

Chapter 1 : Notes on Daniel: Historical Context – The Book of Daniel in Preterist Perspective

Notes on Daniel: Historical Context. By Jay Rogers Published April 27, Most biblical prophecy is "forth-telling" rather than foretelling. Therefore, it is not good to try to figure out what every symbol means when reading Revelation. Do not use a "this means that" cryptic approach. Revelation is a prophecy not a puzzle.

Among them are Daniel and his three companions, who refuse to touch the royal food and wine. Their overseer fears for his life in case the health of his charges deteriorates, but Daniel suggests a trial and the four emerge healthier than their counterparts from ten days of nothing but vegetables and water. Daniel 2 In the second year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar has a dream. When he wakes up, he realizes that the dream has some important message, so he consults his wise men. Wary of their potential to fabricate an explanation, the king refuses to tell the wise men what he saw in his dream. Rather, he demands that his wise men tell him what the content of the dream was, and then interpret it. When the wise men protest that this is beyond the power of any man, he sentences all, including Daniel and his friends, to death. Daniel receives an explanatory vision from God: Nebuchadnezzar had seen an enormous statue with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of mixed iron and clay, then saw the statue destroyed by a rock that turned into a mountain filling the whole earth. Daniel explains the dream to the king: Nebuchadnezzar is astonished to see a fourth figure in the furnace with the three, one "with the appearance like a son of the gods. Daniel 4 Nebuchadnezzar by William Blake between c. Daniel is summoned and interprets the dream. The tree is Nebuchadnezzar himself, who for seven years will lose his mind and live like a wild beast. All of this comes to pass until, at the end of the specified time, Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that "heaven rules" and his kingdom and sanity are restored. Fall of Babylon Belshazzar and his nobles blasphemously drink from sacred Jewish temple vessels, offering praise to inanimate gods, until a hand mysteriously appears and writes upon the wall. The horrified king summons Daniel, who upbraids him for his lack of humility before God and interprets the message: Belshazzar rewards Daniel and raises him to be third in the kingdom, and that very night Belshazzar is slain and Darius the Mede takes the kingdom. But God shuts up the mouths of the lions, and the next morning Darius rejoices to find him unharmed. Four kingdoms of Daniel In the first year of Belshazzar Daniel has a dream of four monstrous beasts arising from the sea. The Ancient of Days judges and destroys the beast, and "one like a son of man " is given everlasting kingship over the entire world. A divine being explains that the four beasts represent four kings, but that "the holy ones of the Most High" would receive the everlasting kingdom. The fourth beast would be a fourth kingdom with ten kings, and another king who would pull down three kings and make war on the "holy ones" for "a time, two times and a half," after which the heavenly judgement will be made against him and the "holy ones" will receive the everlasting kingdom. Daniel 8 In the third year of Belshazzar Daniel has vision of a ram and goat. The ram has two mighty horns, one longer than the other, and it charges west, north and south, overpowering all other beasts. A goat with a single horn appears from the west and destroys the ram. The goat becomes very powerful until the horn breaks off and is replaced by four lesser horns. A small horn that grows very large, it stops the daily temple sacrifices and desecrates the sanctuary for two thousand three hundred "evening and mornings" which could be either or days until the temple is cleansed. The angel Gabriel informs him that the ram represents the Medes and Persians, the goat is Greece, and the "little horn" is a wicked king. Prophecy of Seventy Weeks In the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel meditates on the word of Jeremiah that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years; he confesses the sin of Israel and pleads for God to restore Israel and the "desolated sanctuary" of the Temple. The angel Gabriel explains that the seventy years stand for seventy "weeks" of years years , during which the Temple will first be restored, then later defiled by a "prince who is to come," "until the decreed end is poured out. In the third year of Cyrus [Notes 5] Daniel sees in his vision an angel called "a man", but clearly a supernatural being who explains that he is in the midst of a war with the "prince of Persia", assisted only by Michael , "your prince. A future king of Persia will make war on the king of Greece , a "mighty king" will arise and wield power until his empire is broken up and given to others, and finally the king of the south identified in verse 8 as Egypt will go to war with the "king of the north. He will defeat and

subjugate Libya and Egypt, but "reports from the east and north will alarm him," and he will meet his end "between the sea and the holy mountain. At this time Michael will come. It will be a time of great distress, but all those whose names are written will be delivered. Daniel fails to understand and asks again what will happen, and is told: Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1, days. Deuterocanonical books The Greek text of Daniel is considerably longer than the Hebrew, due to three additional stories: The High Priestly family was split by rivalry, and one member, Jason, offered the king a large sum to be made High Priest. Jason also asked "or more accurately, paid" to be allowed to make Jerusalem a polis , or Greek city. This meant, among other things, that city government would be in the hands of the citizens, which meant in turn that citizenship would be a valuable commodity, to be purchased from Jason. None of this threatened the Jewish religion, and the reforms were widely welcomed, especially among the Jerusalem aristocracy and the leading priests. Three years later Jason was deposed when another priest, Menelaus, offered Antiochus an even larger sum for the post of High Priest.

The Revelation of John in Historical Context I have already pointed out that the book of Revelation is virtually unique among apocalypses in that it does not appear to be pseudonymous. I say that it does not "appear" to be pseudonymous because the author simply calls himself John without claiming to be a famous person from the past.

The symposium consisted of three major presentations 55 minutes in length in the morning and three 20 minute responses and question and answer time in the afternoon. Here are the first two of those principles as I presented them at the symposium. Historical Interpretation that takes into account the Historical Context of the Revelation The first and most basic principle of biblical interpretation is known as grammatical-historical interpretation. Simply stated this fundamental principle says that the Bible must be interpreted in terms of the normal grammatical meaning of the language and in a way that makes sense in light of the historical context of the language of the passage. The original sense of the words first of all for the author and secondarily for his readers is the true sense. No interpretation that divorces itself from its historical-grammatical meaning of the passage can be correct. Of course, this strict attention to the grammatical-historical interpretation of the passage must be supplemented by an appreciation of its theological interpretation. The Bible is a divine-human document. Each part of the Bible, then, has both a specific grammatical-historical meaning because of its human author and a larger theological significance because of its divine author. To put this another way, each part of Scripture is intended by the Holy Spirit as the canon or rule of faith and life of the church and has, therefore, a significance for the whole church. I will point out some hermeneutical implications of this later. The crucial thing that must be pointed out here, however, is that these two sides of Scripture do not contradict one another. The human authorship of Scripture does not make it less divine. For instance, its human authorship does not cancel its inerrancy or decrease its infallibility. On the other hand, its divine authorship does not suppress the peculiar personalities or vocabularies of its human authors. Divine authorship does not mean that we can ignore either the peculiar language or the historical situation of the human author. Rather the theological interpretation always is consistent with and, in fact, grows out of the grammatical-historical interpretation of the passage. Now what has all this to do with Revelation 20? It means that the historical context of its visions cannot be ignored in its interpretation. The exact date of the writing of the Book of Revelation is disputed. What is not disputed is this. It was originally written by John the Apostle in exile at Patmos for his faith to local churches in the Roman province of Asia also suffering for their faith Revelation 1: Interpretations that forget that these visions were recorded by a suffering apostle for a suffering church defy the principle of historical interpretation. A credible interpretation must exhibit a clear line of connection with this historical context. Since the premillennial interpretation of this passage asserts that this passage has to do with a drastically different and distant period of time after the return of Christ, it faces up front a problem with this principle of historical interpretation. If the Beast is the Antichrist at the end of history and those crowned with glory in the millennium are those who suffer at his hands in the Great Tribulation at the end of history, then this passage has only a tangential and secondary application to believers suffering at the hands of Rome in the first century. If, on the other hand, those who stand beheaded for the sake of Christ in the vision of Revelation If their living and reigning with Christ speaks of their glorious participation in the heavenly reign of Christ immediately after their martyrdom, then there is a glorious relevance and encouragement given to the original recipients of this vision. Literary Genre Interpretation that takes into account the Predominantly Apocalyptic Character of the Revelation The Book of Revelation has a predominantly apocalyptic genre. I need to explain each of these three words. Some of it, especially the first three chapters, is predominantly epistolary literature. The Book of Revelation is predominantly, but not exclusively, apocalyptic literature. Epistolary literature must be interpreted in a more literal non-symbolic fashion, while apocalyptic literature must be interpreted in a symbolic. The adjective, apocalyptic, comes originally from the Greek word that means revelation. It may also be derived more immediately from the name of the Book of Revelation. In some traditions it is called the Apocalypse. In the present context the word, apocalyptic, has reference to the highly symbolic, continuous, and dramatic figurative language characteristic

