

Ram & Goat Vision

Daniel 8:1-14

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Daniel 7:9-28 Summary: God revealed to Daniel a vision of four beasts representing kingdoms that parallel those represented by the different materials in Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream in Daniel 2.

- The vision of the four beasts depicts the course of Gentile world dominion from the time of Babylon captivity of the Jews to the second coming of Christ.

What observations & applications can be made from this vision of the future given to Daniel?

- During this time of history, the Gentiles will have supremacy in the world, and Jerusalem and Israel will be trodden down by the Gentiles.
- Daniel 2 portrayed Gentile world dominion as it appears to rebellious man; therefore, it presented that dominion as a brilliant, glorious human image (Nebuchadnezzar's statue)
- Daniel 7 portrayed Gentile world dominion as it appears to God; therefore, it presented Gentile dominion's true, inward nature – that of wild voracious beast!

This vision was prophetic when it was given, but it has been literally fulfilled so exactly that some say it had to be written much later than Daniel's time. Daniel's prophetic vision of the ram with two unmatched horns and the goat with one horn puts the conflict between Medo-Persia and Greece under a microscope. It also serves as a type for the struggle between the two legs of the Roman empire; the "Christian" West and the Islamic East.

Note: Chapter 2:4 thru 7:28 was written in Aramaic, Chapter 8 returns to the use of the Hebrew language.

Vision of a Ram and a Goat, Daniel 8:1-14

In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. ² I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. ³ Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. ⁴ I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and

southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. ⁵ And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. ⁶ Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. ⁷ And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. ⁸ Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. ⁹ And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. ¹⁰ And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. ¹¹ He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. ¹² Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. ¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" ¹⁴ And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

When did Daniel receive his vision?

"In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign" – This vision happened while Babylon was securely in power; though the vision deals with the emergence of the Greek Empire which was not much of anything at the time of this prophecy.

- The Medo-Persian Empire was yet to emerge but God elected to show Daniel details of the third Empire, Grecian

What do you think might be the significance of where Daniel was taken in this vision?

Susa or Shushan was a city located 250 miles east of Babylon and was where the Kings of Persia had their summer residence. It was the capitol of the Persian Empire after King Cyrus' time.

What does the ram represent in Daniel's vision?

The ram depicts the Empire of the Medes and the Persians as explained by Gabriel (Dan 8:20) and in particular is about King Cyrus, who was the founder of the Persian Empire.

What do the two horns represent?

One horn was higher than the other; and the higher horn came up last.

- The Medes were represented by the shorter horn, was the more ancient of the two kingdoms.
- Persia, the higher horn, came up into being last but was of little historic or political consequences until the time of King Cyrus. Persia became the more powerful of the two.

v4 – Where did the ram go to conquer their kingdom?

The Medes and Persians pushed their conquest west, north, and south; the principal theatre of their war was:

- Westward against Babylon, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor
- North against Couches, Armenia, Iberia and the region around the Caspian Sea
- South against Judea, Ethiopia, Egypt, Libya and India
- Daniel does not say "eastward" for the Persians themselves came from the east. Isaiah 16:11 refers to the Persians as "*a ravenous bird from the east*"

v5 – What did the male goat represent?

Alexander the Great from Greece

- The goat was a symbol of the Grecian or Macedonian people
- 200 years earlier they were called the goat people because they used goats to guide them to new settlements in Macedonia.

What was represented by the goat not touching the ground?

This was an indication of Alexander's rapid conquest; it happened so fast that it was as if he was flying over the earth.

What did the single, "notable" horn of the goat represent?

Alexander the Great Himself... he was a charismatic, invincible leader of a relatively small army that had rapid success.

How did the goat attack the ram?

"with furious power" (v6) ...The conflicts between the Greeks and the Persians were excessively severe

- Alexander first vanquished the generals of Darius in Phrygia
- He next attacked and totally routed Darius in Cilicia
- He routed them in the plains of Assyria
- Darius' army was on the banks of the Granicus River, and Alexander and his army plunged in and swam across the river and rushed into battle!
- Alexander sacked and burned the Persian capital city

King Darius had endeavored to draw off Alexander's captains by bribes and also have him assassinated by Alexander's own military personnel

- Because of this act, Alexander absolutely refused to listen to any proposal of peace; he was determined to destroy King Darius and his whole Empire
- King Darius was murdered by his own treacherous subjects

When Alexander was about to lay siege to Jerusalem, he sent emissaries ahead of him asking for Jerusalem to open its gates.

