

DANIEL 8: THE RAM & THE HE-GOAT

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Introduction:

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Body:

- I. **The Date and Recipient of the Vision: (1-2)**
 - A. **(vs. 1) “In the third year”** after the vision of Chapter 7.
 1. Date of Ch. 7 approximately 553/552 BC; therefore Ch. 8 date: 551/550 BC
 2. The later date claimed by F. LaGard Smith. (*Narrated Bible*, 1221)
 3. Both chapters 7 and 8 are chronologically prior to the events recorded in chapter 5.
 - a. **“Subsequent”** - tied to his earlier “dream and visions” in chapter 7.
 - b. **“Vision”** - Daniel was conscious, not a dream - contrast (7:1)
 - B. **(vs. 2) Daniel in Susa (Shushan) in person** (possibly on official business) or in spirit. (Leupold, 336)

1. Compare (Ezekiel 8:3; 37:1; Rev. 17:3)
 - a. From the context it appears that Daniel is in Susa “in the vision.”
 - b. He saw the Ulai Canal “in the vision.”
2. **Susa** - historically and geographically, “chief capital of the Persian Empire” (Young, 166)
 - a. According to Butler, Susa would later become the summer capital of the Persians.
 - 1) Palace of Xerxes discovered there in the 1880’s. (Butler, 292)
 - b. Both Leupold and Butler emphasize that Susa was an insignificant city in the days of Daniel, therefore the need to further explain its location (“in the province of Elam”).
3. **Ulai Canal** - (Heb. term for canal appears only here in 8:2-3, 6; possibly means “stream”
 - a. “Apparently it was a large artificial canal which connected two other rivers...and passed by Susa on the north east.” (Young, 167)
 - b. Butler claims it was a river “flowing on through the city of Susa, into the Tigris-Euphrates.” (Butler, 292)
 - c. It appears that Daniel was not there in person, but rather, in the vision.

II. The Vision Described (3-14)

A. The ram with two horns: (3-4)

1. **(vs. 3) The ram** - emblem of princely power (cf. Ezek. 34:17, 24; 39:18; Dan. 8:20)
 - a. **Two horns** - one longer - literally “higher” - that horn represented the Persians under Cyrus (cf. vs. 20)
 - 1) Note that in chapter 7:5, the bear, representing Medo-Persia, was raised up on one side.
 - 2) At first the Median portion was stronger, but Persia, which would become dominant later, is represented as the longer horn.
 - b. Horns represent strength (Ezekiel 34:21)
2. **(vs. 4) Direction of expansion of the ram’s territory** (later we will see that this represents the military invasions in which Medo - Persia enjoyed its greatest conquests)
 - a. “The verse describes the irresistible advances of the Persian arms, especially in the direction of Palestine, Asia Minor and Egypt, with particular allusion to the conquests of Cyrus and Cambyses.” (Young, 168)
 - b. Persia already controlled the eastern extent of its kingdom.

B. The Male Goat with the Single Horn: (5-8)

1. **(vs. 5) Male goat:** a later more descriptive explanation found in (8:21).
 - a. from the West, covering the world,
 - b. “**without touching the ground**” = speed of military machine
 - c. “**conspicuous horn**” or “prominent horn” (Leupold, 340)
2. **(vs. 6)** This is obviously a prophetic, not historical description, or else Media would have been described as falling before Persia.

