

Statement 7
The Principle of Similar Language
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Statement: Similarity of language does not prove that two verses are talking about the same thing.

Occasionally someone will point out verbiage in Daniel 11 that is very similar to some passage elsewhere in Daniel or in some other part of the Bible, and cite that as evidence that both passages are talking about the same thing. But I'd like to show that this is not necessarily an evidence of identity.

For example, let's take a look at Daniel 11:16.

“But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.”

Some interpreters apply this verse to Antiochus III of the Greek Seleucid Empire, and others apply it to Rome. So, which of these is the correct application?

If we use the principle of similar language, we can easily arrive at an answer. And the answer is: Daniel 11:16 is neither about Greece nor about Rome. It is about Medo-Persia! Notice the clear verbal parallels:

<i>Daniel 8:4</i>	<i>Daniel 11:16</i>
<i>“northward”</i>	<i>“north” (verse 15)</i>
<i>“southward”</i>	<i>“south” (verse 15)</i>
<i>“no beast might stand before him”</i>	<i>“none shall stand before him”</i>
<i>“he did according to his will”</i>	<i>“shall do according to his own will”</i>

These are strong verbal similarities. But I think we will all agree that they prove nothing in terms of identifying the power of Daniel 11:16.

I do believe there is a place for similarity of language in our exegetical tool kit. But as we have seen in this example, it cannot be relied upon as a primary principle for identifying the powers in Daniel 11.