning and evening” sacrifices (cf. 2 Ki. 16:15, 1 Chr. 16:40, 2 Chr. 2:4, 2 Chr. 13:11, 2 Chr. 31:3, Ezra 3:3), never as “evening and morning” sacrifices. The Hebrew construct in verse 14, translated literally as “evening-morning” is found only that once in the entire Bible.
11 According to Josephus, Antiquities 12:5:4, the desecration of the Jerusalem Temple occurred on the 25th day of Kislev (1 Maccabees 1:54 gives the date as the 15th of Kislev) in the 145th year of the Seleucid Empire, which is equivalent to the modern Gregorian date December 13, 167 BCE, and according to Josephus, Antiquities, 12:7:6 and 1 Maccabees 4:52, the rededication of the Temple occurred on the 25th of Kislev in the 148th year of the Seleucid Empire, which is equivalent to December 10, 164 BCE.
12 See footnote 11 above showing that the December 25 date referenced by Dr. Wood is incorrect.
13 Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875), an English biblical scholar, textual critic, and theologian.
yet there is nothing in the historical record to indicate that any such event ever happened. Wood himself does not seem to be bothered by the uncertainty at the core of his interpretation. However, it cannot be ignored, and it means that his 2,300-day approach is just as approximate as the 1,150-day approach he rejected. Unfortunately, Wood is not alone in using an interpretive scheme that produces a result that is less than precise. Essentially all modern conservative and fundamentalist expositors have based their interpretations on approximations.

Another example of an influential conservative expositor using approximation exegesis to interpret Daniel, chapter 8 can be found in the commentary written by the late Dr. John F. Walvoord, long-time president of Dallas Theological Seminary, who offered the following comments as his exposition of the 2,300-day (evening-mornings) prophecy:

“... the best conclusion is that the twenty-three hundred days of Daniel are fulfilled in the period from 171 B.C. and culminated in the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 B.C. [sic] The period when the sacrifices ceased was the latter part of this longer period. Although the evidence available today does not offer fulfillment to the precise day, the twenty-three hundred days, obviously a round number, is relatively accurate [emphasis added] in defining the period when the Jewish religion began to erode under the persecution of Antiochus, and the period as a whole concluded with his death.” 14

Curiously, Walvoord uses the death of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes as the endpoint of the prophecy, an event which has nothing to do with the specified terminus ad quem, which is the cleansing of the sanctuary stipulated by the biblical text in verse 14. Even more surprising, coming from a biblical literalist, are his comments saying that “relatively accurate” is good enough for understanding biblical prophecy.

More examples of the "approximation method" of interpreting the chrono-specific predictive prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, could be provided, but the two examples of approximation exegesis by Wood and Walvoord mentioned above were chosen because they are typical of the many well-received and widely-referenced, but inaccurate, interpretive schemes offered in recent years by conservative and fundamentalist expositors to explain the prophecy in the eighth chapter of Daniel. So far, none of their various interpretive schemes have produced an interpretation that fits the constraints of the biblical text exactly while matching the historical record exactly, at least not in both ways at the same time. Either the time interval does not equal 2,300 units, or the starting date or ending date does not match any event specified in the biblical text that can be documented in history.

As for the interpretive schemes put forth in recent years by non-conservative expositors, most of whom are ensconced as biblical scholars at institutions of higher learning, their expositions usually deny the possibility of any predictive prophecy in Daniel at all, including the one in the eighth chapter. Instead, they tend to focus on textual and literary aspects rather than the chrono-predictive elements. Consequently, the commentaries of these disbelieving scholars

shy away from recognizing that the predictive prophecies recorded in the Bible might have actual fulfillments in history, asserting that the prophecies in Daniel and elsewhere in the Scriptures are merely a telling of history recorded by some unknown scribe after the fact. Almost uniformly, these scholars ascribe all of the events of chapter 8, and the writing down of the Book of Daniel itself, to the time of Antiochus IV and the Maccabees, and they make a point of denying that anything supernatural was involved. And, more than a few recent expositors, unable to decipher the chronology in chapter 8, have simply chosen to remain silent about its chronological aspects. That latter approach, although unsatisfying, is perhaps more honest and certainly not as harmful to Bible-based faith as outright denial of its predictive prophecy.

