

Daniel 8:1-27

"End Times Insight"

You should know, that skeptics *use* Daniel Ch 8 to cast a shadow of *doubt* on the book of Daniel. Because they don't believe that the bible could possibly, truly prophesy/predict the future. Yet Daniel Ch 8 contains prophecy that was fulfilled so precisely, so specifically, so spectacularly that they conclude someone must've written this book after the history & then simply attached Daniel's name to it.

But really, all that indicates to me is that they don't serve a very big God! They certainly don't serve the God of the bible because scripture is very clear concerning *our* God, the God of the bible. We read categorically, there's zero ambiguity, "*For with God nothing will be impossible.*"¹

& As we've pointed out in times past, if you can get past Gen 1:1 (In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth) then the rest of it's a cakewalk. Why should it be thought fantastic (meaning beyond belief) that God should know the future, & that beyond that He's sovereign *over* the future? *That His will, will be done? Surely that's one of the nuances of prophecy, to assure you & me that God is in fact not only real, but that He's really in control & we can trust in Him to bring His word to pass.*

Vs 1-2

So the events of Ch 8 come into focus for us 2 yrs after the vision of Ch 7. & In this vision Daniel discovers himself some 200 miles east of Babylon in Shushan (modern day western Iran about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf) evidently on the bank (or w/in the vicinity) of the Ulai canal (river).

The significance being that this would be the place where a century later, the Persian king Xerxes would build a magnificent palace; it was one of the royal cities of Persia (now bear in mind that at this point Persia is no threat to Babylon, Babylon wouldn't fall for more than a decade after this). (& To kind of help you connect the dots concerning your biblical history, the palace in Shushan would be where the events took place recorded in the book of Esther & also Nehemiah was Artaxerxes' cupbearer in the palace of Shushan.)

So just bear in mind that this vision takes place when Babylon was securely rooted in power. This vision will deal w/the rising of the Medo-Persian Empire & the Grecian Empire.

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). (Lk 1:37). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Though Media & Persia were possibly on the radar, Greece wouldn't have even been worth mentioning w/in the context of a global player...

Vs 3-4

Now, we could speculate as to what exactly this ram w/the 2 horns (one higher than the other) that couldn't be stopped represents. But I have discovered (& I trust that you have as well) that anytime the bible comments on the bible, there's no need to speculate. It's always best to let the bible interpret the bible. If God's word tells us something plainly, then there's no uncertainty.

When we get to Vs 20 of this Ch we're told directly that this ram represents the Medo-Persian Empire. & Just like the bear was raised up on 1 side in Ch 7, here 1 horn is higher than the other (even though it came up 2nd). It was an accurate prediction/depiction of the partnership between the Medes & the Persians because even though the Persians emerged *after* the Medes, they became larger, stronger & were more dominant in the relationship.

Btw, even as the winged lion was emblematic of Babylon (depicted anywhere Babylonian art or artifacts are on display), the *ram* was the national emblem of Persia. (Much like the eagle is the emblem of the U.S.)

& Daniel notes that the ram was pushing westward, northward & southward. It came from the east (& certainly the Medo-Persian empire had territory in the east, but there were no major conquests in the east). The primary theatre of their wars was against the Scythians to the north, the Greeks to the west & the Egyptians to the south.

Vs 5-8

Just when Daniel was about to conclude there was no stopping the ram, a male goat comes charging across the earth (from the west), moving so fast that it appeared as though his feet never touched the ground. & This goat had 1 notable horn between his eyes.

& He charged at the ram w/such ferocity & rage that the ram couldn't w/stand him but was cast to the ground before him & trampled (both horns being broken off). Everything that was once enjoyed by the ram, now was under the authority of the goat.

Again, no need to speculate, Vs 21 tells us plainly that the male goat is the kingdom of Greece & that the large horn between its eyes is the 1st king (or Alexander the Great). & Just like the leopard of Ch 7 moved w/what seemed to be supernatural speed (having wings). Here we see that this goat moved so fast its feet didn't even touch the ground.

And as to where the leopard had 4 heads, here, 4 horns came up on the head of this goat once the large horn was broken.

So we're beginning to gain some details in this prophecy. The Medo-Persian Empire would defeat the Babylonian Empire & dominate the main chunk of the known world. But the Greek Empire would rise out of the west & begin to overthrow any & everything that stood in its way w/such speed & ferocity that even the Medo-Persian Empire (boasting a 2-million-man army) couldn't stop it, but they would be broken, conquered & subjected by Greeks. The Grecian Empire would be led by one notable ruler (namely, Alexander the Great).

But the reign of the notable leader of the Greek Empire (Vs 8) would be cut short. "When he became strong, the large horn was broken." Alexander the Great had conquered the known world by the time he was 32 yrs old (kinda makes ya wonder what you've done w/*your* life, doesn't it? ☺), but he was an alcoholic & as history goes he got drunk one night (having no more nations to conquer) & wandered out in the rain, he came down w/a fever and died in Babylon @ just 32-33 yrs old.