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- a. Reportedly Alexander had an army of 30,000 free soldiers;
 - b. Cyrus had 500,000 slaves as soldiers.
3. **(vs. 7)** Complete and utter defeat of the ram due to the strength of the male goat.
 - a. **“moved with rage against him,”** - the Greeks retaliated against invasions by the Persians. (Butler, 295, 299-300)
 - b. Historically, the first clash between the Greeks and Persians came at the Granicus River (Leupold, 341)
 - c. As others had once been helpless before the ram, so now he was defenseless before the male goat. (Young, 169).
 4. **(vs. 8)** **“Grew very great”** (NKJV) is better translation than “magnified *himself*” [NASB], (Leupold, 343)
 - a. We would say he became extremely successful.
 - b. **“When he was strong”**: Not a gradual decline in power.
 - c. Power often leads to arrogance - “pride goes before destruction” (Prov. 16:18)
 - d. “Great power, resulting in self-importance, invites great reversal (Lk. 1:52).” (Baldwin, 156)
 5. **Four “notable”** (KJV and NKJV) or **“conspicuous”** (NASB) **horns**; the phrase is used adverbially to describe how they came up.
 - a. Later in (8:22) the interpreter tells us that the horns represent kingdoms:
 - 1) Macedonia = Cassander
 - 2) Thrace and Asia Minor = Lysimachus
 - 3) Syria = Seleucus
 - 4) Egypt = Ptolemy
 - b. **Four winds** - empire will be distributed N. S. E. and West “toward” the four winds
- C. Focus turns to the *little horn* out of one of the four horns: (9-14)**
1. **(vs. 9)** This little horn grew out of one of the four.
 - a. (cf. 8:23) horns often represent kings in apocalyptic literature (cf. 7:7-8; Rev. 17:7,12)
 - b. “Since it is clearly stated that the four symbolized kingdoms would originate from the division of Alexander’s empire, this little horn must represent a ruler who would arise in one of those divisions.” (Luck, 93)
 - c. “The ‘little horn’ of Daniel 8:9 *is* different from that of 7:8. The latter arose from the Roman Empire, and that in the ‘last days’; the former from a part of the Greek Empire shortly before the Roman conquest – ‘in the latter time of their kingdom’ (v.23).” (Luck, 94)
 - d. Similarities in characteristics of the horn in (7:8-12 and 8:8-12)
 - 1) Both arrogantly oppose God
 - 2) Both persecute God’s people (7:21; 8:24)
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- e. Differences:
 - 1) The horn of Chapter 7 is from the 4th world kingdom (7:7)
 - 2) The horn of Chapter 8 is from the splintered 3rd kingdom (cf. 8:21-23)
 - f. “It is important to note that the ‘little horn here *grows out of* one of the four which definitely belong to the Grecian empire. It cannot, therefore be the same little horn of Chapter 7 which ... (is) ... connected to the fourth beast.” Note the contradictions in the Scofield Reference Bible at this point. (Butler, 305)
 - g. “Daniel wrote that he saw these visions in the plain of Susa; and he hath informed us that God interpreted the appearance of this vision after the following manner: - He said that the ram signified the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians, and the horns those kings that were to reign in them; and that the last horn signified the last king and that he should exceed them all in riches and glory; that the he-goat signified that one should come and reign from the Greeks, who should twice fight with the Persian, and overcome him in battle, and should receive his entire dominion; that by the great horn which sprang out of the forehead of the he-goat was meant the first king; and that the springing up of four horns upon its falling off... signified the successors that should arise after the death of the first king... and that from among them there should be a certain king that should overcome our nation and ..our political government, and should spoil the temple, and forbid the sacrifices to be offered for three years’ time. And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under **Antiochus Epiphanes**, according to Daniel’s vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass.””
(Josephus, *Antiquities* X:11:7)
 - h. Antiochus was the name of several of the Syrian (Seleucid) kings.
 - 1) Antiochus (IV) assumed the name “Epiphanes” (the illustrious one).
 - 2) The Jews called him Antiochus Epimanes (the mad man).
 - i. This “little horn” indicates that he starts out very small at first.
 - j. This one is 8th in the Seleucid dynasty. (Leupold, 345)
 - k. “**Beautiful land**” (NASB); “pleasant” (KJV); “Glorious” (NKJV) *land* - italicized - added by translators.
 - 1) Refers to Palestine (cf. Isa. 19:23-25; Jer. 3:19; Ezek. 20:6,15)
 - 2. (vs. 10) The vision pictures the little horn growing up to the heavens and causing some of the hosts and stars to fall and be trampled by the horn.
 - a. In certain contexts, stars falling represent God’s casting down of evil powers and kings (cf. Isa. 13:10 - 11; 14:4, 12 - 15; Ezek. 32:1-10); but at other times, the stars represent the righteous (cf. Dan. 12:3; Mt. 13:43)
 - b. This is not the only time an evil power has cast the stars to the earth (Rev. 12:3). This type of cataclysmic visionary event occurs often and pictures a judgment of God against transgressors (cf. Dan. 8:12, 23; Mt. 23:38 ff.)
 - c. 2 Maccabees 9:10 speaks of Antiochus as “the man that a short while before thought himself to touch the stars of heaven.” A possible allusion to Daniel 8 (Young, 171)
 - d. The casting down of some of the host and stars must be interpreted in light of (vss. 11-12 and 24). How are the host and stars described in those texts?
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- e. Note that the events that would occur through the power of the horn would be related to “on account of transgression” (vs. 12). (Young, 171)
3. **(vs. 11)** Equal with the Commander of the host
- a. **“Prince (Commander NASB) of the Host”** = God (cf. 7:9, 13, 25; 8:25)
- 1) Antiochus Epiphanes considered himself equal to God and commanded that a likeness of himself be placed in the temple and worshipped. (cf. 1 Macc. 1:44-47) (Butler, 307)
