

## The Vision of the Ram and the Goat

### Daniel 8:1-27

**Daniel 8 focuses on the two empires of Persia and Greece.** During the Persian occupation the Israelites/Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city, homes and temple. During the Greek dominion (particularly during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes) the city of Jerusalem and the temple were once again destroyed.

#### The Setting of the Vision (Daniel 8:1-2)

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" (Daniel 8:1)
  - Based on what Daniel writes here, we can place this vision approximately 2 years after the vision of Daniel 7. (Compare Daniel 7:1 to Daniel 8:1)
  - It is also worth noting that both Daniel 7 and 8 precede the events (at least chronologically speaking) of Daniel 5.
2. "I looked in the vision, and while I was looking 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." (Daniel 8:2)
  - Notice that Daniel is "*looking forward*" in time - At the time this vision was received; Daniel and his fellow Jews were still under Babylonian rule.
  - Most commentators conclude that he was not physically in Shushan/Susa but merely transported there in thought or vision. In other words he saw himself there.
    - 1) Susa was a royal city in Persia and located about 200 miles east of Babylon
    - 2) Susa would be in modern day Iran, and Babylon in modern day Iraq

### The Ram with the Two Horns: (Daniel 8:3-4)

1. “Then I lifted up my eyes 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” (Daniel 8:3)
  - The ***identity*** of the ram is given to us in Daniel 8:20; “The ram which you saw with the two horns **represents the kings of Media and Persia**”.
  - This vision which describes one horn being higher than the other might be intended to distinguish the empire of the Persians as being ***stronger*** than that of the Medes.
2. “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 8:4)
  - The “ram” is described as dominating or conquering whatever came in its path:
    - 1) This would be a good description and consistent with the success of the Persians over ***Babylon, Egypt, Lydia*** and other nations of the time.
    - 2) Note that the “ram” began its charge to the west, north and south which would be consistent with how the Persians began their conquest. Eventually they did make large expansions toward the east but their initial primary goal was to crush Babylon and Egypt. History records for us that they did just that.
    - 3) The text here does not identify one specific leader within the Persian Empire but ***Cyrus*** was their most notable conqueror.
  - It is good to remind ourselves that when Daniel receives this vision the Babylonian Empire was the dominant empire of the time and the Medes and the Persians had yet to conquer Babylon.
  - What Daniel was seeing here was what would take place in the ***future*** and yet to us we can look back and see this fulfilled in history.

