



## Lesson 3 - The Vision of the Ram and the Goat

Daniel Chapter 8 - Verses 1 - 14

### Lesson 3

How can you tell if you are being deceived?

Think of times when you have been deceived - did you feel like you were being deceived at the time?

The reason for Jesus telling us to Watch - as Christians we are not to go blissfully through life. Look at the life of Paul and Peter and John and the other Christians of the first century. They did not go about their lives without a strong focus on the Kingdom of God. We need to be able to identify false teachings. How can we do that if we do not study God's Word like we are preparing for a graduate degree in college?

Jesus warns us in Matthew 13:18-19 when He is explaining the Parable of the Sower -

*“But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*

*“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.”*

Even Daniel the prophet did not understand, let's use his model as a guide. Daniel inquired of the Lord seeking understanding and that is what we are to do. Seek God through prayer and studying the Word.

## Overview of History around the time of Daniel Chapter 8

This vision occurs 2 years after the one in Chapter 7 and interestingly the language switches from Aramaic to Hebrew. This vision concerns Persia and Greece.

The Persian empire started in 550 BC with Cyrus the Great as he conquered the Median, Lydian and Babylonian kingdoms. The Persian Empire was the world's first superpower. Darius the Great was the 4th king of the Persian Empire and he ruled when it was at its largest size.

The ancient Greek Empire started earlier but was mostly individual city states operating in a loose arrangement. However as the Persian Empire spread and began to invade Greece the city states came together led by Athens and Sparta in the Persian Wars from 490 BC to 479 BC.

The Classical period of Greece is considered to begin around the time the Persian Wars began until the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. This time period was well into the future from Daniel's perspective.

**LESSON 3** - Like Chapter 7 the first 14 verses tell us the vision and 15-27 tell us the interpretation of the vision.

## Daniel 8 - The Goat and the Ram

8:1 - *In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me.*

So, Daniel is setting the stage for us to follow the dates. This is 2 years after the vision in Chapter 7. This would be approximately 551 BC. This vision is quite different from the first but some of the symbolism will help us understand this one as we go.

8:2 - *In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.*

Daniel chooses words that indicate that he was either physically transported to this area or the vision to him is something like we would think of a 3D holographic movie scene. He looks around and from his perspective he was able to tell where he was. Since he was such a high ranking official in the Babylonian government as well as the government that followed he may well have traveled here on business and that is why he recognized where he was.

The city of Susa was located on the Karkheh River in southwest Persia, about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. We find a reference to the citadel in Ester and Nehemiah. Darius ruled from Susa and his empire ranged from Egypt to India and from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea.

Ester 1:2 - *At that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal throne in the citadel of Susa.*

Nehemiah 1:1 - *The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:  
In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa,*

Obviously from the period of Daniel to Ester to Nehemiah this citadel was well known.

8:3 - *I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal,*

*and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later.*

This chapter will present some contradictions with established history or with the Bible or it is precise and is referring to a time and events that have not yet happened. From chapter 7 we see that this term “horn” refers to a ruler. So we can see that this appears to say that longer might mean more powerful or larger kingdom. Grew up later would indicate that it started developing later than the other leader.

*8:4 - I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.*

This apparently took some time for Daniel to watch it develop. It did not charge to the east. Notice that Daniel says that no animal can stand against it. It would seem that rather than Daniel seeing the end times as they are happening he is actually seeing the metaphor carrying out the actions described.

*8:5 - As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.*

This phrase is extremely important as we will soon see. Daniel sees a goat from the west that crosses the whole earth without touching the ground. Let that sink in a minute. Of course in our current time we can easily see fighter jets and bombers that travel across long distances without touching the earth. However, significant parts of this vision will also seem to relate to Alexander the Great’s reign and this is generally thought to describe his military style. Alexander in history is well known for how lightning quick his attacks were - so, to deal with this we have 3 options. #1 - It was Alexander the Great and the other details are not really meant to be taken literally. #2 - It is not referring to Alexander and there will be future events that will make all of this tie together. #3 - It can relate to both and the prophecy has dual meanings in time. Also, we still have to deal with the angel telling Daniel that this prophecy relates to the time of the end.

