

Lesson Text

I. The Two-Horned Ram And the Male Goat (Daniel 8:19-22)

II. The Rise And Fall Of The Stern-Faced King (Daniel 8:23-26)

The Main Thought: 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. (Daniel 8:26), KJV).

Unifying Principle: Hope points us toward the future. Where can we find help as we seek to discern what the future may hold for us? When he did not understand his vision, Daniel received help from Gabriel to clarify its meaning although there were times when Daniel both knew and interpreted dreams.

Lesson Aim: To help students analyze Daniel's vision in chapter eight and the angel Gabriel's interpretation of it.

Life Aim: To teach students not to place their trust and hope in human agencies and might to defeat evil empires or oppressors; only the power of God can put an end to ruthless rule.

8:19 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.

8:20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

8:21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

8:22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

8:23 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.

8:24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

8:25 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.

8:26 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.

HISTORY:

Chapter 8 - ¹As with chapter 7, this chapter precedes chapter 5 chronologically. Approximately two years after Daniel had his first dream in chapter seven, he had another dream. This dream came during the third year of Belshazzar's reign (v.1). He was in the palace at Shushan, about two hundred fifty miles east of Babylon, in the capital of the province of Elam which is modern Iran (v.2). It was the winter capital of the Persian capital and a mighty fortress. Daniel was in the palace, but in the vision he was transported to the banks of the Ulai River.

Here he saw a ram with two horns, one of which was much longer than the other (v.3). This ram pushed in all directions and no power was able to stop him (v.4). These two horns seem to have symbolized Media Persia who conquered all of modern Turkey.

Then a he-goat with a large horn between his eyes attacked the ram and completely conquered him (vv.5-7). This he-goat is thought to be Greece and the horn Alexander the Great. Greece was not yet considered a world power when this prophecy was given. Suddenly the large horn broke off the goat and four "notable" horns came up in its place (v.8). Alexander, at the age of thirty-three died of a fever and four of his powerful generals took over and divided the empire into four parts. From these horns there arose a little horn (vv.9-10). Many Bible scholars identify this little horn with Antiochus Epiphanes who reigned about 175 B.C. He took away the daily sacrifice of the Jews and desecrated their sanctuary (vv.11-12). In the vision Daniel heard a question: "How long..." shall this sanctuary desolation continue with the interruptions of the daily sacrifice? The answer was 2300 days. At the Jews darkest hour, when 80,000 had been killed, the Maccabees came to the rescue and the temple was cleansed (vv.13-14). The little horn also symbolizes the "Man of Sin" which resembles the Antichrist who will come on the scene immediately after the rapture.

²Even though Daniel was able to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams he could not interpret this dream so he earnestly sought for its meanings. Gabriel was sent to give the meaning of the vision to Daniel (vv.15-16). He was a heavenly messenger God used to explain Daniel's visions (9:21). As the angel appeared, Daniel fell down in fear before him

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/daniels-vision-of-a-ram-and-a-goat/>

² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/gabriel-interprets-the-vision/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

(v.17) and went into a deep sleep (v.18).

Daniel 8:19-22 The Two-Horned Ram And the Male Goat

8:19 *"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."* Gabriel comes to interpret the vision for Daniel of what shall be in the last end. *"The last end of the indignation"* is God's displeasure over his people Israel (the Jews) for their sins. It wasn't enough that they had gone through 70 years in Babylon, but there are still difficult times ahead for them and it is at an appointed time.

8:20 *"The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia."* "Horn" in the East is the symbol of power and royalty; strength and defense. The ram being the male sheep has two horns because Media and Persia are two, which represents two kings. This kingdom started when King Belshazzar died (Daniel 5:30-31). The first horn was probably the Medes. Later the Persians became stronger of whom Cyrus, king of Persia became the dominant partner.

8:21 *"And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king."*³ The rough goat being the male goat is Alexander the great of Greece. This goat had one large horn. The goat defeated the ram (sheep). The army of Greece defeated the army of Media and Persia. Gabriel described the great horn (big horn) as very powerful being Alexander the Great. However, he died at a young age (33yrs. old). In Daniel's dream, the great or large horn broke when the goat was very great.

8:22 *"Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."* When he died, his empire was divided among the four generals, fulfilling the prophecy in this verse. Four kingdoms rose up after his death, dividing it up among themselves, but they were not very powerful. *"Not in his power"* meant that Alexander the Great did not designate these kingdoms to them because he was dead. They were:

- Cassander: Macedonia and Greece
- Lysimachus: Thrace and western Asia Minor
- Ptolemy: Egypt, northern Africa, Palestine
- Seleucus: Middle East to India