**Exact Fulfillment**

That brings us to the interpretive approach employed in this book. It uses the principle of exact fulfillment, which is better than the approximation of history, silence about chronology, or outright denial of predictive prophecy approaches used by most expositors who have expounded the Danielic prophecies in recent years, and it can be summed up as follows: The chrono-specific predictive prophecies in Daniel will always have exact, verifiable, and understandable fulfillments located in temporal space and time. Thus, the interpretation of Daniel, chapter 8, offered in this chapter will agree with the biblical text and the historical record exactly.

In fairness to past expositors, they had no choice but to offer approximations or silence, since the Bible stipulated that the prophecies in Daniel were sealed until the time of the end. However, that is not the case for expositors today. A modern event, the liberation of the Temple Mount by Israel during the Six-Day War, unsealed the prophecy in chapter 8 for understanding. After the prophesied restoration of the Temple Mount had occurred on June 7, 1967, it was possible for anyone to identify that event as the fulfillment event specified in verse 14. So, seven years after the liberation, your author’s eyes were opened to the correlation between that modern event and the biblical text, and, right away, the eschatological importance became apparent. It was a thrilling discovery, of course, because it evidenced God’s continuing providence and faithfulness, but he knew that announcing a modern-day fulfillment of an ancient biblical prophecy would not find easy acceptance, even in conservative circles, unless Scriptural validation for such a radical interpretive approach could be found.

So, your author began searching the Bible, keeping in mind that the interpretation had to fit both Scripture and history exactly to be true, and that is what he found. The keys for correctly interpreting the prophecy in chapter 8 are explained in the section that follows.

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15 While comparing your author’s interpretation of the Danielic prophecies with those in older Bible commentaries, one of the works reviewed by him was Adam Clarke’s *Commentary on the Bible* (1825), and he found that Clarke had interpreted chapter 8 similarly. However, Clarke's interpretation used a faulty calculation that forgot to take into account that there was no year zero, thus yielding 1966, not 1967, as the year for the restoration of the sanctuary. Still, considering the time period when it was made, Clarke's interpretation was a remarkable feat of exposition.
The first key to interpretation of the chrono-specific prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, verses 13-14, is to understand the question being asked in verse 13, “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” (KJV). Past expositors have generally misunderstood the scope of the question, assuming it to be asking only how long the interruption of the Temple sacrifices and other transgressions against the Temple would last. That was not the question being asked, however. The questioner was rhetorically asking about the duration of the vision itself. Although not perfect, a better translation of verse 13 reads, “How long will the events of the vision last, this vision concerning the regular offering and the transgression which is so appalling, that allows the sanctuary and the army to be trampled underfoot?” (CJB). That wording recognizes that the question about duration pertains to all of the events in the vision, a time period that includes the events described in verses 1-12 as well as the trampling of the sanctuary underfoot that we now know from history continued in one form or another from the time of the Exile in Babylon until June of 1967. When the full scope of the question is understood, it is easy to see that the first action event of the vision, the king of Greece moving against the king of Persia described in verse 6, is the starting point for calculating the duration of the vision. Verse 14 then states that the final event of the vision will come after 2,300 “evening-morning”(s). Putting all of these pieces together, verse 14 is saying that the sanctuary will be restored after 2,300 “evening-morning”(s), with the count beginning from the time when Alexander the Great first moved against Darius III of Persia in the Battle of Granicus that took place in May/June, 334 BCE.

The second key to interpretation of the prophecy is to understand the unit of time meant by the Hebrew phrase ערב בקר (BHS, Strong’s OT: 1242, 6153), literally “evening-morning,” which is used in verse 14. The King James Version renders that phrase as “days,” based on similar Hebrew wording in Genesis, chapter 1, verses 5-31, “the evening and the morning were the [first, second, third, etc ...] day” (KJV). Expositors adopting that translation have traditionally considered the phrase “evening-morning”(s) to mean literal twenty-four-hour days, as the late Leon Wood did, but none of them have been able to make that interpretation fit actual historical events. Other translations render the phrase as “evening and mornings,” adding the conjunction “and” which is not found in the best Hebrew manuscripts. That has led to expositions that interpret the phrase as a reference to 2,300 twice-daily evening and morning sacrifices, which they usually posit were interrupted for a period of 1,150 days between the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus in 167 BCE and its rededication by the Maccabees in 164 BCE. However, none of the proponents of the 1,150-day approach have been able to make their expositions fit the historical record exactly.

