

Daniel Chapter 8

Pastor Mike Wells Study Notes

Chapter 8: Daniel 8 contains prophecy similar to that in chapter 2 and 7. It adds further detail to the prophecies of chapters 2 and 7. Most of the prophecy has been fulfilled in exacting detail already. Daniel details what was coming in the near future when the coming Persian and Greek empires collided. It is fascinating because history reveals that the prophecy was fulfilled in minute detail. The chapter is divided into 2 parts: (1) Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat in verses 1-14; and (2) the interpretation of it in verses 15-27.

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.*

- The preceding chapter ended with Daniel being troubled over the vision given to him there.
- That was in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar over Babylon.
- Now in Belshazzar's third year, about two years later, God gave Daniel another vision.
- The comment "*after that which appeared unto me at the first*" refers to the vision given to Daniel in Daniel 7:1.

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.*

- Daniel was at Shushan which was the winter home of the Persian kings, located on the Ulai river.
- Shushan was in the province of Elam which was another name for Persia.
- It was located in the southwestern portion of what is now modern Iraq, not far from modern Iran.
- While most likely in prayer by the Ulai River, God gave Daniel this next vision.

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.*

- Daniel saw a ram with two horns—one was higher than the other
- Notice also that the higher one appeared last.
- We will soon see this is a picture of Media-Persia.
- Persian (the higher and last horn) came to power later than Media (first and lower horn), but was without question the dominate part (hence higher and later horn).

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.*

- In the Media-Persian Empire, the Mede's home region was to the north
- Persia initially was more to the south of what would be modern Iraq.
- In the vision, the ram was relentlessly pushing westward, northward, and southward and nothing could stop it.

- The Persian Empire did indeed expand to the west, north, and south conquering nations as they went.
- To the west they conquered: Babylon, Syria, Asia, and a part of Greece.
- To the north they conquered Iberia, Albania, Armenia, Scythia, Colchis, and the inhabitants of the Caspian sea.
- To the south they conquered: Arabia, Ethiopia, Judea, Egypt, and India.
- East is not mentioned because the Persians came from the east.
- Cyrus the Persian quickly became the dominant ruler.
- As he pushed his empire outward, no nation could stop the Persian armies.

Daniel 8 : 5 - *And as I was considering, behold, an 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.*

- As Daniel thinking about what was going on, a male goat came out of the west moving so fast that it appeared to not touch the ground.
- He had a notable horn (leader).
- This was none other than Alexander the Great.
- He led the Greeks in a quick, sudden and decisive war against Media-Persia.
- The-goat corresponds to the leopard in Daniel 7:6 and the ram corresponds to the bear in Daniel 7:5

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.*

- The he-goat from the west (Alexander the Great) collided with the ram with two horns (Media-Persia)
- Remember this is history now, but was prophecy yet to occur when Daniel dreamed it.
- History shows that it was at the river Ulai that Alexander fought his first victorious battle against Darius in 334 B.C.
- The running of the he-goat into the ram in a hostile fashion describes the manner of these creatures in nature when they fight with one another.
- It also describes the conflict with Alexander's army running into the Persian army in the fury of his power that Daniel foresaw.

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.*

- Daniel continues to describe the mighty battle between Alexander and the Greeks against Darius and the Persians in great detail.
- The Greeks came with ***choler*** (anger, great wrath) against the Persians.
- The result was that the goat smashed both horns of the ram and utterly defeated it.
- History indeed does show that Alexander utterly defeated the Medes and the Persians.
- They never again would rise to dominate power.

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.

- When the he-goat (Greece) was in control, the great horn was broken.
- After conquering the Persian Empire, Alexander the Great (great horn) died.
- History records that he died of a venereal disease.
- Notice that after Alexander's death four notable ones sprang up.
- This was his four subordinates and they divided up the empire amongst themselves.
- These four ruled the four quadrants of the empire: Ptolemy from Egypt; Cassander was king of Macedonia and Greece; Lysimachus was king of Asia; and Seleucus was king of Syria and of the eastern countries.
- These four kings correspond to the four heads of the leopard in Daniel 7:5.
- The Greek Empire continued for more than two-hundred years.

