

Madman!
Daniel 8
August 1, 2021

Purpose statement: God's people will prevail through the tribulation to come.

Attention Getter: When people do things that seem unbelievably evil we label them as mad, crazy, or insane. We are all familiar with the evil exploits of murderers like Charles Manson, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Ted Bundy. More recently are the mass shootings in schools, at theaters, work places, and even in churches.

What about those who rise to power over countries and commit mass murder? People like, Germany's Hitler, the Soviet Union's Stalin, and China's Mao? The fact is there will always be those with evil intent, and some will be in power.

Why do we label those who do these evil things as mad, crazy, or insane? Is it because they are or is it because we want to distant ourselves from their behavior? We would rather not believe there are evil people in the world who have no regard for human life. LEOs know better. Patrol officers quickly learn there are people that are capable of all sorts of evil. And some of these people wield power or influence in their community.

Introduction: Today's text records Daniel's third vision of things to come and in it he sees Israel's future and an evil king who will murder and wreak havoc on the nation. But the person Daniel sees is only a type of the last human ruler that will wage war against God's people.

Read: Daniel 8:3-10 *"Out of one of them came a little horn...."* (Dan. 8:9).

Background: Chapter 7 begins the prophetic half of Daniel. Chapters 1-6, while containing some prophecy, were basically historical. The remainder of the book is prophetic. Daniel recounts four prophetic revelations in the remaining chapters. So we continue the prophetic portion of Daniel.

The vision of chapter 7 came to Daniel between chapters 4 and 5. Daniel dreamt of four unusual beasts that arose out of a great sea, the troubled sea of humanity. The four beasts represent four Gentile world empires that would rule the earth from Daniel's time until the end of the *Times of the Gentiles* spoken of by Jesus. They are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. These four kingdoms coincide to the kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2. In chapter 8, Daniel has a vision of two more animals that represent world empires.

The remaining prophecies specifically have Israel in mind. Therefore, from chapter 8 to the end Daniel wrote in Hebrew. The vision recorded in chapter 8 came to Daniel two years after his dream in chapter 7. It was now 551/550 BC, twelve years prior to Babylon's fall,^{1,2} **Dan. 8:1**. The events take place during the *Times of the Gentiles*. Prior to this vision, the prophecies primarily concerned Gentile nations, but what about Israel? Daniel was given insight into what will happen to Israel during the time of Gentile domination. This insight begins with a vision of a ram.

I. **The Ram (8:2-4; 15-20)**

Daniel is about 70 years old when he's transported by a vision to Susa. At the time of the vision Susa wasn't a prominent city; but it would become the capital of the Medo-Persian Empire. It's where both Esther and Nehemiah would later live. Susa was located about 220 miles east of Babylon

¹ (Walvoord, 1971, p. 179)

² (Miller, 1994, p. 220)

and about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. In his vision, Daniel stood beside the Ulai (oo-lie) Canal, **Dan. 8:2**. This was a large canal fed by two rivers. It was 900' wide and was built on one side of Susa, offering protection from enemy attack.³

Immediately after seeing the vision Daniel wanted to understand its meaning. While still “in the vision” Daniel sees a being who had the “*appearance of a man*”; **8:15**. Since this being was not human, but had the “*appearance of a man*” he could either be an angel or God himself. Recall how the preincarnate Christ was described in chapter 7, **7:13a**. This coupled with the next verse in chapter 8 confirms the being Daniel saw was in fact the Son of God. He hovered over the waters of the Ulai Canal and gave a command to the angel Gabriel, **8:16**.

By giving the command to Gabriel the unidentified being demonstrates his authority over Gabriel. Gabriel immediately approached Daniel, who fell to the ground overwhelmed by all he was seeing, **8:17**. It was too much for Daniel; he fainted and needed to be awakened. Gabriel awakened Daniel and repeated the vision is for the end times (that is the *end times* of this vision), **8:18-19**. Let's return the beginning of the vision and see what Daniel saw from Susa.

As Daniel was taking in the scene, he saw a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It was a ram with two horns. Note the difference between the horns, **8:3**. The ram charged west, north, and south, indicating it came from the east, **8:4**.

Daniel's interpreter, Gabriel, identifies the ram, **8:20**. The ram represents the **Medo-Persian** Empire. This is the first

³ (Showers, 1982, p. 97)

time the second empire is specifically identified in Scripture. From history we understand the second empire of silver Nebuchadnezzar saw in chapter 2, and the second beast—the bear—Daniel saw in chapter 7 represented Medo-Persia. But here the empire is specifically named 12 years before Babylon fell on that October night in 539 BC!