 - 2) Epiphanes (Illustrious, or Glorious Manifestation) “often used by the Greeks of a glorious manifestation of the gods.” (Thayer, via Leupold, 347)
 - 3) Note others who magnified themselves against God (Isa. 14: 4, 12-15; Ezek. 32:1-10)
- b. **“His sacrifices; His sanctuary”** Clear references to God’s possessions (cf. 8:24-25)
- c. **“regular sacrifices”** (Ex. 29:38-42; cf. Dan. 11:31; 12:11)
- d. **“place of His sanctuary was thrown down”** - perhaps a reference inclusive of the temple, but, apparently, encompassing a broader scope (cf. Dan. 9:17; 11:31)
- e. Antiochus initiated a great persecution in which the worship was corrupted, the sanctuary was “cast down” until the temple was desecrated to such a point that it was hardly fit for use. (Young, 172)
- f. Antiochus outlawed the Jewish religion and circumcision; outlawed the Sabbath, made possession of the Scriptures illegal, offered swine in the temple and set up an image of Zeus. (Waldron, 143)
4. **(vs. 12) “on account of (because of NKJV) transgression”**: Question: Whose transgression?
- a. Jews:
- 1) “until there was no remedy” (2 Chron. 36:14 -17)
 - 2) Translation: “and an host was given up together with the daily sacrifice, because of transgression.” (Young, 172)
 - 3) Many in Israel welcomed Antiochus and his Hellenization of their culture. They were given over to transgression. “God permitted it - He did not cause it!” (Butler, 307)
 - 4) “This transgression was an apostasy of the Israelites from God.” (cf. 1 Macc. 1:43-52, 56,60) (Simpson, 102)
 - 5) Many Israelites, because of transgression will be given up along with the desecration of the temple and the removal of the sacrifices.
 - 6) Historically, the bribes and corruption relating to the high priesthood in the time of Jason and Menelaus reflected the corruption of the people.
- b. Gentiles:
- 1) Leupold believes the term “transgression” refers to what was being done in the temple as prescribed by the Gentile oppressors during the period of defilement. (Leupold, 349)
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- 2) Antiochus led the transgressors, in casting truth to the ground.
 - 3) The concept espoused is that until the invasion by Antiochus, Jews had been practicing true worship.
 - 4) During his rule, however, clearly many were not.
5. (vs. 13) The vision has now moved beyond what was seen to what was **heard**.
- a. **One holy one speaking to another holy one** - seems to refer to angels (cf. Dan. 4:13, 23; Rev. 14:6-9; 22:6)
 - b. The commanding voice is not identified. Some argue that the one speaking to Gabriel is Christ. (Simpson, 103)
 - c. Matters of revelation are of interest to angels (1 Peter 1:12).
 - d. The question: how long will these horrors last? (cf. Rev. 6:10) "How long..."
 - e. How long between when the sacrifices were stopped by Antiochus until the temple is "properly restored"?
6. (vs. 14) Answer: **"2,300 evenings and mornings"**
- a. Note: The field of vision has narrowed to the period involving the little horn arising from the Seleucid dynasty.
 - b. Some claim the 2,300 evenings and mornings refer to the number of sacrifices (not what the text says) and since two are offered each day the total of days would be 1,150.
 - 1) They argue for a literal time of 3 and ½ years (cf. 7:25). Note 1,150 does not equal 3 and ½ years and Daniel 7 is not discussing the same time period or empire as chapter 8.
 - 2) Some claim this represents the period of desolation from 168-165 BC. (Young, 174)
 - c. The 2300 evenings and mornings are days, not sacrifices (cf. Gen. 1:5, 8, 13 etc.)
 - d. "There would be no basis whatever to interpret each day as a year, thus arriving at a temple cleansing millenniums after the Grecian empire... It must be understood that this temple cleansing stated in Daniel 8:14 does not historically reach past the empire of Greece." (Simpson, 102)
 - e. Albert Barnes starts at Dec. 25, 165 and counts back 2,300 days and arrives at Aug. 5, 171. It was in the year 171 that Antiochus initiated his persecution against the Jews. thus the actual time period of the abomination would be from 171-165 B.C. (Barnes, 115)
 - f. William Miller in the 19th century speculated that each day represented a year and attempted to fix a date for the second coming of Christ. (Luck, 95)
 - g. "It does seem to be used to cover approximately the period of the persecution under Antiochus." (Young, 174-175)
 - 1) **2300 days** - approximately 171 BC to 165 BC (the period of abominations during the reign of Antiochus)
 - 2) **1290 days** - (Dan. 12:11) - the 3 and ½ years may signify the time period from (168-165) BC in which the temple was used for heathen sacrifices.
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- 3) In his paraphrase of the text, Butler refers to it as “a time just short of 7 years, that is 2,300 days, will transpire and then the temple of God will be purified of pagan defilement.” (Butler, 304)
- 4) “The 2,300 days in the vision refer to the period when these outrages were taking place. Usually when such a figure is used, it is describing something that would have a definite beginning date and ending date, but the time itself is an unspecified time in the vision. Since the angel told Daniel that the number of days ‘is true,’ it may mean that this time the number was literal instead of symbolic, a period of time of some six years or a little over.” (Waldron, 223)
- 5) Leupold and McGuiggan concur with Keil and understand this number symbolically. They view the 2,300 days as falling short of the complete period of seven years. A time period short of a complete divine judgment (7 years, cf. Judges 6:1) (Leupold, 356-357)
- 6) Perhaps the days were shortened for the “sake of the elect.” (cf. Mt. 24:22) (McGuiggan, 134)
- h. Holy place “properly restored” [lit. vindicated] – Young (175) thinks this indicates that the period of desolation was unjustifiable. How does that fit with (Daniel 8:12, 23)?
- i. The rededication of the temple became a celebrated festival (Jn. 10:22). The dedication is now known as Hanukah.

