

Daniel

Chapter Eight

Six Themes emerge in chapters 7-8

- 1) Horror of human evil
- 2) Specific time of deliverance
- 3) Repentance leads to deliverance
- 4) Cosmic war is behind human conflict
- 5) Certain judgment for the one who resists God/ opposes His people
- 6) God's people—though down trodden—will triumph

Daniel 8:1-2

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. 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.

- Third year of Belshazzar's reign (553-549 BC)—same time Cyrus established Medo Persian Empire (which will end Babylonian Empire 12 years later)
- Belshazzar became co-regent with his father—Nabonidus
- In the second vision—animals symbolize Empires—warns of end times/antichrist
- In this chapter—warning of a crisis that will come 400 years after Daniel's death (175-163 BC)—Antiochus IV Epiphanes
- Book once more written in Hebrew—Aramaic in chapters 2-7
- The vision of chapter 8 takes place before the events in chapter 5
- Prophecy in chapter 7 is called a dream—in chapter 8—called a vision
- Citadel of Susa—most think Daniel is in this place by vision—not actual
- Ezekiel was often transported through visions—Ezekiel 8-11, 40-48
- Citadel can mean a palace, a fortress within a city, or a city as a fortress
- Susa—220 miles east of Babylon—150 miles north of the Persian Gulf—at the time of the vision, it was the capital of Elam (present day Iran)
- Used as a winter residence for Persian kings
- Esther and Nehemiah lived in Susa

Daniel 8:3-4

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, but one was longer

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

- In vs 20—Gabriel interprets the rams with 2 horns=Medo-Persian Empire
- Rams normally have 2 horns—these are unique in that they came at different times and are of different sizes
- Before Cyrus came to power—Media was major force—Persia smaller—held less than 50,000 sq miles of territory
- Cyrus gained control of Media—to the north—then gave preeminence to Persia
- Ram seems invincible as it charges west, north, south (West: Babylon, Syria, Asia Minor—North: Armenia, Scythia, Caspian Sea region—South: Egypt, Ethiopia)
- Medo-Persia became great—magnified itself

Daniel 8:5-8

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. 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. 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. 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.

- Charging goat suddenly appears—coming from the west—to counter the Ram
- Vs 21—identified as Greek Empire
- Prominent horn=1st king=Alexander the Great
- Alexander conquered the world of his day—over the surface of the whole earth
- Born in 356 BC—son of Philip of Macedon (Philip had united Greece with Macedonia and was planning to attack Persia—but was murdered)
- Alexander was educated under Aristotle—succeeded his father as king, when he was 20 years old
- He conquered the entire Middle East between 334-331 BC
- Goat charges ram in a fit of rage
- Alexander becomes proud—dies June 13, 323 BC—age 32—having been instrumental in spreading Greek culture and language throughout conquered lands
- Koine Greek—language of NT
- When Alexander—the Large Horn dies—leaves 2 sons: Alexander IV and Heracles—both murdered
- Empire is parted to Four military leaders

Daniel 8:9-12

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. 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. 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. 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.

- Little horn represent the 8th ruler of the Seleucid Greek Empire=Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 BC)
- Magnified itself to be equal—Isaiah 14
- He assails the Beautiful Land—called this because of its' spiritual significance
- Host/stars=symbolize God's people
- Trampled them down—persecution of the saints in Jerusalem—He slaughtered 80,000 men, women and children—plundered the temple/erected an altar to Zeus/slaughtered a pig on the altar
- I Macc 1:37-39, 44-47, 54,59
- II Macc 6:2-5
- Antiochus placed himself/his gods—above Yahweh
- Forbid Jewish religious laws: diet, circumcision, sabbath, feasts
- Temple worship interrupted
- Vs 12—sins of Jewish people brought about divine judgment (Antiochus' persecutions)—many Jews had adopted idolatrous Greek religion
- For 3 years—(167-164)—Jews (the host of the saints) were given over to Antiochus (he was prospering in all he did)—he even attempted to destroy the scriptures: I Macc 1:56-57, Jer 36:26-31

Daniel 8:13-14

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?" And he said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.

- Answer is given to Daniel—2300 days
- 167—Antiochus sets up altar and statue to Zeus in the temple (I Macc 1:54)
- 164 BC—Dec 14—Judas Maccabeus rededicated temple (Hanukkah)

Daniel 8:15- 19

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. 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." 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." 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. 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.

