

Daniel #12**May 26, 2024****Series Title: Daniel's Visions Of the Ages****Today's Message: The Vision of Two horns, a Big Horn and a Little Horn; Daniel 8:1-27**

Remember when we outlined the book of Daniel, we mentioned that the book contains parts written in Hebrew and parts written in Aramaic. Hebrew being the language of the exiles and Aramaic being the language of most of peoples under the Babylonian rule and reign. If you remember Daniel 1:1- 2:3 was written in Hebrew. Then, the language changed to Aramaic in Daniel 2:4- 7:28. And now back to Hebrew for the remainder of the book.

Why is this? It seems obvious that the Living God had a message for the people of Israel, but He also had a message for the people of the Gentile world concerning the power and glory, and the rule and reign over the nations by the God of Heaven, the Sovereign Lord, the God of Israel! Call the Aramaic portions a wake-up call to the Gentile nations and rulers, call it a call to repentance, but understand that God is informing the empires of the world that there is a God in heaven who rules over kings and empires.

Daniel 8 introduces us the near future coming of two dominant powers: The Medo-Persians and the Grecian Empire. The vision is given to Daniel in the third year of King Belshazzar, king of Babylon.

It is worth making a remark concerning the precision of Daniel's timeline. As you read Daniel you can locate the particular historical year each vision is given. For instance, we know from history that King Belshazzar's death came in 539 B.C. and that King Darius, the Mede, was appointed by Cyrus, the Persian King, to begin ruling over the Babylonian people in 539 B.C. So, then, the events recorded in Daniel 5 took place in 539 B.C. and the events recorded in Daniel 6 took place at some time during the reign of Darius of the Medo-Persian Empire. But Daniel 7 and 8 takes us back to both the 1st and 3rd year of King Belshazzar, the Babylonian king. Therefore, knowing that King Belshazzar's reign began in 553 B.C., we know, then, that the vision of Daniel 8 is given to Daniel in 550 B.C., just 11 years before the overthrow of Babylon in 539 B.C.! Very interesting!

The outline for Daniel 8 is simple. The First section (8:1-14) covers the vision and the second section covers the interpretation of the vision. But the history and the meaning of the history is amazing!

I) (8:1-14) The Vision Given to Daniel

- A) The details concerning the timing of the and place of the vision.
 - 1) (8:1-2) The time and place.
 - (a) The 3rd year of Belshazzar
 - (i) The kingdom was secure in 550 B.C.
 - (a) Both the Medo-Persians and Greeks were of no consequence at the time.
 - 1. But they were in existence at the time.
 - (b) Either Daniel was actually in Susa in the region of Elam, or his vision took him there in the spirit.
 - (i) Elam was a large territory spreading east from Babylon to modern day India, to the Persian Gulf.
 - (a) It is of interest that Elam was the place of the first conquests of Cyrus, the mighty king of the Persian Empire.
- B) (8:3-4) In his vision Daniel saw a very aggressive Ram.
 - 1) The Ram had two horns.
 - (a) In Daniel 8:20 the Ram with two horns is identified as the Medo-Persian Empire.
 - (i) The Ram was used by the Medo-Persians as the emblem of their empire.

- (a) An ancient historian records that the king of the Persians was depicted as wearing the headdress of a ram as he stood at the head of his empire.
 - 1. Also, the ram was stamped on their coins as well.
 - (ii) Two horns: one longer and larger than the other.
 - (a) As time went on the Persians were the larger and stronger of the two partners.
 - (iii) The ram charged aggressively to the north, south and west. Moving from the region of Elam toward the Mediterranean region
 - (a) To the north Cyrus overtook the Scythians.
 - (b) To the west, he took the Greeks.
 - (c) To the south, he took the Egyptians.
- C) (8:5-8) Daniel sees an even more aggressive male goat moving with a **big horn**.
- 1) The male goat with one big horn charged from the **west**.
 - (a) (8:21-22) identifies this as a “shaggy goat” with a big horn as moving swiftly without touching the ground. This shaggy goat was the king of Greece.
 - (i) This was Alexander the Great.
 - 2) (8:6-7) The violent overthrow of the Two Horned ram by the **big horn**.
 - (a) (v6) Here we have it confirmed that the Medo-Persians are being violently attacked.
 - (b) (v7) The onslaught was so great that the **big horn** shattered both horns of the **two horned ram**.
 - (i) So great and violent was the attack that no one could save the **two horned ram**.
 - (a) Some of the greatest wars in history were fought between the Greeks and the Medo-Persians.
 - 3) (8:8) But something happened that was shocking to Daniel.
 - (a) The **big horned ram** fell while at the height of its power!
 - (i) Note: Alexander the great died of a disease, in 323 B.C. at the age of 32.
 - (b) Then, four prominent horns rose up.
 - (i) Four generals under Alexander the Great took the empire by force. It is said that when he was dying one of the generals asked to whom would go his empire after his death. Alexander the Great said, “To the strongest.”
 - (a) Cassander ruled over Greece and the surrounding region.
 - (b) Lysimachus (Lie-sim-ah-cuss) ruled over Asia Minor
 - (c) Seleucus (Seh-lucas) ruled over Syria and the land of Israel.
 - (d) Ptolemy (toll-eh-mee) ruled over Egypt.
 - (c) Note: God used Alexander the Great to prepare the world for the Gospel of Jesus Christ by imposing the Greek culture and language over his vast empire. Greek, as you know, is the language of the New Testament! His greatness was used by God for His purposes!
- D) (8:9-13) Turning our attention to Israel and the rise of the **little horn**.
- 1) This **little horn** is Antiochus IV. His rise to power came around 175 B.C.
 - (a) He arose from the Seleucid kingdom and located his empire in Jerusalem.
 - (b) He called himself Antiochus *Epiphanes*, which means *majestic one*. The Jews hated him and called him Antiochus *Epimanes*, the *madman*.
 - (c) He set himself up as the *Prince of Hosts* (as a god) and persecuted the Jews.

