

Chapter Seven

Vision of a Ram and a Goat

As always, we need to take particular attention to the details in our approach to God's Word in order to avoid stumbling into the error of accepting an interpretation instead of coming to the solid rock of understanding. Daniel sees a vision which is followed by the interpretation given through an angel who is referred to as a 'saint', literally a 'holy one' from the Lord.

Daniel 8:1-27

In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. 2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. 3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. 6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. 7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. 10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down. 12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. 19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. 20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. 26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. 27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

Daniel has this vision during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar, who was the last king of the Babylonian Empire (Daniel 5:30). In verses 1-14 we have the description of the vision and the rest of the chapter is concerned primarily with the interpretation. In the vision we find a ram that is described as "great" (Daniel 8:4), which is later interpreted as being the kingdom of the Medes and Persians (Daniel 8:20). The goat with one horn is described as "very great" (Daniel 8:8) and it is interpreted as being the kingdom of Greece (Daniel 8:21) which is then divided into four (Daniel 8:22).

Then there is "a little horn" that is then described as growing "exceedingly great" (Daniel 8:9) in the latter time of the Greek Empire (Daniel 8:23), which was long after it had been divided into four. This particular kingdom I have termed the Little Big Horn. This kingdom grew toward the south and toward the east and toward the Pleasant Land (Daniel 8:9) which is a term referring to the Promised Land of Israel.

In the ancient Hebrew language there is **no such expression as ‘southeast’ or ‘northwest’ when it comes to compass headings. They say, “The north and the west” to indicate northwest. “Toward the south and toward the east” means a south-easterly direction.**

This passage perfectly describes the history of the rise of Rome which came to power in the north western portion of the Greek Empire in its latter days (Daniel 8:23). Rome had conquered Corinth in **response to Macedonian aggression and had no initial interest in expanding further. It was a “little horn” (Daniel 8:9a). But a few decades later the new power began to extend its dominion into the Greek territories** and we find that the prophecy exactly details the initial direction of the expansion that was to finally dispatch the Greek Empire to the dustbin of history (Daniel 8:9b). This passage also perfectly describes the history of the procession of empires with regards to their size. As mentioned above: The Medes and the Persians were a great empire (Daniel 8:4); The Greeks were a very great empire (Daniel 8:8); The Romans were an exceedingly great empire (Daniel 8:9).

Many scholars have stumbled over the identification of the Little Big Horn, somehow ascribing it as part of the Greek Empire. However, the timing of its appearance as described in the vision places it in the latter part of the reign of the Greeks (Daniel 8:9-12 and 23-25). Latter part means: toward the end of. In giving the interpretation, Daniel gives some details of the activities of this king that arises that enables us to define the historical time accurately. The New King James more easily describes this character:

Daniel 8:23-25 NKJV

“And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes. 24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people. 25 “Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart. He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without *human* means.

From the above passage we see that the king of the Little Big Horn is described as having fierce features, **sinister, a mighty one who shall “destroy the mighty and the holy people”.** It was to be during a time when the transgressors had reached their fullness. Note also this phrase:

Daniel 8:11

Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down.

“ . . . and the place of the sanctuary was cast down”. This mention of the sanctuary enables us to discern that the time period refers to the destruction of the Temple, which was accomplished by the Romans, not the desecration that happened under the rule of the Greeks. Whilst the Greeks were responsible for an abomination of desolation, they did not cast the sanctuary down; they only desecrated and defiled the temple, then they left it desolate, but it was still standing. For more on this subject see The Abomination of Desolation in the Appendix.

Daniel 8:14

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

The 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 is a period of time hard to discern. However, history tells us the Roman war with the Jews was not over when Jerusalem was defeated in 70AD. Rebellious Jews continued their **resistance and it wasn't until 73AD that the stronghold of Masada was overtaken and the trampling of the host was complete.** It was then that the war was finally finished. Whilst no one can measure the 2300 days, the entire war is approximately that period of time.

The meaning of the phrase: “then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” in Daniel 8:14 has generally been regarded as a mystery. The Hebrew word that is normally translated ‘cleansed’ in English is *taheer* and is used consistently with regard to ritual cleansing. However, the word ‘cleansed’ in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *tse-daq* which is normally translated ‘justify’, ‘just’, ‘justified’, ‘justice’ or ‘righteous’. The context declares that *tse-daq* would be accomplished when both the temple and the host were trampled. In the light of what Jesus said was going to happen to the Temple and the reason He gave for what was coming upon the unbelieving and wicked generation, it makes sense to consider the fate of the Sanctuary and the host being trampled as a ‘just’ or ‘righteous’ event, rather than the sanctuary being cleansed or restored. The fact of the matter is that it was neither cleansed nor restored.

The rise against the Prince of the Host (Jesus), the trampling of the host (the Jews), the Abomination of Desolation, the casting down of the Sanctuary and the taking away of the daily sacrifices were all accomplished together under the rule of Rome. All of these prophesied events are reiterated in the words of Jesus in the Gospels (covered in a later chapter), and as we shall see, in the following two chapters where we cover Daniel Chapter 9 and Daniel Chapters 11-12 wherein we shall also find more about this king. And remember, be sure to view these three prophecies synoptically.