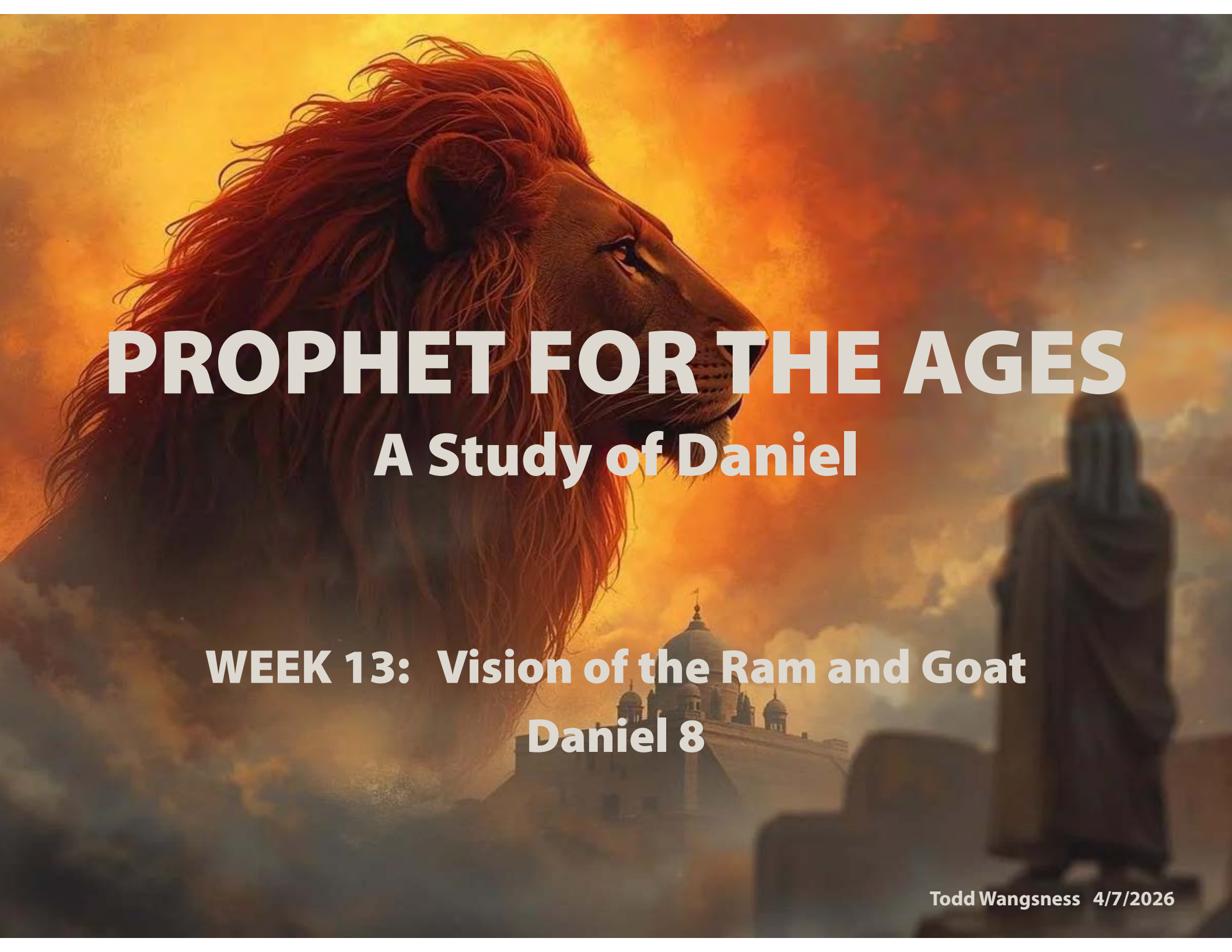




PROPHET FOR THE AGES

A Study of Daniel

WEEK 13: Vision of the Ram and Goat
Daniel 8

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Daniel 8 Overview

- **Daniel observes two symbolic animals:**
 - **A ram with two horns. It charges westward, northward, and southward, becoming powerful with no one able to oppose it.**
 - **A male goat coming swiftly from the west (without touching the ground, symbolizing rapid conquest). It has a prominent horn between its eyes. The goat furiously attacks and shatters the ram's horns, tramples it, and grows very great.**
- **At the height of its power, the goat's large horn breaks. In its place, four prominent horns arise toward the four winds of heaven.**
- **From one of these four horns emerges a little horn that grows exceedingly great:**
 - **It expands toward the south, east, and the "Beautiful Land" (Israel)**
 - **It grows up to the host of heaven, casts down some of the starry host, and tramples them**
 - **It exalts itself against the "Prince of the host" (God), removes the regular (daily) burnt offering, and throws down the sanctuary**
- **Due to transgression, truth is cast to the ground, and the little horn prospers for a time**

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Daniel 8 Major Themes

God's Sovereignty over Empires

- The chapter vividly portrays the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms—the Medo-Persian Empire (the two-horned ram) and the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great (the swift male goat), followed by its division into four kingdoms.

Persecution of God's People and Sanctuary

- A central focus is the little horn's aggressive actions: it grows powerful toward the "Beautiful Land" (Israel), tramples the host of heaven (God's people), exalts itself against the "Prince of the host" (God), removes the daily sacrifice, and throws down the sanctuary.

Conflict Between Evil and God's Kingdom

- Daniel 8 depicts a spiritual and earthly battle. The little horn's rebellion ("transgression") leads to the desolation of the sanctuary and the trampling of truth and worship. Yet this evil is not ultimate—God permits it for a limited time ("because of transgression," v. 12) but will decisively intervene.

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Daniel 8 Major Themes (cont.)

Promise of Restoration and Sanctuary Cleansing

- The chapter climaxes with a heavenly dialogue and the assurance: "For two thousand three hundred days (evenings and mornings); then the sanctuary shall be cleansed" or "restored to its rightful state" (Daniel 8:14). This offers hope amid desolation—God will vindicate His sanctuary, people, and truth.

