

## SESSION ELEVEN

### DANIEL 8:1-27

#### *The "Small Horn" From The Third Kingdom*

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. The Relationship with Chapter Seven

#### a. Chronological Relationship

- (1) Dan 7:1 - first year of Belshazzar
- (2) Dan 8:1 - third year of Belshazzar
- (3) Implications:
  - (a) Daniel had already received the vision of the *four beasts* prior to Chapter 8. Therefore, this new vision built upon the knowledge he already had. He already knew the revelation of the successive Gentile kingdoms, 10 horns, little horn and Messiah's kingdom (i.e., he had the general outline of prophetic events).
  - (b) The third year of Belshazzar would be about 551/550 BC. The vision was very timely as Cyrus would make his move in 550 BC to lead the Persians over the Medes and thereby unite the two forces into one.

#### b. The Relation of Subject Matter

While building upon the revelation from Dan 7, chapter 8 focuses upon some particular developments during the second and third kingdoms. Each of these kingdoms had a significant impact upon developments in Judah.

- (1) 2nd Kingdom of Medo-Persia: Under the Persian government, the Jews were allowed to return to the promised land and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.
- (2) 3rd Kingdom of Greece: Under the latter part of Grecian domination, Jerusalem and the Temple were desolated while the people suffered under the hand of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

### 2. The Shift in Language

With Dan 8:1, the text shifts from Aramaic back to Hebrew. The focus is no longer on the dealing of God with the Gentile nations but rather the future of Israel during the "times of the Gentiles."

## I. THE VISION (8:1-14)

### A. Introduction to the Vision (8:1-2)

The setting for the vision is in Susa of Elam (see map), although Daniel may not have physically been there but transported by vision.<sup>1</sup> The status of Susa at this time is unclear, but Susa was destined to become one of the capitals of the Persian kings, which makes it a suitable location for the vision that begins with reference to Medo-Persia.



## B. The Ram with Two Horns (8:3-4) = Medo-Persia

1. As in chapter seven, "horns" speak of power and are used as symbols of kings (or kingdoms).
2. The text gives us the identity of the "ram" in Dan 8:20. Daniel would have known for over ten years before Belshazzar's feast that the Medes and Persians would unite to eventually topple Babylon!
3. The Symbolism of the Two Horns (8:3)

Both horns were "long" (i.e., powerful), but one was longer than the other and came up last. This was Persia, which although it arose later than Media, went on to become the more powerful and dominated over Media.

*Note:* Notice the parallelism with the vision of the bear in Dan 7:5. The bear raised on one side (ch 7) and the longer horn of the ram (ch 8) both refer to Persia's domination over Media.

4. "I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward" (8:4)
  - a. Notice that with each of the three main powers in chapter 8, their direction of expansion is given (cf. 8:4,5,9).

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<sup>1</sup>Notice Dan 8:27 in which Daniel speaks of resuming the king's business. Also, Ezekiel had visions of scenes in Jerusalem while actually in Babylonia (Ezek 8--10).

- b. The empire of Medo-Persia expanded greatly in every direction except to the east -- no major military campaigns to the east.<sup>2</sup>
5. There was not "anyone to rescue from his power" (8:4)  
For 200 years, Persia dominated the world and seemed almost unstoppable in her appetite for conquest.

### C. The Male Goat (8:5-8) = Greece

1. The goat is a symbol for Greece, as explained in Dan 8:21.
2. "*a conspicuous horn between his eyes*" (NIV = "prominent horn")  
This symbol is also explained in Dan 8:21 as her "first king" and clearly refers to Alexander the Great.<sup>3</sup>
3. "*coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground*" (8:5)
  - a. His origin:  
Alexander emerged from the west and conquered virtually everything to the east (and Egypt to the south).
  - b. His speed of conquest:  
He moved so quickly in his conquest of Persia and Egypt that he is said to not have touched the ground. This is parallel to Dan 7:6 where Greece's speed of conquest was symbolized by a leopard with four wings. Whereas Medo-Persia took decades to establish her power through conquest, Alexander conquered the whole world in three short years:
    - (1) **May 334 BC** Alexander pushed into Asia Minor and defeated the Persian forces at the Granicus River.
    - (2) **Oct 333 BC** Alexander defeated a great Persian army of 600,000 footmen (much larger than his own) at the battle of Issus near the northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea.
    - (3) **332 BC** Alexander invaded Egypt (the Egyptians, who hated the Persians, actually welcomed him as a deliverer).
    - (4) **Oct 331 BC** Alexander made a massive defeat of the Persians at Gaugamela (near Arbela) in Assyria.
4. The Goat was "*enraged*" at the Ram  
There had been a bitter hatred between the Greeks and Persians since the early 5th century BC. The Persians made several attacks against Greece, although the Persians

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<sup>2</sup>To the west, Medo-Persia embraced Babylon; to the south, Egypt; and to the north, the Caspians and Scythians. To the northwest, she also expanded against Lydia, Ionia, Thrace, and Macedon.