of the Book of Revelation and also of some parts of the Book of Daniel. For instances of this sort of language compare Daniel 8: The word, genre, is a word of French origin that refers to a kind, type, or sort of literature. Thus, the apocalyptic genre of Revelation 20 refers to the fact that it is a kind of literature that utilizes highly symbolic and figurative language. It is not ordinary, literal, prose. I have to confess that when I read many Dispensationalists, I am confused by their approach to the interpretation of symbolic literature in the Bible. It seems sometimes that they are saying that we must not interpret the symbols of the Bible symbolically. We must rather, they seem to be saying, interpret the symbolic literature of the Bible literally. As for myself, it seems obvious to me that if literature is symbolic, then it must be interpreted symbolically. Thus, the principle of biblical interpretation relevant here is that biblical literature must be interpreted in a way appropriate to its genre. Genre analysis is, therefore, crucial if the Bible is to be properly interpreted. Sproul has these helpful comments on the subject of genre analysis in biblical hermeneutics. Genre analysis involves the study of such things as literary forms, figures of speech and style. We do this with all kinds of literature. We distinguish between the style of historical narratives and sermon, between realistic graphic descriptions and hyperbole. Failure to make these distinctions when dealing with the Bible can lead to a host of problems with interpretation. Literary analysis is crucial to accurate interpretation. Revelation 20 is clearly written mainly in the apocalyptic genre and should be interpreted in a way that takes this into account. The opening words of Rev. It must not, therefore, be interpreted literally. It must rather be interpreted figuratively and symbolically in accord with its apocalyptic genre or form. Their meaning is not immediately obvious like literal language or prose. Daniel has to inquire as to its interpretation, because as apocalyptic language its meaning is not immediately obvious to him. All this leads to a further, important question. How should such symbolic, apocalyptic, or figurative language be properly interpreted? This question is all the more necessary because the claim is frequently made that symbolic interpretation is necessarily ambiguous. I quote Zukeran again: Second, reading spiritual meanings into the text could lead to arbitrary interpretations. According to this viewpoint they are not merely symbolic of events and persons, as the historicist view contends; they are only abstract symbols of good and evil. In interpretation, the Apocalypse may thus mean anything or nothing according to the whim of the interpreter. They ought not to be suddenly interpreted literally and then figuratively at the whim of the interpreters. For instance, there is no good reason to exclude indications of time i. For instance, in Revelation He immediately, however, interpolates an explanation or interpretation for what he sees. This dragon, he says, in the real world where we live, is the devil or Satan. We must both be able to distinguish and yet properly relate these two worlds. The vision which the prophet sees does not literally exist anywhere in the space-time universe. It is a visionary world that exists only before the inner eye of the prophet through the revealing power of the Spirit of God. None of it exists exactly as the prophet sees it with the inner eye in the outer world which can be seen by his external eye. Yet it symbolizes that world. One unique feature of apocalyptic literature like that found in Daniel and Revelation is the continued character of the symbols. You do not have a symbol here and there sprinkled in a passage. You have long-continued, whole, symbolic passages with, perhaps, here and there sprinkled in an explanation of what this points to in the literal world. This is the character of the vision of Revelation It is continuously symbolic throughout. Let me put it this way. We must not take the vision literally, even though we must take the vision seriously. We must not cut symbols out of the vision and paste them into the real world. They may only come into the real world through the gate of symbolic translation. Let me give an illustration of this. In the history of the interpretation of Revelation 20 not a few have puzzled over the beheaded martyrs of verse 4. A failure to understand the principle I have just been articulating has led some to affirm that only beheaded martyrs, or at least only martyrs, or perhaps only especially martyrs, share in the reign of Christ. Such affirmations raise all sorts of silly questions. Is beheading more heroic or meritorious than burning? Does a person actually have to die to be a martyr for Christ? Does other suffering short of death allow one to reign with Christ? But all such reactions to the text fail to see this that the beheaded martyrs of verse 4 are part of the world of vision. In the vision they are beheaded by a beast for failure to accept a tattoo indicating allegiance to him in their foreheads or hand. That is what John really saw. But none of this is to be taken literally. The question must be asked, How does all this look when it comes through the gate of symbolic translation? I think it looks like 2 Timothy 2: Great

help can be derived in interpreting New Testament symbols by studying Old Testament passages from which such symbolism is derived.

Chapter 3 : Revelation in Context - A literary & historical commentary on Revelation

The Book of Daniel agrees that Nebuchadnezzar did not occupy Judah in It says only that he approached Jerusalem and threatened war. The expression "besieged" (Dan.) can refer merely to action preliminary to a siege (6).

What is the historical setting of the book of Revelation? And the book of Revelation is no exception. So, what is the historical setting of the book of Revelation? The first century is the historical context. And we have to be cautious about that. This book would have been understandable to the people of the first century because that is its historical context. So, its context is the first century struggle between Christianity and Judaism, on the one hand, and Christianity and the Roman Empire, and particularly the context of Caesar worship in the first century. Now when in the first century is another question. So those are the two main dates that most scholars hold to with reference to the book of Revelation. I guess we have to ask the question: Is it before or after A. And the death of the Emperor Nero in A. Well, now it still has application into the future, because even though Jerusalem has been destroyed, the big end of the world is still to come. And so that affects the dating. Johnson The historical setting of the book of Revelation is that it is addressed to seven churches in the Roman province of Asia, which is on the west coast of what is now Turkey. There is also other types of violence, lawless violence, against Christians as well. But the church is also under pressure to conform to the society in a variety of ways. There are false doctrines that are being taught by the Nicolaitans, for example, in Ephesus and elsewhere. There is the appeal of wanting to fit in with the culture, to conform. And the references to meat offered to idols is a reference probably to participation in Roman trade guilds that would involve feasting in honor of various gods that were the patron gods of the guilds. We know that that was used by the Romans as kind of a prison island, especially for political prisoners. John is sharing in their suffering, then, in order to encourage the church, as well as to warn the church against the more subtle dangers of conformity with the culture. Why is it important to understand the historical setting of the book of Revelation? In the case of Revelation, we know the apostle John wrote it to seven churches in Asia Minor during the first century. But how should details like these influence our interpretation? One is that it helps us really see the Bible as a real document written to real people in real circumstances, not simply written and tucked away and sealed for another day, but actually written to living, breathing people who struggled with the same kinds of issues we do. And when we can understand their circumstances, we can see a more direct line of application sometimes to our own lives. So they had real questions about, could they persevere in this kind of world? Was God in charge? And if he was, was he working for their good? And so, as an example, in the book of Revelation, we see what those early Christians received from it if we look at the historical situation instead of simply looking past it to our time! And finally, an important reason why we want to look at the historical setting is because the human authors of Scripture, as they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they used the language, they used the literary forms, and they also, at times, used historical reference so that if we understand those things, we tend to read them in their original context rather than try to force them into our context, so we can understand how biblical writers used poetry or used imagery on their terms rather than forcing them to do it on our terms. So when we read through Revelation 2 and 3, we get a sense of the historical setting that he has specifically in mind. We should put ourselves back in the place of people who were in that original audience, if you would. And that audience would have been in the churches, the major urban centers of Asia Minor in the first century – urban centers that were full of pagan worship that had imagery of the worship of the pantheon of deities that were worshiped in the Roman Empire – but also the worship of the Roman emperor himself, urban centers that also had Jewish places of worship in it as well. And so, many in these early churches probably came out of Jewish worship centers and were attracted to early Christianity and, therefore, when they encountered persecution, they might have even been attracted back into early Judaism. But these were also urban centers that had a great deal of wealth, and that would attract people and perhaps lure them away from the worship of Christ. And you see all of that represented in those two chapters. Keener The majority of scholars think that the book of Revelation was written during the reign of Domitian who claimed to be a god, and that would have just exacerbated the problems in Asia Minor where,

