

The Book of Daniel³²

Lesson 6

Daniel Chapter 8

Daniel's Vision – Ram and Goat

536 BC

Within three years of Daniel's vision in chapter 7, the Lord gives him another vision in the year 536 BC. Nabonidus, the king of the Babylonian Empire has allowed his step-son, Belshazzar, to co-reign with him since 539 BC. Cyrus, the king of Persia, has overthrown the Median Empire in 550 BC and the Lydian Empire some time before 540 BC. Cyrus' power looms over the Babylonian Empire which has begun to crumble and shrink. Even more trouble lurks in the Arabian Peninsula, causing Nabonidus and his wife Nitrocris, daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, to leave Babylon to investigate the problems.³³ He leaves Belshazzar in charge in Babylon. Daniel, now in his eighties, sees another vision about the future, which does not include Babylon.

Daniel's Vision

Daniel ^{8:1} 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.

The vision occurs in 536 BC, the third year of Belshazzar's co-reign with Nabonidus. No other visions have occurred since his dream and visions recorded in Daniel chapter 7 in 539 BC.

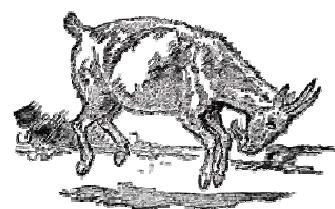
Daniel's Location

Daniel ^{8:2} And I looked in the vision, and it came about while I was looking, that 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.

In the vision, Daniel sees himself in the stronghold of Susa, a city in modern-day Iran near the Ulai River which runs by Susa into the Gulf of Oman. Daniel sees himself in Susa but he is probably in Babylon at the time. Iran, the old Persia, does not belong to the Babylonian Empire at this time. It belongs to Cyrus the Great who has captured both Media and Lydia by 536 BC. Media had been the strongest of the subservient kingdoms of Babylon but Persia grew greater under the leadership of Cyrus who overthrew Media. Therefore, Daniel probably resides in Babylon at the time of the vision because he still serves as a faithful counselor to Nabonidus and Belshazzar.

Ram's Horns

Daniel ^{8:3} Then I lifted my gaze and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long,



³² All Scriptures in this lesson entitled "The Book of Daniel" are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE, Copyright (C) 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1988, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

³³ Nitrocris, also known as Kassaya

but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last.

In the vision, Daniel sees two animals, the first, a ram and the second, a goat. The ram has two horns, both long, but the second horn grows longer than the first.

Ram's Intention

Daniel ^{8:4} I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him, nor was there anyone to rescue from his power; but he did as he pleased and magnified *himself*.

Daniel sees the ram butting to the west, north and south, but not to the east. No one can stop the power of the ram for any reason.

Goat's Horn

Daniel ^{8:5} While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a conspicuous horn between his eyes.

Daniel sees the second animal, a goat coming from the west. It has one horn between its eyes

Goat's Intention

Daniel ^{8:6} And 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. ^{8:7} And I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered 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 none to rescue the ram from his power.



In Daniel's vision, the goat tramples the ram, breaking its horns and hurling it to the ground. No one can rescue the ram from the goat.

Goat's Doom

Daniel ^{8:8} Then the male goat magnified *himself* exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous *horns* toward the four winds of heaven.

Even though it tramples the ram, the goat does not live for long. His horn breaks and four horns come up in its place. The power of the four horns spreads out towards the four winds of heaven: north, south, east, and west.

North's Small Horn

Daniel ^{8:9} And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. ^{8:10} And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. ^{8:11} It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. ^{8:12} And on account of transgression the host will

be given over to *the horn* along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform *its will* and prosper.

Some time after the four horns spread their power to the four corners of heaven, a little horn grows up out of the north and seeks to overpower the south, east and the Beautiful Land, a term that means the Promised Land. In the vision, Daniel sees the little horn overthrow some of the hosts of heaven and it claims to be equal to the Commander, a term that means God. In the Beautiful Land, the little horn stops the sacrifices in the temple and defiles it, turning the truth into a lie and committing abominable acts in that Holy place.

Angel's Question

Daniel ^{8:13} 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 transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?"

