

BOOK OF DANIEL
DANIEL'S SECOND VISION
DANIEL 8

Introduction

The section from Daniel 2:4 to Daniel 7:28 was originally written in *ARAMAIC*, and has **the Gentile nations as its primary focus**.

With this chapter, the language reverts back to **HEBREW**—which is vitally important to the correct interpretation of the Book of Daniel. From this point forward, all prophecy we see will have a **direct reference to the Jews, Jerusalem, and the Sanctuary (the Temple)**.

Daniel 8 gives us some additional prophecies concerning the Medo-Persian Empire and the Grecian Empire (which both were yet future at this time)—as they would relate to the Jews.

Under the Persians, the Jews of the captivity were allowed to return to their land. (*Cf. 2 Chron. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; Neh. 2:1-8; Jer. 29:10*)

Under the Greeks, Palestine became a battleground for the warring dynasties.

I. THE SECOND VISION OF THE PROPHET DANIEL.
(vss. 1-2, 15-19, 27)

A. The Time Of The Vision. (vs 1)

The third year of Belshazzar which would be 551 B.C.

This was two years after the vision of Daniel 7, and just prior to the empire-ending events of Daniel 5.

B. The Type Of Vision. (vs 1)

"*That which appeared unto me at the first...*" refers to the vision of Daniel 7. It did not occur as a dream, but while Daniel was awake.

From Daniel 7:28 we see Daniel was most concerned about the ramifications of that first vision. Now God elaborates.

C. The Transport Of The Vision. (vs 2)

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Daniel was 'transported' in the vision to Shushan—which at this time was an insignificant place, but it was destined to become capital of the Persian world. In later times, both Nehemiah and Esther lived there. (*Nehemiah 1:1; Esther 1:2*)

D. The Teacher Of The Vision. (vs. 15-19)

Gabriel ("*man of God*") is sent to make known the meaning of the vision to Daniel. Gabriel is an angel connected with the delivering of important MESSAGES from Heaven to Israel—see: *Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26*.

E. The Terror Of The Vision. (vs. 27)

Daniel was physically and emotionally expended by the vision. Nevertheless, he was soon back at the king's business.

II. THE RAM FROM THE EAST. (vss. 3-4, 20)

A. The Identity Of The Ram. (vs. 20)

The Ram symbolized the Medo-Persian empire.

B. The Description Of The Ram. (vs 3-4)

1. It Had Two Horns.

These correspond with the two arms of the image in Daniel 2, and symbolize the two-kingdom confederacy of Media and Persia.

2. One Of Its Horns Was Higher.

This corresponds with the bear of Daniel 7, raised up on one side.(Also the arms in the image as one arm is usually stronger than the other!) This symbolizes the Persian dominance of this alliance!

3. The Higher Horn Up Last.

The Persian kingdom was younger than Media, but stronger.

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4. The Ram Pushing.

This symbolizes aggression and conquest. The three directions correspond to the 3 ribs in the mouth of the bear in Daniel 7.

- a. Westward — Babylon, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor.
- b. Northward— Lydia, Armenia, and the regions around the Caspian Sea.
- c. Southward —Palestine, and parts of Egypt, Arabia, and Ethiopia.

5. The Ram Becomes Great.

The Persian armies were invincible for about two centuries.

Interesting Note: The Persian battle standard always carried a RAM. Coins of that ancient empire have been discovered, bearing a ram's head on one side. The Zodiac sign traditionally assigned to Persia is Aries—the Ram!

III. THE HE GOAT FROM THE WEST. (vss. 5-8, 21-22)

A. The Identity Of The He Goat. (vs 21)

The *He Goat* symbolized the Grecian empire.

B. The Description Of The He Goat. (vs 5)

1. It Was From The West.

The Bible accurately shows Greece to be westward from Persia.

2. It Touched Not The Ground.

This corresponds with the four winged leopard of Daniel 7, and symbolizes the speed, swiftness, and mobility of the armies of Alexander the Great.

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3. It Had One Notable Horn Between Its Eyes.

Verse 21 tells us this horn refers to Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.). Alexander was only 20 years old when he received the kingdom of Greece from his father, Philip of Macedonia. His tutor was the famed Aristotle.

C. The He Goat Attacks The Ram. (vs 6-7)

These verses aptly describe the defeat of the Persian empire by the Greeks.

1. The Anger Of The He Goat.

In verse 6 the word "*fury*" is used; in verse 7 the word "*choler*" is used. These show extreme anger.

"choler" = "to be or make bitter"

There was much animosity toward Persia from the Greeks because of earlier attacks upon Greece by the Persians under Xerxes I (c. 480 B.C.) The Greek moves here were retaliatory.

2. The Smashing Of The Ram. (3 Significant Battles)

a. The Battle Of Granicus-334 B.C.

