



Lesson 4 - The Vision of the Ram and the Goat

Daniel Chapter 8 - Verses 15 - 27

Lesson 4

Remember that God uses non-Godly people to accomplish His Holy purpose. As ruthless as this conqueror was or will be he was given his power by God. As we look at various leaders today to try and see who is accomplishing God's will in relation to running countries, it is not likely that it will be a great preacher. The preachers and teachers accomplish God's will in the areas He has put them in but not necessarily in the same positions of power as He places governmental leaders.

Deception in the world today is coming at us on all sides. There are people who present themselves as Godly but they are actually advancing their own agenda. There are leaders who are accomplishing God's plans with no idea that they are doing so.

8:15 - *While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man.*

8:16 - *And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."*

So, this is Gabriel and Daniel is trying to understand the vision and a voice calls to Gabriel and tells him to explain it to Daniel.

8:17 - *As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."*

I can imagine Daniel's fear and confusion. We did not see his vision but it is difficult trying to understand the vision after Daniel has it explained to him. To me the most important part is Gabriel's first statement - Son of man - understand that the vision concerns the time of the end. This is the part that makes it difficult to connect this to Antiochus IV. He clearly did not rule and conquer at the time of the end.

8:18 - *While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet.*

Imagine how difficult this is to comprehend. It is information overload for Daniel and it is mentally and physically exhausting to him. He needs power and strength from the angel to stand up again. Gabriel is able to strengthen him and help Daniel get to his feet.

8:19. - *He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end."*

Again, Gabriel reiterates that this concerns the time of the end - the time of wrath. This is the time of wrath that the Book of Revelation tells us about.

8:20 - *The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.*

This is why so many people think this has occurred in the time of Antiochus IV - that

was the final time of the Media and Persian kings. However, those lands are still where they were and leaders can still emerge from that area and most certainly will. We will see in Daniel 11 and 12 the description of these future rulers and they will be described as being from Persia and then the kings of the north and the south.

8:21 - The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king.

We see the connection Gabriel makes between Greece and the first king. When we look at this from the perspective of current world affairs there is not a king in Greece and Greece is nowhere near being a superpower and being able to field an army of any kind for destroying another army.

We can see how easy it is with Alexander the Great's kingdom and where he was from and this description looking pretty reasonable but then we have to go back to Gabriel telling him that it refers to the time of the end. So, as we look for world events Greece must make some kind of turn around in world power or we have to make other "adjustments" to what Daniel wrote down.

What do we mean by "adjustments"? Ok, we already know that this vision is symbolic with the ram and the goat representing kingdoms. Does Greece refer to the current geographical country of Greece or could it be a current power that is similar to the original Greece? Note also that through the time of Daniel to the time of Jesus Christ Greece has changed in size many times. At the time of Daniel the Greek territory was mostly a loose confederation of city states. A lot of it was ruled by Persia and Darius was the ruler over that area. Darius, Xerxes and Cyrus were rulers of the former Babylonian kingdom and they expanded over the Greek city states. The Greeks rebelled frequently. About 150 years later Alexander The Great conquered all of it. So, during the fourth century BC Greece was the largest territory in the world. The empire grew to cover a lot of the Mediterranean basin through the Middle East, North Africa and into Asia.

As we think of Gabriel referring to the shaggy goat as Greece, we have to wonder – which Greece is he talking about? We tend to think of it as it is today but what was Greece when Gabriel was telling Daniel about it?

8:22 - *The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.*

8:23 - *In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise.*

Apparently, this is the latter part of the reign of the 4 kingdoms - not the 4 horns. Commentators take this as further evidence it must be Alexander and much later Antiochus IV. One common thing about man is that all men strive to be free and not be subjugated to other rulers. The Greeks rebelled against the Babylonians, then the Persians and later against the Romans. Could this be the rebels that Gabriel is referring to or is it rebels against God?

8:24 - *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 those who are mighty, the holy people.*

8:25 - *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.*

Historians say that at the end of Antiochus IV's reign he received word that the Maccabees had miraculously won control of Israel again and he fell sick and laid down and died and before he died he told his friends and told them he remembered the evil he had done in Israel and he felt that was the cause for his death. As we get deeper into this it seems like this verse more closely ties it in to the future time of the antichrist especially given 2 Thessalonians 2.

Of course, history gives us several players who might fit this description but most notable is the Roman army, led by the future Emperor Titus in 70 AD as they destroyed Israel. If you lived in that time it would be easy to think that it must have been the time spoken of by Daniel. Or, it could be describing events that have not yet happened.

8:26 - *"The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."*

Daniel is told to seal up the vision and that it concerns the distant future which com-

pliments the earlier declaration by Gabriel that it concerns the time of the end. As we can see with the benefit of 2500 years of history leading up to this point it is still impossible to understand. I think the sealing up of the vision is done by God and the meaning will not become clear until we see these things take place. But, we will only recognize them if we know to look for them and pray for understanding ourselves.

8:27 - I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

This encounter with Gabriel was exhausting and at this point I agree with Daniel - it is beyond understanding.

Lesson Goals - What did we learn?