in many of the cities that are addressed in the book of Revelation, there were temples for the worship of the emperor. And of course, people worshiped many other gods. It was a setting of paganism. It was also a setting where persecution could easily arise and had arisen in some of the cities. Some of the other cities, however, were not experiencing persecution. Some of the other cities actually were compromising with the same world system that was killing their brothers and sisters elsewhere. And I think that gives a lesson to us today because today, in different parts of the world, the church is experiencing different things. Some places the church is suffering; some places the church is compromising with the values of a world that are inimical with values of the kingdom of God. And I think we who are not suffering so much have a lot that we can learn from our brothers and sisters who are. What is the main message of the book of Revelation? Everyone admits that the book of Revelation can be difficult to understand. But we can still benefit from reading it. The whole point of the book of Revelation is to help the church to see, in a sense, behind the surface of everyday occurrences, of everyday events, to recognize that though there are very obviously visibly strong and formidable enemies of the church, that Christ has already defeated them. In fact, paradox is a key element in the book of Revelation. Things are not what they seem. In Revelation 5 we read about Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah who has conquered, and then what John sees when he looks to see this Lion, this conquering Lion, is a Lamb standing as though slain. It is by his death that Christ has redeemed people from all the peoples of the world. By the same token, in Revelation 12, John is told in the vision that Satan, the Dragon, the Accuser, has been cast out of heaven, and the accuser of the brothers has been defeated by the brothers because they have not loved their lives even to the point of death. In other words, the martyrs have conquered the Dragon. Their death looked like defeat, but it was really victory. And we need to remain pure from the defilements that the surrounding pagan culture would try to insert into our lives. Peter Walker The book of Revelation is a very complicated book, 22 chapters that people find very difficult to understand. But the main message of it could be summarized firstly, that God is in control. But second is the whole theme of Jesus Christ, who shares in the sovereignty of God and who himself is the one who is to be worshiped and adored. So I think the baseline of Revelation is one of encouragement:

Chapter 4 : Historical Background of the Book of Daniel

Dr. J. Paul Tanner Daniel: Introduction Historical Background July 14, App. H.5 In BC the Assyrians sought the help of Egypt, and Pharaoh Necoll le danarmy from Egypt to join Assyria.

Nerva Trajan Early and late extremes for the date of Revelation have been proposed occasionally. If we accept his words at face value, Epiphanius d. Such a view might explain why Paul was forbidden to go into Asia Acts These two "advantages" work against each other, however, when we remember that one of those seven Asian churches at Ephesus was clearly founded by Paul! Moreover, Epiphanius seems to have spoken carelessly, many scholars believe; he probably was referring to Nero whose full name was Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus as "Claudius. Such opinions are far too late and unargued to warrant serious attention. The correct date for the writing of Revelation lies somewhere between the extremes of Claudius and Trajan. Throughout the history of the church only two general views regarding the date of Revelation have been credible and consistently forwarded. These, the dominant positions, call for study and careful scrutiny. Two periods for the origin of the Revelation have won considerable scholarly support, and only these two need be considered. One is the reign of Domitian, preferable the latter part, around the year The counting on this view commences with Augustus since he was the first official emperor, and the three rules of the anarchy are skipped because Seutonius wrote of their period as a mere interval and the provinces never recognized them as emperors. The difficulty with this view, even if one is not struck with the artificiality of the counting technique, is that martyrdoms can be definitely placed with the reign of Vespasian, [6] and the relative calm of his reign which is out of line with the tumultuous picture in Revelation was not marked by his pressing of claims to deity or by his persecuting of the church [7] - both of which characterize the beast in Revelation Farrar, Weigall and C. Torrey [8] who cannot persuade themselves to ignore the three, brief claimants to the throne, but who do commence counting the kings of Revelation However one calculates the identity of this emperor, those holding to an early dating for Revelation would together recognize that by no stretch of the imagination could Domitian be reckoned the sixth emperor of Rome, without resorting to artificial and arbitrary starting points and methods of counting dictated by a preconceived end point. The essence of the "early date" for the writing of Revelation is the belief that John composed the book sometime prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. Philip Schaff, once an advocate of the later post A. The early date is best suited for the nature and object of the Apocalypse, and facilitates its historical understanding. Christ pointed in his eschatological discourses to the destruction of Jerusalem and the preceding tribulation as the great crisis in the history of the theocracy and the type of the judgment of the world, and there never was a more alarming state of society. The tribulation of the six years preceding the destruction of Jerusalem extended over the whole Roman empire and embraced wars and rebellions, frequent and unusual conflagrations, earthquakes and famines and plagues, and all sorts of public calamities and mysteries untold. It seemed, indeed, that the world, shaken to its very centre, was coming to a close, and every Christian must have felt that the prophecies of Christ were being fulfilled before his eyes. It was at this unique juncture in the history of mankind that St. John, with the consuming fire in Rome and the infernal spectacle of the Neronian persecution behind him, the terrors of the Jewish war and the Roman interregnum around him, and the catastrophe of Jerusalem and the Jewish theocracy before him, received those wonderful visions of the impending conflicts and final triumphs of the Christian church. His was truly a book of the times and for the times. As Sanday saw, "It is a Choice of evils, and a choice also of attractions. What is taken for granted in Biblical scholarship about such things as the date of Revelation turns out to vary from one generation to another, or from one area of the church to another, even though students and parishioners rarely are informed that this diversity exists much to the ease of their teachers and pastors. It is simply inadequate to rest in the unfounded claim that virtually "everybody" knows that Revelation dates from this or that time. That would be a comfortable illusion. A number of distinguished authors can be cited as supporters of the late date for Revelation. There is no question but that some very respectable scholars have favored the Domitian date for the writing of Revelation, and that fact should motivate us to be thorough and cautious in our research and analysis. Our esteem for such writers should also lead us to hear those among

them who, like Leon Morris, say "the evidence is far from being so conclusive that no other view is possible. Ladd admits "there is no evidence that during the last decade of the first century there occurred any open and systematic persecution of the church. On the other hand, having studied the case for the earlier date, Swete conceded that but for one ungranted assumption, it "would be nearly conclusive. Many simply assert - without qualm or qualification - that Revelation was definitely written during the last decade of the first century under Domitian, [19] or else they assume it without any reservation or question as a premise in further studies. Indeed, attempting to sway their readers with an all too easy appeal to a selective "consensus" on the question, Summers says that "the Domitian period is the date most generally accepted by New Testament criticism for the writing of Revelation," [26] and it is described as "the majority opinion" by Walvoord, [27] while Mounce claims that it is "accepted by most writers" [28] and Boer says it is "favoured by most students of the book. Are we to believe that Boer knows or has interviewed "Most students" of the book? Has Mounce really read "most writers"? If New Testament criticism has "most generally accepted" the late date for Revelation, how do we account for the fact that debate over the date for Revelation, continues in scholarly circles even today? Indeed, uncharacteristically, those arguing for the early date are not always the conservative scholars! Besides, are we to think that questions of truth can be decided by a census of personal opinions rather than an analysis of the evidence pro and con? Even if we were to fall into such a logical fallacy, can we accept a census of secondary opinions which is limited in its scope say, to the commentaries read by one author? Questions could be multiplied regarding the common, exaggerated claims about the scholarly support for the late date of Revelation. But this much should be made clear to the reader. One need only get beyond the cocoon of his own circles of contact and his own lifetime to find that the preceding overstated claims for the late date of Revelation are unbelievable. We need only go back to the turn of the present century to find to our surprise that what was then taken for granted as the scholarly conclusion about the date of Revelation was just the opposite of the claims made above. Consider, for instance, the standard reference work found in most theological libraries, the Dictionary of the Bible edited by James Hastings in five large volumes. This work was published , when the dominating opinion regarding the book of Revelation was indicated in these words: Torrey observes that, if there are few dissenting voices from the late date in our current generation, It was not so in former years, Swete. Many of the foremost German scholars of the same period were in essential agreement with this dating, as is well known. The evidence seemed to permit no other conclusion. At the turn of the century not only were the three most renowned Biblical scholars of the day - Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort - agreed as to the Neronian date for Revelation, the same conclusion was reached by the superb church historian, Philip Schaff, and by the acclaimed expert in hermeneutics, Milton Terry. Terry asserted in In the 6th century, Andreas, the Greek commentator on Revelation who resided in Cappodocian Caesarea, had to take note of the fact that there was then no want of interpreters who applied chapters 6 and 7 to the fall of Jerusalem. Emerging from a millennium of mystical, medieval interpretation, the revival of Biblical studies found proponents of the early date in the 17th century scholars Alcasar , Grotius , and Hammond , as well as in the meticulous and brilliant thinker who spanned the 17th and 18th centuries, Sir Isaac Newton posthumously published The early date continued to be favored in important 18th century works by Abauzit , Herder , Herrensneider , and "the father of modern criticism," Eichhorn The 19th century blossomed with advocates for the early date of Revelation. The respected scholar, Guerike, in his Introduction to the New Testament, retracted his strenuous arguments for the late date and, based upon analysis of internal evidence in the book, advanced the Neronian date instead. In James Glasgow asserted that the defenders of the early date "have so established the early date of the Apocalypse as no writer of the Domitianic school can successfully meet. They find it much easier to speak lightly of what they cannot answer. Davidson, Beyschlag, Salmon, Hausrath. Continuing on into the 20th century we could list Plummer, Selwyn, J. Scott, Erbes, Edmundson, Henderson, and others. It has been described, as we saw above, as "the ruling view" of critics," by "the majority of modern critics," by "most modern scholars," and by "the whole force of modern criticism. In our day it has gained the support of such worthies as C. Bruce and has been popularized by Jay Adams. When one notes that it was in - just a generation away from the heyday for the earlier dating of Revelation - that Pieters said, "there is now general agreement that it was written during the reign of the emperor Domitian,"