Since both the 2,300 full-day and the 1,150 half-day approaches yielded only approximations based solely on historical assumptions as interpretations, your author reasoned that a different interpretive approach was needed. Having previously understood that the ending
event of the prophecy had occurred with the liberation of the Temple Mount during the Six-Day War in 1967, and now understanding that the starting event had occurred when Alexander the Great defeated the Persian army of Darius III for the first time in 334 BCE, he did a quick calculation that revealed the interval between the two events to be essentially 2,300 years. Thus, an “evening-morning” had to be equivalent to a year in actual time in some way, but, considering the meanings of Hebrew words used, how that could be?

As was your author’s custom, he turned to the Scriptures for clarification. The needed insight came while he was reading the passage describing God’s instructions for observing the Passover given in the Book of Exodus, chapter 12, verses 6-10, 14:

“And ye shall keep it [the Paschal lamb] up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ... And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire ... And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever” (KJV).

In those verses was the answer. Passover, the annual memorial observance of the Jewish people, was defined in the Bible as an evening-until-morning event. Thus, “evening-morning” did not represent a calendar unit, such as a day, a year, etc., nor did it have anything to do with the morning and evening sacrifices, but instead it meant a night. More specifically, it meant the Passover night, the yearly reminder of God’s redemption of the people of Israel. Thus, 2,300 “evening-morning”(s) was understood to represent 2,300 Passovers.

The third key to interpretation of the prophecy is to understand how to count the 2,300 Passovers that determine the time span stipulated in verse 14, to know when to begin and when to end the count. The initial Passover in the count had to occur after the first action event of the prophecy, the Battle of Granicus stipulated in verse 6 had occurred (see diagram on next page). That battle was the first time that Alexander the Great met and defeated an army of Darius III of Persia. There is no direct historical reference to a specific date for the Battle of Granicus, but a mention by Plutarch of Chaeronea, who recorded that the battle took place in the Macedonian month Daesius in the year 334 BCE, is sufficient to locate it chronologically in history. That

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16 Plutarch of Chaeronea, Life of Alexander (section 16, verses 1-3): “In the meantime, Darius’ captains, having collected large forces, were encamped on the further bank of the river Granicus, and it was necessary to fight, as it were, in the gate of Asia for an entrance into it. The depth of the river, with the uneveness and difficult ascent of the opposite bank, which was to be gained by main force, was apprehended by most, and some pronounced it an improper time to engage, because it was unusual for the kings of Macedonia to march with their forces in the month called Daesius. But Alexander broke through these scruples, telling them they should call it a second Artemisius. And when Parmenion advised him not to attempt anything that day, because it was late, he told him that he should disgrace the Hellespont, should he fear the Granicus.” ... translated by Mr. Evelyn for John Dryden’s Plutarch’s Lives by Several Hands, published in 1683.
reference shows that Alexander moved against the Persians in late May or early June. Passover was celebrated in March that year, so it had already occurred before the battle began. Thus, the next Passover, the one celebrated in 333 BCE, is the one that must be used to start the count that determines the duration of the 2,300-Passover time span specified in verse 14. Equally important, the count has to be concluded before the Temple Mount was liberated by Israeli army paratroopers on June 7, 1967. That means that the last Passover in the count, the 2,300th Passover, has to be the Passover in 1967, which occurred on the 25th of April. Were there exactly 2,300 Passovers between the Battle of Granicus in 334 BCE and the liberation of the Temple Mount during the Six-Day War in 1967? There was only one way to find out, and that was to count the Passovers. So, your author did, and you can, too.