Human Response: Faithfulness Amid Mystery

- The chapter encourages us as true believers to trust God's sovereignty even when events are troubling or not fully grasped, preparing God's people for opposition while pointing them toward ultimate hope in His kingdom.

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Notable Quotes About Daniel 8

“Martin Luther wrote, ‘This chapter in Daniel refers both to Antiochus Epiphanes and the Antichrist.’ Greece with all its refinement, culture and art, produced the Old Testament Antichrist, while the so-called Christian nations produce the New Testament Antichrist.’

■ David Guzik

“The reason for symbolizing both as a little horn is that the one prefigures the other. Antiochus Epiphanes is sometimes called the Antichrist of the Old Testament; that is the one who brought suffering to the Jews in his day. From what Antiochus did to the Jews in his day, therefore, one may know the general pattern of what the Antichrist will do to them in the future.”

■ Leon Wood

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Daniel has another vision ...

Dan 8:1-2 *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. 2 I 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.*

- Two years have passed since Daniel's vision of the four beasts in chapter 7
- The year is 551 BC and Daniel was now about 69 years old
- Daniel was transported in his vision to the capital of the Medo-Persian Empire at Shushan (Susa) located in southern Iran today
 - He likely was not physically transported to Susa as no other prophetic passage in the bible describes a physical transportation
 - Interestingly, the capital at Susa was only an insignificant village at the time of his vision
 - Construction work for the capital of the Persians began under Darius I Hystaspes in 522 BC, 29 years later than this vision

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

He sees a ram with two horns ...

Dan 8:3a *Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns ...*

- The *ram* in this vision clearly portrays the Medo-Persian empire
 1. Interpreted as such by the angel in verse 20
 2. The 'guardian spirit' of Medo-Persia is portrayed in the form of a ram with pointed horns per a Persian religious book 'Bundahishn'
 3. Persian kings bore a golden figure of a ram's head when standing before their armies
 4. The zodiac sign for Persia was Ares, the ram

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Dan 8:3b-4

... and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. 4 I 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.

