

## **Daniel's Second Vision**

### **Daniel 8:1-14**

#### **Introduction**

The chapter divides into seven sections:

1. The setting; the time and place of the vision (vv.1-2).
2. The historical background of the vision; the contest between the ram and the goat (vv. 3-8).
3. The main theme of the vision; the revelation of a little horn; a servant of Satan (vv.9-14).
4. The theophany and ministry of Gabriel; the dating of the vision and the 2300 days.
5. The revelation and interpretation of the background portion of the vision (vv.20-22).
6. The revelation and interpretation of the future king with the fierce or bold or impudent features (vv.23-26).
7. The personal testimony of Daniel; his illness and perplexity and the fact that “none understood it” (v.27).

In this message our focus of concern will be the first three sections. Later we will examine the final four sections.

#### **The Strong Ram With Two Horns (vv.1-4)**

*Daniel 8:1-4 (NKJV) In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time.*

The vision unfolds about two years after chapter 7 (551-553 BC?).

We would do well to contrast and compare the two visions of chapter 7 and 8. What do they have in common? How are they different?

In both chapters the visions of the animals represent world kingdoms.

In both chapters we are dealing with predictive prophecy. We might think of this as history written in advance. Examples include Isaiah 6:1-2a.

In both chapters the revelation comes in the form of a vision.

In chapter 2:28 we read; “But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown. . .what will happen.”

G.B. Hardy: “Only the supernatural mind can have prior knowledge to the natural mind. If then the Bible has foreknowledge, historical and scientific, beyond the permutation of chance it truly then bears the fingerprint of God.”

How are they different?

In the first vision Daniel appears to be asleep.

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In the second vision Daniel appears to be awake.

The vision in the 7th chapter is in the Aramaic language.

The text returns to the Hebrew language (chapters 8-12).

Why is that shift in language important? The chapters written in the Aramaic language have a special application to the Gentiles and what the Bible refers to as the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles began in about 606 B.C. with the Babylonian captivity; the destruction of the Temple and apparently will not end until the Second Coming of Christ. An argument might be made that the times designated for the Jews are closely tied to the 70 weeks of Daniel. But I will have more to say about that when we look long and hard at the 9th chapter of Daniel.

*2I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.*

Scholars are divided whether Daniel was physically in Shushan or Susa the citadel.

The city is some 230 miles east of Babylon and 120 miles north of the Persian Gulf. Susa would later become one of the capital cities of the Persian Empire and home to Esther. It was here that an archeological team dug up the famous code of Hammurabi in 1901.

Most scholars believe that the Ulai river is a man made canal that is now dry.

*3Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.*

We are given the identity of the creature later in the chapter (v.20).

The ram with two horns is the Medo-Persian Empire. The Empire begins dominated by the Medes and grows in strength and power through the agency of Persia. One was higher than the other. The higher came up last. Cyrus II (The Great) began his reign in 559 BC as a vassal or loyal subject of the Medes. In 550 BC he rebelled and defeated the Median King Astyages; creating a single Medo-Persian Empire. By 546 BC he gained control of the kingdoms of Lydia (west). In 539 BC he conquered Babylon; expanding north and west into Greece and west and south into Syria and the Levant (Israel) through to Egypt (see *NKJV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*; p.1490—note for Daniel 8:3-4).

*4I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.*

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The Medo-Persian Empire expanded historically to the west, north and south. According to the prophecy no matter which direction the kingdom expanded; resistance was futile.

We are given a brief sketch of the Persian Empire.

### **The Strange Goat With One Horn (vv.5-8)**

*5And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.*

*6Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power.*

*7And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.*

*8Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.*

In this portion or passage of Scripture what was future to Daniel is now history for us.

The billy goat or male goat represents the Greek Empire (v.5). We are told from the goat would come from the west. The prophecy adds “without touching the ground”. The Empire’s movement is so quick as to almost defy gravity. The notable horn is Alexander The Great (v.5).

In brief Alexander forged an army of some 35,000 soldiers from across the Aegean Peninsula. In the prophecy the Goat initiates the attack (vv.6-7).

Wilmington: “This prophecy of the ram and the goat places a microscope down on the conflict between the second and the third world empires in the struggle of East and West, of Orient and Occident, of Asia and Europe. Historical drawings have been discovered which depict a one horned goat as the symbol for the ancient Greek armies”.