Table 1.1 (on next page) demonstrates how the 2,300 Passovers should be counted. Included in the count are all Passovers occurring after Alexander the Great led his army against Persia at the Battle of Granicus in 334 BCE, and before Israeli army paratroopers liberated the Temple Mount in 1967. The count is initiated with the Passover in 333 BCE, the first Passover after the Battle of Granicus. The count ends with the Passover that occurred before the start of the Six-Day War. Each Passover in the table is denoted as “P#” (where “#” is its number in the count), followed by its corresponding Gregorian year. After the initial ten Passovers (P1 through P10), shown on the top line, Passovers are shown in ten-year increments, which allows you to count along on your fingers to verify the count if you wish. When you have completed verifying the count as demonstrated in the table, you will see that there are exactly 2,300 Passovers between the starting event of the vision, the Battle of Granicus specified in verse 6, and the concluding event of the vision, the restoration of the Temple Mount specified in verse 14, precisely the time span required for that interpretation to be an exact fulfillment of the chronospecific prophecy set forth in verses 13-14.
Table 1.1 - How to Count the 2,300 Passovers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P1 - 333 BCE</th>
<th>P2 - 332 BCE</th>
<th>P3 - 331 BCE</th>
<th>P4 - 330 BCE</th>
<th>P5 - 329 BCE</th>
<th>P6 - 328 BCE</th>
<th>P7 - 327 BCE</th>
<th>P8 - 326 BCE</th>
<th>P9 - 325 BCE</th>
<th>P10 - 324 BCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10 see above</td>
<td>P20 - 314 BCE</td>
<td>P30 - 304 BCE</td>
<td>P40 - 294 BCE</td>
<td>P50 - 284 BCE</td>
<td>P60 - 274 BCE</td>
<td>P70 - 264 BCE</td>
<td>P80 - 254 BCE</td>
<td>P90 - 244 BCE</td>
<td>P100 - 234 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P190 - 224 BCE</td>
<td>P290 - 214 BCE</td>
<td>P390 - 204 BCE</td>
<td>P490 - 194 BCE</td>
<td>P590 - 184 BCE</td>
<td>P690 - 174 BCE</td>
<td>P790 - 164 BCE</td>
<td>P890 - 154 BCE</td>
<td>P990 - 144 BCE</td>
<td>P1090 - 134 BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P200 - 214 BCE</td>
<td>P300 - 214 BCE</td>
<td>P400 - 204 BCE</td>
<td>P500 - 194 BCE</td>
<td>P600 - 184 BCE</td>
<td>P700 - 174 BCE</td>
<td>P800 - 164 BCE</td>
<td>P900 - 154 BCE</td>
<td>P1000 - 144 BCE</td>
<td>P1100 - 134 BCE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that there was no year “0” (zero) when going from nce to BCE, so the count for the Passovers in the transition decade from 4 nce to 7 ce is determined as follows: Passover number 330 in the count (P330 above) occurred in the year 4 nce, P331 in 3 nce, P332 in 2 nce, P333 in 1 nce, P334 in 1 ce, P335 in 2 ce, P336 in 3 ce, P337 in 4 ce, P338 in 5 ce, P339 in 6 ce, P340 in 7 ce.

In addition, the dates for both the starting and ending events that are used for the count, namely, the Battle of Granicus and the liberation of the Temple Mount by Israel during the Six-Day War, between which there must be a count of exactly 2,300 Passovers, can be verified from historical records as being exactly as described in the Bible. That is a major improvement over traditional interpretations mentioned earlier in this chapter, which always fail to identify either a starting event or an ending event that can be identified in recorded history and thus fail as legitimate interpretations of Daniel, chapter 8. The interpretation offered in this chapter, with a count of 2,300 Passovers occurring between the Battle of Granicus in May/June of 334 BCE, and the liberation of Jerusalem’s Temple Mount on June 7, 1967, satisfies the textual constraints of Daniel, chapter 8, verses 13-14, exactly.