III. The Vision Explained to Daniel (15-27)

A. Daniel meets the interpreter (15-16)

1. (vs. 15) Daniel, having seen the vision, sought to understand its meaning.
 - a. One like the appearance of a man - probably an angel in human form (cf. Dan. 10:16, 18)
 - b. In reality he was not a man, but assumed this form in the vision (Young, 175)
2. (vs. 16) A voice instructs Gabriel.
 - a. (cf. Dan. 9:21) *describes Gabriel as a man*; to explain the vision.
 - b. (Lk. 1:19, 26) *describes Gabriel as an angel*
 - c. The only book in the Old Testament where angels are named is Daniel. Only two are named in Scripture (cf. 10:13; Jude 9) (Young, 176)
3. (vs. 17) When Gabriel came near, Daniel fell on his face, “*panic stricken*” (cf. Rev. 22:8-9) (Young, 176)
 - a. **Son of man** - common phrase, earlier used to describe Ezekiel
 - b. This vision pertains to the “time of the end.” (cf. 8:19)

B. The “time of the end” (17)

1. Note he does not say the *end of time*, but rather a time appointed by God with an end in view. (cf. Habakkuk 2:2-3) Note: Babylon will sack Jerusalem right on time.
2. An earlier time of “*the end*” is referenced in Amos 8:2 where it applies to Israel and then later quoted by Ezekiel in 7:2-3 and there applied to Judah. See also (Ezekiel 21:25, 29 and 35:5).