[43] one sees how shallow and suspect such short-sighted generalizations have been. The proliferation of such remarks in the present day, of course, does nothing to remove their factually erroneous and logically fallacious character. Writers who make these sweeping claims to persuade their readers, whether they are aiming to support the Domitian or the Neronian dating of Revelation, only stain their scholarship thereby. The utter futility of such propaganda is well illustrated by the fact that, when Stuart claimed in that "most of the recent commentators and critics" dated Revelation before the destruction of Jerusalem, just four years earlier Elliott had claimed that "the most approved modern ecclesiastical historians and biblical critics" adopted the Domitian date for Revelation! Strong stated that "the majority of modern critics are of the opinion that the book was written in the time of Nero," but in James Moffatt claimed just the opposite: All such claims must be discounted, bring us finally to an honest and open consideration of the external and internal evidences themselves, upon which all scholarly opinion must finally be based. When we get down to such considerations, the appeal to the number of writers who agree with this or that conclusion is an informal logical fallacy anyway. Nose counts are irrelevant to the extent and character of evidence for the truth. In analyzing the evidence concerning the date when Revelation was written, another consideration which is argumentatively irrelevant is the motivation which is was operative in a scholar who argues for one conclusion or another. No writer or researcher is completely impartial or neutral, and doubtless his or her inclinations will affect the kinds of evidence adduced and the distribution of weight or importance given to each. Proponents of the early date have properly perceived that many futurists, especially of the dispensational school, find it necessary to maintain the late date for Revelation in order to bolster their eschatological opinions, many of which rest only on passages in Revelation taken as written after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. The motivation which a writer has is irrelevant to the truth of his conclusion and the strength or weakness of his evidence. If an author is predisposed to favor dispensationalism or the Tübingen hypothesis etc. Weak arguments are not improved by good motives, and good arguments are not impaired by weak motives. Both exemplify fallacious reasoning. In addition to these rules for debate, certain reversible lines of argumentation should be ruled out of serious consideration. What is in mind here are those sorts of arguments which depend for their strength and direction on a large number of other disputable variables and assumptions and which, for that very reason, can be used equally well by the advocates of either the early or the late date for Revelation. For instance, from time to time one will find a writer who seeks to substantiate his proposed date for Revelation by appealing to its chronological relationship to other New Testament writings. Some authors, observing literary parallels between Revelation and the gospels of Matthew and Luke, [49] have held that Revelation draws from these other books, which are themselves dated after the fall of Jerusalem usually between 80 and 85 A. Moreover, the asserted dating for Matthew and Luke is at best conjectural; it is more likely just wrong e. If one assumes that there must be literary dependence involved, it could just as well be that the direction of borrowing is from Revelation to the Gospels rather than vice versa - which would make Revelation earlier, instead of later, than Matthew and Luke, and would as such preclude a Domitian dating for the book! The proponents of the early date for Revelation have also resorted at times to the use of arguments pertaining to chronological relationship between Revelation and other New Testament books. So much depends on variable assumptions and personal feelings. They offer no sure footing whatsoever. Another example of reversible argumentation concerning the date for the writing of Revelation would be the variety of appeals which are made to the literary style and quality of the Greek prose in the book. Revelation is full of crude Hebraisms and rough Greek idiom. For some scholars this points to an early date for Revelation, many years prior to the Gospel, before John would have enjoyed extended exposure to the Greek of Asia Minor and have developed greater command of the language and a more polished style. Guerike first took it as an indicator of the late date, reasoning that Hohn was removed to Patmos away from a Greek-speaking district and there lapsed back into the style of his former tongue. Dating the writing from its style of language is precarious, however. The content of the visions would make description difficult no matter when it was written, and an amanuensis could smooth out the written style at an early date as well as a late date. The apparent awkwardness of expression in some of its language is therefore not a final criterion for judging the time of publication. Similar remarks could be made regarding the lively imagination, fiery writing, and

thundering agitation characteristic of the literary style of Revelation. Some have argued that such is more likely in a year-old writer than in one who is quite elderly, as John would have been in 96 A.

Chapter 5 : Interpretation that takes into account the Context and Character of the Revelation

Dr. J. Paul Tanner The Book of Revelation Historical Background Apr 1, Intro.

Introduction to the Historical Context of the Bible This course on the historical context of the Bible begins with an introduction to the subject, highlighting the benefits of such a study for apologetic, educational, and interpretative purposes. Genesis 1 and Enuma Elish Ever since the discovery of the Mesopotamian creation myth, Enuma Elish, there have been attempts to reconcile the creation record of Genesis with the views of the ancient Sumerians. In this presentation, Bruce shows the important similarities, but also highlights the significant differences between the two accounts, and explains why the comparison should be important to us. Noah and the Epic of Gilgamesh When the Epic of Gilgamesh was discovered in the late 19th Century, it sent a shock wave through the world of biblical scholarship, as attempts were made to reconcile the account of Genesis with the similar account of the ancient Mesopotamians. In this lecture, Bruce seeks to find the proper understanding of the relationship between the two, while summarizing in some detail the most important features of the great Gilgamesh tale. He travels first with this family to Haran in southern Turkey, and from there to Canaan, the land that God promised to give to him and his seed. The career of Abraham is followed along with the significant events and locations of his life in this summary of a remarkable life of faith. Moses and the Code of Hammurabi The most enlightened example of civil legislation prior to Moses comes from the Babylonian ruler Hammurabi, who pre-dates Moses by at least years. In this discussion, a comparison and contrast between the two great law-givers is provided, with a focus on the extent to which the law given through Moses shows a clearly superior approach to jurisprudence. By that time the great pyramids had already been standing for hundreds of years, and the great civilization had realized some of its most important accomplishments. Joseph and the Hyksos Pharaohs When Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt by his envious brothers, the region of Lower Egypt was dominated by the Hyksos pharaohs, the so-called "Shepherd Kings," who were semitic in background. Exodus and the 18th Dynasty Although there is on-going disagreement about the precise timing of the Exodus, the biblical chronology suggests it took place during the 18th Dynasty of Egypt. If that is correct, then Hatshepsut may be the daughter of pharaoh later a pharaoh herself who rescued Moses and reared him in the privileges of the royal household. Egypt and the Era of the Israelite Judges The Israelite nation gradually established itself in Canaan during a period of significant international conflict between Egypt and the Hittites. The mention of the "Apiru" by the Phoenicians, as well as the "Israel Stele" point to a significant Israelite population in the latter part of the second millennium b. The Hittites and the Era of the Israelite Judges While the Israelites were settling into their territories of Canaan during the era of the judges, international conflicts were playing out around them, involving especially the great powers of Egypt to the south and the Hittites to the north. In spite of these surrounding threats, God protected his people and established them securely in the possessions that had been promised to Abraham. The Assyrian Empire and the Israelite Monarchy The beginning of Assyrian recovery coincided with the division of the Israelite monarchy. The failure of the tribes of Israel in the north to honor their covenant God led eventually to their subservience to the Assyrians as reflected in the Black Obelisk now housed in the British Museum. The Assyrian Empire and Jonah The Assyrian Empire was expanding both in territory and brutality toward the beginning of the eighth century b. At the same time he was negotiating a deal with the king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser III, to come protect him against local enemies, and thus he strapped Judah to tribute payments that would last for years to come. Hezekiah, Sennacherib, and Big Surprises One of the great military reversals of history, attested to in Herodotus and the Bible, and implied in Assyrian records, involves the defeat of the vast army of Sennacherib as he attempted to assert control over Egypt and Judah. King Hezekiah was delivered, not by military prowess, but by faith in the God of Israel. Manasseh and the End of the Assyrian Empire The last and greatest king of the Assyrian Empire was Ashurbanipal, who left the vast library that was eventually discovered by Austen Henry Layard. He also captured the Jewish king Manasseh and kept him in chains, only reinstating him to his royal throne after his repentance for his sinful and idolatrous practices. During those years, Josiah of Judah attempted to restore proper worship of the God of Israel, but his brilliant

career was cut short in battle with Necho II of Egypt. Jehoiachin, Belshazzar, and the Fall of Babylon After Nebuchadnezzar, the succeeding kings of Babylon show less brilliance until finally during the reign of Nabonidus, the last king, the empire falls to Cyrus the Persian. Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, watches in terror as "handwriting on the wall" declares the end of his reign, just as Cyrus is marching into Babylon to take the capital of the once mighty kingdom. Cyrus therefore represents a great blessing for those who had been so long separated from their homes, and for his earns the title "messiah," the only non-Jew in the Old Testament to receive such a stamp of approval.