**Fulfillment in History**

The chrono-specific predictive prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, encompasses more than twenty-five-hundred years of Jewish history. Verse 6 starts things off by successfully predicting that Alexander the Great, the king of Greece, would defeat Darius III, the king of Persia, in
battle. That prophecy was revealed more than two-hundred years before its fulfillment took place. In the year 334 BCE, after crossing the Hellespont from Greece to Asia, Alexander’s disciplined foot soldiers and cavalry clashed with the forces of Darius III near the site of the ruins of Troy, in what history records as the Battle of Granicus because it took place on the banks of the Granicus River. Alexander and his Greek army won a great victory over the numerically-superior Persian forces assembled by Darius III to oppose him, and they would go on to defeat the armies of Darius two more times, in 333 BCE in the battle at the Issus River and then in the climactic battle on the flat plains of Gaugamela in 331 BCE. The latter battle brought the Achaemenid Persian Empire to a close. From a biblical standpoint, though, the earlier Battle of Granicus in 334 BCE was the event in history that set into motion the conflict between Hellenism and Judaism that would profoundly shape the history of the Jewish people for many hundreds of years into the future.

The Battle of Granicus was the signal to begin the Passover count prescribed in Daniel, chapter 8, verse 14. As we now know, the count ended twenty-three hundred Passovers later, on April 25, 1967. The Six-Day War began soon after that 2,300th Passover was observed. On the third day of the war, in the morning hours of June 7, 1967, soldiers from Israel Defense Forces (IDF) 55th Paratroopers Brigade were poised on the Mount of Olives, ready to fight their way through the Lion’s Gate into the Old City of Jerusalem. Their commander was Colonel Mordechai “Motta” Gur, who exhorted his troops with these words: “Soon we will enter the city, the Old City of Jerusalem, about which countless generations of Jews have dreamed, to which all living Jews aspire. To our brigade has been granted the privilege of being the first to enter it ... Now, on, on to the gate!”

Within the hour, they had captured the walled Old City and liberated the sacred Temple Mount. Five days later, on June 12, the men of Brigade 55 assembled in parade formation atop the Temple Mount to commemorate their victory and remember their fallen comrades. They were again addressed by Colonel Gur, who told them, “You have been privileged to restore to the people of Israel their capital and their sanctuary.”

As for Alexander the Great, there is no historical evidence that he understood the biblical importance of the Battle of Granicus or the role he played in Hebrew prophecy except Josephus’ story of Alexander’s visit to Jerusalem, during which he was supposedly met by the high priest and presented with the Book of Daniel, an account which most scholars believe to be based on a fable. Likewise, there is no historical evidence that Colonel “Motta” Gur and his troops recognized the exegetical significance of their heroic deeds during the Battle for Jerusalem in

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19 From Josephus, *Antiquities* 11: 8 :5 (Whiston): “When asked by one of his generals why he welcomed this group [the high priest and his entourage], Alexander replied: ‘I did not adore him, but that God who hath honoured him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit [garment], when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius [III], and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.’”
1967. They obviously realized that what they had done was significant within the context of Israeli history and Jewish identity, but perhaps not that their actions were the literal fulfillment of a specific biblical prophecy. They were not alone, though, since no one else at the time recognized the end-time significance of what had transpired by the return of Jerusalem’s Old City and Temple Mount to Israeli sovereignty. Nevertheless, Gur and his men had carried out the fulfillment of the prophecy set forth in Daniel, chapter 8, verses 13-14, which foretold that the restoration of the Temple Mount to God’s people Israel would take place soon after the 2,300th Passover of the prophecy, the Passover of 1967, had occurred.

So, now that the prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, has been fulfilled exactly by the return of the Temple Mount to Jewish sovereignty during the Six-Day War in 1967, what are we to make of that restoration?

In verse 14, the Hebrew word נপנעה (BHS, Strong’s OT: 6663) has been translated in various ways. The King James translators rendered it as “cleansed,” whereas the JPS 1917 edition of the Tanakh rendered it as “shall be victorious.” Modern translations have been just as diverse: “properly restored” (NASB), “restored to its rightful state” (RSV), “reconsecrated” (NIV), and “restored to its rightful state” (ESV, CJB).

The UBS Handbook says: “Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state, literally ‘and the sanctuary will be justified.’ ... Some take it to mean ‘purified’ or ‘cleansed’ (NJV). Others have the idea of rededication; NIV reads ‘reconsecrated.’ Still others have a more general statement: ‘then shall the wrongs of the sanctuary be righted’ (AT) or ‘ have its rights restored’ (NJB).”

