

# Parallels and Patterns in Dan 11

Frank W. Hardy

## Introduction

We had a wonderfully perceptive question from the floor on Friday as to how one should go about doing exegesis in Dan 11. In my view the short answer is through parallels and patterns. Not by exegetical dead reckoning. The only way to get Scripture to teach itself to us is by comparing one Scripture with another. The following sequence is important: (a) We start with a given text, or perhaps nothing more than a single word, (b) examine the immediate context of that, (c) and then its broader context. In the process we will frequently find another passage that bears on the same topic. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to guide us in making the right connections. Such comparisons are what I mean by parallels.

Patterns are not the same as parallels, but they are equally important. In my view patterns are indications of intentionality – like an archeologist finding a series of holes lined up neatly. If the angel wants us to notice something, he will make that clear by leaving clues, i.e., patterns in the text. Below we consider some examples from Dan 11 (first section, second section, part of the third) and Dan 12. These may serve as a proof of concept.

## Dan 11:2b-15

Table 1  
Internal Structure of Dan 11:4

Seq	Column A	Column B	Seq
1	<i>ûk<sup>e</sup> omdô tiššābēr <b>malkûtô</b></i>	<i>kî tinnātēš <b>malkûtô</b></i>	5
2	<i>w<sup>e</sup>tēhāš l<sup>e</sup> arba rûḥôt haššāmayim</i>		
3	<i>w<sup>e</sup>lō l<sup>e</sup> <b>aḥarîto</b></i>	<i>w<sup>e</sup>la aḥērîm mil<sup>e</sup>bad `ēlleh</i>	6
4	<i>w<sup>e</sup>lō kemošlō ašer māšāl</i>		

The symmetry we see in table 1 is important it predisposes us to expect that *l<sup>e</sup> aḥarîto* will have a masculine referent, as for example, the generals who divided up Alexander's empire.

# Dan 11:16-22/23-28

## Exhibit 1 Opening Clause of Dan 11:16

Table 2

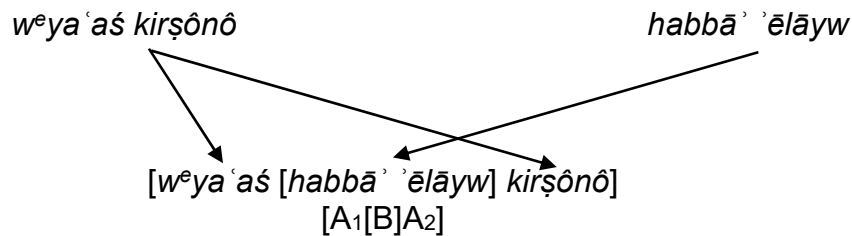
Series A Parallels: Going Back to Dan 8

Ref	Hebrew	English (ESV)	Empire
8:4	<i>w<sup>e</sup>ʿāsā kiršônô</i>	He did as he pleased	II
11:3	<i>w<sup>e</sup>ʿāsā kiršônô</i>	And do as he pleases.	III
11:16	<i>w<sup>e</sup>yaʿas . . . kiršônô</i>	The invader will do as he pleases	IVa
11:36	<i>w<sup>e</sup>ʿāsā kiršônô</i>	The king will do as he pleases	IVb

Table 3

Series B Parallels: Going Back to Dan 9

Dan 11	Hebrew	Dan 9	Hebrew
11:16a	<i>habbāʿ ʿēlāyw</i>	9:26b	<i>nāgīd habbāʿ</i>
11:16b	<i>w<sup>e</sup>kālā b<sup>e</sup>yādô</i>	9:27	<i>w<sup>e</sup>ʿad-kālā</i>
11:17b	<i>lehašhītāh</i>	9:26b	<i>yašhīt</i>



The opening clause of Dan 11:16 is not merely an example of cooccurrence, where two sets of parallels are represented in the same verse; it is an example of center embedding. The words *wēyaʿas habbāʿ ʿēlāyw kiršônô* ("But he who comes [lit., the comer, the one who comes] against him will do as he wills") are exquisitely precise. One set of parallels describes a different world empire power each time it is used (8:4 empire II, 11:3 empire III, 11:16 empire [?], and 11:36 empire IVb). The other set of parallels connects Dan 11:16-17 to 9:26-27, confirming that the power in question is indeed Rome. Since we haven't been reading about Rome in vss. 2b-15, this is where that power is introduced. Notice especially 11:17/9:26, where "the daughter of women" (11:17) corresponds to "the city and the sanctuary" (9:26).