- He notes that one horn grew higher than the other
- Both Media and Persia were powerful kingdoms
 - Media was a major power before Persian even came on the scene
 - Media helped Babylon conquer the Assyrian Empire
- Persia rapidly grew to be the dominant power of the two kingdoms
- The combined empires pushed westward to conquer Babylon, Syria and Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey)
- It pushed northward all the way to the Caspian Sea where it subdued Armenia and Scythia
- Then southward to overthrow Egypt and Ethiopia

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

The Male Goat

Dan 8:5

And 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.

- The *he-goat* in this vision portrays the Hellenistic Empire (Grecian/Macedonian)
 1. Verse 21 identifies the goat as the king of the Greeks (Alexander)
 2. The zodiac sign for Greece was Capricorn, the one-horned goat
 3. The national emblem for Macedonia was a goat
- The first major battle between Alexander the Great and the Medo-Persians was the Battle of Granicus in 334 BC, which was 217 years later than Daniel's vision
- *Without touching the ground:* Alexander was renown for his lightning-fast speed of conquests
- The notable horn is reference in particular to Alexander the Great as a unique king with the vision and force of personality to initiate these conquests

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Dan 8:6-7

Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. 7 And 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.

- **Alexander's military prowess and resolve enabled him to quickly crush all opposition**
- **On two separate occasions (490 and 480 BC), the Persians invaded Greece (100 years prior to Alexander the Great's reign)**
 - **The Greeks did not forget these invasions and harbored deep hatred for the Persians as a result of the great damage inflicted on Greece**
- **As mentioned on previous page, Alexander's first attack against Persia was at the River Granicus in 334 BC, where he overcame them against overwhelming odds**
- **The third and final attack was the Battle of Guagamela, where Alexander resoundingly defeated the Persians with an army of only 47,000 soldiers against a numerically superior Persian force with up to 1 million soldiers**

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

The Goat's Large Horn is Broken

Dan 8:8

Therefore 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.

- Alexander fell ill after binging at the age of 32 in Babylon after returning from a war campaign in India (323 BC), slipped into a coma, and died of a high fever
- Alexander's generals ('Diadochi' or *successors*) fought among themselves in two decades of extremely brutal and bloody battles to assume control of Alexander's vast empire
- The Diadochi battles were filled with intrigue and inter-family betrayals and assassinations
- Ultimately, four generals secured various territories
 - Seleucid Dynasty of Asia – *important prophetically*
 - Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt – *important prophetically*
 - Lysimachus Dynasty of Asia Minor (Turkey)
 - Cassander Dynasty of Greece/Macedonia

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

The Little Horn ... Again

Dan 8:9

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

- **A little horn arises from one of the four kingdoms of Greece**
 - **Historically, this individual is identified as Antiochus IV Epiphanes**
 - **He ruled the Seleucid Empire from 175 BC until his death in 164 BC**
 - **He initiated an egregious campaign of persecution against the Jews**
- **He undertook military campaigns in three directions**
 - **In the south, he marched against Ptolemaic Egypt**
 - **In the east, he conquered Armenia**
 - **Lastly, he invaded the land of Israel (*the Glorious Land*)**
- **The Israel invasion is documented in the apocryphal books of Maccabees I and II**
 - ***1 Macc 1:20 And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the 143rd year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude.***

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Acts of Antiochus Epiphanes

Dan 8:10-12 *And 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. 11 He 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. 12 Because 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.*

- Antiochus IV Epiphanes implemented a harsh persecution of the Jews in 167 BC:
 - He forbade circumcision, Sabbath observance, festivals, and dietary laws
 - He ordered the burning of Torah scrolls under punishment of death
 - He required Jews to participate in pagan sacrifices and eat forbidden foods
 - He profaned the Temple:
 - It was renamed and rededicated to Zeus
 - An altar to Zeus was erected on top of the Jewish altar of burnt offerings
 - Sacrificed pigs on the altar – known as the *abomination of desolation*
— Reference: 1 Macc 1:54 and Dan 11:31

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Dan 8:13-14 *Then 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?" 14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."*