Darius and the Completion of the Second Temple The construction of the temple in Jerusalem was impeded by local opposition and a change of official policy in Persia. That changed, however, when Darius the Great took the Persian throne in b. Under the inspiring preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, the people of God once again took to the task and the temple was completed and put back into operation in b.

Artaxerxes, Ezra, and Nehemiah The last great king of the Persians, Artaxerxes I, authorized the return of Ezra to the Holy Land to deal with deficiencies in the practice of worship among the people of God, and Nehemiah, who dealt with political problems, and oversaw the rebuilding of the walls of the city of Jerusalem.

The Greeks Seek for Wisdom The sweep of Greek history provides a remarkable story of how and language and a culture were prepared for the advent of the message of the Gospel. Beginning with the Minoans and finishing with Alexander, this lecture surveys the major epochs of Greek history as part of the story that leads to the great context of the New Testament era.

Alexander the Great When Alexander swept through the ancient world, conquering the Persian Empire, and establishing a Greek presence throughout the Near East, the entire shape of the ancient world changed. It was this moment that transformed ancient civilization to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

Alexander to Antiochus III Following the death of Alexander, his vast domains were split up among four of his military commanders, and thus commenced the age of Greek influence throughout the Mediterranean World.

Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees The greatest crisis of the Jewish people during the Hellenistic era involved the persecution imposed by the ruler of Syria, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. His reign of terror sparked the backlash known as the Maccabean Revolt, and the eventual effect of this movement was to liberate Israel from outside control for the better part of a century.

Most prominent among them was the last empire, described as iron mixed with clay, an apt description of the Roman world into which the Messiah was born, and the Christian movement began.

The Rise of the Roman Republic When the Romans threw off the rule of kings, they replaced it with their remarkable experiment in republican rule, a system that took shape in the 5th century b. After this, the Roman power spread throughout the western Mediterranean, and by the beginning of the second century b.

Rome and Israel Collide By the time the expanding Roman world had reached Jerusalem, it had transformed into the beginnings of an empire, largely due to the influence of several military leaders. One of those leaders, Pompey, was the commander who took control of Jerusalem, and from that time until its destruction about a hundred years later, Israel was under Roman domination.

Herod, who had been appointed by Rome, and Jesus, who had been appointed by God.

Caligula, Agrippa, and a Sermon to Cornelius The brief reign of Caligula was marked by instability and moral collapse. At the same time, one of the most transforming events of early Christian history took place, the conversion of Cornelius under the preaching of Peter. Until that moment, the gospel had been restricted to Jews and Samaritans, but with this event, it was clear that anyone, Jew or Gentile, would be admitted to the household of faith, the commonwealth of Israel, by sheer faith with no prerequisites.

Claudius and the Journeys of Paul When the emperor Claudius reigned over Rome, the Christian church experienced some of its most important developments with respect to its early growth. The journeys of the Apostle Paul and the Council of Jerusalem combined to translate the Christian gospel into a message for all people, rather than a belief limited to the Jewish nation.

Nero and Imperial Persecution of Christians The Emperor Nero distinguished himself as the first ruler of Rome to authorize a state sponsored assault on the fledgling Christian movement. Aside from this, he represents one of the most unbalanced and vicious characters in the history of the Roman world. Nevertheless, during his reign the Christian message continued to spread, touching an ever increasing number of both Jews and Gentiles in the ancient world.

Chapter 6 : Early Life Of Daniel In Babylon | www.nxgvision.com

So, what is the historical setting of the book of Revelation? Dr. Mark Strauss When we talk about the historical setting of the book of Revelation, the simple answer is, it's the first century. The first century is the historical context.

Patrick Zukeran presents a summary of four of the major approaches to interpreting the book of Revelation and its meaning for the end times: For each, he presents the basic approach, strengths of the approach and weaknesses of the approach. Recognizing that God is the central mover in all of these, he encourages us to keep these questions from dividing Christians in our mission of sharing Christ with the world. The Debate One of the most intriguing books of the Bible is the book of Revelation. The imagery of the cosmic battle in heaven and on earth makes it a fascinating book to study. However, much debate surrounds the proper interpretation of this apocalyptic work. Is this book a prophecy of future events yet to take place, or have the prophecies of this book been fulfilled? Two popular authors highlight the debate that continues in our present time. In his hit series *Left Behind*, Tim LaHaye writes a fictional account based on his theological position that the events of Revelation will occur in the future. Popular radio talk show host Hank Hanegraaff responded by attacking the theology of LaHaye. He criticizes theologians like LaHaye for taking a hyper-literal approach to Revelation. The issues at the core of the debate between Hanegraaff and LaHaye are not new. Throughout church history, there have been four different views regarding the book of Revelation: The idealist view teaches that Revelation describes in symbolic language the battle throughout the ages between God and Satan and good against evil. The preterist view teaches that the events recorded in the book of Revelation were largely fulfilled in AD 70 with the fall of the Jerusalem Temple. The historicist view teaches that the book of Revelation is a symbolic presentation of church history beginning in the first century AD through the end of age. The prophecies of Revelation are fulfilled in various historic events such as the fall of the Roman Empire, the Protestant Reformation, and the French Revolution. The futurist view teaches that Revelation prophesies events that will take place in the future. These events include the rapture of the church, seven years of tribulation, and a millennial rule of Christ upon the earth. Each view attempts to interpret Revelation according to the laws of hermeneutics, the art and science of interpretation. This is central to the debate about how we should approach and interpret Revelation. The idealist approach believes that apocalyptic literature like Revelation should be interpreted allegorically. The preterist and historicist views are similar in some ways to the allegorical method, but it is more accurate to say preterists and historicists view Revelation as symbolic history. The preterist views Revelation as a symbolic presentation of events that occurred in AD 70, while the historicist school views the events as symbolic of all Western church history. The futurist school believes Revelation should be interpreted literally. In other words, the events of Revelation are to occur at a future time. The goal of this work is to present a brief overview of the four views of Revelation and present the strengths of each view as well as its weaknesses. It is my hope that the reader will gain a basic understanding and be able to understand the debate among theologians today.

The Idealist View The first view of Revelation is the idealist view, or the spiritual view. This view uses the allegorical method to interpret the Book of Revelation. The allegorical approach to Revelation was introduced by ancient church father Origen AD and made prominent by Augustine AD According to this view, the events of Revelation are not tied to specific historical events. The imagery of the book symbolically presents the ongoing struggle throughout the ages of God against Satan and good against evil. In this struggle, the saints are persecuted and martyred by the forces of evil but will one day receive their vindication. In the end, God is victorious, and His sovereignty is displayed throughout ages. It is a philosophy of history wherein Christian forces are continuously meeting and conquering the demonic forces of evil. The battles in Revelation are viewed as spiritual warfare manifested in the persecution of Christians or wars in general that have occurred in history. The beast from the sea may be identified as the satanically-inspired political opposition to the church in any age. The beast from the land represents pagan, or corrupt, religion to Christianity. The harlot represents the compromised church, or the seduction of the world in general. Each seal, trumpet, or bowl represents natural disasters, wars, famines, and the like which occur as God works out His plan in history. God ultimately triumphs in the end. The strength of

this view is that it avoids the problem of harmonizing passages with events in history. It also makes the book of Revelation applicable and relevant for all periods of church history. First, this view denies the book of Revelation any specific historical fulfillment. The symbols portray the ever-present conflict but no necessary consummation of the historical process. Second, reading spiritual meanings into the text could lead to arbitrary interpretations. According to this viewpoint they are not merely symbolic of events and persons, as the historicist view contends; they are only abstract symbols of good and evil. In interpretation, the Apocalypse may thus mean anything or nothing according to the whim of the interpreter.

