

## Daniel Chapter 8

**Daniel 8:1 "In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, [even unto] me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first."**

This is another vision (it is not the same as the vision in chapter 7). The last vision was of the end times. This vision deals with Media, Persia, and Greece leading up to the end times.

With chapter 8, the text begins again in Hebrew. This is appropriate since the rest of the book is concerned with God's program for Israel. The vision of chapter 8 came two years after that of chapter 7.

**Daniel 8:2 "And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I [was] at Shushan [in] the palace, which [is] in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai."**

Shushan was a chief city of the Medo-Persian Empire. It was the capitol of the land of Elam. Shushan or Susa was a Persian royal city about two hundred miles east of Babylon where Daniel was at the time.

Elam was named for the first son of Shem. There is very little known about the river Ulai.

Verses 3-9: The imagery of (verses 3-9), is unfolded historically. The ram pictures the Medo-Persian Empire, as a whole, its two horns standing for the two entities (the Medes and the Persians), that merged into one. The history of this empire is briefly noted (in verse 4), as it is seen conquering for the East to the West, South and North under Cyrus, as predicted also by Isaiah 150 years earlier (Isa. 45:1-7).

The longer horn, which appeared last, represents Persia. The goat (verse 5), represents Greece with its great horn Alexander, who with his army of 35,000, moved with such speed that he is pictured as not even touching the ground. The broken horn is Alexander in his death. The 4 horns are generals who became kings over 4 sectors of the Grecian empire after Alexander.

The small horn is Antiochus Epiphanes, who rose from the third empire to rule the Syrian division (in 175-164 B.C.), and is the same king dominant (in 11:21-35; 8:24-26), where a similar "little horn" clearly represents the final Antichrist.

The reason both are described as "little horns" is because one prefigures the other. A far more detailed summary will come later (in 11:2-35).

**Daniel 8:3 "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had [two] horns: and the [two] horns [were] high; but one [was] higher than the other, and the higher came up last."**

Verse 20 of this chapter tells us the two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. It appears that Persia was the more prominent of the two. The higher horn portrays the dominance of Persia over Media (as did the raised bear in 7:5).

The fact there was just one animal, shows the unity of Media, and Persia. The two horns show they were of two peoples.

**Daniel 8:4 "I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither [was there any] that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great."**

We do know from history, there was a great conquest of nations who surrounded them. They were so powerful they had conquered even the Babylonians.

**Daniel 8:5 "And as I was considering, behold, a he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat [had] a notable horn between his eyes."**

This is speaking of Greece, and the horn (symbolizing power) is speaking of Alexander the great.

The fact that the goat's feet did not touch the ground symbolizes the swiftness of Alexander's conquest, as did the wings on the leopard in the previous chapter.

**Daniel 8:6 "And he came to the ram that had [two] horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power."**

This is just explaining that Alexander the great fought against the Medes and the Persians.

**Daniel 8:7 "And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."**

This powerful ruler (Alexander the Great), fought with the Medes and Persians, and defeated them in battle. "Choler" means bitter. The Medes and the Persians were no match for Alexander.

In a series of battles over the period (of 334-330 B.C.), Alexander the Great decisively destroyed Persian power and became the master of the ancient Near Eastern World.

**Daniel 8:8 "Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven."**

Alexander was thought of as great. When he died, 4 of his generals took over in his place.

Four notable ones (or horns), refer to the four generals who by (301 B.C.), ruled Alexander's empire (verse 22). Macedonia and most of Greece were under the rule of Cassander; Asia Minor

and parts of Thrace were under the rule of Lysimachus; Syria, Israel and Mesopotamia were ruled by Seleucus; and Egypt and parts of southern Syria were under Ptolemy.

**Daniel 8:9 "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant [land]."**

A little horn came out of one of the four horns. Most agree that this little horn can only refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Seleucid ruler over Syria and Israel (175-163 B.C.), and for a short time over Egypt.

(In 167 B.C.), Antiochus outlawed the Jewish religion, burned Jerusalem, killed multitudes of Jews, and forbade circumcision and other Jewish observances. (On December 16, 167 B.C.), he offered a sow on the altar outside the temple, the ultimate sacrilege to a Jew. This began the period known as the Maccabean revolt.

After three years of fighting, the Jews were able to restore temple worship (in late 164 B.C.). This rededication of the temple is still commemorated today in the eight day Jewish holiday known as Hanukkah. Antiochus's atrocities are accurately predicted (in verses 10-14 and 23-25).

The "pleasant land" was probably Palestine.