Perhaps this is why Daniel was so bold when he interpreted the handwriting on the wall to Belshazzar. The empire began with the Medes, but they soon partnered with the Persians who became stronger and dominated, as indicated by the two horns. While considering the greatness of the ram, a second animal suddenly appears in Daniel's vision, a male goat.

II. **The Goat** (8:5-8; 21-22)

A. One Horn (8:5-7)

The goat came from the west and moved swiftly, as depicted by moving without touching the ground, **Dan. 8:5a**. Other than he moved with great speed, there was something else significant about this goat—he had one big horn between his eyes, **8:5b**.

The swift-moving one-horned goat directed his fury at the ram and ran at him, full force; **8:6**. The goat was moved by great rage against the ram, as if it was personal, **8:7**. Who was this goat, and why such anger against the ram?

Gabriel clues us in, **8:21**. The goat from the west was **Greece**. We know from history the great horn (its *first king*) was Alexander the Great. Why was Alexander so angry at the ram? For years the Greek people resented the Persians, especially after the invasions by Darius I and Xerxes I.

Further, when Alexander was 20 years old his father, Philip of Macedon, was planning an attack against Persia when he was murdered. The young Alexander succeeded his father and 18 months later, in 334 BC attacked Persia, by 331 BC the Medo-Persian Empire had come to an end.⁴

B. Four Horns (8:8 & 22)

Within ten years Alexander conquered most of the world; but on June 13, 323 BC, at the age of 32 he died. His two sons were murdered, thus eliminating any heir to the throne. This too was depicted in the dream, **8:8**.

After Alexander's untimely death his kingdom was divided between his four generals, as interpreted by Gabriel, **8:22**. Only two of the generals are of significant importance on the world scene, Ptolemy who ruled Egypt and Seleucus who ruled Syria. But the focus of Daniel's dream isn't on one of these generals; it's on a Little Horn.

III. The Little Horn (8:9-12; 23-25)

This Little Horn is not to be confused with the Little Horn in chapter 7. The Little Horn in chapter 7 will come from the fourth beast (**Rome**). Specifically it will arise from among ten other horns that are part of a ten-nation confederation of a revived Roman Empire, not the Greek Empire, **Dan. 7:23-24**. The Little Horn of chapter 7 will be the last human ruler. He will set himself against God and God's people, we know him as the *man of lawlessness*⁵ or the *Antichrist*⁶. He is yet to come.

⁴ (Miller, 1994, p. 223)

⁵ 2 Thess. 2:3

⁶ 1 John 2:18

On the other hand, the Little Horn of chapter 8 comes from the **Greek** Empire, although he is regarded as a type of the Antichrist. At the time of Daniel's dream he was a future king, today we know he's history. The Little Horn of chapter 8 came from one of the four kingdoms that emerged after Alexander died. This horn dominated the south (Egypt), the east (Persia), and the *glorious land* (Israel), **8:9**. Which of the four kingdoms will the Little Horn arise from? History shows that he came from the north (Syria, of the Seleucid dynasty).

He will become great, symbolically growing even to the "*host of heaven*", **8:10a**. This is simply a way of saying he will be powerful. In the next sentence, Daniel sees "*some of the host and some of the stars*" trampled. To Daniel the stars were a clear reference to Israel. God said to Abraham, "*I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven*" (Gen. 22:17). This Little Horn casts these stars to the ground and tramples them, **8:10b**.

He will exalt himself equal to *the Prince of the Host*, that is, God himself! Further, this Little Horn will stop the daily sacrifice in the temple. In fact, he will overthrow the temple, **8:11**. His goal was to cease all worship to Yahweh, like the Antichrist will do.

He will be given a *host* (army); and the truth will be trodden underfoot while the Little Horn prospers, **8:12**. Why will God allow this Little Horn to do all these things to his people? The answer is given here in v.12, "*because of transgression*" or their act of rebellion against God, **8:12a**.

Let's see how Gabriel interprets this Little Horn. Recall he came up from one of the four horns of the Greek Empire

after Alexander died. Gabriel calls him “*a king of bold face*” and one who is intelligent, **8:23**.

Gabriel continues, he will be mighty, but not by his own power, **8:24a**. *Not by his own power* seems to infer that Satan will empower him and God will allow him to have power. Gabriel continues; he outlines some of the terrible things the evil king will do before he comes to an end *by no human hand*, **8:24b-25**.

The Little Horn of chapter 8 is a king that ruled 170 years before Christ. At the time of the dream Daniel was seeing years into the future. This Little Horn is **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** of the Seleucid dynasty. He came to power in 175 BC after his brother, who had inherited the throne, was murdered.

