

Dan 11:40 and Genre

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Long ago, at many times and in many ways [*polumerōs kai polutropōs*], God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ^[2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Heb 1:1-2)

"In many ways." The expression *polutropōs* could be considered by itself, but the author clearly wants us to understand it together with the first term *polumerōs*. The point is that Scripture is diverse. And yet all Scripture is Scripture. "God spoke."

All Scripture [*pasa graphē*] is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ^[17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

"All Scripture." The expression *pasa graphē* cannot refer to every writing, because the human experience of writing is also diverse (Eccl 12:12), and some things should never have been written. But here we are talking about writings that were "breathed out by God," i.e., inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, and "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

This list of characteristics is also diverse. The use we make of Scripture for teaching might not be the same as the use we make of it for reproof, and the use we make of Scripture for correction might not be the same as the use we make of it for training in righteousness. The diversity of Scripture is important, because it addresses many different needs.

But Paul is not using these facts to argue that Scripture should be divided up into separate compartments. On the contrary, he appears to be saying that the unified body of Scripture does service for all these things, and others. If the Scriptures themselves are what we're talking about, he appears to be removing distinctions rather than setting distinctions in place. Scripture can be legitimately put to a variety of uses, but it was all inspired by one Holy Spirit, and it all draws people into an intelligent relationship with God. The uses are many; the Scripture is one.

In this context, I suggest that any effort to keep this part of Scripture separate from that part of Scripture is misguided. It doesn't matter what the argument is. It's the wrong argument if it has the effect of separating Scripture from Scripture, as in the case of separating Dan 11:40 from Rev 11:8. If this is the result, it's the wrong process.

In the present case it's also an inconsistent process. Any comparison of Dan 11 with Rev 11 is rejected because of a mismatch in genres, but comparing Dan 11 with Dan 8 is required in spite of a mismatch in genres. Dan 8 is neither more nor less symbolic than Rev 11, but the one is required and the other rejected.

Let us say the problem is not genre as such, but context. In my view Dan 11:29-35/36-39 takes place during the time, times, and half a time because of thematic parallels with Dan 7:25 and verbal parallels with 12:6-7, so Dan 11:40 takes place immediately after that, i.e., immediately after the three and a half times. Rev 11:8 also takes place immediately after this period, but in that passage the period is called forty-two months (11:2) and 1260 days (11:3). For ease of exposition let us select one spelling of this period, 1260 days for example. Using this terminology, Dan 11:40 takes place immediately after the 1260 days and Rev 11:8 takes place immediately after the 1260 days. In this respect the contexts are the same. Are they different in some other significant way?

There is an inconsistency here in what we are willing to accept and on what basis. Bottom line, Scripture must be compared with Scripture. If genre does not keep us from comparing Dan 8 with Dan 11, it should not keep us from comparing Dan 11 with Rev 11.