**Daniel 8:10 "And it waxed great, [even] to the host of heaven; and it cast down [some] of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them."**

This picturesque language portrays Antiochus' persecution against Jewish people using the figure of stars. When defeated, the "stars" (Jewish people), will fall under the tyrant's domination.

Revelation 6:13 "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

The fig tree symbolizes the house of Israel. The "host of heaven" could be speaking of Israel.

This particular Scripture could have two messages. One would be to the time very near to when Daniel lived, and the other could reach to the end of time.

**Daniel 8:11 "Yea, he magnified [himself] even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily [sacrifice] was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down."**

The "Prince of the host" would have been the Lord. (In 70 A.D.), the temple was destroyed and the sacrifice stopped.

In addition to the desecration of the temple, Antiochus blasphemed Christ; to who ultimately the host of Jewish people sacrifice, and to whom the sanctuary belongs. He is later the "Prince of princes (verse 25).

I believe this has to do with the similar Scriptures following.

Daniel 11:31 "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily [sacrifice], and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate."

Daniel 12:11 "And from the time [that] the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, [there shall be] a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

These last two Scriptures have to do with the time of the end (Tribulation), and the antichrist.

**Daniel 8:12 "And a host was given [him] against the daily [sacrifice] by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered."**

The transgressions would have made the sacrifice unacceptable to God. There was no truth prevailing. They seemed to prosper, even though they were evil.

**Daniel 8:13-14 "Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain [saint] which spake, How long [shall be] the vision [concerning] the daily [sacrifice], and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" "And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."**

Holy ones or angels are in view here.

This is referring to evenings and mornings which the period runs to about 6-1/2 years of sacrificing a lamb twice a day, morning and evening. The prophecy was precise in identifying the time as that of Antiochus' persecution (Sept 6, 171 B.C. to Dec 25<sup>th</sup>, 165/164 B.C.).

It is interesting to note that Judas Maccabeus cleansed the temple on December 25th 165 B.C.

After his death, Jews celebrated the cleansing of their holy place in the Feast of Lights, or Hanukkah, in celebration of the restoration led by Judas Maccabeus.

**Daniel 8:15 "And it came to pass, when I, [even] I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man."**

Notice, this was not a man. He appeared to be a man. Daniel was seeking an interpretation of this dream, or vision, from God.

The word for man meaning "a mighty man" is the linguistic framework for "Gabriel," which means "mighty one of God." This is the first mention of an angel by name in the Bible.

**Daniel 8:16 "And I heard a man's voice between [the banks of] Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this [man] to understand the vision."**

The word "Ulai" is speaking of a river in Persia, possibly the Eulaeus. The man's voice was the voice of God who spoke with a human voice. Gabriel is under direct orders of the Father.

Gabriel is an archangel. He is to explain the vision to Daniel.

**Daniel 8:17 "So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end [shall be] the vision."**

"Time of the end" is a term likely having a double sense of fulfillment. First the "end" (as verse 19), "final" or "latter period" (verses 19 and 23), and "appointed time" (verse 19), refer to time late in the specific span that the historical prophecy has in view. That time is the period defined by the empires in these verses, Persia (Ram), and Greece (Goat), when the Grecian sector will be divided into 4 parts (verse 8).

One of these, the Syrian under Seleucus will eventually lead to Antiochus Epiphanes (175 to 164 B.C.), as the "little horn" meant (in verse 9, which persecutes the people of Israel (verse 10), and defies God (verse 11).

Secondly, the "little horn" (in verse 9, the Antichrist in the last days at the time of the eschatological fulfillment, sees Antiochus as a pattern of the Antichrist, who in many ways will be like him, though far greater in power, and will exercise his career in the end of the age just before Christ's return.

This would be a frightening experience, to be this close to Gabriel. The worst fear would be the fact that God sent him, and told him what to say. He opens Daniel's understanding to the vision.

**Daniel 8:18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.**

This is very similar to being overcome by the Spirit. Being in the presence of heavenly beings brings this type of reaction.

At the mount of transfiguration, Peter, James, and John went into a deep sleep. This is a special privilege to be in the presence of heavenly beings.

**Daniel 8:19 "And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end [shall be]."**

The time for the end of the world has been set since the foundation of the earth. This is speaking, however, of a nearer time, as well. The end of the indignation could be speaking of the end of the indignation for those specific people.

The near meaning speaks of the Jews struggle against Epiphanes.