- The Jewish High Priest Juddas asked for an audience with Alexander, which was granted. He showed Alexander the Book of Daniel written about 300 years earlier where he was represented by the "male goat" who would destroy the Medes and Persians represented by the ram.
- Alexander was so moved, that he did not lay siege or destroy Jerusalem. He used Jews throughout his Empire to govern and also decreed that no taxes would be required of Israel.

v8 – What happened after the Grecian male goat grew very great?

the large horn was broken

Alexander died at the height of his conquest when he was 32 years old; he had never lost a battle or campaign!

- Alexander died an agonizing death in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon two days after consuming a large bowl of wine in honor of Hercules. Some say "poisoned", others say natural causes, "malaria, typhoid fever, etc."

What took the place of the large horn that was broken?

While on his death bed, it was asked of Alexander: “To whom should the Kingdom go?” He replied: “To the strongest!” His wife and two sons tried to retain the kingdom but could not.

- Alexander’s four generals took over the kingdom and held dominion, “*towards the four winds of heaven*”

General Lysimachus – Asia Minor (Trace, Pergamum)

General Cassander – Macedonia and Greece

General Ptolemy – Egypt, Libya, Palestine

General Seleucus – Syria, Persia

v9 – What was this little horn that grew out of one of the four horns that replaced the horn of Alexander?

Out of one of the four generals, General Seleucus of Syria, an ambitious and persecuting “little horn” was to spring up.

- Antiochus III gained power in Syria; his son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, was this “little horn.” He treated the Jews severely demanding that they submit to Greek culture worshipping the Greek gods

v10 – How is it this little horn became so great that he cast down some of the host of heaven?

This is where things get a bit complicated. What is described here does not fit Antiochus Epiphanes so well as it does what we know of the Antichrist... Antiochus Epiphanes was only a type of the Antichrist.

- We’ve seen this before in Scripture, in Ezekiel 28, the fall of the King of Tyre is described but it becomes clear that Scripture is really referring to Satan who was the spirit behind the king
- While the “*transgression of desolation*” was foreshadowed by Antiochus slaughtering a pig to Zeus on the Temple altar, everywhere else Daniel mentions the abomination of desolation, the Antichrist is clearly the perpetrator. And when Jesus spoke of this in the Olivet Discourse, it was referred to as a future event.
- So, with that reasoning, we are talking here about the spirit behind both Antiochus and the Antichrist: Satan which brings to mind the following...

Revelation 12:4, 9 – *His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth... So, the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

What will be the Abomination of Desolation?

The Antichrist will “proclaim himself to be God” in a wing of the Temple (probably the Holy of Holies). See Matthew 24:15, Daniel 8:11, 9:27, 11:31, 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

v11 – Who is the Prince of the host?

God

Who is it that exalts himself as high as the Prince of the host?

This has to be Satan...

Isaiah 14:13-14 – *For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’*

So, what else does Satan do per verses 11& 12?

- Take away the daily sacrifices... this was foreshadowed by Antiochus and will be fulfilled by the Antichrist; both under the influence of Satan himself.
- He cast down truth – after all, Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44)
- He prospered – for a time being used by God to have His will be done

v13-14 – How long will the daily sacrifices be taken away?

“2300” days... using the 360 days/year of the Hebrew lunar calendar, this is a little more than 6 years.

- So, this can’t apply to the time of Antiochus who took away the daily sacrifice for a little more than three years.
- Since the abomination of desolation occurs at the midpoint of Daniel’s 70th Week (the Tribulation) per Daniel 9:27, the Temple sacrifices will cease through the end of the Tribulation and a little more than 2½ years into the Millennial Kingdom... perhaps the time it takes to establish a new Temple?

What observations or applications come to mind?

The Bible has to be from God (end from beginning)

My commentary has been taken from David Guzik, bluletterbible.org

The Bible passages are from NKJV, biblegateway.com