

## Bible Study Notes

### Daniel 8: Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat

Interestingly, the first seven chapters of Daniel were written in Aramaic, whereas chapter 8 through the rest of the book is written in Hebrew. It was likely done this way because there are two separate audiences for the information.

v1-2: This vision was given to Daniel two years following his previous vision. Although it is not necessarily clear where Daniel actually was when he was given this vision, he sees himself standing on the banks of a canal in the Susa area.

v3-4: He sees a ram with two horns, representing the Medo-Persian dynasty (confirmed in the interpretation in v20). The horn that came up later is the Persian part of the dynasty, which ended up dominating the Medes. "It did as it pleased and became great". This speaks to the arrogance as well as the power of the Persian king Cyrus and his successors.

v5-8: He sees a goat with a prominent horn, who is the first king of Greece (confirmed in the interpretation in v21-22). This describes Alexander the Great and his conquest of the Greeks over the Medo-Persian Empire. "The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up". Alexander the Great died suddenly at a very young age, and his empire crumbled fairly quickly. It was divided up into four parts and ruled by four separate leaders, represented by the four prominent horns.

v9-12: the references to the small horn could refer to Antiochus IV Epiphanes ("the Manifest/Conspicuous One"), who usurped the throne, and using the interpretation from v23-25, could be referring to future events and the rise of the false prophet who is guided by anti-Christ. The crisis destined to confront God's people in the time of the earlier little horn, Antiochus Epiphanes, will bear a strong similarity to the crisis that will befall them in the last days (as Christ himself foresaw in Matthew 24:15).

In each case a determined effort will be made by a ruthless dictator to suppress completely the biblical faith and the worship of the one true God. We are again reminded that God only tolerates sin to a certain point. We have seen, time and time again, where God had enough of either mankind or His chosen people and put a stop to the sin by "thinning the herd"—we saw it with the flood, with Sodom and Gomorrah, when Jewish rebels opposing Moses were swallowed up in desert. At some time, there will always be a point of no return, where punishment is demanded.

v13-14: "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord's people?" "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated". The Maccabean Revolt, for which Hanukkah is celebrated, ended in the rededication of the temple within this time period. The first Hanukkah was celebrated in the year 164 and it was at that time that the temple was rededicated so that sacrifices could be resumed.

v15-17: Gabriel's appearance is so incredible that Daniel was struck even unable to speak. It was only at Gabriel's touch that Daniel was restored. Gabriel tells Daniel he is to "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end".

v26: Gabriel instructs Daniel to keep this account sealed up for later because it describes events in the "distant future", which is why this chapter and all of those following are written in Hebrew rather than Aramaic, like the first seven chapters.