- Angels are named in Book of Daniel—Gabriel and Michael (In Book of Enoch: Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Saraggel, Remiel)
- Man=strong or mighty one—God Himself (He is giving orders to angelic realm)
- Daniel had not shown fear of angels (7:16)
- Shows extreme fear here—characteristic of those who find themselves in God's presence (Is 6:5, Ezek 1:28, Rev 1:17)
- This is the first time in scripture that an angel is designated by name
- Gabriel also appears to Zachariah (Lu 1:19)—Mary (Lu 1:26)
- Michael—Jude 9, Rev 12:7
- Time of the end—time that is at the end of the current prophetic discussion—which is about Antiochus—also describes the time of the antichrist
- Vs 19—latter part of time of wrath—events that will occur at end of period of judgment
- Wrath/indignation—recipients—Antiochus and unfaithful Israelites

Daniel 8:20-22

The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 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.

- None of the 4 successive kingdoms ever achieved the strength of Alexander
- 4 horns—Alexander's 4 prominent generals—the Diadochi

Daniel 8:23-27

And in the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue. 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. And though 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. 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. 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.

- Vs 23-26—heart of the vision—and reason for it—prep for the persecution of Antiochus—a call to faithfulness
- Rebels/transgressors—those who have rebelled against God's laws—when rebellion reaches its height—punishment is exacted
- Insolent—a harsh face—unyielding, merciless
- Skilled in intrigue—one who understands riddles or difficult problems—he will be a master of political intrigue
- Antiochus began to rule a weak kingdom in 175 BC—gained power through military conquest
- He gains his power through satan—he aims at Hellenization—for awhile he appears invincible
- Vs 25—shrewdness=cunning, prudence, understanding
- Antiochus—will deploy deceit to achieve his goals—he will cause deceit to prosper—deception is elevated—truth is thrown to the ground
- Magnify himself in his heart—he had coins with his image which said 'theos epiphanes=God Manifest—he saw himself as an earthly representative of deity
- While they are at ease—when they feel secure—in quietness—then Antiochus took them by force
- Took a stand against the Prince of Princes—God Himself
- Broken without human agency—he will not die in battle or assassination
- Vs 26—assurance given on exact timing offered
- Keep vision secret—sealed up/keep closed

Truths from Chapter 8

God is Omniscient

God's people will be called to suffer

By examining Antiochus—his rise to power—how he displays his power can give insight to what we may be up against with the antichrist

Antiochus and antichrist both symbolized by horns—that were little or small at the beginning

Representing both kings as 'little horns' shows that one prefigures the other

Antiochus—stern faced

Antichrist—imposing look

Daniel Chapter Eight-----Workbook

Project:

Make a list of the animals that have shown up in the visions. What qualities do they have in real life?

Harmonize:

Read Revelations 12-13

Dig:

- 1) When did this vision take place?

- 2) What was the location in the vision? Is this important? Why?

- 3) How is the rain described in chapter eight? Is it similar to any other description in the Book of Daniel?

- 4) As you read about the 'Little Horn' in verses 9-12, what conclusion do you draw?

- 5) What does the ram represent in chapter 8?

- 6) What do horns represent in chapter 8?

- 7) What does the goat represent in chapter 8?

- 8) How does Daniel find out the interpretation of his vision?

9) Who is being described in 8:23-25?

10) What is Daniel instructed to do with the vision?

11) What is 'the Beautiful Land'?

Discuss:

- 1) Jesus calls us to have 'eyes to see and ears to hear'—How is the Lord developing your spiritual seeing?
- 2) How do you tend to process what is happening in the world today?
- 3) How is one to live 'in' the world, but not 'of' it?

Point of Prayer:

Take time to pray for the persecuted church.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Have you experienced persecution for your faith?
- 2) Have you regarded someone as your enemy?
- 3) What has the Lord done to resolve the conflict?
- 4) When a country or a people begin to oppose your country—what is a Kingdom response?
- 5) During times of war, how can we best represent the Kingdom of God?
- 6) Do you have ways you have learned to thrive during seasons of suffering?
- 7) How do you “consider it all joy when you encounter various trials”? (James 1)
- 8) How has suffering contributed to your endurance/perseverance?