

Daniel 8 – The Ram, Goat, & Little Horn

I. The Setting of Daniel’s Vision

(Daniel 8:1-2 NASB) “In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously. 2 I looked in the vision, and while I was looking, I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision, and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal.”

- a. Daniel was in Babylon (roughly 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq) at the time he had this vision. In the vision, he saw himself in the city *Susa* (200 miles east of Baghdad, in Iran – today it’s a city called Shush), located in the province of *Elam* (A southwestern Persian province over the boarder of Iraq into Iran).
- b. Understanding the setting of the vision is important because, it highlights the fact that the storyline being set up is a predominately Middle Eastern centered storyline. What Daniel sees in the vision is directly knit to the geographic setting within the vision. *End Time Prophecy Hint – When the bible names the names of specific geographical locations, they are not symbolic for other nations.*

II. The Ram & Goat

(Daniel 8:3-8 NASB) “...behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. 4 I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand against him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and made himself great. 5 While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the entire earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a prominent horn between his eyes. 6 He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. 7 And I saw him come up beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and smashed his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was no one to rescue the ram from his power. 8 Then the male goat made himself exceedingly great. But once he became powerful, the large horn was broken; and in its place four prominent horns came up toward the four winds of heaven”

- a. The Angel Gabriel is sent to explain the vision’s meaning to Daniel and he tells Daniel that the ram with two horns represents the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel saw this empire “butting” westward, northward, and southward which was a prophecy of where this empire would spread. The Medo-Persian Empire not only conquered Babylon, but much of the Middle East.

(Daniel 8:20-22 NASB) “The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.

- b. Gabriel told Daniel that the male goat “coming from the west” was the kingdom of Greece (Gk. word “yavan” – Ionia (Western Turkey into Greece). “Coming from the west...without touching the ground” speaks to the speed of the Greek Empire’s conquest. Gabriel said, that the prominent horn between the goat’s eyes represents the “first king” which the future would prove to be Alexander The Great (though he wasn’t the “first” king of Greece, he was the king that “put Greece on the map”. The Greek Empire dominated the Persian empire (*struck the ram and smashed his two horns...*). After “the large horn was broken”(Alexander The Great dying), four other horns took his place to extend the empire, this speaking of the 4 main divisions of the Greek Empire after Alexander the Great’s death.

(Daniel 8:21-22 NASB) “The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 The broken horn and the four horns that came up in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.”

III. History Reaching into The End of the Age

- a. Everything discussed up to this point (though it was a future reality to Daniel) can be observed through history from our perspective. However, when the angel Gabriel explained the vision to Daniel, he said three times that this vision has end-time implications (*specifically vv. 9-14*). Just like in *Daniel 2* and *Daniel 7*, The Lord uses Daniel 8 to highlight events that would take place both throughout history and at the end of the age, so that the final generation can recognize the pattern of history and be alert.

(Daniel 8:15-19 NASB) “When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. 16 And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, “Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.” 17 So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; and he said to me, “Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end.” 18 Now while he was talking with me, I was dazed with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand at my place. 19 And he said, “Behold, I am going to inform you of what will occur at the final period of the indignation, because it pertains to the appointed time of the end.”

- b. The end of the age and the Day of the Lord is not something meant to take the praying church by surprise. God promised to release “*signs of the times*” for the church to be able to discern times and season before his return (*Matthew 24:32-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11*) in order that she would fully partner with His heart and participate in what He’s called her to do.

(1 Peter 4:7 NASB) “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.”

IV. The Little Horn

(Daniel 8:9-12 NASB) “And out of one of them [the 4 horns of the goat] came a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land [Israel]. 10 It grew up to the heavenly lights, and some of the lights, that is, some of the stars it threw down to the earth, and it trampled them. 11 It even exalted itself to be equal with the Commander of the army; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was overthrown. 12 And because of an offense the army will be given to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will hurl truth to the ground and do as it pleases and be successful.”

- a. The primary fulfillment of the little horn will be seen in the Antichrist at the end of the age. However, many Bible teachers agree that this prophecy finds a partial fulfillment in *Antiochus IV Epiphanes*. Antiochus reigned over the Seleucid empire from 175-164 BC. Antiochus “exalted himself” claiming to have “god status” by giving himself the name “Epiphanes” which translates “God Manifest”. Antiochus also conquered Jerusalem in 167 BC and desecrated the temple by setting up a Greek altar to Zeus and sacrificing a pig on the altar. He forced Jews to not practice the Sabbath or read the Torah and many died under his persecution.
- b. Antiochus IV Epiphanes is a foreshadow of the end of the age Antichrist. Paul tells us that before the Antichrist (Man of Lawlessness) emerges, that something is restraining him (*2 Thessalonians 2:10*). The book of Revelation describes what is restraining the emergence of the Antichrist, that is, (a combination) of Satan, currently dwelling in the heavens not wanting to lose his power and authority, and God allowing Michael and the angels to wait to wage war with Satan which will lead to Satan being kicked out of heaven during the Great Tribulation (*Revelation 12:7-9*). *Revelation* tells us that at the start of the final 3 ½ years of this age, Satan will be cast down to earth, and give his authority to the Antichrist, which begins the exposed evil reign of the Antichrist (*Revelation 12:6-13:10*).

(Daniel 8:23-25 NASB) “And in the latter period of their dominion, When the wrongdoers have run their course, A king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. 24 And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and be successful and do as he pleases; he will destroy mighty men and the

holy people. 25 And through his shrewdness he will make deceit a success by his influence; And he will make himself great in his own mind, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency.

V. 2,300 Evenings & Mornings

(Daniel 8:13 -14 NASB) “Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the offense causes horror, so as to allow both the sanctuary and the army to be trampled?” 14 And he said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be properly restored.””

- a. *Daniel 8:14* is one of the first times we get an “end-time timeframe” in scripture. It tells us how long the sacrifices in the Temple will take place, 2,300 days. After the 2,300 days the sanctuary will actually be restored by Jesus as we enter the Millennial reign. This tells us that from the moment we see the sacrifices taking place in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, we can actually begin to count down the days until Jesus restores it.