<sup>3</sup>Technically, Philip II of Macedonia (Alexander's father) was the first king who united all the Greek city-states except Sparta. However, Daniel 8 is looking at things from Greece's role as a world conqueror. Note the phrase in 8:5 about "*coming from the west.*" Philip never led Greece from the west in a power expansion.

suffered severe defeats at the hands of the Greeks at the Battle of Marathon (490 BC) and the Battle of Salamis (480 BC).

5. "as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken" (8:8)

Alexander the Great was only 23 years old when he conquered the entire Persian Empire, and ruled over a larger territory than anyone else up to that point in history. He died in his prime, however, at the age of 33 from a fever (malaria?) and complications from alcoholism.

6. "in its place there came up four conspicuous horns"

This is interpreted in Dan 8:22 as the four kingdoms that arose after the death of Alexander from the remains of his empire (see notes on Dan 7:6).

	<u>Daniel 7</u>	<u>Daniel 8</u>
Greece	<i>leopard</i>	<i>male goat</i>
Alexander		<i>large horn</i>
4 Generals	<i>four heads</i>	<i>four horns</i>

7. Results of Alexander's Conquest for Greece

- The Greek language (*Koine* Greek) was spread throughout the civilized world (which paved the way for Christian evangelism and distribution of the Scriptures in Greek).
- There was a widespread dispersion of the Jews throughout Alexander's realm (which helped pave the way for Christianity).
- There was a power shift in the world from the east to the west.

#### **D. The "Small Horn" and His Hostility Against Israel (8:9-14)**

1. Comparison with the "Little Horn" of Daniel 7

Although the English expressions "small horn" and "little horn" may sound similar, care must be taken to distinguish these two. They do not refer to the same person!

- The "little horn" of Daniel 7 arises from the ten horns of the 4th beast (Roman Empire), and is interpreted as the Antichrist of the Book of Revelation.
- The "small horn" of Daniel 8 arises from the third kingdom of Greece and one of its four divisions:

8:8 - "*there came up four conspicuous horns*" (i.e., the division of Alexander's empire into four smaller realms)

8:9 - "And out of one of them came forth a rather small horn"

- The "little horn" of Dan 7 is followed by God's kingdom, but the "small horn" of Dan 8 is not.
- The "small horn" of Dan 8 refers not to the Antichrist, but to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (a Seleucid king who reigned 175-164 BC).

2. "*grew exceedingly great*" in three directions (8:9)

- a. "toward the south" - This refers to Egypt. For many years, there was a bitter rivalry between the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt and the Seleucid dynasty in Syria. Antiochus IV had several encounters over the Egyptians, and was generally successful.
- b. "toward the east" - Expeditions against rebellious elements in Parthia and Armenia.
- c. "toward the Beautiful Land" - This is Palestine!

The word "land" is actually not in the text. The Hebrew word is *haṣṣebî* (הַצְּבִי), from a root meaning "beauty, honor."<sup>4</sup>

- (1) Yet this is an abbreviation for "the Beautiful Land," since the longer phrase (בְּאַרְץ הַצְּבִי) is used in Daniel 11:41, clearly with reference to Palestine.
- (2) The same word is used in Ezek 20:6 of the "Promised Land" which "is the glory [Lit., 'beauty' צְבִי] of all lands."

### 3. Tramples down "the host of heaven" (8:10)

The Hebrew word "host" (צְבָא) is used most often of angels in the service of God, and at other times of literal stars (Jer 33:22). However, the reference here is clearly to Jewish people of Israel. The trampling of the hosts refers to their persecution and affliction by the Seleucid king of Syria, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

- a. The term "host" is also used of the people of God, who are to become as the stars in number (Gen 12:3; 15:5).
- b. In Exodus 12:41, the term is used of the Hebrews as "'the hosts of Yahweh' . . . who went out of the land of Egypt."
- c. This makes good sense in light of the term's use in Dan 8:13, in conjunction with the Temple ("the holy place").
- d. In Dan 12:3, those who attain to the resurrection from Israel are compared to innumerable stars.