The next example shows the overall structure of vss. 16-22/23-28. The row labeled "Verses" is self-explanatory. The row labeled "Predicates" refers to the grammatical form of the first word in each verse, after adjusting the verse division between vss. 23/24 by drawing *b<sup>e</sup>šalwā* from its position as the first word of vs. 24 to its correct position as the last word of vs. 23. Verse numbers were added more than a millennium after the fact, and this verse number was misplaced. It is not just that I want to move the verse number. A grammatical problem follows from leaving it where it is. This problem is pointed out in the critical apparatus of both *Biblia Hebraica* (Kittle) and *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). Notice that the various types of verse-initial words for groups of four verses, two verses, one verse, two verses, and four verses (4 2 1 2 4). The last group is incomplete, because only the first and last lines of the last group have a *wēyiqtol* verb as their first word. Here we have been looking only at the first word in each verse.

Now we look at each verse as a whole. In each of the first four verses we find violence; in the next two verses violence is absent; in the next verse it is present; in the

next two verses is absent; and in the last four verses this thematic element is again present (+ - + - +). Notice in particular that the number of verses in each group does not change. When we were looking at initial words the pattern was 4 2 1 2 4, and now again as we track the theme of violence the pattern is 4 2 1 2 4. The two topics (grammatical form of the first word, thematic element of violence) are entirely unrelated, but they lead to the same 4 2 1 2 4 result. This is a pattern.

The figure at the center of the structure is Christ, dying on a Roman cross. And, once the verse numbering problem is sorted out, notice that *b<sup>e</sup>šalwâ* occurs both one verse before 22 and one verse after. That also is a pattern. The name for this particular type of pattern is an inclusio. This word creates a frame around vs. 22 (21 [22] 23 = ABA'), just as the 4 2 1 2 4 pattern of initial words did, and this is the same pattern we saw in matter of where violence does or does not appear. There's a lot of structure here, and the only part of this that involves interpretation is my identification of the *n<sup>e</sup>gîd b<sup>e</sup>rît* as Christ. He is the central figure.

Table 4  
Elements in Daniel 11:16-28 that Frame Vs. 22  
at the Center of the Section

	A	B	C	B'	A'
Verses	16-19	20-21	22	23-24	25-28
Predicates	<i>w<sup>e</sup>+yiqtol</i>	<i>w<sup>e</sup>+qatal</i>	<i>w<sup>e</sup>+N</i>	<i>w<sup>e</sup>+PP</i>	<i>(w<sup>e</sup>+yiqtol)</i>
	4	2	1	2	4
Violence	+	-	+	-	+
	4	2	1	2	4
Center			Prince of the Covenant		
Inclusio at center		<i>b<sup>e</sup>šalwâ</i> (21)		<i>b<sup>e</sup>šalwâ</i> (23)	

The reason why these things are important is that there can be no center without a periphery. Without the other twelve verses (six on either side), it would be meaningless to talk Christ being at the center of anything. The context in which the angel has placed the above reference to Christ is what transforms that reference from being a footnote or sidebar, to being the center around which an entire section revolves. This is the middle verse. And this is the middle section. And this is the middle chapter of Daniel's culminating prophecy. In my view the angel is trying to tell us something here and he does through leaving textual clues in the form of structural patterns.

The alternative would be to use assertion. X is the case. This is important. Instead, the angel shows us it is important, by a delicate and artistic use of structural symmetry.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jesus did something like this when John's disciples asked Him if He was the Messiah (Luke 7:22).

## Dan 11:29-35/36-39

Table 5  
Thematic Parallels Linking Dan 29-35/36-39 to the  
Three and a Half Times of Dan 7:25

Dan 7:25	Dan 11:29-35/36-39
Pride, Violence	Violence, Pride
AB	B'A'

Table 6  
Verbal Parallels Linking Dan 11:35-36 (29-35/36-39) to the  
Three and a Half Times of Dan 12:6-7