Crossing the Hellespont with only 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, at the Granicus River in Asia Minor Alexander defeated the Persian armies of Darius III which were far superior in numbers and position.

b. The Battle Of Issus-333 B.C.

Alexander again defeated the 600,000-strong army of Darius III at Issus, near Antioch in Cilicia.

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Following this victory, Alexander turned to conquer the island fortress of Tyre. Next, he took Egypt (which surrendered passively), whereupon he founded the great city of Alexandria.

c. The Battle Of Arbela-331 B.C.

Alexander once again "*came close to the ram*" at the battle of Arbela, a plain near Nineveh.

In this third clash between the Greeks and the Persians, Darius III himself led a vast army of 1 million men. His forces were routed and Darius was assassinated. At this point in history, Greece supplanted the Mede-Persian empire as a world power.

From Arbela, Alexander went on to take Susa (Shushan) with its fabulous wealth of gold, and for three years thereafter he completely subjugated all the provinces of the Persian empire.

Note that it was a new thing in the history of human affairs for power to come from the west. Before Alexander, new powers usually arose in the east where the most ancient civilizations had developed.

When Alexander took his armies across the Hellespont (334 B.C.), he changed the course of history for 2,300 years and perhaps forever. For the first time, the center of world dominion shifted from the Orient to the Occident. Alexander prepared the way for Christianity to spread westward.

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D. The Division Of The Kingdom Of Alexander. (vs 8)

1. At the height of his career and power, Alexander the Great died.

He had completely conquered the then-known world, and would have gone on to the Ganges River except for the refusal of his armies.

Alexander established himself at Babylon and finished his life in hedonistic pleasure and drunkenness. At the age of 33, he died—worn out, feverish, and drunk. A bad habit can conquer even a world conqueror!

2. Alexander left no heir and for about 20 years his kingdom was left in a state of confusion.

This ended, just as the Bible predicted, with a four-fold division corresponding to the four heads of the winged leopard of Daniel 7 and the four notable horns of Daniel 8.

Alexander's four generals divided the empire among themselves:

- a. Cassander—took Macedonia and the western parts.
- b. Lysimachus—took Thrace and the northern parts.
- c. Seleucus—took Syria and the eastern parts.
- d. Ptolemy—took Egypt and the southern parts.

We will later see some further details concerning the kingdoms of Seleucid and Ptolemy in Daniel 11.

I want you to note that the symbol of Greece has always been a GOAT. An ancient city was Agea ("*goat city*"). The sea between Greece and Turkey is still called the Aegean Sea (*the Goat Sea*).

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IV. THE GRECIAN LITTLE HORN. (vss. 9-14)

This is one of the most difficult passages in the area of Bible prophecy. There are two main areas of disagreement among those who have studied the passage:

1. Whether the "*little horn*" of Daniel 8 is identical to the "*little horn*" of Daniel 7, and...
2. Whether the events prophesied in these verses have been fulfilled or are yet to be fulfilled.

A. The Key To Interpreting The Passage.

The key to correctly understanding this passage of Scripture is found in understanding a law of Biblical Interpretation known as the "*LAW OF DOUBLE REFERENCE*," which states that "*the Bible sometimes refers to a near and a far subject in the same passage.*"

For example:

1. Ezekiel 28:1-19 is addressed to the king of Tyre, Ethbaal II. However, it indisputably goes beyond the immediate earthly reference to give great detail of the original estate and fall of the evil one behind Ethbaal—Satan.
2. Hosea 11:1 applies primarily to the nation of Israel, but the Holy Spirit also uses it of God's "*greater Son*," the Lord Jesus Christ—Matthew 2:14,15.
3. Jeremiah 50 & 51 prophesy of the judgment of God upon the ancient kingdom of Babylon through the agency of the Medes and Persians. However, it also looks forward to the final (yet future) overthrow of Babylon prophesied in Revelation 17 & 18.

The prophecy of Isaiah 14 also predicts the fall of Babylon (near), but also contains a prediction of the final end of the Antichrist—"Satan in the flesh!"

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4. The prophecy of Zephaniah 1 predicts both the near invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar and the far coming siege of Jerusalem by the Antichrist and his armies.

The prophecy of Daniel 8 falls into this category. The little horn has both a PAST (historical) fulfillment in Antiochus IV and a FUTURE fulfillment in the coming Antichrist.

B. The Rise Of The Little Horn. (vs. 9)

"Out of one of them," i.e. from one of the four divisions of the Greek empire.

Note that the *little horn* of Daniel 7 rises out of the fourth beast, the restored Roman empire, whereas the *little horn* of Daniel 8 rises out of a branch of the Grecian empire.

Therefore, these two '*little horns*' do not refer to the same character.