The Preterist View The second view is called the preterist view. There are two major views among preterists: Both views believe that the prophecies of the Olivet discourse of Matthew 24 and Revelation were fulfilled in the first century with the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Chapters describe the conditions in the seven churches of Asia Minor prior to the Jewish war AD 70. Full preterists believe that all the prophecies found in Revelation were fulfilled in AD 70 and that we are now living in the eternal state, or the new heavens and the new earth. Partial preterists believe that most of the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem but that chapters point to future events such as a future resurrection of believers and return of Christ to the earth. Partial preterists view full preterism as heretical since it denies the second coming of Christ and teaches an unorthodox view of the resurrection. Church historians trace the roots of preterism to Jesuit priest Luis de Alcazar. However, some preterists contend that preterist teachings are found in the writings of the early church as early as the fourth century AD. Since it is a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, preterists hold to a pre-AD 70 date of writing. According to this view, John was writing specifically to the church of his day and had only its situation in mind. This letter was written to encourage the saints to persevere under the persecution of the Roman Empire. Preterists point to several reasons to support their view. A generation usually refers to forty years. The fall of Jerusalem would then fit the time Jesus predicted. There are several criticisms of this view. One example is that Christ described his return to Jerusalem this way: However, the Roman army advanced on Jerusalem from west to east, and their assault was not as a quick lightning strike. The Jewish war lasted for several years before Jerusalem was besieged, and the city fell after a lengthy siege. Rather, he destroyed the Temple and burned it to the ground. Thus, it appears the preterist is required to allegorize or stretch the metaphors and symbols in order to find fulfillment of the prophecies in the fall of Jerusalem. Another example of allegorical interpretation by preterists is their interpretation of Revelation 7: John identifies a special group of prophets: Second, John says there are 12, from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is a strange way to describe the multitude of believers from all nations. Finally, the context shows John is speaking of two different groups: Here Hanegraaff appears to be allegorizing the text. Robert Mounce states, The major problem with the preterist position is that the decisive victory portrayed in the latter chapters of the Apocalypse was never achieved. It is difficult to believe that John envisioned anything less than the complete overthrow of Satan, the final destruction of evil, and the eternal reign on God. If this is not to be, then either the Seer was essentially wrong in the major thrust of his message or his work was so helplessly ambiguous that its first recipients were all led astray. Second, the preterist position rests on a pre-AD 70 date of writing. However, most New Testament scholars date the writing of the book to AD 95. If John had written Revelation after AD 70, the book could not have been a prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem. This presents a significant argument against the preterist position. Preterists point to several lines of evidence for a pre-AD 70 date of writing. First, John does not mention the fall of the Jerusalem Temple. If he had been writing two decades after the event, it seems strange that he never mentioned this catastrophic event. Third, in Revelation Sproul, Hank Hanegraaff, Kenneth Gentry, and the late David Chilton who later converted to full preterism after the publishing of his books.

The Historicist View The third view is called the historicist approach. The symbols in the apocalypse correspond to events in the history of Western Europe, including various popes, the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, and rulers such as Charlemagne. Most interpreters place the events of their day in the later chapters of Revelation. Many adherents of this position view chapters as seven periods in church history. The breaking of the seals in chapters symbolizes the fall of the Roman Empire. Among Protestant historicists of the Reformation, the antichrist in Revelation was believed to be the papacy. Chapters in Revelation represent the true church in its struggle against Roman Catholicism. First, this approach allows

for a wide variety of interpretations. Adherents have a tendency to interpret the text through the context of their period. Thus, many saw the climax of the book happening in their generation. John Walvoord points out the lack of agreement among historicists.

Chapter 7 : Apocalypticism Explained | Apocalypse! FRONTLINE | PBS

The first chapter of Daniel is a beautifully written, moving story of the early days of Daniel and his companions in Babylon. In brief and condensed form, it records the historical setting for the entire book.

In brief and condensed form, it records the historical setting for the entire book. Moreover, it sets the tone as essentially the history of Daniel and his experiences in contrast to the prophetic approach of the other major prophets, who were divine spokesmen to Israel. Although shorter than prophetic books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the book of Daniel is the most comprehensive and sweeping revelation recorded by any prophet of the Old Testament. The introductory chapter explains how Daniel was called, prepared, matured, and blessed of God. With the possible exceptions of Moses and Solomon, Daniel was the most learned man in the Old Testament and most thoroughly trained for his important role in history and literature. The Captivity of Judah 1: And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: The opening verses of Daniel succinctly give the historical setting which includes the first siege and capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Parallel accounts are found in 2 Kings They had ignored the Sabbath day and the sabbatic year Jer The seventy years of the captivity were, in effect, God claiming the Sabbath, which Israel had violated, in order to give the land rest. Israel had also gone into idolatry 1 Ki Because of their sin, the people of Israel, who had given themselves to idolatry, were carried off captive to Babylon, a center of idolatry and one of the most wicked cities in the ancient world. It is significant that after the Babylonian captivity, idolatry never again became a major temptation to Israel. In keeping with their violation of the Law and their departure from the true worship of God, Israel had lapsed into terrible moral apostasy. Of this, all the prophets spoke again and again. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: Here again, the ironic judgment of God is that Israel, because of sin, was being carried off captive to wicked Babylon. The first capture of Jerusalem and the first captives were the beginning of the end for Jerusalem, which had been made magnificent by David and Solomon. When the Word of God is ignored and violated, divine judgment sooner or later is inevitable. The spiritual lessons embodied in the cold fact of the captivity may well be pondered by the church today, too often having a form of godliness but without knowing the power of it. According to Daniel 1: Montgomery, for instance, rejects the historicity of this datum. There are, however, several good and satisfying explanations. The simplest and most obvious explanation is that Daniel is here using Babylonian reckoning. Keil and others brush this aside as having no precedent in Scripture. Tadmor was among the first to support this solution, and the point may now be considered as well established. Having spent most of his life in Babylon, it is only natural that Daniel should use a Babylonian form of chronology. This simple explanation is both satisfying and adequate to explain the supposed discrepancy. However, there are other explanations. Leupold, for instance, in consideration of the additional reference in 2 Kings In a word, it is the assumption that there was an earlier raid on Jerusalem, not recorded elsewhere in the Bible, which is indicated in Daniel 1: Leupold holds that the invasion of Daniel 1: He points out that the usual assumption that Nebuchadnezzar could not have bypassed Carchemish to conquer Jerusalem first, on the theory that Carchemish was a stronghold which he could not ignore, is not actually supported by the facts, as there is no evidence that the Egyptian armies were in any strength at Carchemish until just before the battle that resulted in the showdown. In this case, the capture of Daniel would be a year earlier or about b. Both Finegan 42 and Thiele, 43 present-day authorities on biblical chronology, accept the assumption that the accession-year system of dating was in use in Judah from Jehoash to Hoshea. Thiele resolves the discrepancy by assuming that Daniel used the old calendar year in Judah which began in the fall in the month Tishri Sept. Still a third view, also mentioned by Leupold, 44 offers the suggestion that the word came in Daniel 1: Keil, following Hengstenberg and others, also supports this explanation. The probability is that Wiseman is right, that Daniel was carried off captive shortly after the capture of Jerusalem in the summer of B. In any case, the evidence makes quite untenable the charge that the chronological information of Daniel is inaccurate. Rather, it is entirely in keeping with information available outside the Bible and supports the view that Daniel is a genuine book. If this occurred before the battle of

Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar was not as yet king. The prophetic use of such a title is so common. It is associated with Nimrod Gen 10:9. The expression he carried is best taken as referring only to the vessels and not to the deportation of captives. Critics, again, have found fault with this as an inaccuracy because nowhere else is it expressly said that Daniel and his companions were carried away at this time. The obvious answer is that mention of carrying off captives is unnecessary in the light of the context of the following verses, where it is discussed in detail. There was no need to mention it twice. Later other vessels were added to the collection 2 Ch 36:7. Jehoiakim himself was not deported, later died, and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin. Jehoiakim, although harassed by bands of soldiers sent against him, was not successfully besieged 2 Ki 24:1. Jewish Youths Selected for Training 1: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: The name Ashpenaz, according to Siegfried H. It is not stated that the Jewish youths were made actual eunuchs as Josephus assumes. Such perfection could not belong to eunuchs. The Hebrew for the princes is a Persian word, *partemim*, which is cited as another proof for a late date of Daniel. However, inasmuch as Daniel lived in his latter years under Persian government as a high official, there is nothing strange about an occasional Persian word. As a matter of fact, it is not even clear that the word is strictly Persian, as its origin is uncertain. Those carried away captive could well serve as hostages to help keep the royal family of the kingdom of Judah in line. Further, their careful training and preparation to be his servants might serve Nebuchadnezzar well in later administration of Jewish affairs. The specifications for those selected are carefully itemized in verse 4. In a word, their total physical, personal, and intellectual capacities as well as their cultural background were factors in the choice. The use of the same word for the nation as a whole and for a special class of learned men is confusing, but not necessarily unusual. The meaning here may include both: Their age at the time of their training is not specified, but they were probably in their early teens. Although an education such as this did not in itself violate the religious scruples of Jewish youths, their environment and circumstances soon presented some real challenges. Ancient literature contains many references to this practice. Leo Oppenheim lists deliveries of oil for the sustenance of dependents of the royal household in ancient literature and includes specific mention of food for the sons of the king of Judah in a tablet dating from the tenth to the thirty-fifth year of Nebuchadnezzar II. The expression so nourish them three years literally refers to training such as would be given a child. In verse 6, Daniel and his three companions—Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah—are mentioned as being children of Judah included among the captives. These only of the captives are to figure in the narrative following, and no other names are given. The name of Daniel is a familiar one in the Bible and is used of at least three other characters besides the prophet Daniel 1 Ch 3: Conservative scholars, however, find a reference to the prophet Daniel in Ezekiel. As noted previously, however, it would be most significant and natural for Ezekiel, a captive, to mention one of his own people who, though also a captive, had risen to a place of power second only to the king. Jewish captives would not only regard Daniel as their hero, but as a godly example. The contention of critics that Ezekiel is referring to a mythological character mentioned in the Ras Shamra Text dated b. Significantly, all of their Hebrew names indicate their relationship to the God of Israel, and in the customs of the time, connote devout parents. This perhaps explains why these, in contrast to the other young men, are found true to God: All four of the young men, however, are given new names as was customary when an individual entered a new situation cf. Baal, the chief god of the Canaanites. Hananiah was given the name of Shadrach. Mishael is given the name of Meshach. Keil does not venture an opinion on the meaning of Shadrach or Meshach, but agrees with the interpretation of Abed-nego. Daniel, in his later writing, generally prefers his own Hebrew name, but frequently uses the Babylonian names of his companions. The fact that the Hebrew youths were given heathen names, however, does not indicate that they departed from the Hebrew faith any more than in the case of Joseph Gen 39:1. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: Daniel and his companions were confronted with the problem of compromise in the matter of eating food provided by the king. The problem was twofold. First, the food provided did not meet the requirements of the Mosaic law in that it was not prepared according to regulations and may have included meat from forbidden animals. Second, there was no complete prohibition in the matter of drinking wine in the Law; but here the problem was that the wine, as well as the meat, had been dedicated

to idols as was customary in Babylon. To partake thereof would be to recognize the idols as deities. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. Keil summarizes the problem in these words: Instead of inviting punishment by rebellion, he courteously requests of the prince of the eunuchs that he might be excused from eating food which would defile his conscience 1 Co Although critics attempt to equate this abstinence with fanaticism and thereby link it to the Maccabean Period, 72 there is no excuse for such a charge since Daniel handles the situation well. Leupold points out that Daniel did not object to the heathen names given to them nor to their education which involved the learning of the heathen, including their religious view.

Chapter 8 : Book of Daniel - Wikipedia

If historical literature is emphasizing a revelation (record) of the sovereign work of God in history, then Daniel certainly applies because the prophetic visions are.

Overview of the Book of Daniel The first look at the book of Daniel is exciting and tough at the same time. It is complex in its historical and prophetic account of things now past, and things to come. Chapters 8 and 11 have some sections that are hard to distinguish between the historical figure Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist. There is an initial excitement when reading about the details of the future, which is natural. After all, who else in this world can claim to know the future? However, it is also important to see the big picture of Daniel. Of course the timeline is not absolute dateable, but relative. There are no dates, but there are successive events in relation to successive kingdoms. The fourth kingdom Rome has come and gone, although we still have remnants of Roman culture in much of the world today. We only wait for the reviving of that empire in a new form to usher in the antichrist. Context is everything in the book of Daniel. The book is organized very logically once the context and purpose of the book are known. The key to the book is revealed in the relationship between the future Gentile dominion and the Jewish historical context. The Jews were in a very special situation. The Jewish nation had a theocratic government, as opposed to democratic, dictatorial, or monarchical. Since God had given them the land they were not subject to anyone but God. God was making Himself known to the world through the special nation, inspiring the word of God, and doing mighty works. As far as the Jews were concerned, this was going to go on forever, and it could have. The natural effect of being scattered would be that they would be subject to authorities other than God. They lost their special theocracy. They had no temple, no Levites, no High priest, and no sacrifices for sins. God made a change. Because of their disobedience He said that they were going to be under the dominion of Gentiles until the end. He therefore had the right at any time to remove His hand of blessing. He would never forsake them forever though. That was an unconditional promise made to them. They went into exile with their new prophet Daniel. The world empires described in Daniel are all kingdoms that encompass the land of Israel. The book of Daniel shows the rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, the future destruction of Jerusalem, the reign of antichrist, and the coming triumphant Messiah who is given an everlasting Kingdom by God. Atonement is done, prophecy and visions are no longer needed. Chapter 1 - Sets up the historical background and introduces Daniel and his friends. Chapter 2 - First glimpse of the prophetic purpose of the book. The first prophecy is given to Nebuchadnezzar, and pictures the future Gentile empires in a nutshell, the statue. It leaves out the hidden part of the fourth kingdom and antichrist. The whole plan is not laid out yet, just the basics. Now the news is out that God is giving the Gentiles world dominion. Chapters - Building on this new truth, that the Gentiles will have dominion, God shows us and Daniel that even though Gentiles are ruling, He is still sovereign and in control. This truth is acknowledged by Nebuchadnezzar when he credits God with being the one that gives and takes away dominion and authority. An expanded vision is given to Daniel. This time there is an added feature, the fourth kingdom evolves into a fifth kingdom, and has an individual that is singled out for some reason. This individual speaks blasphemous words. While introducing this new element, God also lets us know that this individual will be defeated. This would have been important to Daniel and to future readers of the word of God. Interesting how the angel encapsulates the context of the revelation when Daniel asks him to explain the meaning. The angel tells him that Kings will arise The saints shall receive an everlasting kingdom He makes it clear how simple the message is. Of course there are lot of complex details under this umbrella, but they should always be kept underneath the truth of what the angel tells Daniel. God had ordained that Gentiles would rule from Babylon until the second coming when the Son of man would destroy Gentile rule by smashing the nations into dust. Remember that the nations in general never follow God. As a group they always reject God and create their own gods. Chapter - Both chapters mix details specific to the Greek empire and the Antichrist. Chapter 8 goes into Alexander the great, and Antiochus IV, who named himself Antiochus Epiphanes god during the Intertestamental period. He is seen as a type of Antichrist. Some prophecies from both chapters are hard to distinguish between Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist. Chapter 12 - Daniel is

assured that it will all happen, and it is all true. What amazing truths did Daniel himself learn from his own prophecies? That God would subject the Jews to Gentile dominion. This must have amazed him. He must have felt horrible to know that his country had so offended God that there would be such a lasting effect. The Jews are still partly under Gentile world rule today in that they depend on certain allies and not on God alone. There is an indication that this is winding down now though. The timing of the seventy weeks prophecy was probably too much for Daniel to figure out since it was all yet future. He might have known from Isaiah 53 that the Messiah would suffer if he understand the passage to refer to the Messiah, but now he knew more than this. He knew that Gentiles would rule until a time after the Messiah was killed. He knew that the temple would be destroyed, which was good news and bad news. It was bad news to know that it would come down yet again. Remember that the temple was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, so to hear that the temple would be destroyed in the future again told him that it would also be rebuilt again.

Chapter 9 : The Book of Revelation in Historical Context – The Bart Ehrman Blog

Revelation In Context Sticky November 6, Uncategorized Revelation irenebelyeu The book Revelation In Context, by Irene Belyeu, is a literary and historical commentary on the Biblical Book of Revelation with supporting referents and notes.