## The Vision of the Goat (Daniel 8:5-14)

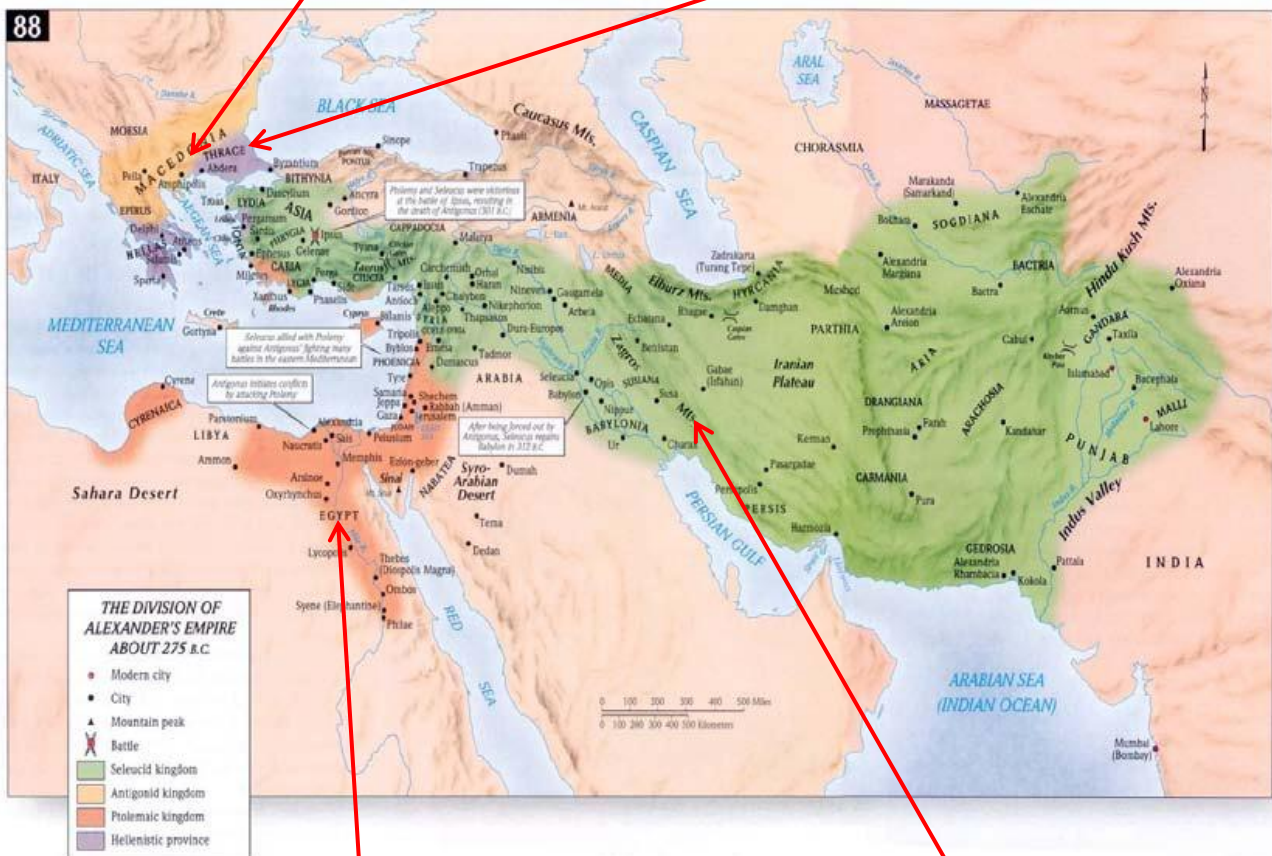
1. “While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes.” (Daniel 8:5)
  - The first thing Daniel tells us is that this male goat comes from the west and come across the surface of the whole earth.
  - We know that the goat represents the kingdom of Greece because we are told this later in Daniel 8:21.
  - Daniel tells us that the goat has a “conspicuous horn” between its eyes. We are not told here who or what this “notable horn” represents, but many commentators conclude this to be “**Alexander the Great**” since he was the first recognized leader/king of the Greek Empire. (Daniel 8:21)
2. “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. 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 no one to rescue the ram from his power” (Daniel 8:6-7)
  - The goat attacks the ram and destroys him
    - 1) In the animal kingdom it is worth noting that the ram’s power is in his horns. When those break the animal is of no use and eventually dies.
    - 2) Historically speaking we know that Greece conquers Persia and tramples it
  - There was no one to rescue or come to the aid of the ram
    - 1) All of the other surrounding nations and kingdoms are conquered by **Alexander the Great** which leaves no significant resistance to oppose him.
    - 2) As a special note, the Jews will be ruled by the Greeks in the same way they were ruled by the Babylonians and the Persians.

3. “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” (Daniel 8:8)
  - The Greek kingdom (identified here as the male goat) becomes very powerful and dominates the world.
    - 1) This is precisely what happens during the approximately 10 year military campaign of **Alexander the Great** in which he conquered the major empires, kingdoms, and nations of his time.
    - 2) At the height of his reign Alexander succumbs to a rather sudden illness and he dies at the age of 32 which might be the fulfillment of the phrase; “But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken”.
  - Then something unusual happens; “the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.”
    - 1) From an historical perspective we can look back and see that after the death of Alexander the Great that Greece divided into four strong dynasties.
    - 2) These four dynasties became four separate kingdoms, and the first ruler of each kingdom were the 4 leading generals in Alexander’s army
  - The four generals that divided the Greek Empire after Alexander died were:
    - 1) **Ptolemy – Controlled the southern portion (primarily Egypt)**
    - 2) **Seleucus – Controlled the Eastern portion (modern Iraq, Iran, Israel etc.)**
    - 3) Cassander – controlled Macedonia
    - 4) Lysimachus – controlled Asia Minor (parts of modern Turkey)
  - The two major dynasties (Ptolemaic and Seleucid) will eventually battle for complete control of the empire and the Jews (who will have returned to Jerusalem by this time) will be caught right in the middle of this warfare.