3. In Daniel 8 the “time of the end” is tied to the desolation of the sanctuary (8:13, 19).
4. The “*time of the end*” is determined by the context. The vision relates the latter end of the Medo-Persian empire through the affliction of God’s people via the Seleucids. This vision must be related to the Grecian kingdom (vs. 23) and does not relate to the fourth kingdom. Therefore it cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or the coming of Christ. (Simpson, 103)
5. “The view that the ‘time of the end’ here has reference to the great tribulations, supposedly to occur during the latter half of the 70th week is utterly without exegetical support from this context or any combination of texts!” (Butler, 310)
6. Leupold claims that this refers to the end of time and the Antichrist (Leupold, 361-362)

C. Daniel’s reaction (vs. 18)

1. Daniel sank into deep sleep “fainted; passed out” (Waldron, 222)
2. (cf. Dan. 10:9; Rev. 1:17) “fell at his feet as a dead man”.

D. Daniel’s enhanced understanding: (19-26) Holy Spirit’s interpretation, via the angel, Gabriel

1. Note: We must respect the context of **(vs. 19)**
 - a. Imperative that we remain within the explicitly stated historical context.
 - b. We must not mix the contexts of chapters 7 and 8.
 - c. “**at the final period (latter time NKJV)**”: Another possible translation: “for at an appointed time the end will be.” (Young, 177)
 - d. “**of the indignation**” (or the wrath)
 - 1) “In other words it pertained to the time after the wrath had ended, that is, following the time of the Babylonian captivity.” (Waldron, 222) (cf. Dan. 9:2; Jer. 29:10)
 - 2) “The indignation is the sentence of God which must eventually fall on those who rebel against Him and fail to repent.” (cf. Isa. 10:5-11; Jer. 10:10) (Baldwin, 159)
 - 3) This “final period of indignation” refers, I believe, to the judgment of God against the Jews, during the days of Antiochus IV, because they were not faithful to God. (cf. Malachi: right back in the same old attitudes and problems)
 - 4) The time of the end is the same as the latter time of indignation. (Young, 176)

2. Identity of the ram and male goat (20-21)

- a. **The ram** represents the “kings of Media and Persia.” (vs. 20)
- b. **The male goat** (rough or shaggy) is: (vs. 21)
 - 1) “the kingdom of Greece” (Heb. H3120 Javan, “the name of a son of Joktan, and of the race (Ionians, i.e. Greeks) descended from him, with their territory; also of a place in Arabia:--Javan.” (QuickVerse) (cf. Isa. 66:19; Ezek. 27:13)
 - 2) **Large horn is the first king** - “Alexander the Great, who ‘ruled first over Greece’ (Macc. 1:1).” (Young, 178)
 - 3) There is little disagreement among scholars regarding who the large horn

represents.

- 4) The Persian king Xerxes tried to conquer Macedonia. The Greeks bitterly resented it and Philip, father of Alexander, was planning to conquer Persia.
 - 5) Josephus tells us that Alexander the Great marched on Jerusalem to punish the Jews for their loyalty to Darius, but Jaddua the high priest met him at the head of a procession of priests all dressed in white. Alexander claimed this related to a vision he had received from God. Jaddua showed him a copy of the book of Daniel, which foretold that a Grecian king would overthrow Persia. (*Antiquities of the Jews*, XI. 8. 4-5)
- c. For an historical sketch of this period of history see *The Book of Daniel*, pp. 4-5, by Jim McGuiggan.
 - d. For a more complete review see *A Remnant Shall Return*, pp. 124-145, by Bob Waldron.
3. **Identity of the four horns: (22)**
- a. **The broken (horn)** represents Alexander, who dies in 323 BC, at age 32 in Babylon [Persepolis] (Butler, 301). Waldron cites the same date and age, but places his death at Babylon as do most historians referenced. (129).
 - b. **Four (horns)** represent four kingdoms (cf. Dan. 11:3-4).
 - c. These will arise from the Greek nation (empire).
 - d. These kings will not have as much power as the first.
 - e. **Four kingdoms** - the Diadochi (Successor) Wars (ca. 323-300) a series of battles determining how Alexander's vast kingdom would be divided. (see McGuiggan, 5)
 - 1) Cassander controls Macedonia
 - 2) Seleucus I, later becomes king of Syria
 - 3) Lysimachus controls Thracia
 - 4) Ptolemy I controls Egypt
 - f. The two strongest and most enduring kingdoms: (cf. Daniel 11:5-35) North and South
 - 1) **Seleucids**: Syria, encompassing at times, Babylon and Asia Minor [North]
 - 2) **Ptolemies**: Egypt and (Palestine from ca. 300-175 B.C.) [South]
4. **Identity and power of the little horn: (23-25)**
- a. (**vs. 23**) latter time (period) of their kingdom (rule). [Seleucids and Ptolemies]
 - b. **“transgressors”** (cf. 8:12) may be translated “transgressions” (6586. pasha, [rather ident. with H6585 through the idea of expansion]; to break away (from just authority), i.e. trespass, apostatize, quarrel:--offend, rebel, revolt, transgress (-ion, -or). (QuickVerse)
 - 1) The question is who or whose transgression??? Whoever it is:
 - 2) The transgressors “have reached their fullness” (“run their course,” NASB)
 - 3) Concept of ripeness of fullness of iniquity (cf. Gen. 15:16; 2 Chron. 36:14-17; Mt. 23:38).