Aegis means *goat* in Greek. The Aegean Sea is the Goat Sea and Aegea was the capital of Alexander’s home in Macedonia. “. . . *he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram and broke his two horns*” (7b).

There was a growing bitter animosity between the Persians the Greeks. Alexander wanted to crush Persia which had invaded the Greek peninsula.

The emphasis seems to lie in the conquests of the Goat; the breaking of its horn; the emergence of four horns; and the subsequent emergence of another little horn (vv.9-14) which will play an important role in Israel’s future.

You will note that the large horn is broken (v.8) which appears to be a reference to Alexander’s death. He died in Babylon of pneumonia complicated by alcohol.

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In the years that followed Alexander's death the kingdom was divided in four; Ptolemy occupied the territory to the South that included Egypt and North Africa and from time to time the Levant; Selucus the Eastern section of Syria; Cassander the western division of Greece and Lysimachus, the northern area that included Asia Minor.

### **The Sinister Creature Defiles The Temple (vv.9-14)**

*9And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.*

*10And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.*

*11He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.*

*12Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.*

We are left wondering the identity of the little horn (v.9). The angel Gabriel will make known the meaning of the vision (v.16).

Clearly this little horn is not the little horn of chapter 7. The little horn in chapter 7 emerges from a revived Roman Empire. This little horn emerges from one of the four horns that emerge from the Greek Empire; after the large horn is broken (v.8); one of the *notable ones* (v.8).

We are given a clue. The horn grows exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.

After the death of Alexander the Kingdom was basically divided into four provinces. You will note that the provinces are described in reference to the Glorious Land or the Promised Land or Israel.

The prophecy emphasis shifts as God's revelation focus is the Jewish people. Clearly God has prophetic dealings with the whole world; but now those dealings begin to focus on God's plan for the Jewish people and the Coming Messiah.

We are given a glimpse of Israel's immediate future.

The majority of conservative scholars see here a picture of Antiochus Ephiphanes IV. He was a Greek (Syrian). He was the son of Antiochus the Great. He continued as king from 175 BC to 164 BC ruling from his father's capital of Antioch. Antiochus hated the Jews and the Jewish God. In brief he ordered the Jewish people to cease and desist the practice of circumcision; ordered the Jewish sacred writings destroyed; mocked the Levitical offerings and would

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eventually offer a gigantic sow upon the altar of the Temple and scatter the broth in the Holy Sanctuary (vv.11-12). He called himself Epiphanes (the light with us) and the Jews called him Epiphanes the Madman.

Sources cite him killing and enslaving on hundred thousand Jews. Some of his cruel and diabolical exploits are recorded in the book of Maccabees.

Some have suggested the man was literally possessed by Satan. Others suggest that in that possession he pictures the future antichrist figure who will desecrate a future temple at a future time. Luther believed the chapter refers to Antiochus and Antichrist. Jerome said the Jews of his time looked upon this prophecy as yet to have a further and future fulfillment in the same manner as Antiochus (see *The Prophecies of Daniel by Lehman Strauss p. 240*).

Daniel tells us the little horn grew up to the host of heaven (v.10). The KJV reads; "and it cast down some of the host of the stars to the ground and stamped upon them (v.10). Who are these stars? Supernatural beings? Angels? Ron Rhodes believes it is a reference to the Jewish people. He argues that often the Scriptures describe the Jewish people as stars. He writes; "For example, recall Joseph's dream: "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me" (Genesis 37:9). In this dream, the sun (Joseph's father), the moon (Joseph's mother), and the 11 stars (Joseph's 11 brothers) would one day bow before him. These astronomical terms refer to the whole clan of Israel. Likewise, in Revelation 12:1 we encounter a metaphorical description of Israel as a woman with a "crown of twelve stars." The 12 stars represent the 12 tribes of Israel. We conclude, then, that Antiochus's trampling of the host and the stars refers to his trampling of the Jewish people. History reveals that Antiochus brutally persecuted the Jewish people from 170-164 BC." (see *40 Days Through Daniel p.205*).

*13Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?"*

*14And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."*

The great challenge of this prophecy is whether or not it is a picture of a person in the past; or in the future; or in both past and future.

We are left with the impression that the past hatred of Antiochus and the future hatred of Antichrist will cause great pain and suffering for God's chosen people.

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**Conclusion**