# The Greek Empire

Territory of Cassander

Territory of Lysimachus



Territory of Ptolemy

Territory of Seleucus

4. “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” (Daniel 8:9)
- Out of those four “notable horns” (four Grecian dynasties) that replaced the large horn (Alexander the Great) came a “**small horn**”. (Daniel 8:9)
    - 1) This is probably not the same horn as mentioned in Daniel 7:20
    - 2) The circumstances of this vision are different and the context here lends itself to conclude that this horn comes from the third kingdom of Greece and not the fourth kingdom of Rome as described in Daniel 7:20.
  - Note that the “rather small horn grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land”
    - 1) Eventually the Greek Empire developed into two strong groups – The Ptolemies of the South (*Egypt*) and the Seleucids of the North (*Syria*).
    - 2) The stronger of these two groups were the Seleucids who wanted control of the land of Israel (known as the Beautiful Land) and all of the territory once conquered by Alexander the Great.
    - 3) The land of Israel (“Beautiful Land”) became the continued battle ground between these two groups - Syria and Egypt for a little over 100 years.
    - 4) Take note that this **rather small horn that grew exceedingly great** comes from out of the north which is from the Seleucid Empire of Syria.
    - 5) This rather small horn will rise up to do battle with the kingdom of the south and those saints of the “Beautiful Land” will suffer persecution. (**Daniel 11**)
  - As we will see in the following verses of Daniel’s vision; he speaks of a future ruler from within the Greek Empire who will:
    - 1) Bring the people of Israel (the saints of the Beautiful Land) under his rule
    - 2) Desecrate their temple, interrupt their worship, and set himself up to be god

5. “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.” (Daniel 8:10-11)

- This “rather small horn” appears to be very powerful:
  - 1) He seems to be able to disrupt and or do harm to some of the heavenly beings which causes me to conclude that this “rather small horn” is influenced or indwelt by some evil spirit or evil force.
  - 2) We should never underestimate the power that exists in the unseen world of angels and demonic forces. (Daniel 10:1-21)
- This very powerful leader who will come from the Kingdom of North (Antioch of Syria), will initially will set out to crush the Kingdom of the South, but his primary focus will be on the saints of the “Beautiful Land”.
  - 1) He will set himself up to be equal with God
  - 2) He will set out to interrupt their worship
  - 3) He will set out to desecrate their temple

6. “And on account of the 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” (Daniel 8:12)

- Although this is something that Daniel saw in the people of Israel’s future, we see its fulfillment in history through a man named Antiochus IV (who is also referred to as **Antiochus Epiphanes**).
- This “rather small horn” (Antiochus Epiphanes) will do everything in his power to destroy the people of Israel; for it is from them that the Messiah will come!
- This “small horn” and his actions are but a glimpse of what will take place in the future Tribulation that Daniel described in his earlier vision (Daniel 7:23-25)

7. “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? He said to me, for 2300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored” (Daniel 8:13-14)

- A conversation takes place between two beings identified here as “**holy ones**”
  - 1) The identity of these two beings is not made known but the general consensus is they are both angelic beings (See Daniel 4:17)
  - 2) Later on in this passage it is the angel ***Gabriel*** who will give the interpretation of the vision to Daniel so it is possible that one of the holy ones here is him.
- The question is asked by one of the angels as to how long will this transgression, and desecration of the temple be permitted.
  - 1) The response the angel provides is that it will last 2300 evenings and mornings until the holy place is properly restored.
  - 2) The beginning of the transgression and desecration happens at some point when this small horn, which Gabriel later identifies as the insolent (brazen) king (Daniel 8:21-25) begins to persecute the Jews and put an end to their formal worship in the restored temple in Jerusalem.
  - 3) **The defined period of 2300 days is not precisely clear** but it could fall during the period from 171 B.C. (when the Jewish high priest Onias III was killed and Antiochus IV replaced him with his own appointment which allowed him to begin his defilement of the sacrifices in the Jewish Temple) up to the death of Antiochus IV in 164 B.C.
- It is also worth noting that the Seventh Day Adventists define these as 2300 years and place its starting point at 457 B.C. and its end point in A.D. 1844 when Christ was supposed to have undertaken the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. This thought was originally started by William Miller (a Baptist) and when Christ did not return in 1844, Ellen G. White took that premise and built an entire belief system known to us today as the Seventh Day Adventists.