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- 4) Seems to fit best the Jews who have rejected God and His rules of worship.
 - 5) God's longsuffering is exhausted and He will use Antiochus IV to call the Jews back to Himself. (cf. Isa. 10: 5-7; note especially verse 7 "Yet it does not so intend Nor does it plan so in its heart, But rather it is its purpose to destroy, And to cut off many nations.")
 - 6) God would use Antiochus IV as he had formerly used Assyria.
- c. **Transgressors** - could refer to the Seleucids; especially Antiochus, who demands that the true worship of God be disbanded and replaced with pagan idolatry. (Leupold, 365)
- d. A king described: "fierce countenance" (NKJV); and "skilled in intrigue" (NASB)
- 1) Intrigue - "ambiguous speech" (NASB footnote)
 - 2) "Sinister schemes" - NKJV
 - 3) "...a master of dissimulation, able to conceal his meaning under ambiguous words, and so disguising his real purpose." (Young, 178)
 - 4) Refers to Antiochus Epiphanes IV who ruled Syria from 175-163 BC (Waldron, 223) [See also 1 Maccabees 1:1 - 6:16]
 - 5) Read also *Antiquities of the Jews*, XII. 5
- e. **(vs. 24) This king's power becomes surprisingly great, but is limited, but not by his own will. (Dan. 4:17) "even the lowliest of men."**
- f. The power of Antiochus IV was limited, by the Lord and the Romans. (See McGuiggan, 7)
- 1) Early in life he was a hostage in Rome due to the defeats experienced by his father.
 - 2) Later after returning to Syria and accepting the throne, he forces Jews to adopt Hellenistic culture (ca. 171-170) and invades Egypt in 170 BC
 - 3) Romans demand that Antiochus IV leave Egypt. (Waldron, 142-143)
 - 4) Jews hear false reports of the death of Antiochus IV in Egypt. Word of their rejoicing gets back to Antiochus IV. (*The 400 Years Between The Old and New Testaments*, Ray C. Stedman, <http://www.templemount.org/0240.html>)
 - 5) He unleashes his fury upon the Jews (168 BC).
 - 6) 80,000 Jews are slain (1 Macc. 1:20 - 28) (Waldron, 232)
 - 7) This leads to the Maccabean revolt (167-164 BC)
- g. Antiochus destroys many of God's holy people (Dan. 8:9; cf. 7:25; Rev. 6:11)
- h. **(vs. 25) Character description and historical end of Antiochus IV.**
- 1) Antiochus IV used deceitful shrewdness to have his way, to the detriment and destruction of thousands of other people.
 - 2) He magnified himself (Isa. Dan. 4:30; Isa. 14: 4, 12-14)
 - 3) He destroyed many who felt secure "at ease" (NASB)
 - 4) He opposed the "Prince of princes" - God (cf. Dan. 4:17, 24 - 25)
 - 5) When we oppose God's will and God's people, we oppose God (cf. Mt.
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25:40).