Taking all of the above ideas into consideration, and viewing them in the context of the 1967 chronology dictated by the prophecy, it seems safe to assume that the Hebrew word נפנעה reflects, at the least, a return of the Temple Mount to Jewish possession. Some have argued that the Temple Mount has, in reality, not been restored to Jewish control since, within days of its captured, Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Defense Minister at the time, delegated administration of the platform area to the Islamic Waqf, and it remains so delegated today. Skeptics correctly point out that Jews and Christians or persons of any faith other than Islam still cannot pray there openly without risk of rioting or worse by young Muslims. But, make no mistake about it, the Temple Mount is under the sovereignty of the State of Israel and has been since its liberation on June 7, 1967. The government of Israel determines who has access, and when, and it will be the Jewish people who will determine its ultimate status.

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20 Tanakh (also Tanach) is the English name for the Jewish Bible, a name resulting from the acronym TNK formed by the initial letters of its three main sections, the Torah (Five Books of Moses), the Neviim (Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings).

21 An Islamic Waqf has managed the Temple Mount continuously since the Muslim reconquest of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1187. On June 7, 1967, soon after Israel had taken control of the area during the Six-Day War, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol assured that “no harm whatsoever shall come to the places sacred to all religions”. Together with the extension of Israeli jurisdiction and administration over east Jerusalem, the Knesset passed the Preservation of the Holy Places Law, ensuring protection of the Holy Places against desecration, as well as freedom of access thereto. Israel agreed to leave administration of the site in the hands of the Waqf ... (excerpted from the Wikipedia article “Temple Mount”).
Judging from the turbulent history surrounding the Temple Mount over the centuries, and especially since its recent restoration to Jewish sovereignty in 1967, it seems obvious to your author that the liberation event that took place on that June morning forty-plus years ago was but the beginning event in a progressive fulfillment of biblical prophecy that is unfolding daily before our eyes.

### Historical events described in Daniel, chapter 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year BCE</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>559 BCE</td>
<td>Achaemenid Empire began with reign of Cyrus the Great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>551 BCE</td>
<td>(verse 1) The vision of Daniel, chapter 8, was revealed to Daniel in the third year of the reign (coregency) of King Belshazzar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539 BCE</td>
<td>(verses 3, 4) Cyrus the Great captured Babylon; Achaemenid Persian Empire expanded for the next two-hundred years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336 BCE</td>
<td>(verse 20) Darius III Codomannus became king of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, (verse 21) Alexander of Macedon became first king of a united Greece.</td>
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<tr>
<td>334 BCE</td>
<td>Passover was observed on March 26.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(verses 5, 6) Battle of Granicus: Alexander the Great, king of united Greece, defeated the army of Darius III of Persia for the first time in battle at the Granicus River (May/June).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333 BCE</td>
<td>(verse 14) Passover #1 in the count was observed on April 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Battle of Issus: Alexander the Great defeated the army of Darius III for the second time at the Issus River on November 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331 BCE</td>
<td>Battle of Gaugamela: Alexander the Great defeated the army of Darius III for the third and final time at Gaugamela on October 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175 BCE</td>
<td>(verses 9, 23) Antiochus IV Epiphanes became king of the Seleucid Empire, Hellenism was made the official religion of Judea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167 BCE</td>
<td>(verses 10-12, 24, 25a) Antiochus IV Epiphanes banned Judaism, desecrated the Temple by erecting a pagan altar on the sacred altar and placing statue of Zeus atop the new altar, stopped daily sacrifices on December 13; revolt led by the Maccabees began as a result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164 BCE</td>
<td>Judah Maccabee captured Jerusalem, rededicated the Temple and consecrated a new sacred altar on December 10 (not on December 25 as some expositors claim), began offering the daily sacrifices again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163 BCE</td>
<td>(verse 25b) Antiochus IV Epiphanes died in January.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 CE</td>
<td>(verse 14) Passover #2,300 in the count was observed on April 25. Israeli army paratroopers liberated the Temple Mount and restored it to Jewish sovereignty on June 7 during the Six-Day War.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>