Daniel still does not know the meaning of this vision. He hears an angel question the angelic speaker saying, "How long will the vision *about* the regular sacrifice apply" The angel directs his worry towards the sacrifices in the temple, which, by this time in Daniel's life, have not occurred since the destruction of the temple in 586 BC, 50 years before. "How long...?" the angel asks.

Angel's Answer

Daniel ^{8:14} And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings *and* mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."

The angel says that the sacrifices in the temple will stop for 2,300 days or 6 ½ years. Fifty years have passed since the sacrifices stopped with the destruction of the temple, so 586 BC could not have been the starting point of the 2,300 days. Someone would need to rebuild the temple so the sacrifices could stop again. The whole vision has to be confusing to Daniel.

Man's Request

Daniel ^{8:15} And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. ^{8:16} And I heard the voice of a man between *the banks of Ulai*, and he called out and said, "Gabriel, give this *man* an understanding of the vision."

Daniel needs to know the interpretation of the vision and an angel calls for Gabriel to give the interpretation. Most likely, Gabriel has been telling the story and directing the vision all along.

Gabriel's Action

Daniel ^{8:17} So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end." ^{8:18} Now while he was talking with me, I sank into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and made me stand upright. ^{8:19} And he said, "Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for *it* pertains to the appointed time of the end."

Gabriel approaches Daniel and his presence causes Daniel to fall on his face in the vision. Gabriel calls Daniel, "Son of man," and says to him, "... the vision pertains to the time of the end." Daniel falls into a deep sleep but Gabriel raises him to his feet and promises to interpret the vision which will occur toward the end of the "indignation" of the small horn that grew out of the north horn.

Gabriel's Interpretation

The Ram

Daniel ^{8:20} "The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia.

Gabriel interprets the vision clearly. The ram with the two horns represents the Medo-Persian Empire with its two kings, Darius and Cyrus. Cyrus conquered the Medes in 550 BC but he made Darius, its king, second in command of the whole combined empire. Therefore, the horn of Cyrus grew longer than the horn of Darius. At the time of this vision, Cyrus has the Medo-Persian Empire marching hard toward Babylon to take it under their control and they will do so within the year. Surely, this part of the vision does not surprise Daniel.

The Goat

Daniel ^{8:21} "And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king.



In 336 BC, Phillip II, king of Macedonia, dies and his son, Alexander III, also called Alexander the Great, becomes the king. He rises as the first king of the Greek Empire, the large horn between the eyes of the shaggy goat.

Two years later, in 334 BC, Alexander begins his first campaign against the Persians. That campaign places all of Persia's control over Asia Minor, now modern day Turkey, in the hands of Alexander.

In 333 BC, Alexander runs Darius III, the ram of Persia, out of the Syrian area. From there, Alexander takes over Syria, destroys Sidon, and destroys both the old and new cities of Tyre, using the stones of the old city to build a land bridge across to the island where he destroys the new city just as prophesied.³⁴

Alexander marches down to the Gaza Strip and destroys four of the five major cities in that area. In the city of Gaza, he bores holes in the feet of the king, attaches ropes and drags him through the city to fulfill that prophecy.³⁵

From the Gaza strip, Alexander attacks Egypt and becomes its Pharaoh in 332 BC. On his way back to the Euphrates, in the Syrian area, he completely passes by Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy that no harm comes to Jerusalem.³⁶

Alexander is the one-horned goat of Daniel's prophecy and he hits Darius III, the ram of Daniel's prophecy very hard. In 331 BC, Alexander defeats Darius III at Arbella, ending the Persian Empire for all practical purposes. Within the year of 330

³⁴ Daniel 9:24 ff; Amos 1; Zechariah 9, Zephaniah 2; Daniel 11:3

³⁵ Amos 1; Zechariah 9, Zephaniah 2

³⁶ Amos 1; Zechariah 9, Zephaniah 2

BC, two of Darius' men, Bessus and Nabarzanes throw Darius in a cart, wound him with a Javelin and leave him to die. Disappointed Alexander, who wants Darius alive, finds him dead and covers him with his cloak. Alexander sends him back to Persepolis where Alexander orders his burial in the tombs of his royal ancestors accompanied by magnificent funeral. Alexander has the Persian Empire securely under his control. He eventually marries Stateira, Darius' daughter in Susa in 324 BC.



Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue continues to be fulfilled. The silver chest and arms now pass to the belly of bronze.³⁷ Daniel's dream of the bear with three ribs now passes to the leopard with four heads. Alexander continues his campaign to the east, capturing eight more tribes and brings their land into his empire. In 327 BC, Alexander is determined to cross the Hindu-Kush Mountains to enter the valley of the Indus River and conquer India, but his battle-weary troops refuse to go. Alexander returns to Babylon and makes it his capitol.

On May 29th, 323 BC, Alexander attends a function in honor of his admiral, Mericus, and he drinks heavily at the party. When that party ends, his friend, Medius, persuades him to attend another party where he continues to drink wine, which has been diluted with water. When he becomes drunk, his friends carry him home to bed. When he awakes, he has a very high fever; he has contracted malaria. He spends the day and night in the bathhouse trying to cool off. The next day he spends his time in his bedroom playing with dice. He makes a valiant effort to conduct business, but, on June VI, he hands his ring to Perdicus, his senior officer, so the business of the empire can continue. The upper echelon of his organization gather around him in his bedroom and one of his men asks him, "Who should have the kingdom?" Alexander answers, "The strongest." His last words are, "I foresee a funeral contest over me," and so it will be.³⁸

Early in the morning of June 10th, 323 BC, Alexander dies at the age of 32, after reigning just 12 years and 8 months. He has led his troops over 20,000 miles. They prepare him for burial and attempt to transport him back to Macedonia to be buried with his father but one of his generals captures the body in Damascus and carries it back to Babylon and buries him there.

Alexander's empire falls into anarchy. After Alexander's death, Philip, his half-brother takes control. Olympias, Alexander's mother, successfully instigates Philip's murder in the sixth year of his reign. They murder Philip's wife at the same time. Alexander had a mistress, Barsine, who had given him a son named Hercules. Both are murdered to prevent them from inheriting the throne. Alexander had taken Darius III's daughter, Stateira, as a wife, murdered by Roxanne, another of Alexander's wives bore him a son after his death. Roxanne named him Alexander, after his dead father. When he is 13 years old, Olympias, Alexander's mother, orders his and his mother's deaths. General Cassander kills both of them. Finally, the murders of Olympias, Alexander's mother, and his sister, Cleopatra, occur; therefore, within 15 years of his death, the world contains no living relatives of Alexander the Great. The prophecy is fulfilled. With the shaggy goat of Daniel's vision dead, the four-horns will grow in soon.

³⁷ Daniel 2

³⁸ [A Bibliography of Alexander the Great](#) by Waldemar Heckel

The Horns

Daniel ^{8:22} "And the broken *horn* and the four *horns* that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from *his* nation, although not with his power.

During the chaos after Alexander's death, four of his seven generals rise in power and fight each other. After many internal wars, the empire begins to divide into four parts, initially headed by satraps. Cassander takes over Macedon, Thessala and Greece. Lysmachus takes over Trece, western Bithnia, Phrygia, Missa and Lydia. Ptolemy I takes Egypt, Cyrene and Cypress. Seluius I takes Syria, Babylonia and Media.

Selucius I's authority does not come easily even though he represents the horn of Daniel's vision that grows longer. Selucius I acts as vice-regent of Babylon, but Antigonus, another of Alexander's generals, drives him out of the Babylonian area. Selucius I runs to Egypt, becoming a general for Ptolemy I.

In the Battle of Ipsus, Selucius defeats Antigonus in 301 BC and captures most of Alexander's Empire. He takes Cappadocia, Phrygia, Upper- Syria, Mesopotamia, Euphrates Valley and rules from the Indus Mountains to Hellspoint, a narrow strait in northwestern Turkey connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara. For all practical purposes, Selucius now controls the major part of Alexander's kingdom, the larger part, and he has grown into the larger horn referred to in the prophecy.