- i. God ultimately defeated Antiochus and will do so to all others who oppose Him.
 - 1) History records that Antiochus IV died of a horrible disease while returning from Persia (McGuiggan, 6)
 - 2) “While advancing on the Maccabees, he met a horrible death by worms and ulcers (quite similar to the judgment of God on Herod Agrippa I, as described in Acts 12).” (Luck, 97 with a reference to II Maccabees 9.)
 - 3) Antiochus IV died in 164 B.C. (Waldron, 144)
 - 4) God doesn’t have to use our hands, to win His battles.
 - 5) But we do have to rely upon Him to win ours. (cf. Rev. 17:14).

5. **(vs. 26) Time context of the vision**

- a. The veracity of the details of the vision are here confirmed; especially regarding the duration of the suffering (Dan. 8:14; cf. 10:1; Rev. 21:5; 22:6).
- b. “The point of interest was not ‘the future’ as such, but the vindication of God’s sovereignty by the restoration of His sanctuary.” (Baldwin, 160)
- c. **Keep the vision “shut (seal, NKJV) up”**
 - 1) “5640. *catham*, (Num. 24 : 15), saw-tham’; a prim. root; to stop up; by impl. to repair; fig. to keep secret:--closed up, hidden, secret, shut out (up), stop.” (QuickVerse)
 - 2) “Keep the vision *secret*” (NASB)
 - 3) The verb is *sethom*, “which basically does mean ‘shut up.’ But it cannot here mean ‘keep it a secret’ or ‘hide’ or the like. To ‘hide or conceal’ is a different verb - *sathar*. The shutting up is here done with the purpose of keeping the vision intact and we have therefore translated” (cf. Rev. 22:10) (Leupold, 370)
 - 4) According to Butler, the command to seal up does not mean to be kept secret, but rather, preserved by writing it down. (Butler, 314)
- d. **For** - the reason given for the instruction to seal up
 - 1) Events described will occur “many days” in the future (cf. Dan. 2:28).
 - 2) “In the third year of Belshazzar Jerusalem was still a ruin, and hopes of return and rebuilding could not yet be implemented; but the vision referred to a later destruction and restoration, hence the need to *seal up the vision*, for it had no immediate application.” (Baldwin, 160)
- e. Note the comparison between the command to Daniel to “seal up” and the command to John to not “seal up.”
 - 1) John is given the opposite command in Rev. 22:10.
 - 2) In Dan. 8:26 we are told the reason for shutting up the vision is that “it pertains to many days in the future.” The vision was received in 550 BC and was completed by 164 BC. That is less than 400 years. We invite you to compare Daniel 8:26 with Revelation 1:3, and 22:6, 10). (McGuiggan, 136)
 - 3) What conclusion will you reach regarding the time context of both visions?

E. **(vs. 27) Daniel, after the shock, continues to wonder about what he has seen.**

1. Note the psychological effect of the vision (Dan. 8:18; cf. 2:1; 10:9)
 - a. “The psychological effect of the vision upon Daniel is stated...The verb is the same as that used in 2:1. It is peculiar and apparently means exhausted, worn out.” (Young, 182)
 - b. Daniel is astonished and bewildered by the vision and its explanation.
2. Daniel could easily understand (Daniel 9:2) because it was couched in historical, (non - visionary) language. (McGuiggan, 136)
 - a. Symbolic visions are difficult to understand prior to historical fulfillment.
 - b. We have the benefit of historical hindsight which Daniel did not.
3. We benefit more from Daniel’s visions than did Daniel (1 Peter 1:10 - 12).

Conclusion:

I. GOD KNOWS THE FUTURE.

- A. The names change, the territories change, *but the principles remain eternal.*
- B. Great nations struggle and *lock horns*; but out of all the agony, destruction, apostasy, social improvements, cultural developments, faith, and courage, *God’s immutable purposes roll on, while man makes moral and mental choices which determine his eternal destiny.*
- C. Men and their wisdom come and go; men and their powers rise and fall, *and God’s book has proven once for all that God knows, sees, overrules and uses history to his own glory, and the glory of all who are faithful to Him!*

II. WHEN MEN LOCK HORNS WITH GOD, MEN DESTROY THEMSELVES.

- A. Men will have their day. (Butler, 325)
- B. But their day has an appointed end.
- C. Oftentimes God permits the tyrants to have sway in order to sift the believers, to purge and purify their lives and to strengthen their loyalty to Him.
- D. But believers can rejoice for God will also have His day (Psa. 2:10-11).

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