

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF DANIEL

THE RAM (DANIEL 8:1-4) THE TRANSITION FROM PERSIAN TO GREEK

Since the vision dealt with these empires, Daniel was spiritually transported to the important Persian city of Susa in the province of Elam, which is in modern day Iran.

- This city was about 250 miles away from Babylon. Remember, Daniel is receiving this vision while Babylon was still in power.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL IS ABOUT THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

God wanted Daniel to know how He would start to move the Jews back to Israel and how the flow of history will change.

THE RAM WITH 2 HORNS

The ram symbolizes the Persians just like the silver chest and arms (Daniel 2) and the bear (Daniel 7). It had 2 horns on its head that symbolizes people.

- The horns were different sizes because the Medes eventually became secondary to the Persians when the Medes betrayed their king to Cyrus

THE RAM CHARGED IN 3 DIRECTIONS

West, north, and south foretelling Persia's conquest of Asia Minor, Lydia, Palestine, and some of Africa.

NO ANIMAL COULD STAND AGAINST IT

Until God permitted a change, the Medo-Persian forces were unstoppable. In fact, we still see a shadow of their reign with the wealth and power in Iran.

THE GOAT (DANIEL 8:5-8)

"AS I WAS OBSERVING, A MALE GOAT APPEARED"

A goat with a horn between his eyes came from the west across earth "without touching the ground." This is the bronze (Chap. 2) and leopard (Chap. 7).

- This symbolizes an empire with less brute force, but more swiftness and agility. Remember, this is how Greece was so successful—with strategy

FROM WILD ANIMALS (BEAR, LION, LEOPARD) TO MORE DOMESTICATED ANIMALS (RAM, GOAT)

The change is because the relationship these empires had with Israel vs. each other. Alexander (Greece) respected the Jews and Cyrus (Persia) was the instrument for the Jews return to Israel

THE GOAT ATTACKED THE RAM

The goat (Greece) rushed at the ram (Persia) with "savage fury" and shattered the two horns (the Medo-Persian leaders). Alexander had created a new kind of warfare that enabled him to defeat armies 10 times bigger than his.

PROPHECY, HISTORY, AND THE WORD

Josephus, a Roman-Jewish historian, claimed that as Alexander passed through Palestine the Jews showed him the Book of Daniel, which he immediately applied to himself. This would have been roughly 200 years after Daniel was written.

EVENTUALLY ALL HORNS ARE SHATTERED

Horns in Daniel represent leaders of empires, and history validates Daniel. In 323 B.C. during the 13th year of Alex's reign, he suddenly died at age 33. After that, his 4 generals, or "four conspicuous horns" divided the empire in 4 different directions

THE HORN (DANIEL 8:9-14)

THE OTHER LITTLE HORN

Ch.7 speaks of the "little horn" that represents the Antichrist, the leader of the last empire on earth. In ch.8 we see another "little horn" that foreshadows the Antichrist.

- The Antichrist arises from the 10 horns from the 4th empire (Rome). This one is from one of the 4 horns of the 3rd empire (Persian)

ANTIOCHUS IV CALLED EPIPHANES, THE 8TH KING OF THE SYRIAN DYNASTY FROM 175-164 B.C.

His name means, "God manifested" which seems to set him up to be a foreshadowing of the Antichrist. Antiochus' rise was sudden but grew in power in the south and east towards the "beautiful land" (Israel)

"GREW AS HIGH AS THE HEAVENLY HOST"? (V10)

This most likely means Antiochus warred against the Jews, specifically the Jewish Priests and the Maccabees. The "stars" he trampled were God's people (Genesis 15:5, 22:17). Maccabees says Antiochus killed over 100,000 Jews in the south

HE PRESENTED HIMSELF AS GOD

Antiochus made himself "Prince of the host." In other words, he claimed to be God and in his arrogance, he extinguished the daily sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple

- In doing this he took it a step further. It is one thing to rebel against people, but Antiochus intentionally rebelled against God.

LET'S GO BACK A STEP THOUGH

God handed His people over to yet another evil king because of their rebellion and idol worship.