### 4. The Atrocious Acts of Antiochus Against the LORD (8:11-12)

- a. The removal of "the regular sacrifice" (8:11)
  - (1) This is one word in Hebrew, *hattāmîd* (הַתְּמִיד), meaning "continuously."
  - (2) This is a technical expression for the daily sacrifices which were offered at the Jewish Temple according to Ex 29:38-42 (cf. Num 28:3ff.). The word *hattāmîd* is from the Exodus passage in which the sacrifices were to be done "each day regularly" (לְיוֹם תְּמִיד).
  - (3) The daily sacrifice consisted of the offering of a lamb along with a grain offering and a drink offering, both in the morning and at twilight, as a soothing aroma to the Lord. Every day of their life, the Jews were reminded that the blood of the lamb atoned for sin, which anticipated the coming of

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<sup>4</sup>Baldwin remarks, "The land of God's promise could not but be the most beautiful, especially to those exiled from it" (*Daniel*, 157).

Jesus Christ whose death for sins on the cross was a "fragrant aroma" to God (Eph 5:2).

- (4) During the reign of Antiochus, he actually forced the Jews to halt the offering of the daily sacrifices at the Temple.
- (5) This action, however, also has an end times counterpart according to Dan 12:11 (note the same word *hattāmîd*).

b. *"the place of His sanctuary was thrown down"* (NIV "brought low")

During the reign of Antiochus, he desolated the Jewish temple. Not only did he halt the regular sacrifice, but he himself entered the Holy of Holies (which only the High Priest was allowed to enter), he sacrificed swine on the altar, and he erected a statue of Zeus Olympias in the temple.

c. *"it will fling truth to the ground"* (8:12)

Antiochus not only despised the truth of God's Word, but he literally attempted to outlaw scriptural faith and service to God on pain of death. Copies of the Torah (Bible) were burned. For a while he "performed his will and prospered," i.e., God allowed him to do what he wanted and succeed.

d. *"on account of transgression"* (NIV = "rebellion")

The Hebrew word is *peša'* (פְּשָׁעַ), a word for sin or transgression with the idea of revolting against the authority of God (but there is no clear case where the noun actually means "rebellion" as the NIV has). This may look at the abomination of the priesthood that was carried out by certain Jews.

The legitimate high priest of this time was Onias III, but his Egyptian sympathies aroused the disfavor of those Jews who were pro-Seleucid. Soon a power play arose over the position of High Priest. One Jew named Menelaus arranged for the murder of Onias, and bribed Antiochus for the position of High Priest (though he had no legitimate claim to the priesthood). Funds from the temple treasury were used for paying off Antiochus.

5. The Duration of Antiochus's Atrocities (8:13-14)

a. Chronological Data

- (1) Antiochus reigned as king 175-164 BC.
- (2) The priesthood was corrupted about 171 BC when Onias III was murdered and an illegitimate High Priest assumed office.
- (3) 15th of Chislev, 167 BC (Dec 167) - This is the time at which Antiochus defiled the Temple, halted the regular sacrifice and instituted the religious persecution.
- (4) 25th of Chislev, 164 BC (Dec 164) - A successful uprising against Antiochus led to the cleansing and rededication of the Temple.

Note: This occasion was commemorated thereafter as the feast of Hanukkah (which means "dedication"), also known as the Feast of Lights or Dedication (cf. Jn 10:22).

b. The Interpretation of "2300 evenings and mornings"

Since the dates are very inexact for this period, it is difficult for anyone to establish terminal points for this reference, although most evangelicals agree that this is fulfilled in the time of Antiochus. The mention in Dan 8:14 of the proper restoration of the "holy place" does seem to view the formal rededication of the Temple in Dec 164 BC.

- (1) This could mean 2300 days (so Walvoord, Feinberg)

So interpreted, this would amount to more than six years, and could refer to the period from 171 BC (when the High Priest was murdered) until the Rededication of the Temple.

- (2) This could mean 1150 days (so Archer, Pentecost)

If the point is to record how many sacrifices were missed (two each day, one in the morning and one in the evening), then only 1150 days were involved.<sup>5</sup> In this case, the period runs approximately from Antiochus's desolation of the Temple in Dec 167 until the Rededication in Dec 164.

- (3) Evaluation

(a) Walvoord's objection (p 189) to the 1150 days based on Hebrew parallels (e.g., *forty days and forty nights*) does not really stand.

i) For his position (2300 days), we would have expected the text to say "2300 evenings and 2300 mornings," which it does not.

ii) The parallel does not apply here, because the point is not about "days and nights" but about daily sacrifices.

(b) If "2300 days" were the point, there would be no need to mention "evenings" and "mornings." This suggests that the concern is over sacrifices. This seems to be confirmed by the question itself in v 8:13 - "*How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply?*"

- (4) Conclusion:

While either position is possible, a better case can be made for 1150 days (in which 2300 sacrifices were missed). This would probably refer to a period running from some time in 167 BC until the Temple Rededication in December 164 BC.