- The "days" in verse 14: Literally, "evening mornings"
- **Maccabean Revolt**: Starting in 167 BC, a Jewish priest and his five sons (Maccabees) initiated a guerrilla warfare against the superior Seleucid forces of Antiochus
- In 164 BC, the Maccabees (also called Hasmoneans)
 - Recaptured Jerusalem
 - Cleansed the Temple of pagan idols
 - Rebuilt the altar and rededicated it on the 25th of Kislev
 - Many scholars believe the duration of desecration was 1150 days (or 2300 evening-morning sacrifices)
- The Festival of Hanukkah commemorates the re-dedication of the altar
- The Hasmoneans maintained their dynasty until Roman conquest in 63 BC

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

Dan 8:15-17 *Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."*

- We aren't told if the *appearance of a man* was a 'theophany' (pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ) or perhaps Michael the archangel
 - Whoever it was, he had the authority to direct Gabriel to disclose the interpretation of the vision to Daniel
- As is typical of the appearance of angels, Daniel fell on his face in fear!
 - True angels commonly initiated their communications with, "Fear not!"
 - Followed by a directive to stand up and stop trying to worship them!
- The angel specifically told Daniel this vision is primarily referring to end times

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Dan 8:18-19 *Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.*

- Daniel was placed in a *deep sleep* ... reminiscent of the same deep sleep placed upon Abraham, when God performed the Blood Sacrifice with him
 - *Gen 15:12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram*
- Gabriel made it abundantly clear the primary application of the prophecy was *in the latter time of the indignation, for at the appointed time the end shall be.*
 - It is possible Gabriel was referring to Antiochus Epiphanes, as that timeframe was still many years in the future (384 years later)
 - However – from the context of the remainder of the interpretation – it is quite clear Gabriel was referencing the *end of days* in his discussion about the Antichrist
- In other words, the ruler described in verses 9-14 is a *type* of the Antichrist who will be the focus of verses 23-25

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

- What Gabriel describes in verses 23-25 was not true of Antiochus Epiphanes
 - It will be true, however, of the Antichrist!
- An *expanded paraphrase* of verse 19 would be:
 - *:19 Gabriel said, "By explaining verses 9-14, I will cause you to understand what will happen in the latter portion of the indignation, meaning in the tribulation. This time will have long before been foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes, who serves as a type of the Antichrist. His oppression of the Jews was directly predicted by verses 9-14. In like manner, the Antichrist will persecute the Jews in the prophetic future, at the appointed end of the times of the Gentiles."*

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Gabriel Clarifies the Identity of the Ram and Goat

Dan 8:20-22 *The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. 22 As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.*

- Not much to discuss here ... Gabriel is exceptionally clear, straightforward, and incredibly precise!
- Gabriel clearly identifies the *ram with the two horns* as the kingdom of Medo-Persia
 - The current year is 551 BC
 - Babylon would fall to the Medo-Persians in 539 BC, 12 years in the future
- He describes the *male* goat as the kingdom of Greece
- He also foretells the fall of the Medo-Persian empire to the Greeks, which would happen 220 years later in 331 BC shortly following the Battle of Guagamela
- He states the first king (Alexander) was the large horn that would be broken, with four little horns (his generals) taking over, but not with Alexander's influence

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Who is the 'Little Horn'?

Dan 8:23-25 *"And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes. 24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people. 25 "Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.*

- **Gabriel again emphasizes the events are *in the latter time of their kingdom***
 - In context, it refers to the latter times of the four horns coming out of the Greek empire
- **Note in particular, in verse 22, the plural is used ... "*kingdoms*"**
 - However, here in verse 23, it is singular ... "*kingdom*"

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Who is the 'Little Horn'? (cont.)