This was His design to eventually draw them back to Himself

ONE ANGEL ASKS ANOTHER, "HOW LONG...?"

Angel #1 specifically asks how long the Jews will be persecuted by Antiochus, and angel #2 gives a direct, but confusing answer of "2,300 evenings and mornings."

- Some argue this is 2300 sacrifices, making 1150 days, or 2300 full days. Either way, it ended with the leadership of Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C.

WE DO WELL TO AVOID DOGMATIC APPROACHES TO THE SCRIPTURE

The point to this history lesson is that God appoints time frames for persecution that have an end.

Without trials, suffering, and friction there can be no great victories and the character of a people is diluted and becomes entitled.

- When we place ourselves above God we gravitate towards arrogance and moral relativism that leads to destruction. When theology takes a backseat to politics, entertainment, and self-preservation, truth is muddled and eventually lost. Without trials there's inadequate development of character and community

INTERPRETATION (DANIEL 8:15-22)

SEEING SOMEONE THAT LOOKED LIKE A MAN

As Daniel was "watching the vision and trying to understand it," a figure spoke in a human voice (likely Christ) from the Ulai river and told Gabriel to interpret the vision

WHEN THE ANGEL APPEARED, DANIEL FELL FACEDOWN IN TERROR

This is the response of everyone who came in contact with angels in the Bible (John in Revelation 22:8, Moses in Exodus 3:6, Isaiah in Isaiah 6:5, Ezekiel in Ezekiel 1:28)

- Whenever we hear of casual exchanges "ministers" have with angels, we must ask if it lines up with scripture

"...THE VISION REFERS TO THE TIME AT THE END"

This chapter is about events that were going to happen just centuries after Daniel's death, but they also foreshadow the Antichrist and the events of the end times.

- v19 says the end will be accompanied by "time of wrath" which connects this history lesson to the future coming of Christ (Revelation 11:18, 12:2, 16:1)

A DUAL REFERENCE APPROACH IS USED SEVERAL TIMES IN THE BIBLE

The history of Antiochus IV in Daniel is one of those. Daniel's vision and prophecies give us a historical example of what the end times will be like

SO, THE INTERPRETATION IS PRETTY CLEAR

Gabriel clears up any confusion and identifies the goat, ram, and the horns on each. He also says from what kingdom Antiochus, "little horn," will come from

- The angel says, from the "1st king" of Greece meaning Alexander. Alex was not technically the 1st king, but is the greatest king in Greek history

FORESHADOWING (DANIEL 8:23-27)

SHATTERED, BUT NOT BY HUMAN HANDS

Something that pops out is the end of v25 when Gabriel says Antiochus will be shattered, but not by human hands like the previous empires.

- 1 Maccabees 6:8-13 says that Antiochus received word in that the Maccabees had miraculously won control of Israel. It says he was astonished and laid on his bed and fell sick due to grief. He then called in his friends to confess that he had done great evil to the Jews.
- "Seal up the vision" is not to hide the prophecy, but to make sure it is kept safe so the Believers and skeptics can see it in the future

DANIEL WAS PHYSICALLY ILL FROM THE DISTURBING EVENTS HE WAS ABLE TO WITNESS

Imagine seeing the future, especially parts so distant they are hard to understand.

HARD TO IMAGINE TIMES WOULD CHANGE

Daniel received this vision when Belshazzar was still on the throne and the Babylonian empire was thriving. It was hard to imagine that Persia, let alone Greece, could topple the mighty Babylonians. The thought of God's people being shut down in their worship practices was also unimaginable

THE FUTURE IS LAID OUT, AND HAS BEEN FORESHADOWED

- If one believes the Bible to be true, not just spiritually, but historically, we cannot ignore the warnings of Daniel's prophecies that became history. These past events prepare Believers for future events.

OUR PROBLEM IS VISION

- I fear that we have become a people myopic in vision. We fail to see the relevance of the past, the magnitude of the present, and the vastness of eternity. How will we react when our way of life changes?