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.

- The focus of the Greek Empire now turns to that which pertains to the '*pleasant land*,' meaning Israel.
- Now came a '*little horn*.' (This was Alexander's grandson Antiochus Epophanes)
- This is not the same little horn mentioned in Daniel 7 (anti-christ)
- This little horn proceeded to magnify himself and enter the '*pleasant land*' (Israel).

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.

- He eventually ruled over the portion of the empire that included the land of Israel.
- Upon entering the land of Israel, Antiochus Epiphanes (little horn – Alexander's grandson) not only dealt harshly with the Jews in the land, but murdered spiritual leaders—Levites and priests of God.

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.

- Antiochus Epiphanes exalted himself against even the "*prince of the host*."
- Some believe that the "prince of the host" was the high priest, while others have suggested it is God Himself.
- Either way, Antiochus Epiphanes blasphemed the God of heaven either through the high priest or directly.
- At his orders, the daily sacrifices of the Temple were halted.
- The Temple itself was desecrated, robbed, and disdained by him.

Daniel 8 : 12 - And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

- Antiochus Epiphanes ordered Greek soldiers to be stationed in the Temple to enforce his decree of no daily sacrifices.
- He cast aside all Levitical observance of the Law and the things of Jehovah God.
- He did whatever he pleased and seemed to prosper.

Daniel 8 : 13 - *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?*

- On top of all his blasphemy, Antiochus Epiphanes made himself like an ‘*anti-christ*’ and desecrated the Jewish Temple.
- He offered a pig (the king of unclean animals according to Jewish law) as a sacrifice upon the brazen altar and placed its blood on the mercy seat.
- This was known to the Jews as the ‘**abomination of desolation.**’
- Their temple had been defiled and could not be used.
- Daniel therefore in his vision heard one godly man speaking to another, asking how long the transgression of desolation would continue.
- How long would the Temple be trodden under foot of pagan gentile feet?

Daniel 8 : 14 - *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*

- The length of the desecration of the Temple was to last 2,300 days.
- That is 6 years and 110 days.
- Jewish tradition/history holds that the desecration of the Temple lasted 2,300 literal days.
- The abomination of desolation spoken of here does not have eschatological implications other than perhaps a preview or foreshadow of another one to come.
- In Daniel 9:27 we will see another abomination that certainly refers to end-time events as does Matthew 24:15.

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.*

- After having seen the vision from God, Daniel sought understanding of the vision.
- God sent a messenger with the appearance of a man to explain the vision to Daniel.
- As the text will unfold, this messenger was an Gabriel the archangel (high ranking angel)

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.*

- As Daniel heard a voice from the river ordering Gabriel to help Daniel understand the vision.
- This is the first of two times in Daniel that Gabriel was sent to Daniel.
- He also appears twice in the nativity story, once to Zechariah and once to Mary. (See Luke 1:19, 26)
- Gabriel is one of only two (or three if Lucifer is considered) angels who are named in Scripture.
- He is an archangel (along with Michael)
- The name Gabriel literally means ‘*man of God,*’ or ‘*strength of God.*’
- The voice ordering him to speak to Daniel was that of God Himself.

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.*

- Gabriel came to where Daniel stood.
- Daniel's reaction was the same as that of virtually every mortal recorded in Scripture when confronted by an angel.
- Daniel was terrified.
- The reflected holiness and glory of God apparent in all angels so convicted Daniel that he could only fall on his face.
- Gabriel spoke reassuringly to Daniel, telling him the vision he had seen was yet to be fulfilled.
- There was a determined time when the vision would be fulfilled: when the 2,300 days were expired along with other events still to come.