**Daniel 8:20-21 "The ram which thou sawest having [two] horns [are] the kings of Media and Persia." "And the rough goat [is] the king of Grecia: and the great horn that [is] between his eyes [is] the first king."**

These are both discussed earlier in the lesson. The two horns are because Media and Persia are two. The rough goat is Alexander the great of Greece who is the third world power.

**Daniel 8:22 "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."**

“Broken ... four”: Alexander died at age 33 (in 323 B.C.), leaving no heir ready to reign. So four men, after 22 years of fighting, assumed rule over 4 Grecian sectors:

- (1) Cassander, Macedonia;
- (2) Lysimachus, Thrace and Asia Minor;
- (3) Seleucus, Syria and Babylonia;
- (4) Ptolemy, Egypt and Arabia. These are the four referred to in “toward the four winds” (verse 8).

The phrase “not in his power” indicates they did not have Alexander’s power or direct family lineage.

Verses 23-25: “A king ... stand up”: The near fulfillment views Antiochus as the historical persecutor (as in verses 9-14). His career down to 164 B.C. was “in the latter period of their rule,” that of the male goat in the Syrian territory.

Rome conquered Greece by 146 B.C., only a few years later, and became the next dominant empire. Antiochus died, “broken without human agency,” due to insanity and disease of the bowels.

The far fulfillment sees Antiochus (in verses 23-25), as prophetically illustrating the final tribulation period and the Antichrist. In such a view, the king here is also the “little horn” (as in 7:7, 8:9), and the willful king (in 11:36-45).

**Daniel 8:23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up."**

This has jumped to an entirely different time element. Notice, it does not say in their later time, it says in the latter day of their kingdom. It is the kingdom's latter day. This king is evil. He is using things of Satan to make him understand. Dark sentences have no light of God in them.

**Daniel 8:24 "And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."**

His strength is not his own. He is operating under the influence of Satan. He is totally opposed to God's people. God has allowed this, because of the unfaithfulness of His people.

**Daniel 8:25 "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify [himself] in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."**

“He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes”: Many believe that the description here transcends that of Antiochus alone, and uses him as a type of the Antichrist who will oppose ‘Christ during the Great Tribulation. Certainly, the devious work of Antiochus and of the Antichrist is of the same heinous character.

The Prince of princes is speaking of Jesus. Destroying by peace is a trick of the antichrist. If this is not speaking of him, it is certainly speaking of a type of antichrist. This is speaking of a spiritual battle.

“Broken without hand”: Jesus does defeat Satan and all of his fellows.

**Daniel 8:26 "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told [is] true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it [shall be] for many days."**

Since he told it here, this did not mean to shut it up to secrecy but to preserve it as truth even if not to be fulfilled for a long time.

In upcoming chapters of Daniel, we see where God has told him to shut up the words until the time of the end.

Daniel 12:4 "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, [even] to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

Daniel 12:9 "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words [are] closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

**Daniel 8:27 "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick [certain] days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood [it]."**

The vision has caused Daniel to be very grieved.

I believe God does not reveal this to man, because it is His secret. There are some things not intended to be understood.

## Daniel Chapter 8 Questions

1. Where was Daniel in this vision?
2. Who was Elam named for?
3. How many horns did the ram have?
4. What did they symbolize?
5. Which was the most prominent?
6. The horn symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Who is this horn speaking of?
8. What does "choler" mean?
9. Macedonia and Greece were under which of the 4 Generals?
10. Asia Minor was under whose rule?
11. Who ruled Syria?
12. Cyrene was ruled by \_\_\_\_\_.
13. What was the "pleasant land" speaking of?
14. Who does the "fig tree" symbolize?
15. Who is the "host of heaven", possibly?
16. Who is the Prince of the host?
17. In \_\_\_\_\_ A.D., the temple was destroyed and the sacrifice stopped.
18. Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11 have to do with the time of the \_\_\_\_\_.
19. What would have made the sacrifices unacceptable to God?
20. How long will the city be trodden down of the Gentiles?
21. What is interesting to note about Judas Maccabaeus?
22. The man's voice in verse 16, was whose?
23. Who had God sent with the message to Daniel?
24. When is this vision for?

25. What does the name "Gabriel" mean?
26. The sleep (in verse 18), is very similar to what?
27. How long has the time for the end of the world been set?
28. Dark sentences have no \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in them.
29. Why has God allowed this evil one to destroy?
30. This evil one is operating under the influence of \_\_\_\_\_.
31. The Prince of princes is speaking of \_\_\_\_\_.
32. Destroying by peace is a trick of \_\_\_\_\_.
33. What are some of the things the vision of evening and morning could be?
34. Who understood Daniel's vision?