Once he died his kingdom was divided by 4 of his generals (4 horns came up). They were Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy & Seleucus. It's the Seleucid dynasty that will be of interest to the biblical narrative.

But Vs 8 tells us that the male goat grew very great. Alexander's Empire wasn't limited in greatness to its vast dominion, but also in its cultural power. He was determined to spread the Greek civilization, culture & language across every land he conquered.

& God would use that passion to prepare the world for the Gospel of J.C. Thanks to Alexanders influence, by the time Jesus was on the scene, koine (or common) Greek was the common language of the civilized world. It's the language your NT was written in. The disciples could go virtually anywhere & share the gospel in the common Greek language. So again, God not only *knows* the future, He's sovereign *over* the future.

Interesting little piece of history; after defeating Xerxes, Alexander kept going south to Israel & when he was set to come against them, the high priest (accompanied w/a delegation of priests) met him outside the city & showed him this passage written 200 yrs earlier. Because of what he saw in scripture, he spared Jerusalem out of reverence for Israel's God. We might say that the word was shared & the city was spared... Pretty amazing.

Vs 9-12

Out of 1 of the 4 horns came a little horn which grew exceedingly great.

I'll spare you the line of successors, but we can know exactly who this is by what we read here. As I mentioned a moment ago it was the Seleucid Dynasty that wound up over the territory of Alexander's Empire that included the land of Israel (the Glorious Land). (Glorious in that God chose Israel to be the light of the world, to be responsible for His holy word, to bring forth the Savior of the world & to be His people).

But back to this little horn; don't get this horn (Vs 9-12) mixed up w/the little horn of Daniel 7. In Daniel 7 the little horn came up among the 10, here it comes up out of the 4. What we'll see in this horn (leader) is a foreshadowing of what will be fulfilled by the other. In other words; *this horn* (whom we can identify as Antiochus Epiphanes historically) served as a *type* or a foreshadowing of the A.C. prophetically.

In what ways did Antiochus Epiphanes serve as a type (or a picture) of the A.C.? Well, we read here that he began small, but grew powerful, even casting down some of the hosts & stars of heaven to the earth. Now there are times that these terms speak of the angels of God. Other times they point to the people of Israel (if you remember right, back in Genesis Joseph had a dream where the stars of heaven were bowing to him & that was interpreted to be his brothers [the forefathers of the nation]). **The word "hosts" means "armies" & we discover this term (armies of the Lord) applied again to Israel in Ex 12:41. When you cross reference that information w/Vs 24-25 you understand this is saying that he would mercilessly/brutally slaughter many of the Jews (10's of thousands upon 10's of thousands history reveals).**

He blasphemed the God of the Jews, even setting up a statue of Zeus in their temple & sacrificing a pig upon the altar & smearing its broth & blood throughout their temple, (taking away the daily sacrifices & casting down the place of His sanctuary) demanding the idolatrous worship of himself (identifying himself as the royal manifestation of Zeus). **As a matter of fact, he assumed the title "Epiphanes" which means "illustrious" alluding to deity, but the ancient Jews referred to him as "Epimanes" which means "madman". He did all this & he "prospered" just as Vs 12 tells us (because of transgression, sin in the nation of Israel). Let's carry on.**

Vs 13-14

When was the sanctuary cleansed? History tell us that Judas Maccabaeus led a revolt in 165 BC that reclaimed & cleansed the temple. Here's the kicker, what's meant by 2,300 days? Literally, it's 2,300 mornings & evenings. If you take it to mean 2,300 days you go back to the time Epiphanes began his oppression of the Jews.

If you take it to mean 2,300 daily sacrifices (which 1 was in the morning & 1 was in the evening) it comes out to 1,150 days, or just over 3 yrs which takes you back to the day he desecrated the sanctuary. Either way you want to look at it, the prophecy fulfilled it w/staggering accuracy which is why critics insist that the *book* of Daniel must've been written after the *time* of Daniel.

But upon the cleansing of the temple there was only 1 container of holy oil found to light the lampstand & it took 8 days to make a new batch. So they prayed & God miraculously sustained the oil until the new oil was ready & that's why the Jews today celebrate Hanukah, or the "Feast of Lights". Jesus Himself celebrated this holiday, it's mentioned in John 10 Vs 22 where it mentions it being winter & Jesus was at the Feast of Dedication (the dedication of the cleansing of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus).

Btw this is also the passage the William Miller used to predict the return of Christ saying that the 2,300 days was actually 2,300 yrs & he came up w/a date in 1844 (2,300 yrs after Cyrus issued the decree to rebuild the temple) & said that Jesus would return then... Well, he was wrong. But his movement wound up giving birth to 7th Day Adventists, J.W.'s & other movements as well.

But that's the kind of thing that happens when we take it upon ourselves to assign meaning to scripture that the bible doesn't allow for. We can never take apart, apart from the whole & context is everything.

Vs 15-19

Few things to notice here. #1 This is our 1st scriptural introduction to Gabriel who seems to be the main angelic messenger of God. He was sent to Daniel, he was sent to Zacharias to inform him of the birth of J.B. & He was sent to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus.