Daniel 8:23-26 The Rise And Fall Of The Stern-Faced King

8:23 *"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."* *"In the latter time of their kingdom"* refers to these four kingdoms rising out of the Greek dominance. One particular king was to be outstanding for his fierce opposition to God's people, Israel. The little horn of verse 9 corresponds to the king of fierce countenance who was completely wicked. This describes Antiochus Epiphanies, king of the Seleucid Empire, one of the four kingdoms that emerged after Alexander the Great. He reigned over the Seleucid dynasty 175-164 BC. He is remembered mostly for his tyrannical persecution of the Jews 171-165 BC. He had seized the throne from his nephew and enlarged his kingdom through military power. He banned circumcision, ended sacrifice at the temple in Jerusalem (vv.11-12). He burned copies of the Scriptures and slaughtered those who remained true to their faith in God. Just as in the latter time of this Christian era where transgressors will reach their full measure of intense and widespread rebellion; rejecting Christ, committing violent and lawless acts, whereby receiving the Antichrist who will be as Antiochus being fierce, wicked, and cruel to the bone, sparing neither old nor young as Antiochus, a symbolic forerunner. The Antichrist will come to rise up to darken the closing days of history.

8:24 *"And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."* His power and strength is not his own. He is operating under the influence of Satan. He is totally opposed to God's people. God has allowed this: to destroy, prosper, and practice upon the mighty and holy people because of the unfaithfulness of God's people. *"Destroy wonderfully"*⁴ refers particularly to the manner in which he would lay waste the holy city, and the land of Judea. *"Practice"* distinguishes not only for *"forming"* plans, but for *"executing"* them.

8:25 *"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."* The word rendered *"policy"*, means, as it should be, intelligence, understanding, and wisdom. The word *"craft"* in the Hebrew is *"mirmah"* meaning *"deceit."* He would be intriguing and cunning. He came to the kingdom by

³ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/dan-lbw.htm>

⁴ <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/21986/eVerseID/21986/RTD/barnes>

deceit and thereby a great part of his success was owed to craft and policy. A lot of times you can look good in your own eyes, thereby deceiving yourself. Antiochus introduced Greek literature, culture, plays, sports, government, and religion which esteemed himself. ⁵While they were at ease, and regarded themselves as in a state of safety, he would come suddenly and unexpectedly upon them, and destroy them. He would make sudden war on them, invading their territories, so that they would have no opportunity to make preparation to meet him. He preserved the appearance of friendship, that he might accomplish his purpose while his enemies were off their guard. He thought he was God Himself thereby standing up against the Prince of princes; against God, the ruler over the kings of the earth, but he soon found out that that wouldn't work. He would be broken without the hand of man or by no visible cause. It shows us what the evil king at the end of the world will be like. Daniel and John's, writing six hundred years apart, both detail for us these two powerful figures who will deceive and amaze the whole world at a time appointed, the end.

8:26 *"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."* *"The vision of the evening and the morning"* can refer to a long time coming, but it was true. Daniel was told to *"Shut thou up the visions"* meaning, ⁶seal it up; make a record of it, that it may be preserved, and that its fulfillment may be marked. Many days will elapse before it will be accomplished because it concerned the distant future.

NOT A PART OF THE LESSON

8:27 *"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 had been permitted to look into this detailed revelation of future persecution of his own people, and the scenes were so appalling that he fainted and became sick for a certain amount of days. He was exhausted from what he had seen. After several days he was able to rise up and do the king's business. Even though Daniel himself had this great reputation for interpreting dreams and visions, he was astonished and unable to understand when this one would take place. All he knew was that it would come true.

SUMMARY:

⁷The angel (Gabriel) also told Daniel that the vision concerned *"the time of the end"* (verse 17) and *"the time of wrath"* (verse 19). The angel then gave a detailed account of the career of the blaspheming *"small horn:"*

⁸Gabriel clearly declares that the ram with two horns symbolized "the kings of Media and Persia." The "male goat" is Greece. The large horn (goat) is the *"first king"* of Greece, Alexander the Great. His horn was broken and there were four horns that replaced the broken one. They stood up representing four kingdoms, but not having much power. The *"four kingdoms"* are Macedonia and Greece, Thrace and Asia Minor, Egypt and Palestine, and Syria and Persia (**Daniel 8:20-22**).

⁹In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power (**Daniel 8:23-25**).

He then told Daniel to seal the vision because it concerns the distant future. (**Daniel 8:26**). The final verse of Daniel 8 tells us how the prophet responded to this remarkably detailed revelation of future persecution of his own people, the Jews: *"I, Daniel, was exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding"* (**Daniel 8:27**).

APPLICATION:

Though the vision interpreted by Gabriel gave meaning that the one that will rise up against God will be defeated. We see there is an end to tyranny, but it also gives hope that God will have a better tomorrow for His people. There will be a rise and a fall of the evil one. So put your hand in the hand of the God that stills the water! He is our hope!

⁵ <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/21987/eVerseID/21987/RTD/barnes>

⁶ <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/21988/eVerseID/21988/RTD/barnes>

⁷ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2000-02-06-Goats-1-Rams-0/>

⁸ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/daniel/daniel-815-26/>

⁹ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2000-02-06-Goats-1-Rams-0/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>