

Lesson 8: Chapter 8 – A Vision for the Jewish People

In the previous chapter, God gives Daniel a prophetic warning about the end of all time. In this vision of Daniel's, a few years later, God warns him of a unique time of trial that will be visited upon the Jewish people. It is not coincidental that this is the point at which the book reverts to Hebrew from Aramaic. This vision concerns Israel, the covenant people of God.

Day 1: Once again, Daniel sees a vision of animal-like creatures. This time, though, rather than four animals, he sees just two. Read Daniel 8:1-7.

1. Describe the first beast.
2. Describe the second beast.

Day 2: After introducing us to the animals of his vision, Daniel notices an unusual feature on the second creature, the goat. Read Daniel 8:8-14.

1. What happens to the goat's horns?
2. What did the small-horn-that-grew-large do to the sanctuary of God (v. 11-12)?
3. How long will the desecration of the sanctuary occur and what will happen to the sanctuary after that time (v. 14)?

Day 3: What a curious vision indeed! We notice similarities between it and Daniel's previous vision, like the usage of beasts as symbols and the mention of a "horn" who seeks to challenge the Most High God. But we also notice differences between the two visions. The number of beasts is different, the activities of the "horn" in view here are focused upon the physical sanctuary of God, and the Son of Man, who comes in the clouds, is conspicuously absent. Read Daniel 8:15-22.

1. Biblical scholars differ over the exact identification of the deliverer of the interpretation in vv. 15-16. Some think it is Gabriel, others think it is Jesus Christ himself, still others think it is another angel altogether. Regardless of the different options, one thing is completely assured – what is the origin of the interpretation given to Daniel?
2. Yet again, the creatures in Daniel's visions represent kingdoms and rulers.
 - a. Which kingdom is represented by the ram?
 - b. Which kingdom is represented by the goat?

The identification of the goat as the Grecian empire makes the mystery of the changing horns reasonably identifiable by the now-historical record (remember Daniel was writing this some 200 years before the rise of the Greeks). The large horn represents Alexander the Great. After his untimely death at the age of 32 in 323 B.C., the Grecian empire was partitioned into four regions, coinciding with the four horns that replace the broken single horn.

Day 4: The transformation of the second beast (the one represented the Grecian kingdom, do not forget) continues in Daniel 8:23-25.

1. The little horn is identified in v. 23 as “completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue”. Out of the partitioned Greek empire, a ruler rose to prominence, one who would rule over the land of Israel. This ruler, history has recorded, was Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The horrors he perpetrated upon the Jewish people who remained faithful to their God were recorded in the historical books about a family of Jewish priests who rebelled against the evil reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Maccabees. What do you think it means in v. 25 when it says he will “take his stand against the Prince of princes” (hint – see Daniel 8:11-12)?
2. Antiochus IV Epiphanes did indeed cause much desolation in the sanctuary. The 2,300 days spoken of earlier in v. 14 commenced with the murder of the High Priest Onias III in 170 B.C. and lasted to approximately 164 B.C., when the reconstruction of the temple began after the death of Antiochus. In the middle of this time, Antiochus famously installed an altar to the Greek god Zeus inside the Jerusalem temple, offering unclean pigs upon it. This double offense indicated the heights of Antiochus’ insolence against the Most High God. The main themes of the book of Daniel regarding God’s character is that of His sovereignty and power. What do you think the book of Daniel teaches us about the characteristic tendencies of human kings and rulers?

Day 5: Daniel’s heart is grieved by the revelation given to him, but he remains faithful to the command of God in v. 28, to “seal up” or save the vision he has been given for future Jewish generations. Finish reading Daniel chapter 8:26-27.

1. The little horn that Daniel describes in chapter 8 shares many similarities with the horn that he saw in his vision in chapter 7, but there are striking differences between the two.
 - a. Where did the little horn of chapter 8 originate (v. 21)?
 - b. What about the horn of chapter 7 (see Chapter 2, Day 4 notes)?



Maccabees by Wojciech Stattler, 1842

2. Did the prophecy regarding the destruction of the horn’s kingdom and the inauguration of the heavenly kingdom of God in Daniel 7:23-27 occur in 1st century B.C.?
3. Since we have established that the everlasting kingdom of God did not come in the first century B.C., can the little horn in Daniel’s chapter 8 vision be the same horn described in Daniel’s chapter 7 dream?