

EXILIC & POST-EXILIC PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE

Senior Adults & Friends Bible Study — Summit View Church of Christ
Winter 2022-2023

PART 5, SECTION 4

DANIEL'S VISION OF A RAM AND A GOAT (about 551 BC)

DANIEL 8

Date: Daniel 8:1 dates this vision to "the third year of King Belshazzar's reign." Belshazzar acted as coregent under his father Nabonidus beginning in about 553 BC, dating this vision to about 551 BC.

Daniel 8:1-14

8:2 — Where was Daniel when he saw this vision?

8:3 — The first animal Daniel saw was a _____. What was strange about its horns?

8:4 — This animal charged toward the _____, the _____, and the _____.

8:5 — The second animal Daniel saw was a _____. How many horns did it have at first? _____

8:6-7 — What did it do to the first animal?

8:8 — What happened to this animal at the height of its power?

8:9-12 — What was the small horn like (attitude, character)?

8:9-11 — This small horn grew in power toward the _____ Land. It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the _____. It took away the _____ from the Lord. The Lord's _____ was thrown down.

8:13-14 — A holy one said it would take _____ evenings and mornings for the vision to be fulfilled and the _____ to be reconsecrated.

THE TIME OF THE SUFFERING OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Daniel and Revelation often refer to a length of time during which the wicked will oppress and defeat the righteous before the Lord steps in to make things right. This length of time is described in various ways as 3-and-a-half (times/years/days). Why 3-and-a-half? Perhaps because it is half of 7, the complete/perfect number in Ancient Near Eastern culture. This was about the literal length of time during which Antiochus IV Epiphanes stopped the offering of sacrifices to God in the Lord's temple (167-164 BC). This real event became a symbol for every occasion when the wicked defeat the righteous—but only until God acts.

- **time, times, and half a time** (hence $3\frac{1}{2}$ times/years) — Daniel 7:25, 12:7; Revelation 12:14
- **the middle of the seven** (oppression commencing mid-way through a 7-year period) — Daniel 9:27
- **42 months** — Revelation 11:2, 13:5
- **2,300 evenings and mornings** (possibly meaning 1,150 days, a little less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ years) — Daniel 8:14
- **1,290 days** (just over $3\frac{1}{2}$ years) — Daniel 12:11
- **1,260 days** (just under $3\frac{1}{2}$ years)— Revelation 11:3, 12:6
- **$3\frac{1}{2}$ days** (similar use of the symbolic $3\frac{1}{2}$) — Revelation 11:9, 11:1

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Daniel 8:15-27

8:16 — Who explained the meaning of the vision to Daniel?

8:17, 19 — The vision concerned the time of the _____.

8:20 — The ram represented the kings of _____ and _____.

8:21 — The shaggy goat represented the king of _____, and the large horn represented the first _____.

8:22 — The 4 horns that replaced the first horn represented 4 _____ that would emerge from that nation but would not have the same power.

8:23-25 — Later, another king would arise [represented by the small horn]. He would destroy those who are mighty, the _____ people. He would cause deceit to prosper. He would consider himself superior. He would destroy many and take his stand against the _____. Yet he would be destroyed, but not by _____ power.

The Fulfillment

539 BC — The Medes and Persians conquered the Babylonian Empire (including the land of Israel); their empire was the ram of Daniel's vision.

333 BC — Alexander the Great led the Greeks in a lightning-quick conquest of everything from Greece to Egypt in the south and parts of India in the east. His empire was the goat of Daniel's vision.

323 BC — Alexander died suddenly at age 33. His empire was divided among four of his generals (represented by the 4 horns). Israel was controlled by one of these Greek nations (the family of the Ptolemies in Egypt) until about 200 BC, then by another (the family of the Seleucids in Syria) until 164 BC.

adapted from "Antiochus IV Epiphanes," the NIV Archaeological Study Bible, page 1406

The "small" horn of 8:9 turned out to be Antiochus IV, a Seleucid king (in Syria) who attempted to unite his lands by requiring the inhabitants to worship his own god, Zeus. When the Jews refused, he attacked Jerusalem, slaughtering many Jews in 169 BC. In 167 BC he launched another attack on the city, killing 22,000 men. He stationed a garrison at the temple, outlawed all Jewish rites there, ended the daily sacrifice, and (worst of all) set up an altar to Zeus over God's altar of burnt offerings. On December 25, 167 BC, a pig was sacrificed to Zeus on that altar.

Infuriated, the Jews rebelled. Led by Judas Maccabeus over a 3-year period, they forced Antiochus's army out of the region and gained some independence. They purified the temple and resumed the daily sacrifice on December 14, 164 BC.

Key Themes

- 1) What does this chapter say about the power of God?
- 2) Why does God allow the wicked to crush the righteous for a time? (Consider, for example, Psalm 37, especially verses 12-15.)
- 3) How should God's people respond to oppression by the wicked?
- 4) From 8:27 — What do you think "appalled" Daniel in this vision? And what, if anything, gave him hope?