Wattslines Some of my lectures, essays, study notes, primarily on religious subjects, but not always. Generally, the wording is my own, but not always, and generally in most of my ideas, I am indebted to thousands of devout scholars and friends from whom I have gratefully learned. I usually try to give credit to my sources, but if I have failed to do so, it is entirely unintentional, and I request people to notify me if you find I have not done so, so that I may give proper credit. There have been those who, with the reformer Martin Luther, would relegate the book to an appendix to the New Testament, asserting that it is too violent, and that it does not emphasize the central message of the Gospel. But there are still others, including myself, who simply believe that, when interpreted in its proper historical and literary context, the late first century CE, the Revelation provides a message relevant to Christians in any generation. With patience, common sense, and careful use of the tools of Biblical scholarship the Revelation can be appreciated, not only as a carefully crafted literary work of art, but also as a book that provides a meaningful message for Christians today. It is not surprising that the Book of the Revelation, with its narratives of visions and its elaborate symbolism, has been interpreted in differing ways. Our approach will be to assume that the original readers understood its central message and most of its details with little difficulty. We will assume that the original readers found its message relevant to their own circumstances in the Roman Province of Asia modern Turkey in the last decade of the first century CE. We will assume further that Christians today can find the Revelation relevant in the same way that they would find a letter of Paul or a Gospel passage relevant. In those cases they would examine the text itself to understand just what is, and is not, being said. They would learn about the circumstances that caused the work to be written. They would then ask if there are any parallels to the experiences of those early believers to their own contemporary experiences. Insofar as such a match can be made, the Revelation will be as relevant as any other writing in the Bible. As we approach the Revelation, we will assume that, for any contemporary interpretation of the Book to be acceptable, it must have had that same meaning for the earliest readers. Historical Background In his opening sentence the author identifies the class of literature to which his work belongs: The writer understands that God has instructed him to warn his fellow Christians about an impending crisis in his own generation. Just what was the crisis that the writer expected to happen so soon? In this view all the varied imagery and symbolism has no other purpose than to set that crisis into perspective. It will be more helpful to read the book with a mind open regarding both possibilities. That fact has tended to weaken some of the relevance of the book for later generations of the Church, causing interpreters in those later generations to keep re-figuring the numbers and the symbols to make them apply to a much later time. Indeed, it would have had no relevance to the needs of any of the succeeding generations of readers, except those who would live in the final generation, in which the events of the End were destined to occur. Yet our writer clearly seems to be writing with the needs of his own generation in mind, especially the needs of the seven specific congregations to which his book is addressed. Traditionally the Book of the Revelation has been assigned to a date late in the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian, who died about 96 CE. The descriptions of historical circumstances given in the book, even in symbolic form, seem to fit the years CE. Some portions of the book may have originated as early as the reign of Vespasian, shortly after the death of Nero in 68 CE. The book seems to suggest that some of the anticipated persecutions were already being experienced by some of his readers, and that he believed a much greater series was about to begin. Persecutions of Christians certainly had taken place during the reign of Nero, beginning about 64 CE, but they were confined primarily to the vicinity of the city of Rome itself. The persecutions under Domitian were directly related to the practice of Emperor worship. But wholesale, Empire-wide persecution of Christians, simply because they were Christians, did not occur as the writer of the Revelation expected. Probably this was because Domitian was assassinated before the full-scale persecution got underway, although, of course, they

did take place under succeeding Emperors. But it is clear that some knowledge of the reigns of Nero and Domitian is essential for an understanding of the Book of the Revelation. His father, Ahenobarbus, was notorious for his wickedness. He killed one man for no other crime than refusing to drink more wine; he deliberately ran over a child while driving his chariot along the Appian Way; in a brawl in the Roman Forum he gouged out the eyes of a Roman nobleman. When Ahenobarbus became aware that he and Agrippina were to have a child, he cynically said that nothing but a monstrous abomination could come from himself and her. She had been warned by soothsayers [who always tell the sooth, the whole sooth, and nothing but the sooth! While Nero busied himself at painting, sculpture, music, and drama, the wise stoic philosopher Seneca and other upright men governed the Empire for him. But then Nero embarked on a career of vicious crime. He would roam the streets with other vicious young men, attacking all whom he encountered. He murdered his rival Britannicus. He publicly married a young man named Sporus in a state wedding, and took him on a bridal tour of Greece; then he took the wife of his best friend as his mistress, and he eventually kicked her to death after she became pregnant. He forced the philosopher Seneca to commit suicide. His mother Agrippina made some attempts to control him, and he then turned against her. He made repeated attempts to murder her—once by poison, once by causing the roof of her house to collapse, once by sending her to sea in a leaky boat. Finally he sent someone to stab her to death. In 64 CE there was a great fire in Rome that burned for weeks. There was not the slightest doubt that Nero had the fire started, and that he hindered every attempt to extinguish it. The people recognized this, but Nero tried to shift the blame to the Christians. Then the most sadistic of persecutions broke out. He had Christians sewn up into the skins of wild animals and set savage hunting dogs on them. He had Christians enclosed in sacks with heavy stones and flung into the Tiber River. He had them coated with tar and set afire as living torches to light the gardens of his palace at night while parties were going on. It was probably during this period that he had Peter executed by crucifixion and Paul by beheading. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the Emperor, and all the propitiations of the gods did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an [Imperial] order. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, had suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our Prefects, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition broke out, not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty [i. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a chariot. It could not last. The Senate got up its courage and declared Nero a public enemy. Writings from this period indicate that a belief soon arose that Nero was not really dead, but was hiding in the East, among the Parthians [Persians], and that he was raising armies to return and to destroy Rome itself. Eventually several pretenders even appeared, who were claiming to be Nero. He met his death in the thirty-second year of his age, on the anniversary of [his] murder of [his wife] Octavia, and such was the public rejoicing that the people put on liberty caps and ran about all over the city. Yet there were some who for a long time decorated his tomb with spring and summer flowers, and now produced his statues. Nay more, Vologaesius, king of the Parthians, when he sent envoys to the Senate to renew his alliance, earnestly begged this too, that honor be paid to the memory of Nero. In fact, twenty years later, when I was a young man, a person of obscure origin appeared, who gave out that he was Nero, and the name was still in such favor with the Parthians that they supported him vigorously and surrendered him with great reluctance. Another form of this belief in the myth that Nero was not actually dead was the Nero redivivus myth, the concept that Nero had in fact died in 68 C. There shall be at the last time, about the waning of the moon, a world-consuming war, deceitful in guilefulness. And there shall come from the ends of the earth the man who murdered his mother, fleeing and devising sharp-edged plans. He shall ruin all the earth and gain all power and surpass all men in cunning. That for which he perished he shall seize at once. And he shall destroy many men and great tyrants and burn all men as none ever did. We need only recall the persistent belief in some quarters that Adolf Hitler and his henchmen Martin Bormann and Dr. Joseph

Mengele survived the fall of Berlin to the Russians at the end of World War II, to recapture some of the same kinds of feelings those first century Christians must have had about a possible return from the dead of the Emperor Nero. Domitian Can the Emperor Domitian reasonably be identified with the evil force personified in the Nero redivivus myth? According to the Roman historian Suetonius, Domitian was, like Nero, an object of terror and hatred to all. Suetonius tells of Domitian at the beginning of his reign spending hours in seclusion every day doing nothing but catching flies and stabbing them with a keenly sharpened stylus. Any psychologist would find that to be a curiously revealing picture. Domitian was insanely jealous and suspicious. He formed an attachment to a famous actor named Paris. Domitian promptly had this man murdered. The historian Hermogenes wrote things Domitian did not like; Domitian had him executed, and even had the scribe who copied the manuscript crucified. Senators were slaughtered right and left. Dominus et Deus commands that this be done: Domitian was the very first Roman Emperor to make Caesar-worship compulsory, and thereby he became responsible for unleashing the flood-tides of persecution on the Christian Church. The difference is that Caligula was definitely insane. Although there also may have been traces of insanity about Domitian, the general consensus of the historians is that Domitian was sane, and that may be an even more terrifying thought. It may well be that the writer of the Revelation saw in Domitian the re-incarnation of Nero. Others did precisely the same thing. Juvenal was exiled and eventually murdered for his opinions. So here is the historical background to the Book of the Revelation, especially chapters 13 and There was no escape. Christians were being confronted with a choice: Based on commentaries by George B.