C. The Little Horn Located. (vs. 9)

Because this little horn is said to push south (to Egypt), east (to Armenia), and toward the "*pleasant land*," we conclude it represents a king from the north (with reference to Jerusalem), (i.e. the Seleucid dynasty of Syria)

D. The Little Horn Identified. (vs. 10-12)

He is historically identified as Antiochus IV "*Epiphanes*," the eighth king of the Syrian (Seleucid) dynasty.

Antiochus usurped the throne in 175 B.C. and ruled for 11 years. Antiochus called himself Epiphanes—"*glorious one*."

His attempts to force Greek culture and religion upon the Jews of Palestine provoked strong resistance, and in retaliation he unleashed a reign of terror upon God's people.

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1. **He Grew Great — vs 10a.**
2. **He Cast Down Some Of The Host — vs 10.**
This probably refers to his destruction of certain Jewish leaders and priests.

Antiochus forbade the observance of the Sabbath and other holy days.

Once, on returning from a disastrous military expedition to Egypt, he took out his rage by slaughtering 40,000 Jews and taking another 10,000 into slavery. He was truly a beast!
3. **He Magnified Himself — vs 11.**
The title "*epiphanes*" ("*glorious one*") shows this. It is so typical of man!
The Jews changed this title to "*Epimanes*" "*madman!*"
4. **He Stopped The Jewish Sacrifices — vss. 11-12.**
Antiochus set up an altar to the god Jupiter within the Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Then, as a final insult to the Jews and their God, he sacrificed a sow upon the altar of God.

E. The Period Of Desecration. (vs 13-14)
It would last for 2,300 days. The question is, "*What do these days mean?*"

1. **The Seventh Day Adventist Theory.**
William Miller, one of the forerunners of Seventh Day Adventism, interpreted the 2,300 days to mean 2,300 years, and those who followed him reckoned that Christ would return 2,300 years after the command to rebuild the temple was given (457 BC), i.e. in 1843AD

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When Jesus did not return as expected they decided their timing was 'off,' and re-set the date to 1844.

When Jesus still didn't come, they came up with the explanation that He really did come, only not to the earth but to cleanse the sanctuary in HEAVEN.

This error resulted in the Adventist heresy that Christ's work on Calvary was not finished until 1844 AD!!

2. Interpreting The "Days."

While it is true that sometimes the word "*day*" means a period of time (e.g. II Peter 3:10) and possibly even a year, the word "*days*" here in Daniel 8:14 is translated from the Hebrew words which literally mean '*from dusk to dawn*' or "*evening-morning's*" (as were the six days of creation). In other words, they are literal 24 hour days.

Thus the 2,300 days is a period of 6 years, 4 months, and 20 days. This corresponds to the historic period of time beginning with the murder of Onias the High Priest in 171 B.C. and ending with the death of Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 B.C.

V. THE END TIME LITTLE HORN. (vs 23-26)

While Antiochus Epiphanes represents the **near** fulfillment of the prophecy of the Little Horn in Daniel 8, verses 23-25 speak of someone other than Antiochus, the coming king who is the **far** fulfillment of this prophecy—the Antichrist.

The phrase, "*the time of the end*" in verses 17 and 19 lend weight to the double reference of this prophecy.

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Antiochus' sacrificing of a pig upon the altar in the Temple of God was indeed an abomination—but in the time of the end, the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION shall stand in the holy place, many times more evil and terrible than his foreshadowing.

Note the information concerning the Antichrist given here:

A. He Is A King. (vs 23)

The "little horn" of Daniel 7:24 is a king.

B. He Is A King Of Fierce Countenance. (vs 23)

This refers to his ruthlessness and warlike disposition.

C. He Will Understand Dark Sentences. (vs 23)

This refers to his great intelligence—possibly in occultic mysteries.

D. His Power Is Not His Own. (verse 24)

Antichrist will be energized by Satan.

Revelation 13:2—“...and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority...4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast...”

E. He Shall Accomplish Wonderful Things. (vs 24)

Revelation 13:13—“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men”

F. He Shall Be A Master Of Deceit. (vs 25)

Revelation 13:14—“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast...”

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10— 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness...”

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G. He Shall Exalt Himself. (vs 25; 2 Thessalonians 2:4)

2 Thessalonians 2:4—“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

H. He Shall Oppose The Prince Of Princes. (vs 25)

He is anti-Christ.

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

I. He Shall Bring In A False Peace. (vs 25)

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Antichrist will conquer through peace, as symbolized by the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6:2 (a bow, but no arrows!) A world, long wearied by wars and strife, will welcome any peace-making 'messiah' with open arms.

J. He Will Be Destroyed Supernaturally. (vs 25)

Revelation 19:20—“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Note: It is true that all of these things could be applied to Antiochus Epiphanes alone. Even his death was of God, in the sense that he was stricken with a sudden illness which the Jews believed was from the hand of God. Certainly, this ancient king gives us a preview of the one that is to come!