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.*

- As Daniel fell to his face, recorded in the previous verse, he apparently entered into deep sleep.
- The angel Gabriel touched Daniel and set him on his feet.

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.*

- Gabriel informed Daniel that he was about to give him understanding of the vision.
- Of interest is that Gabriel speaks of the "*last end of the indignation.*"
- The implication is the events of the end time.
- The angel remarked, "*for at the time appointed the end shall be.*"
- The end of the ages will be at God's appointed time.
- It is totally in His control.
- The end times will be a time of anger and the wrath of God against a wicked world.
- This allude to the Tribulation period that is to come.

Daniel 8 : 20 - *The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.*

- The angel Gabriel explains to Daniel the significance of what he had seen in his dream.
- The ram with two horns were the kings of Media and Persia.
- Darius was a Mede and Cyrus (who reigned with him and then succeeded him) was a Persian.

Daniel 8 : 21 - *And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.*

- The rough goat would be Alexander the Great of Greece.
- Though Philip of Macedon was the first king of the Greeks at this time, it was Alexander who put Greece on the map and eventually conquered the mighty Persian Empire.

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.*

- After Alexander's untimely death, four of his subordinates divided the empire between themselves.

- None of the four divisions of Alexander the Great's empire had the power or influence of the original whole.
- That is all fulfilled history.
- Though prophesied decades prior to its inception that is exactly how the history of Persia and Greece unfolded.

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.*

- The focus now turns to the latter years of the Greek era of history.
- Out of the Greek empires arose a great wicked one.
- At that time "*a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences*" would arise.
- The one foretold was Antiochus Epiphanes (grandson of Alexander the Great).
- During his reign he ravaged Jerusalem and the Temple.

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

- However, decades had passed from the time of Alexander to that of Antiochus.
- Implied is that his power was satanic and what he did against the Jews and the Temple was by the power of the devil.
- He in fact is a foreshadow of the antichrist.
- Antiochus desecrated the Temple and the antichrist will do the same someday.
- As Antiochus turned against the Jewish people, so will the coming Anti-christ
- Antiochus slew thousands of Jews

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.*

- Antiochus certainly was crafty, proud, and destroyed many.
- However, the foreshadow here refers to the antichrist and his diabolical power.
- The Prince of princes is a reference to Jesus Christ.
- Though Antiochus certainly was blasphemous, there is no record of him directing challenging the coming Messiah, the Prince of princes.
- The greater thought here is prophetic in the coming antichrist.
- Implied is that the man of sin will advance his agenda in part by preaching peace..
- However, once he has deceived Israel into entering his seven year peace covenant, he then will turn against them to destroy them.
- Though he will stand up against the King of kings, Jesus Christ will destroy him with the breath of his lips.
- The "*stone cut out without hands*" will destroy him.
- The man of sin will be supernaturally destroyed by Jesus Christ!

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.*

- The vision of Daniel began during the night and concluded the following morning.

- Gabriel certified its truthfulness to Daniel.
- Daniel therefore was directed to “*shut thou up the vision.*”
- The thought is that he was to keep it to himself.
- Write it down, but do not proclaim it.
- The fulfillment of the vision certainly was for many days (would take some time to totally fulfill).
- There was the coming demise of Babylon, then Persian, and then of Antiochus.
- And of course end times portion regarding the antichrist, certainly is yet to be fulfilled.

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.*

- At the conclusion of the vision and its interpretation, Daniel was shaken.
- The thought is that he was sick of heart.
- Though the prophecy had revealed things to come, there was bad news regarding Jerusalem and the Temple.
- He finally was able to return to work to tend to his governmental business in administrative matters for the king.
- Daniel was utterly astonished (even appalled) at what had been revealed to him.
- God had chosen him to channel the blueprint for the rest of the ages.
- And, much of it was bad news for his own homeland.
- In addition, he had been forbidden to verbally speak of these things.
- So, no one understood why he was so shaken.