## II. THE ANGELIC INSIGHT (8:15-26)

### A. The Encounter with Gabriel (8:15-19)

1. "*the vision pertains to the time of the end*" (17)
2. "*to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation; for it pertains to the appointed time of the end*" (19)
3. These time references are perplexing. Whereas the context seems to clearly refer to the atrocities of Antiochus IV about 167 BC, the angel seems to suggest that the vision goes

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<sup>5</sup>Archer views this as three years and 55 days, calculating on the basis of 365 days per year ("Daniel," 103). Pentecost, however, views this as three years and 70 days, calculating on the basis of "prophetic years" of 360 days per year (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1358-59).

beyond this. The word "end" (*qēš*, עֵץ) does not have to have an eschatological (end-times) nuance, but it most often does.<sup>6</sup>

- a. The particular phrase "time of the end" (*et qēš*, עֵץ תֵּימַת) occurs three other times in Daniel (11:35,40; 12:4), all with clear reference to the period near the 2nd Coming of Christ.
- b. Even more interesting is the phrase "the final period of the indignation" (*ahārîṭ hazzā'am*, אַחֲרֵי תֵּימַת הַזָּעַם - *Lit. "the latter indignation"*). The word for indignation (*zā'am*, זָעַם) is used again in Dan 11:36 in a passage referring to the Antichrist of the end-time Tribulation: "he will prosper until the indignation is finished."

4. Point:

Whereas the vision pertained to the historical Antiochus, the angel seems to be suggesting that the vision looks beyond his time to the end times when another shall rise up in a similar manner to him.

**B. Explanation of Gabriel (8:20-27)**

1. Symbols: From Medo-Persia to the Division of Alexander's Kingdom (8:20-22)
2. The King who arises out of Alexander's Kingdom (8:23-26)

- a. Notice v 8:23 - "and in the latter period of their rule"

This is referring to the previous verse which spoke of the four divisions of Alexander's empire. Since this is before "Rome," Antiochus is still in view.

- b. Traits

All of these characteristics could be true of Antiochus, but they will also be true of the Antichrist (in an even greater way).

- (1) The "Prince of princes" refers to God who is prince over the rulers of the earth (Dan 4). Whereas Antiochus defied God and attacked His Temple and the Jewish people, the Antichrist will attack Jesus Christ personally and also the Jewish people in the Tribulation.
- (2) "he will be broken without human agency"

Antiochus did not die in battle but probably insane or from internal ailments in 164 BC. The Antichrist will not be destroyed by human agency but by the personal return of Jesus Christ (Rev 19).

3. Fulfillment of the Passage

There are three basic ways in which the passage in Dan 8:9-26 can be interpreted:

- a. The passage is directly prophetic of Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the 2nd century BC, but does not go beyond him.

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<sup>6</sup>The phrase "after some years" in Dan 11:6 is literally "at the end (עֵץ) of years," the same word used in Dan 8:17. The reference in Dan 11:6, however, is not eschatological but refers to an event about 252 BC. The word can also mean the "end" of a person's life, i.e., his death (as in Dan 11:45).



- b. The passage is prophetic, but it has double fulfillment: it is fulfilled *in part* with Antiochus, but *more completely* with the Antichrist who arises in the Tribulation period prior to the 2nd Coming of Christ.
- c. The passage is directly prophetic of Antiochus and all the details can be fulfilled in some sense with him. However, his character and actions serve as a "type" of the Antichrist who will arise in the Tribulation (typical fulfillment).

A Lesson for Our Life

Most of the details of this passage are prophetic of events now in past history or yet to come. One of the details of this passage (namely, the 2300 evenings and mornings) has been the subject of "prophetic abuse" through faulty interpretation by one of the founders of Seventh-Day Adventism, William Miller (1782-1849).

1. Miller's Prediction: Christ would return during March 21, 1843 - March 21, 1844
2. Problem:
  - a. Failure to interpret according to context (Antiochus)
  - b. Endeavor to apply a mystical method of interpretation without any warrant from Scripture.
3. Lesson:

In dealing with prophetic interpretation, we need to be very careful to avoid "twisting the text" to make it say what we want to find. Christ is coming again, but we can do more harm than good by imposing dates and making claims based on faulty interpretation.

Illustration: Matt 24:32 - Fig tree = Israel (new nation founded 1948)

Matt 24:34 - Generation = 40 yrs

Rapture will come by 1988 (1948 + 40 yrs)

Obviously, the *rapture* did not happen in 1988, which shows that the whole line of reasoning was wrong.