### The Interpretation of the Vision (Daniel 8:15-27)

1. “When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, 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 the Ulai, and he called out and said, Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision” (Daniel 8:15-16)
  - Daniel proceeds to seek an understanding of the vision and he is going to receive the interpretation from the angel ***Gabriel***.
  - There is another unidentified person in this passage who will instruct Gabriel to provide the interpretation to Daniel.
    - 1) It could be a preincarnate appearance of Jesus Christ
    - 2) It could just be another unidentified angel or “holy one” – we are not told.
2. “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 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. He said, behold, I am going to let you know what will come at the final period of indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end” (Daniel 8:17-19)
  - Daniel appears ***frightened*** at the appearance of this heavenly messenger and he falls prostrate before him.
    - 1) There is no indication that Daniel is ***worshipping*** the angelic being but the appearance of an angel actually speaking directly to Daniel no doubt had him shook up a bit.
    - 2) Daniel is referred to here as the **son of man** (see Ezekiel 2:1) and this should not be confused with Jesus Christ referring to Himself as the Son of Man.
  - The primary point that Gabriel makes is that the details of the vision point to what will take place in the ***future*** during the time of the Greek Empire as it relates to the people of Israel.

3. “The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia” (Daniel 8:20)
- The ram with the two horns that Daniel saw at the beginning of his dream is revealed to be the Medo-Persian kingdom.
  - This was completely consistent with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2, and Daniel’s dream recorded in Daniel 7.
4. “The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king” (Daniel 8:21)
- The goat with the conspicuous horn at the beginning of his dream is revealed to be the future kingdom of Greece.
  - The large horn (conspicuous horn) is identified here at the first king of this future kingdom/empire.
    - 1) Although we don’t have an exact identity, many commentators consider this to be **Alexander the Great**.
    - 2) Although Phillip of Macedon (Alexander’s father) was the actual first king, the recognition leader of the world conquest goes to **Alexander**.
5. “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.” (Daniel 8:22)
- Although we are not told who or what these four horns represent, most conclude and I think we have exhausted this enough to conclude they represent the four dynasties that rise up from the four generals who along with Alexander will conquer the world and set out to make the world Greek.
  - They never gained the same notoriety, control or power that Alexander did but nonetheless they are mentioned because of their significance to the future of the Greek Empire and their impact on the people and land of Israel.

6. “In the later period of their rule, when the transgressions have run their course. A king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. 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.” (Daniel 8:23-24)
- At some point toward “the later part of their rule” a brazen king will arise and he will have some very notable traits:
    - 1) This king is a sinister schemer
    - 2) He is powerful but his power appears to be derived from a source that is not of his own doing. Perhaps some sort of evil influence or divine permission.
    - 3) He is feared, successful in his actions and sets out to destroy the holy people (God’s people).
    - 4) He exalts himself even to the point of demanding worship
  - These events, including the actions of this insolent king take place toward the end of the Greek rule and prior to the Roman Empire coming to power.
  - This brazen king is considered by most scholars and commentators to be the historical figure known to us as Antiochus IV (**Antiochus Epiphanes**)
    - 1) He was the eighth king in the Seleucid dynasty, born in 221 B.C. He took the Syrian throne by deception in 175 B.C. and reigned eleven years in Antioch. He was an evil tyrant who was the brother of Cleopatra and he was known as an evil tyrant who oppressed the Jews and desecrated the altar in the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem.
    - 2) Many commentators conclude that Antiochus Epiphanes was a foreshadowing of the antichrist of Revelation 13, II Thessalonians 2:1-12.
  - Whoever this person is in history (I believe that Antiochus IV fits the description), his clear goal (the same goal that the evil Haman had for the Jews – read Esther) was to destroy and even annihilate the Jewish people in the hopes of eliminating any chance that a Jewish Messiah would be born.

7. “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” (Daniel 8:25)

- This is just a little more detail as to character and capability of this insolent king:
  - 1) He will be a clever yet conniving leader
  - 2) His influencing qualities will have a foundation of lies and deceit
  - 3) He will be a proud and arrogant leader thinking very highly of himself
  - 4) He is destructive but his destruction is intentional toward the people of God who themselves may not even expect that harm will come to them.
  - 5) He will think of himself so highly that he will oppose the Prince of princes, which some conclude to mean that he stands in direct opposition to the Lord.
- Each of these characteristics will also apply to the deceiver (antichrist) that is spoken of by the Apostle John in Revelation 13 and Paul in II Thessalonians 2.
- If this “insolent king” is Antiochus IV, we know from history that he took the throne by deception, and he dies, not in combat or by human power, but instead from a case of self-imposed madness or crazed lunacy.

8. “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 sick and exhausted 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” (Daniel 8:27)

- The vision itself, though future to Daniel is declared to be true and considered complete (the idea behind keeping it secret or sealed).
- The vision was exhausting to Daniel, so much so that the thought of such things taking place to the people of God made him physically ill. He managed to continue his duties and for the king, yet unable to fully comprehend the vision.