11:35	11:36	12:6	12:7
<u>'ad 'ēt qēs</u>		<u>'ad mātay qēs</u>	
<i>kî 'ôd <u>lammô 'ēd</u></i>	<i>[kî neḥ<sup>e</sup>râšâ ne 'ešâtâ]</i>		<i><u>lammô 'ēd</u> <u>mô 'edîm</u> <u>wahḥēšî</u></i>
	<i><u>niplā 'ôt</u></i>	<i><u>happ<sup>e</sup>lā 'ôt</u></i>	
	<i>'ad <u>kālâ</u> [za 'am]</i>	<i><u>ûk<sup>e</sup>kālôt</u> [nappēš yad 'am qōdeš]</i>	<i><u>tiklênâ</u> [kol-'ēlleh]</i>

Table 7  
Some of the Verbal Parallels Linking Dan 11:31-35 to the  
1290 Days of 12:10-11

Ref.	Hebrew					English (ESV)
	a	b	c	d	e	
11:31	<i>w<sup>e</sup>hēsîrû</i>	<i>hattāmîd</i>	<i>w<sup>e</sup>nāt<sup>e</sup>nû</i>	<i>haššiqûš</i>	<i>m<sup>e</sup>šômēm</i>	Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.
12:11	<i>hûsar</i>	<i>hattāmîd</i>	<i>w<sup>e</sup>lātēt</i>	<i>siqqûš</i>	<i>šômēm</i>	And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

Table 8  
The Entire System of Verbal Parallels Linking Dan 11:31-35 to the  
1290 Days of Dan 12:10-11

Daniel 11			Daniel 12		
		11:35 (C)	12:10a (C')		
i		<i>lišrôp bâhem</i> <i>û<sup>e</sup>bârêr</i> <i>w<sup>e</sup>albên</i>	<i>yitbâr<sup>e</sup>rû</i> <i>w<sup>e</sup>yitlabb<sup>e</sup>nû</i> <i>w<sup>e</sup>yisšâr<sup>e</sup>pû</i>		ii
ii					iii
iii					i
	11:32-34 (B)			12:10b (B')	
i	<i>ûmaršî'ê b<sup>e</sup>rît</i> <i>ûmaškîlê 'am</i> <i>yâbînû</i>			<i>w<sup>e</sup>hiršî'û r<sup>e</sup>šâ'im</i> <i>w<sup>e</sup>lô' yâbînû</i> <i>w<sup>e</sup>hammaškîlîm</i>	i
ii					iii
iii					ii
11:31 (A)					12:11 (A')
<i>w<sup>e</sup>nât<sup>e</sup>nû</i> <i>haššiqûš</i> <i>m<sup>e</sup>sômêm</i> <i>w<sup>e</sup>hêsîrû</i> <i>hattamîd</i>					<i>w<sup>e</sup>lâtêt</i> <i>šiqûš</i> <i>šômêm</i> <i>ûmê'êt hûsar</i> <i>hattamîd</i>

What all of this means is that Dan 11:29-35/36-39 occurs during the "time, times, and half a time" of Dan 7:25 and 12:7. For ease of exposition let me use another spelling for this period, i.e., 1260 days.

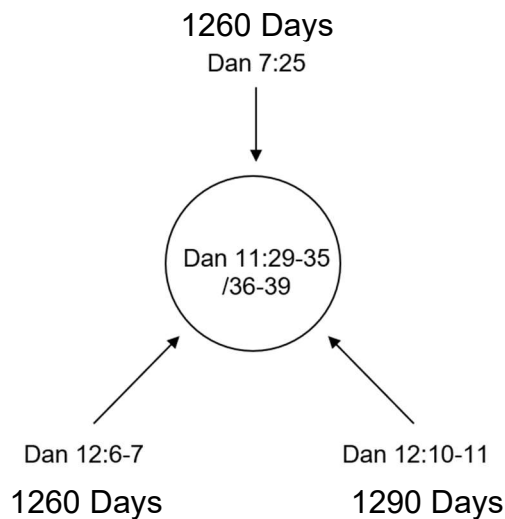


Fig. 1. Dan 11:29-35/36-39 linked by verbal and thematic parallels to the 1260 days twice and the 1290 days once.

In table 6 let words in square brackets represent thematic parallels. Time to stop. One more example.

## Dan 12:5-13

Table 9  
Proposed Outline for Dan 12

	First Half	Second Half	
A	12:5-7	12:10-12	A'
B	12:8-9	12:13	B'

This outline is important because it shows that the time period of vs. 7 and the time periods of vss. 11-12 are in corresponding parts of the outline. The three periods are not identical, but we should study them together. They are mutually instructive. The only way to misunderstand them is to separate them.