The Seleucid domain was Syria, Babylonia, and southern Asia Minor. Antiochus had also gained control of Egypt for a short time in 170 BC by defeating Ptolemy VI, who had attacked him. After declaring himself king of Egypt, Antiochus turned his attention to Jerusalem, “The people were subjugated, the temple desecrated, and the temple treasury plundered.”⁷

In 168 BC, Antiochus returned to Egypt only to be forced out by Rome. He decided to use Israel as a buffer state between the Roman controlled Egypt and Syria. Antiochus vented on the people of Jerusalem, killing some 80,000 and enslaving 40,000 others. He burned the city and on December 16, 167 BC, Antiochus entered the temple and offered a pig as a sacrifice to the Greek god Zeus, spraying the blood of the pig all over the temple’s interior. Antiochus instituted pagan worship throughout Judah.

⁷ (Wolvoord & Zuck, 1985, p. 1358)

That same year, an old Jewish priest name Mattathias became so upset by the forced pagan worship that when a Jewish man was about to offer a sacrifice to the Greek god Jupiter, Mattathias killed both the Jew and the soldier who ordered the sacrifice. Mattathias died the following year, but his son Judas Maccabeus (*the Hammer*) carried on the revolt known as the Maccabean revolt until Antiochus was defeated. Antiochus did not die at the hands of men, just as Daniel recorded (8:25), but died suddenly of a disease in 164 BC.

The cruelties done to the Jewish people by Antiochus are too abhorrent to detail. Let me mention he had no qualms about slaughtering innocent women and babies. In the vision, I think Daniel got at least a glimpse of what lay in store for his people. After seeing a foretaste of what his people were in for; the next question is, “How long?”

IV. **How long?** (8:13-14; 26-27)

In the vision, Daniel heard an angel inquire how long the sacrifices at the temple would be suspended and the temple and God’s people be trampled by this Little Horn, **Dan. 8:13**. The response is given to Daniel; apparently this is what was on Daniel’s mind, **8:14**.

According to Walvoord this verse is the key to the proper interpretation of this chapter. The question lies with the understanding of 2,300. There are three interpretations.⁸

What is meant by “2,300 evenings and mornings”? Was this 2,300 evenings and mornings combined, meaning 1150 days? Or did it mean 2,300 daily sacrifices (the evening and

⁸ (Walvoord, 1971, pp. 188-190)

morning), making it 2,300 days (KJV). A third interpretation of this is that it refers to 2,300 years.

The Seventh Day Adventist held to this last view stating the Second Coming of Christ would be sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. Their leader, William Miller set the start date with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem given in 457 BC by Artaxerxes.

First, the third proposition is wrong, Jesus has yet to return. This shows the danger of taking biblical prophecies out of context and trying to find some secret code or hidden message within the text.

Either of the other two interpretations will fit Antiochus IV and both have the support of scholars. The best interpretation is for 2,300 literal days. This is best supported by the context, the Hebrew language used, and our understanding of history. Twenty-three hundred days prior to December, 164 BC was September, 171 BC; it was then when Antiochus had the former Jewish high priest, Onias III murdered at the request of his appointed replacement priest, 2,300 days (or just over six years) later the terrible oppression ended.

Either way, scholars agree the 1150 or the 2300 days concluded when the temple was rededicated by Judas Maccabeus or at the death of Antiochus a short time later.

According to Jewish tradition a miracle occurred at the rededication. There was only enough untainted oil to keep the menorah's candles burning for one day; amazingly the menorah continued to burn for eight days until more oil was found.⁹ The rededication of the temple became a special

⁹ (history.com/topics/hanukkah, accessed November 21, 2013)

celebration for the Jews. Today it's remembered as **Hanukkah**, the Feast of Dedication, or the Feast of Lights. John mentions the celebration in his Gospel, **John 10:22-23**.

Conclusion: Scoffers and false teachers continue to spread their ignorance about the Bible and cause doubt in the mind of both believers and non-believers. When we realize the Bible is God's Word, and it is trustworthy we can rest assured in the promises contained therein. Daniel's vision is true; it was as good as done, **Dan. 8:26**. Daniel saw the vision and wrote these words nearly 400 years prior to Antiochus' cruel reign. The details given are so convincing it leaves no room for doubt. You either take it as God's word or outright **deny** the evidence.

Daniel became physically ill when he realized just what lay ahead for his people, **8:27**.

If we had a visual of what is going to come to our world during the Tribulation, we, like Daniel, might become physically ill. Just reading about these events in the Bible should spark us to be faithful witnesses—**SALVATION!**