- (d) He desecrated the temple and exchanged the priestly daily sacrifices with pagan sacrifices, **which were offered to him.**
- (e) (v13) He overtook the Temple and trampled down all things sacred. After his defeat in Egypt in 168 B.C., he returned to Jerusalem, seized the city, and set up an idol Zeus offering the sacrifices of pigs, sprinkling pig blood and urine in the sanctuary.
 - (i) Sadly, many of the Temple priests succumbed to Antiochus and offered bribes in order to remain alive. They served Antiochus instead of God.
 - (a) It was the Maccabees that eventually overthrew Antiochus IV.
- E) (8:14) The timeline: The answer to the question in 8:13 of “how long” will this go on?
 - 1) 2,300 days. Most interpreters see this as meaning “seven years.” (Almost 7 years.)
 - (a) It was almost seven years exactly from the time Antiochus began his persecution of the Jews and the desecration of the Temple in 171 B.C. to the time it was *cleansed* in 165 B.C.
 - 2) **Keep in mind that Daniel had this vision some 360 years before Antiochus Epiphanes** came on the scene! Remarkable! Our Sovereign God rules over history!

II) (8:15-27) The interpretation of the vision given to Daniel.

- A) (8:15-16) Gabriel is commanded to speak to Daniel
 - 1) Daniel heard a man’s voice speaking, telling Gabriel to tell the meaning of the vision.
- B) (8:17-19) Gabriel reveals the intent of the vision Daniel received.
 - 1) The vision was a revelation of the “time of the end” and the “time of wrath.”
 - (a) Meaning: Telescopic: A near-term and future fulfillment.
 - (i) Near: Antiochus IV was one fulfillment. He was, some have noted, the Antichrist of the Old Testament. He was taken away a little over 100 years before Christ came the first time.
 - (ii) Future: Antiochus IV also prefigures the Antichrist of Revelation, who is removed prior to Christ’s second coming.
- C) (8:20-23) The Two-horned Ram, the Big Horned Goat, the 4 Horns, and the Little Horn
 - 1) Two-horns: The larger horn is king of Persia; the smaller horn is king of Medes.
 - 2) Big horn: Alexander the Great of Greece. (Grecian)
 - 3) Four horns: the four generals who rose up to succeed Alexander the Great. (Grecian)
 - 4) Little Horn: Antiochus IV, aka, Antiochus Epiphanes. (Grecian)
- D) (8:23-26) The Rise and Fall of Antiochus *the majestic one*.
 - 1) Each line can apply to both Antiochus and the future *Antichrist*.
 - (a) The *latter part* of their reign: Time preceding the coming of Christ. This was true concerning Antiochus IV and Christ’s 1st coming and Antichrist before Christ’s 2nd coming.
 - (b) “stern-faced”: both Antiochus and Antichrist are known for brutality.
 - (c) “master of intrigue”: Through flattery and deceit both come to power.
 - (d) Not by his own power: both are empowered by Satan.
 - (e) Self-exalted
 - (f) Brought down but not by human power: Antiochus died of disease. Christ Jesus removes Antichrist, etc.
- E) (8:27) The conclusion: beyond understanding. But Daniel was searching and seeking.
 - 1) **See 1 Peter 1:10-12** But look what we’ve been given! Christ has been revealed!