

Daniel 8:1-14 – The Ram and the Goat

Chapter 8 provides more detail about two of the four beasts from chapter 7. They are represented by different animals. One was a two horned ram and the other was a male goat with a horn in the middle. Unlike chapter 7, Daniel was told the identities of the kingdoms which the ram and the goat represented. Chapter 8 is in Hebrew. Chapter 7 was in Aramaic. As the end of the Babylonian empire drew ever closer, Daniel was given more details about what would happen after the Babylonian empire fell.

Read Daniel 8:1-8.

In verse 1, Daniel saw a vision. When did this vision occur? How long after the vision in Daniel 7 did this vision occur? In chapter 7, Daniel's vision occurred during a dream when he was laying in bed. Is there any mention of a dream in 8:1? What type of vision was this? Was Daniel awake when he saw the vision? Parts of the vision were introduced with "I saw". (8:1)

In verse 2, was Daniel actually in Susa or was that just what he saw in the vision? Where was Susa? In his vision, Daniel was by the Ulai canal. Some say that the Ulai was a river. Others say that it was an artificial canal between two rivers. Either way, it was near Susa. (8:2)

What did Daniel see in verse 3? If we look at verse 20, an angel told Daniel that the two horns of the ram were the kings of Media and Persia. Based on this knowledge, what was the significance of the two horns. Which horn came up later and was also higher? Cyrus the Great, credited with defeating the Babylonian empire, was the one who is credited with uniting the Medes and Persians. He was Persian on his father's side and a Mede on his mother's side. In verse 4, how was the ram described? (8:3-4)

What did Daniel see in verses 5-7? If we look at verse 21, Daniel was told that the goat was the king of Greece. The horn was the first king who was most certainly Alexander the Great. He is the one who conquered the Medo-Persian empire. (8:5-7)

What did Daniel see in verse 8? What was the significance of verse 8? After Alexander the Great's sudden death, the Greek kingdom was eventually divided into four prominent kingdoms ruled by four of Alexander's generals. Cassander had Macedonia and Greece. Lysimachus had Thrace and Asia Minor. Ptolemy had Egypt. Seleucus had Syria and Mesopotamia. My sources for the four kingdoms are Edward J. Young and Dale Ralph Davis. (8:8)

Read Daniel 8:9-14.

What did Daniel see in verse 9? “One of them” refers back to one of the four Greek kingdoms which came after Alexander the Great. Was this “little horn” the same as the “little horn” in chapter 7? Remember that in chapter 7, the little horn came out of the fourth beast. Some want to say that the four beasts of chapter 7 were Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greek. One reason is so that the little horn in chapters 7 and 8 could be the same and both would come out of one of the four Greek empires which came after Alexander. The problem with that is that the ram is one animal who represents a united Medo-Persian empire. Who was the little horn of chapter 8? (8:9)

In verses 9-12, how was the little horn described? What did the little horn do? Have you heard of Antiochus IV Epiphanes? He was in the line of Seleucid kings. One of the capitals of the Seleucid empire was Antioch, Syria. That is why a number of the Seleucid kings were named “Antiochus”. Seleucus was one of Alexander’s generals. Antiochus Epiphanes is a name that he gave to himself. It was a blasphemous name. By some, he was referred to as Antiochus Epimanes (“the mad man”). He reigned from 175 BC to 164 BC. The Seleucid empire’s greatest expansion was to the east. It extended toward India. It extended toward the south, toward Egypt. By the time Antiochus Epiphanes came to power, Judea was under his control. I believe that was the fulfillment of the statement that it grew toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land, Judea.

Did the acts of Antiochus Epiphanes align with verses 10-12? Here are some of the things he did.

- He removed the high priest at the temple in Jerusalem and replaced him with a high priest who pleased him, who supported him, and who gave him money.
- He banned the study of Scripture, Sabbath observance, circumcision, and dietary laws.
- He killed many Jews.
- He desecrated the temple in Jerusalem when he placed an altar to Zeus, the Greek god, in the temple and sacrificed pigs on the altar. Remember that Antiochus was of Greek descent.

In verse 13, what question was asked? Who asked the question? ESV, NASB, NKJV and NIV all have “a holy one” and “another holy one”. In verse 14, what was the answer to the question in verse 14? Is the 2,300 the number of days, half days or something else? ESV, NASB and NIV all have “evenings and mornings”. KJV and NKJV have “days”. The Hebrew text is literally “evenings and mornings” just as in Genesis 1. Some say that the 2,300 number refers to 1,150 evenings and 1,150 mornings and is therefore 1,150 days. Others say that the “evenings and mornings” is used like it is in Genesis 1 and refers to one day. Those who understand the number as 1,150 days equate the time to the number of days from the time the temple was desecrated to the time when the temple was cleansed. Those who understand the number to be 2,300 days equate the time to the number of days that Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the Jews. Neither number seems to fit perfectly into the known historic dates. The number 2,300 means that the time of suffering was limited.