

Study on Daniel

Chapter Eight

The vision of the Ram and the He-goat

Verse 1

The year is about 550BC. We can tell the date from verse one, as it was when Belshazzar was king. Read **verse 1–14** Suza was the capitol of Persia and that was in the province of Elam where Daniel was standing by the Ulai River. When he looked up he saw a ram standing by the side of the river. The ram had two long horns (this could be indicative of the length of time they actually reigned) but one horn was longer than the other but the shorter grew up later. The longer horn represented Persia that was within the Medo-Persian Empire

To summarise

The Ram is the Medo-Persian empire the two horns being the Medes and the Persians with the Persians being the most dominant.

Then we come to the goat

While Daniel was thinking about the Ram and what it all meant he saw a male goat come from the West - this represented Greece and its large horn between its two eyes represented their leader, who was Alexander the Great. This was an amazing prediction because Greece was not yet considered a world power when this prophecy was given.

Within a period of twelve years Alexander had conquered the world with amazing swiftness and military strategy indicated by the goat's rapid movement. The shattering of the two horns symbolised Alexander breaking both parts of the Medo-Persian Empire.

In summary

The Goat is Greece. Philip the second of Macedon was a military genius who succeeded in building the Grecian Empire into one unit. He devised a Macedonian phalanx, which is an impregnable tortoise (illustrate) with the army's shields. Alexander the Great, Philip's son followed Philip. He conquered at great speed. The Medo-Persians were taken over by the Greeks whom became very great. Remember in **chapter 7** about the four beasts? The Third Beast was Greece

Verse 8

The goat being Greece, the horn was Alexander. In the vision the large horn was broken off. This is symbolic of Alexander dying prematurely at the height of his power; he was only 33 years old when he died.

In the vision there were four horns that grew in place of the one big horn. They were easy to see and pointed in four different directions

The four horns to follow were:

1. Lysimachus – of Asia minor
2. Cassander (Antipater) – of Macedonia and Greece
3. Seleucus the 1st Nicator – of Babylon and Syria
4. Ptolemy the 1st Sotor – of Egypt and Palestine

Four winds of heaven. Using an illustration that Bill Barnes used in his study on Revelation. He explained that the four winds came from the four corners of heaven – (illustrate)

Verse 9

The little horn is Antiochus (the fourth) Epiphanies a Rasele. He desecrated the temple by having a pig sacrificed in the temple and removed the altar of burnt offerings (see verse 11)

Verses 9 – 12

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Out of one of the four came one little horn (Antiochus) from the Seleucides and he did a lot of damage (see verse 9.) He was a destructive person causing havoc wherever he went. He introduced and encouraged the worship of false Gods. The removing of the Altar of burnt offerings meant that the Jews could not offer up their daily sacrifices. They would have no cleansing for their sins.

Verse 10

Host of Heaven – are like the people of God and the people who believed in God.

The glorious land or beautiful land refers to Israel and Jerusalem. Antiochus's main objective there was to disrupt the worship, which would cause people to fall away from the one true God and the worship of Him. In other words - An idol trampling on God's people - (this took place before 165BC) (Referring to question 5 in our questionnaire - How can anyone say that Daniel was written after the event when obviously this was a prophecy or prediction of things to come)

Verse 11

The Prince of Hosts here refers to God and Christ and the place of sanctuary is the Temple. The host of heaven in **Daniel 8: 10 – 12** appears to be figurative for the people of Israel referred to in **Daniel 8: 24**. Comparison of Israel to the host of heaven has its root in the fact that the king of Israel is called the God of hosts (the commander of hosts in verse 11.) To help people to visualise this it could be compared to a very vast army that stretched out as far as the eye could see.

Verse 12

The truth was trampled and idolatry was taking over the true worship and because the Altar had been taken away people were more likely to worship false gods. This all happened through the transgression (sins) of Antioch. The basic instinct of human nature is to look up to something higher and the people had had that taken away from them. These people would be disorientated, frightened and needed something to cling on to.

How would you feel if some overriding authority came in and forbade you to worship the one true God? What would you do? How would you feel? Where would you find your comfort? These people resorted to idol worship – what would you resort to? Many people today revere Angels but this has almost become a cult with people praying to angels for guidance instead of praying to God.