- The switch from plural to singular points out that Gabriel is not referring to the four kingdoms of verse 22
 - Rather he is indicating far distant future events involving a fierce ruler that would arise out of the *area* of the four kingdoms
- Verses 23-25 are not interpreting verses 9-14, which would have been expected if Gabriel had still been talking about Antiochus Epiphanes
 - Rather, they are giving new information about someone like Antiochus – namely – the Antichrist

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

- Gabriel proceeds to give a detailed prophetic description of this individual and points out 14 things about him
- The Antichrist will:
 1. Be a king of *fierce countenance* – meaning he will be *insolent*
 2. He will be *one who understands sinister schemes* – able to understand enigmas and perplexing riddles ... Supernaturally gifted, but not from God
 3. His *power shall be mighty* - indicates he will be characterized by great physical strength and a strong military leader
 4. His power *shall not be by his own power* - his power does not come from good genetics, a disciplined exercise regimen or a prestigious military academy ... it will be from Satan himself
 5. He *shall destroy fearfully* - 'surpassing and extraordinary' ability to wield forces of destruction, because of the supernatural source of his power
 6. He *shall prosper* - He will achieve all his plans
 7. He *shall thrive* - He has a focus on deliberate actions characterized by willfulness
 8. He *shall destroy the mighty* - He will target any competitors to subjugate or destroy them

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

- Now Gabriel shifts the focus to what the Antichrist will do to the Jewish people :
 9. He will wage war against the *holy people*
 - *Zec 13:8 And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it.*
 10. He will *cause deceit to prosper* - He will use deceit, treachery and subterfuge to gain political power
 11. He *shall exalt himself in his heart* - He will declare himself to be God
 - *Rev 13:7-8 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him ...*
 12. He *shall destroy many in their prosperity* - When the Jewish people feel secure, the Antichrist will turn against them and kill many (described in verse 27)
 13. He *shall even rise against the Prince of princes* - He will have a special antagonism against the Jewish Messiah
 14. He *shall be broken without human means* - He will not die of natural causes or by the hand of a human ... Jesus will personally put an end to him
 - Antiochus Epiphanes died by human hands ... the Antichrist will not!

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

Dan 8:26

“And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future.”

- **Gabriel concludes his interpretation and reaffirmed the vision of the 2300 *evenings and mornings* would surely come to pass**
- **In light of the prophetic levels at play here ... he confirmed both**
 - **The immediate prophecies regarding the type of the Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes contained in verses 9-14**
 - **The far distant prophecies regarding the true focus of an evil end-times ruler, the Antichrist contained in verses 23-25**
- **Gabriel told Daniel to *seal up the vision***
 - **In other words, the prophecy was to be preserved for the end-times generation with future clarifying revelations to be provided to them (maybe Dead Sea Scrolls?)**

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

Dan 8:27

And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

- The vision and appearance of Gabriel had a profound impact on Daniel
 - He lost consciousness and became sick for days
- This verse proves he never physically left Babylon – but was transported in the vision to Shushan
- Daniel continued to be perplexed by the vision

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Questions To Ponder

- **Confusion and various opinions circulate regarding the 2300 days (evenings and mornings)**
 - **Some believe it demarcates 2300 evening and morning sacrifices, meaning it is only 1150 days in duration**
 - **Others maintain it is a 2300 day interval**
 - **Many scholars believe that from the time Antiochus Epiphanes *desecrated the temple* until it was re-dedicated by the Hasmoneans, was 1150 days**
 - **Certain others believe it was 2300 days**
 - **Some believe the 2300 days only had application to the first desolation**
 - **Others believe it has profound application to the end-times**
 - **It likely does have application to end-times, but it is unclear what the starting point or end point will be**
 - **Is it 2300 days or 1150 days ... should we attempt to apply the day for a year principle to the timeframe?**

Prophet for the Ages: Vision of the Ram and Goat

Questions To Ponder (cont.)

- Where will the Antichrist come from?
 - From the text in Daniel 8, we can make a strong case that it will come from one of the four regions of the Greek empire, likely the Seleucid area (Syria)
 - Micah prophesied about *The Assyrian*, which is in this same region
 - *Mic 5:5-6 When the Assyrian comes into our land, And when he treads in our palaces, Then we will raise against him Seven shepherds and eight princely men. 6 They shall waste with the sword the land of Assyria, And the land of Nimrod at its entrances; Thus He shall deliver us from the Assyrian, When he comes into our land And when he treads within our borders.*
 - Modern-day Assyrians are centered in northern Mesopotamia
 - Northern Iraq
 - Northeastern Syria
 - Southeastern Turkey
 - Northwestern Iran