

DANIEL 8
THE VISION OF THE RAM AND THE GOAT

For use August 3-8

God is in control! It is very easy to be comforted by these words of God's control when trouble is 9,000 miles away. Even when trouble moves closer, say 900 miles away (like in Washington with the Supreme Court in particular) we can be encouraged by the knowledge of God's control. And when it moves even closer, let's say 90 miles or so, that same encouragement of God's control can be so comforting. But what do we do when the tests, trials and difficulties are on our own doorstep? For Daniel, all of his life was lived in times of trial, tests and difficulties. It was not miles away, it was his daily experience. In chapters 7-12, Daniel tells us of trials, troubles and difficulties that are coming. It is clear that it is under God's control and authority. The unfolding of history is not at fate's guidance but God's control and He is moving history toward His planned conclusion.

Day 1

First Read Daniel 8:1-14

Daniel has another vision that follows the one in chapter 7. This vision is of a ram which is Medo-Persia and a goat which is Greece. History tells us that this was actually played out as was prophesied here and in chapters 2 and 7. It is an encouraging thing to read that The Lord God gave these visions to Daniel and then know that these events really played out in history.

After Greece defeated Medo-Persia there were four kings and kingdoms that arose out of Greece and Alexander the Great. Then one mighty ruler came out of this known as Antiochus IV, also known as Epiphanes, the eighth ruler of the Seleucid division. He had a small beginning and was not the rightful heir to the throne. He was a very evil king, but He was part of God's plan to deal with the rebellious people of Israel—His people.

We often ask why God allows things to happen. I have become convinced that it is not always the question 'why' that needs to be asked but 'what do we do now?' The people of God need to repent and return to Him when we see such trials and tests.

Look at our nation right now, we need to return to the Lord God! We need revival and spiritual awakening. This is not a time to curse the darkness but return to the Lord and shine His light!

Day 2

First Read Daniel 8:15-23 and Luke 21:20-24

In today's passage the Angel Gabriel gives understanding to Daniel regarding the vision because He was troubled by it. He tells Daniel that "the vision refers to the time of the end." He also says that he is making known to him what will "happen in the latter time of the indignation." "The indignation" refers to the period of history during which God is indignant or angry with Israel because of its rebellion against Him. It is the time when God chastens Israel, usually at the hands of the Gentiles. This included the cruel treatment of Israel by Assyria and their conquest and captivity by Babylon. "The indignation" began somewhere around 730 BC and will continue until the second coming of Jesus Christ. This time could also be known as "the times of the Gentiles." It is basically parallel to the times when the Gentiles are the predominant power in the world. "It could be said that *The Indignation* is the title of God's program for Israel, and *The Times of The Gentiles* is the title of God's program for the Gentiles during the same basic period of history." (Ronald Showers)

The king that arises in Daniel 8:23 is in the short term Antiochus Epiphanes and in the long term the antichrist. Daniel is told by Gabriel in verse 24 that he will be mighty but not by his own power. This clearly speaks of Satan behind both Antiochus Epiphanes and the antichrist.

Remember, God is in control of all events including end time events. Remember to be overwhelmed by Almighty God and underwhelmed by circumstance.

Day 3

First Read Daniel 8:24-25

As we read again Daniel 8:24-25, we see a description of Antiochus Epiphanes but also a description of one who would come that would be the antichrist. He is a summary of these verses:

- He will achieve great power by subduing others (v.24)
- He will rise to power by promising false security (v.25)
- He will be intelligent and persuasive (v.23)
- He will be controlled by another, Satan (v.24)
- He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugate Israel to his authority (vv.24-25)
- He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ (v.25)
- His rule will be terminated by divine judgment (v.25)

Antiochus Epiphanes was a type or foreshadowing of the Antichrist:

- “He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.” – No man will be able to buy or sell except the one who has the mark of the beast (Rev 13:17)
- “He shall magnify himself in his heart.” – He is given a mouth speaking blasphemies, with power to continue 42 months (Rev 13:5)
- “By peace shall destroy many.” – The rider on the white horse; then comes the red horse of *war*—thus, a false peace (Rev 6)
- “He shall stand up against the Prince of princes.”— The 1st beast of Rev 13 is against Christ (Rev 13)

Remember we are still connecting the dots. The Antichrist will come and will stand against the One, True, Jesus Christ. The Antichrist will be a counterfeit. We need to be familiar with the real Christ!

Day 4

First Read 2 Chronicles 13:5 and 2 Peter 2:1-2

The Jewish people were going through some really tough time because of their own rebellion. They were ripe for an ungodly leader. They were susceptible to following those who would lead them away from following God and His Word. Are you? This is the time of false teachers and preachers who are leading many away. Consider both of these passages. Are you truly a follower of Jesus Christ? Have you really been saved? Paul tells the believers at Corinth to examine themselves to make sure they were really saved. I have never been able to question my salvation. I want to make sure and I am!

Also, be very sure of what you believe. Know the truth. Become familiar with the real thing—the truth of God’s Word so that you can recognize the counterfeits. We are living in very difficult times. Study God’s Word. Make sure you are in a Bible teaching church. Join a small Bible study group and get familiar with the Word of God.

Day 5

First Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8

Paul had a good understanding of what was to come in the future; not only in the immediate temporal future but also in the eternal future. He knew the end of his temporal life was coming. He had “fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith.” Paul also mentions a “crown of righteousness that will be given to me on that Day.” This time he was not talking about his death but the day of Christ’s return. He knew that an eternal reward awaited him. He knew that this was something to anticipate as he, along with others, “loved His appearing.”

The future hope is one of the great joys of the believer. We can, like Paul anticipate the day of our departure. We can also anticipate and long for the appearing of Jesus Christ. Both of these should cause us to run the race with great zeal, finish the course and keep the faith!

Daniel, Chapters 7-12 are apocalyptic and eschatological, that is they are about the end time events and what lead up to them. The Lord God has not left us without a witness to these things. It is not always easy to understand but when we seek Him and seek to know His truth, I believe there will be understanding.