

Daniel - Chapter eight

Vs.1,2. 'in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar'. Since Belshazzar was in power for just over two years, this had to be at the very end of his reign as king of Babylon, at a time near the hand-writing on the wall (ch.5).

- While in the palace at Shushan (possibly there on business for the king) Daniel had a second vision.

- Shushan was a chief city of Persia. The Greeks called it 'Susa'. And since it enjoyed a nice climate, the Persian kings often wintered there.

- Note: It was while in the Shushan palace that Nehemiah received news concerning the terrible conditions of Jerusalem (Neh.1:1). Too, it was in the Shushan palace that Esther went before the king in hopes of saving here people, the Jews, from annihilation (Est.5:1-3).

Vs.3,4. In Daniel's vision he saw 'a ram which had two horns'. God is revealing to Daniel the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by the armies of the Medes and Persians, as mentioned plainly in v.20.

- 'the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up first'.

- Darius, the Mede, was the first king of the Medo-Persian Empire, although Cyrus, the Persian (represented by the higher horn), was the stronger of the two, as well as the 'founder' of the empire. He ruled afterwards.

- The Medes and Persians conquered Lydia to the north, Babylon (and other countries) to the west, and Egypt to the south.

V.5. 'an he goat came from the west' (Greece - v.21).

- 'touched not the ground'. Symbolizes the swiftness of the conquests by the Greeks.

- 'the goat had a notable horn between his eyes'. The 'notable horn' represents 'Alexander the Great', the first king of the Grecian Empire (v.21). He was a Macedonian taught by Aristotle, and was a brilliant military strategist. He was the one who devised the military plan known as the 'Phalanx', as mentioned earlier.

Vs.6,7. 'Greece' goes to battle against the 'Medes and Persians'.

- Alexander the Great, although outnumbered 20 to 1, defeated the Medes and Persians (338BC) utilizing the 'phalanx' military strategy. And in 13 short years he conquered the known world.

V.8. 'the horn was broken'. Alexander the Great died a drunkard at age 33.

- 'for it came up four notable ones'. After Alexander's death, his kingdom was divided among his four generals (v.22): Cassander (Greece), Lysimachus (Turkey), Seleucus (Syria), and Ptolemy (Egypt).

V.9-13. 'out of one of them came forth a little horn'. This 'little horn' comes out of one of the four horns mentioned in the previous verse, and is an important 'key' in understanding the events of the end time.

- In Daniel's vision (ch.7) the fourth beast had 10 horns, and a 'little horn' (Antichrist) came up among them.

- There are differences of opinion concerning this 'little horn'.

- Some believe it refers to 'Antiochus Epiphanes', King of Syria, who is a type of the Antichrist. In 168BC he set up an image of the Greek god 'Zeus' in the Jerusalem temple and sacrificed a swine (sow) on the altar (an abomination similar to the one mentioned in Matt.24:15, to be offered by the Antichrist). Three years later (165BC) Judas Maccabeus recaptured Jerusalem and cleansed the temple and altar.

- Others believe the 'little horn' mentioned in ch.7:8 is the Antichrist, while the 'one' spoken of here in 8:9 is Antiochus Epiphanes.

- I believe the 'little horn', in both instances, is speaking of the Antichrist.

Important note: In 8:9, God narrows things down farther. The Antichrist is to come out of one of the four kingdoms into which the Grecian Empire was divided upon the death of Alexander the Great. Therefore the Antichrist will either be from Greece, Turkey, Syria or Egypt.

- He 'waxed exceeding great . . . even to the host of heaven'. Note: The term 'host of heaven' is used some 475 times in Scripture, meaning: persons organized for battle, armies of earth or heaven, heavenly planets, stars, etc. In this instance, it is speaking expressly of religious ministries of the Temple (high priest, priests, and Levites).

- The fact that the 'host' will be trodden under the foot of man proves it refers to the Jewish people on earth, and not to literal stars, etc., of heaven.

- 'prince of the host' - the high priest himself.

- 'the daily sacrifice was taken away'. The place where the sacrifices were offered will be destroyed and taken away.

Note: The Jews have not offered sacrifices since their Temple was destroyed by Titus in AD70. But they will rebuild the Temple in the last days (possibly even be assisted by the Antichrist as part of the 'treaty', which is to be made, having to do with 'peace' in that part of the world). Sacrifices will be offered once again. Note: Today, there is a school operating in Jerusalem training young Levites the art of carving and preparing animals for sacrifice.

V.14. Question is raised: How long will the 'daily sacrifice' be cut off, the transgression of desolation continue, and the sanctuary and the host of heaven be trodden under foot? It's believed that the 2300 days is speaking of evening and mornings. If so, that would be a total of 1150 days, or a little over 3 years and 2 months. Note: We are not told that the 'abomination of desolation' will continue in the Temple the entire 1260 days (3 1/2 years). Therefore, it's likely that the daily sacrifices will be taken away after 1150 days.

Vs.15-27. Gabriel explains the vision.

- 'at the time of the end shall be the vision' (v.17). The vision will be fulfilled when the 'little horn' (Antichrist) stands up against the Lord Jesus Christ (the 'Prince of princes'), and is crushed at the end of this age (at the second coming of the Lord to the earth).

- Some believe the 'latter times' (v.23) refer to the latter times of the four kingdoms that were formed out of Alexander's kingdom. Thus the 'king of fierce countenance' is Antiochus Epiphanes. (I disagree.) At the time of Antiochus Epiphanes the 'Prince of princes' had not yet come on the scene.

- The 'latter times' mentioned here will take place at the end of the tribulation. Antichrist will be defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Battle of Armageddon, and then be cast alive into the eternal lake of fire.