The Transgressor

Daniel ^{8:23} "And in the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run *their course*, A king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue. ^{8:24} "And his power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power, And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform *his will*; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. ^{8:25} "And through his shrewdness He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify *himself* in his heart, 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.

Gabriel tells Daniel that after the Greek Empire divides into four parts later in their rule, "a king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue," the transgressor. Gabriel's concise interpretation seems to give little usable information; yet, history reveals the fulfillment of each part of the angel's words.

In 181 BC, Ptolemy V of Egypt dies and his six year old son, Ptolemy VI, begins to co-reign with his mother, Cleopatra I. Late in his reign, Selucius IV of Syria sends a treasurer to Jerusalem, called in Daniel's prophecy the "Jewel of the Kingdom," to raise money to pay the taxes to the Romans.³⁹ The treasurer tries to plunder the riches of the Temple, but he does not enter it because he is stopped supernaturally. The treasurer returns to Selucius IV in 175 BC and poisons him. Thus, Selucius IV dies, neither in anger, nor in battle. The treasurer seizes the throne for himself. Ptolemy VI of Egypt disputes the treasurer's claim to the throne and claims it, stating that Syria should be part of the Egyptian Empire of the South because Antiochus III was the father of his mother, Cleopatra I. It does not matter because Selucius IV's

³⁹ Daniel 11:20

younger brother, Antiochus IV, also called Antiochus Epiphanies, claims the throne back from the treasurer in 175 BC.



Antiochus IV is vile. As the prophecy says, the honor of the kingdom is not his because the kingdom really belongs to his brother, Demetrius I, imprisoned in Rome, exactly where Antiochus IV wants him to stay. Through flattery, Antiochus IV takes the throne peacefully using friends in Pergamum to keep Demetrius I imprisoned in Rome.

Soon after taking the throne in 175 BC, Antiochus IV's nephew, Ptolemy VI, of the South, makes a futile effort to recover Egypt's land that was lost to Syria, but he fails.

Antiochus IV murders the "prince of the covenant," Onias III, the Jewish high priest. His brother, Jason, next in line for the position, should take his place, but Minilaus obtains the office of High Priest in the temple by paying a huge bribe to Antiochus IV, beginning the 2,300 day prophecy of Daniel.

Antiochus IV had made a treaty with the rulers in Pergamum so they would help keep Demetrius I in Rome allowing Antiochus IV to remain on the throne. He breaks that treaty for a stronger one with Rome later on. With his army, he enters Egypt and makes it all the way up the Nile River to the city of Memphis, distributing gifts as he goes. His plans a peaceful takeover of four of the major cities in Egypt, which include Alexandria and Memphis. Because of the prophecy he can go only so far; therefore, he cannot capture Alexandria.

Antiochus IV assembles a large army and marches on Ptolemy VI. In the first battle, Ptolemy VI is defeated. Antiochus wins the next battle also. Then he marches on to Memphis and proclaims himself the ruler of Egypt. Ptolemy VI's advisors have advised him wrongly. They have secretly sided with Antiochus IV, yet they are serving in Ptolemy's counsel. Many of the people in Egypt have transferred their loyalty from Ptolemy VI to his brother, Ptolemy VIII, who successfully stops Antiochus IV from taking Alexandria.

Antiochus IV returns to Memphis where he sits at a table with his nephew, Ptolemy VI. He pretends to be Ptolemy's friend and calls him the king of Egypt. Ptolemy VI pretends to go along with the banter of Antiochus IV. They lie to each other just as Daniel foretells in chapter 11.

As soon as Antiochus IV leaves the table, Ptolemy VI appeals to his brother, Ptolemy VIII, and they begin a co-rule of forces in Egypt. As Antiochus IV journeys home, he hears rumors in Palestine of his death, and the Jews rejoice over the news.

Jason, the rightful High Priest, gathers 1,000 mercenaries and marches to Jerusalem, capturing the city. Antiochus IV takes this as a revolt and determines to teach the Jews a lesson. He attacks Jerusalem and kills 40,000 inhabitants. He sells another 40,000 into slavery and plunders the temple, carrying off its treasures. Jason flees.