Verse 13

It is asked - How long will this continue? Daniel did not know the name of these two angels but saw that they were speaking to each other and he could hear what they were saying. How long will this state of affairs last before the sanctuary is restored they ask? If the angels had been having this conversation between themselves it would have been no use to us but they were conveying this information to a prophet, Daniel, for our own good to enable him to pass it on

Verse 14

Two thousand, three hundred evenings and mornings – this was successive evening and morning sacrifices of 1150 days. This was a lot of sacrifices. Can you imagine the horror of seeing so many sheep and cattle slaughtered? They must have had huge herds and flocks of animals to be able to kill so many.

This is mentioned as a day because offerings were given on a daily basis. It works out at about 6 years 140 days. One explanation is that this is figurative and falls short of seven years thus shows Antioch 4th's power as being imperfect. Remember that 7 was the perfect number)

A literal explanation is that it describes the period of time from the horror of Antiochus desecration to the time when the temple was cleansed again. The cleansing happened in roughly 165 BC.

End of vision and temple restored.

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Read verses 15 – 26

Daniel cannot make head nor tail of the vision. His mind must have been boggling. He hears and sees someone who looked like a man standing in front of him then he hears a man's voice coming from above. The voice called, "Gabrielle – tell this man the meaning of the vision."

Verse 17

The vision was seen by Daniel and written by him for the benefit and understanding of the people to come later (about 300 years). It was given for encouragement to reassure them that the trial would indeed come to an end but in God's time. This is talking about the end of the Grecian kingdom (Refer to verse 27) and not the end of the world. This king would cause terrible destruction, he would be very powerful and tricky, he would even try to fight God but God was using Antiochus 4th as an instrument of His indignation

Chronologically the time of the end in **chapter 8:17** is the time of the end of the Grecian Kingdom. This may be seen from **verse 23** and the later time of their kingdom. Chronologically it was not near the end of the Grecian Empire but as far as God was concerned when Antiochus 4th appeared on the scene it was on its way out! With the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid Empire sank lower and lower. Daniel was appalled but went about his daily business even though he had not understood the vision.

Verse 18

Daniel probably saw himself fall asleep while he was asleep and having the vision.

Verse 19

Gabriel explains the vision.

Indignation is a term used for the outpouring of wrath from God on His people. The end is the end of vision i.e. end of the trials that the vision pertains to and NOT referring to the end of the world (**refer to Habakkuk 2:2–3**)

Verse 20 onwards is re-emphasising the vision. From here on things are repeated so that Daniel is in no doubt as to the meaning of the vision

Verse 20 is recapping and interpreting the things in the vision

Verse 21

The He-goat here is not any specific king but representative of the kingdom of Greece itself and all kings. The great horn between its eyes, is symbolic of one particular king (probably Alexander the Great)

Verse 22

Refer to notes on **chapter 7** as this speaks of the four to come after Alexander the Great but who were not as powerful. Alexander's Kingdom was divided between the following kingdoms:-

1. Kingdom of the Seleucids - Antiochus 3rd is the father of Antiochus 4th
2. Ptolemy
3. Cassander
4. Lysimachus

Verse 23 – 25

Refers to Antiochus and is spoken about in chapter 8 verse 9 through 14 – see notes

Verse 26

Refer to **chapter 8 verse 14** on evenings and mornings this being for the future was to be noted but sealed up and left for later use as its meaning would not become clear for about 386 years

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(550BC – 164 BC.) Again this is not talking about the end of the world but the end of the Grecian Kingdom.

Verse 27 - Read Verse 27

The vision was to be sealed as the things Daniel saw would not happen for about another 300 years. Although the vision had been explained to Daniel he could not comprehend that something as awful as he had seen depicted could possibly happen. He felt sick to his stomach as we would if we had seen a vision of a nuclear holocaust. It took him several days to recover before he could go about his business.

As a little interesting foot note The Prince of Princes is of course God himself, no human power could defeat the king whom Daniel saw in his vision but God would bring him down. Antiochus 4th Epiphanes reportedly went insane and died in Persia in 164BC. God's power and justice will prevail so we should never give up our faith or lose hope no matter how powerful God's enemies may seem or even how long it seems to take.

The Ram, the he-Goat and the horns!

In **chapter eight** Daniel returns to the Ram and the he-goat visions. These represent the 2nd and 3rd of the four great kingdoms. They have been spoken of as the bronze and silver kingdoms of **chapter 2** and the bear and leopard kingdoms of **chapters 7, 5, and 6**.

1. What were the other two kingdoms referred to? If in doubt consult your golden image picture.
2. What did the Ram represent?
3. What did the He-goat represent?
4. Susa was one of the capitol cities in which Empire?
5. What does the glorious land or beautiful land refer to (v 10)?
6. What age was Alexander the Great when he died?