

## SERMON OUTLINE

In Daniel 8:1-27 we find Daniel engaging with a vision in 5 ways.

- I. Daniel sees a vision of a ram, a goat, and horns (vs. 1-12).
- II. Daniel overhears a conversation between holy ones (vs. 13-14).
- III. Daniel seeks to understand the vision (vs. 15-18).
- IV. Daniel receives the interpretation of the vision (vs. 19-26).
- V. Daniel responds to the vision (v. 27).

## BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, January 7, 2018

Passage: Daniel 8:1-27

Memory Passage: Daniel 8:25

### DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 8:1-27.** There is almost universal agreement concerning the time in history this chapter covers, and to fully appreciate it we will need a bit of history (which will require this week's study to be a bit longer than usual). But first, let's take the text as it stands by reading the entire chapter today and tomorrow and answering the following questions:

(b) When does Daniel receive this vision in comparison to the vision in chapter 7, and what differences do you notice between the setting/opening descriptions in 7:1-2a and 8:1-3a?

(c) Who is the ram, how is it described, and how does this translate into the characteristics of the actual kingdoms?

(d) Who is the goat, how is it described, and how does this translate into the characteristics of the actual kingdom?

(e) What do you learn about the 4 horns, and then the little horn, from both the vision and the interpretation of the vision?

### DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 8:1-27.** What does this vision and its interpretation tell you about God's role in this struggle?

(b) Who are "the host of heaven" and "the stars," and how did/will this little horn "throw down to the ground and trample on" some of these stars (v. 12)?

(c) Who are the "transgressors" (v. 23), what "transgressions" (vs. 12, 13) do they commit, and what consequences follow?

(d) How does the interpretation of the vision explain the "2300 evenings and mornings?"

### DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 8:1-27.** Though Daniel received this vision around 550 B.C., the main events actually took place in history in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. We are told by Gabriel that the ram with its 2 horns represent Media & Persia and the goat is Greece. We know that Cyrus overthrew the Medes in 550 B.C., and then Babylon and its king, Belshazzar, in 538 B.C., and this empire lasted until Alexander the Great (the horn on the goat) overthrew it in 333 B.C. (vs. 4-7). In approximately 10 years (v. 5—"without touching the ground") Alexander would expand his empire from Greece to India (v. 5—"from the west across the face of the whole earth"), and never lose a battle. He died in 323 at the young age of 33 (v. 8, "when he was strong").

(b) Alexander's 4 generals (Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, the "four conspicuous horns" of v. 8) took over different parts of the empire (v. 8—"toward the four winds of heaven"). Seleucus was leader of Syria. Antiochus Epiphanes IV was the 8<sup>th</sup> king of this dynasty (and the "little horn/king of bold face" of vs. 8-14, 23-25) taking the throne through deceit and trickery (v. 25—"by his cunning he shall make deceit prosper") instead of his nephew and then advancing his power & reign through military might (v. 9—"little horn, which grew exceedingly great") eventually including the Promised Land (v. 9—"the glorious land").

(c) The Apocryphal books *1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Maccabees* record in detail the acts of Antiochus IV, including stopping the sacrifices, erecting an altar to Zeus over the altar in the temple, and then sacrificing a pig on that altar (vs. 13-14), burning the Torah (v. 12—"throw truth to the ground"), and murdering 40,000 Jews and enslaving 40,000 more, including women and children (v. 24—"he shall destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints," and v. 25—"without warning he shall destroy many").

(d) Antiochus IV's aggression against the Jews began in 171 B.C. when he removed the Jewish High Priest Onias III, and increased in 167 B.C. with the murders, prohibition of sacrifices, and profanation of the altar, and ended in 164 B.C. with his death (v. 25—"and he shall be broken—but by no human hands."), and with the rededication of the temple on December 25, 165 B.C. (an event still commemorated by Hanukkah, the "Feast of Dedication" in John 10:22).

### DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

### READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Dan. 8:1-27.** Notice the evil the little horn does against (1) God (vs. 10-11); (2) God's people (vs. 24, 25b); and God's truth (vs. 12b, 25). In what ways do God's enemies, especially kings and their kingdoms, conspire against God and his people today in our world?

(b) In what ways does Daniel 8 help us to both understand and persevere through these manifestations of evil?

(c) Antiochus IV was a type of antichrist. Read 1 John 2:18-27 and write down several ways you and other believers are to identify and respond to these "many antichrists (who) have (and will) come" (1 John 2:18).

(d) What is the primary point of the “2300 evenings and mornings” and how is this encouraging for you in 21<sup>st</sup> century America?

**DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**

**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Daniel 8:1-27.** Let’s consider Daniel’s responses in v. 27 in reverse order. First, he did not understand the vision. Given Daniel’s giftedness (cf. 1:17; 4:9; 5:12), does this surprise you? Though you might be tempted to despair over this, in what ways *should* this bring you comfort?

(b) Second, he “was appalled by the vision” and “was overcome and lay sick for some days.” What parts of the vision caused this kind of reaction? Are you appalled and overcome by sin? By God’s judgment of sin? By the consequences of sin? In what ways can you grow in your tenderness to these ideas? In what ways does the presence of sin and judgment in this world cause you to work in the kingdom?

(c) Finally, he “rose and went about the king’s business.” Notice he did not separate from society, ignore his calling and responsibilities because, after all, the end was near!, or sit in a corner in despair. *He went back to work!* How do the truths you have learned in Daniel 8 about God, His sovereignty, and the way He limits the times of persecution help you in your daily life? How do they help prepare you for an uncertain earthly future? How do they help you disciple those who have weaker faith or struggle with anxiety over evil’s advancement? How do they help you in public gatherings of our church to “encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Hebrews 10:24-25)?

**DATE: January 7, 2018**

**PASSAGE: Daniel 8:1-27**

***Living While Waiting***