Minilaus, who bought the High Priesthood from Antiochus IV, still controls the position. He sacrifices a pig on the bronze altar for Antiochus IV, and makes a broth with the pig, spreading the juice all over the temple, defiling it.

Antiochus IV returns to capture Egypt in a second campaign. After that campaign, Egypt hires Greek mercenaries and asks Rome for help.

In 168 BC, Antiochus IV attacks Egypt again, ordering the surrender of Cyprus and other areas that belong to Egypt. Just as the prophecy foretells, no one can stand up to Antiochus IV

Memphis falls to Antiochus IV, but at Alexandria, the Roman ships of Chittim anchor in the harbor. Four miles from Alexandria, Roman officers surround Antiochus IV and hand him an ultimatum to leave the friends of the Romans alone. Antiochus IV tries to get away saying, "Give me a few days to think about this," but the commander draws a circle around him and says, "Before you step out of this circle, you give your answer." Antiochus IV says, "If it pleases the senate, we must depart." Antiochus IV leaves Egypt. For all practical purposes, the belly of bronze bows to the waist and thighs of iron. The four-headed leopard of chapter 7 has yielded to the Great Beast, even though both kingdoms will continue for a while.

In revenge, Antiochus IV returns to Jerusalem, attacks the temple, the town buildings and the massive walls and uses them to protect the Syrian troops. He decrees a universal religion and a universal law. He stops Jewish sacrifices, he destroys the Scriptures, he changes the feasts, he builds an altar to Zeus and he erects an Ashura Pole, the sex symbol of the Canaanite worship. To disobey Antiochus IV means immediate death. He dedicates the temple to Zeus Olympias and to himself as king, ordering all the people to worship both as god. Antiochus IV has gone too far.

God's remnant finds leadership in Matthaius and his sons. They represent the wise men of the prophecy who know God's word. They attempt to make things right in the midst of all the persecution.

One of Antiochus IV's officials approaches Matthaius, a priest in a little town called Modan and instructs Matthaius to offer a sacrifice to Zeus. Matthaius not only refuses to offer the sacrifice; he also kills the official. When Antiochus IV hears about this deed, he sends officials to enforce the decree. A skirmish occurs and the priest kills the officials.

Matthaius and his son, Judas Maccabeus, lead a group of religious rebels and they cut deeply into the troops of Antiochus IV. When Matthaius dies, Judas Maccabeus takes over. Many join Judas in the fight and the Maccabees become a major force in Israel.

Antiochus IV repeatedly attacks the Jews on the Sabbath, knowing that they will not fight on that day. Jews are roasted, Jews are strangled, Jews are crucified, Jews are sold into slavery, Jews are robbed, and Jews are cut into pieces. Six and a half years, 2,300 days since Antiochus IV placed Minilaus in charge, Judas Maccabeus and his men march on the city, ousting Antiochus IV, ousting Minilaus, reclaiming the city and repairing, cleansing, and finally rededicating the temple they had defiled. They add this day to their calendar as a feast day and they call it the Feast of Dedication.

Antiochus IV dies of a disease in 163 BC, and his nine-year-old son takes the throne, ruling for part of two years. With Antiochus IV's death in 163 BC, the little horn that grew off the long horn of the four horns of the goat in Daniel Chapter 8 dies "without human agency."

The Vision

Daniel ^{8:26} "And the vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; But keep the vision secret, For *it* pertains to many days *in the future*."

Gabriel assures Daniel that the vision of the 2,300 day assault on the Beautiful Land will occur, but Daniel must keep it secret because it will not occur for a long time in the future. History reveals that the total fulfillment of the eighth chapter of Daniel in 163 BC, 373 years after its presentation to Daniel in 536 BC.

Daniel's Exhaustion

Daniel ^{8:27} Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain *it*.

The assault on the Beautiful Land disturbs Daniel greatly for days, but soon he must get back to his job of taking care of Nabonibus and Belshazzar's business in the empire. He could not have known the extent of the vision and the devastation it would cause upon the temple, Jerusalem and Israel. Because "there was none to explain it," we do not know the extent to which Daniel truly understood the vision; however, fifteen years later, in 521 BC, the angel will reveal another vision to Daniel with greater detail about this same story as recorded in Daniel 11.