But just as a side note, we're talking here of Daniel. A man who was of such godly confidence that he stood tall before Nebuchadnezzar regardless of consequence, he refused to back down in the face of a lion's den. & Yet here in the glory of the holiness of an angelic being, he was so afraid that he fell on his face & couldn't get up until Gabriel touched him & stood him upright. This is a created being...! We can only imagine our response when standing in the presence of the glory of God!

But Gabriel tells him, "Look, I'm going to give you understanding. What I'm about to tell you applies to the time of the end." Wait. There will be an "end"? Listen, a time is coming (Vs 19) an "appointed time" when the end shall be.

When God will wrap up & wind down human history as we know it. He will judge the earth in righteousness & wickedness will be abolished. This is why it's so important to make sure your heart is in Christ's hands because #1 you're never guaranteed another day & #2 you don't want to be on the wrong side of the fence when this time comes...

But because Gabriel tells Daniel that this concerns the time of the end it causes a real problem for some people. Here's why. They say, "I thought Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled what we just read." That's true. "How then can it be for the end when that happened more than 100 yrs before the birth of Christ?"

The answer is as I mentioned before, Epiphanes was the foreshadow of which the A.C. is the substance. He was a *precursor* (if you will), a foretaste of what's to be fulfilled in the A.C. That's why he's sometimes called the A.C. of the O.T. He was on the scene before Jesus' 1st coming. The A.C. will be on the scene before His 2nd coming.

It's not unheard of for prophecy to have a "near/far" fulfillment, or a foretaste in someone of what will be fulfilled in another... Perhaps you remember when Jesus' disciples were asking Him why the scribes say that Elijah must come before the Messiah (Matt 17:10-13) & Jesus said, *"Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands."²* He was saying that Elijah will come again before His 2nd coming (a whole other fascinating topic for another day), but in a sense Elijah *had* come in the person of J.B. He fulfilled a type of Elijah before His 1st coming.

Even so, Epiphanes fulfilled a type of the A.C. He was a foreshadowing of the things that would be fulfilled in him. & Gabriel here is about to explain the kind of things that Antiochus Epiphanes would foreshadow that the A.C. would fulfill at the time of the end. Here we go...

Vs 20-22

We already discussed these things. Alexander's generals divided his kingdom, but none of them had the same dominion or power as did Alexander.

Vs 23-26

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Mt 17:11-13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The king w/fierce features who understands sinister schemes was foreshadowed in Antiochus Epiphanes, will be fulfilled in the A.C.

We read "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." He will be literally supercharged by Satan himself (Rev 13:2), he will destroy viciously, fearfully & shall prosper & thrive. He will destroy the mighty & the holy people. He will persecute the people of God unrelentingly. He'll seem to be a complete success, he'll do what he wants to who he wants & no one will be able to stop him.

He will convince people through cunning & deceit. "Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper." Paul the apostle said, *"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved."*³

"He shall exalt himself in his heart... he shall even rise against the Prince of princes." Again Paul writes of this man & calls him, *"the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*⁴

"But he shall be broken w/out human means." No man killed Antiochus Epiphanes, disease got him. As for the A.C., the book of Rev informs us that when Jesus returns he will actually seek to oppose Jesus at the battle of Armageddon, but Jesus will destroy him w/out human means giving him & his false prophet the distinct dishonor to be the 1st 2 cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20).

& Gabriel tells Daniel that what he's telling him will surely come to pass, however it's not for a near date, but a date far in the future from Daniel, therefore seal it up. Put it away for another day. The idea here is that God is giving revelation to His people in a future day to prepare them for what's to take place. To realize that they haven't been abandoned by God, but that He will vindicate them in the end.

Vs 27

These things blew his mind. He didn't understand, he was confused, but we see clearly. It wasn't for him, it was for God's people in another day, a day not too far away from *our* day. Now when you read the book of Rev John is told in Ch 22:10 *not* to seal the book, for the time is at hand.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Th 2:9-10]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [2 Th 2:3-4]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But then Daniel got back to work, he was busy about the service of his king. Ladies & gentlemen; biblical prophecy isn't given simply as a source of fascination, it's to serve as motivation that we might be busy about the work of *our* King (J.C.)

If what God has said has been specifically, meticulously fulfilled in the past, we can be confident that it will be in the future as well... Wrath & indignation are on the way, grace is available today & we should be busy about the business of our King, being *ambassadors of J.C.* God help us that we don't just cruise through life going to a bible study occasionally, praying sporadically, trusting it'll all work out eventually... But may we be *intentionally* about the business of our King.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for sharing so clearly & candidly w/us through Your Word. That though we may not know what *our* future holds personally, we know You hold the future & in that we have peace. Even when tough times are upon us, You're w/us, You'll never leave nor forsake us. May we be motivated to about Your business for Your glory. Pour out Your Spirit & stir us out of apathy spiritually that we might serve You whole heartedly.

When it comes to turning from sin, & trusting in J.C. there's no better time than the present to do so. The door is open, the invitation stands, believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead that you might stand justified before Him through faith. Confess Him as the Lord of your life.