*8:6. - It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage.*

The ram started out as the aggressor and pushed and extended its territory but now the

goat appears and the goat has great rage. The goat is the aggressor. It is quite natural that when someone feels they are being attacked that they will dig in and fight back with an even greater intensity.

*8:7 - I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power.*

Apparently these two leaders in the area that the ram had conquered are shattered in the attack. The goat overwhelmed the ram sort of like the US and Iraq in Desert Storm.

*8:8 - The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.*

This leader, at the height of power is broken off does tilt back to matching up to Alexander the Great so this verse is another vote in that direction as well as the 4 prominent leaders that took Alexander's place and split the kingdom. Not sure about the four winds of heaven unless that phrase in this case refers to the four directions - North, East, South and West.

*8:9 - Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land.*

Geographically this helps us realize this is in the area of Iraq or Iran because Israel is east of those lands. Interesting the commentaries have some issues here. This seems like it would be Syria and if applied to Alexander the Great than it would be the part of the kingdom that was taken by Seleucus, since he received Assyria and a vast region to the east which would point to Israel. OK, the issue is that this took place around 300 BC, but some commentaries look at the phrase "grew in power" and fast forward over 100 years to Antiochus IV called Epiphanes, the eighth king in the Syrian dynasty who held power from 175 to 164 B.C.

If a horn refers to leader that is one person not a regal succession of rulers. It seems to me that this one ruler grows in power and this growth doesn't take 100+ years to get started.

8:10 - *It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.*

8:11 - *It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down.*

It seems difficult to say that Antiochus IV was ever powerful enough to have thrown down starry hosts to the earth. In our current day it is not too hard to see this referring to missiles or bombs falling from planes. Historians estimate that Antiochus IV did kill about 100,000 Jews as he marched to the south and some of this is recorded in 1 and 2 Maccabees.

These historical books tell us that Antiochus entered the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick and all the vessels thereof; and the temple show-bread, the pouring vessels ... and stripped the temple of the ornaments of gold. So, this could fit Antiochus and in our current times the daily sacrifice has not been restarted. It also may point to a time that has not yet come. We will see later in Daniel that the anti-christ also abolishes the daily sacrifice and we see Jesus tell us in:

Matt. 24:15 - *“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand”*

Since Jesus was reiterating Daniel’s prophecy it is hard to ascribe it to an event that occurred 200 years before Jesus spoke it to the disciples.

8:12 - *Because of rebellion, the Lord’s people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.*

We see in v. 10, 11 and 12 that they use the pronoun “it” to keep referring back to the horn in v. 9. Also, we see the reference to truth being thrown down to the ground and that sounds a bit more like Paul’s description in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 describing the lawless one and those who worship the antichrist will love the lie and hate the truth.

8:13 - *Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, “How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled —the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord’s people?”*

8:14 - *He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."*

The vision takes a new turn here. Daniel hears the exchange between two of the holy beings that he is talking with and they say that the time frame until the end of all of the things he has just seen will take 2,300 days. This is 6.38 Jewish years. Then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated. So, this time period is confusing to say the least. Does the 2,300 days equal 2,300 years? If so, then from Daniel's time period would put this in the year about 1,750 AD or from Antiochus IV it would be 2,140 AD. This date reference is not the same as Daniel will get in Chapter 9 when Gabriel comes and explains Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy for the Jewish people.

Daniel's seventieth week has not started yet and it represents 7 years of tribulation. We will get more details in rest of Daniel but it gives us something to think about. In Daniel 12:11 we see the angel refer to 1,290 days as a time period.

12:11 - 12 - *From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.*

When you add these together we get 2,625 days or 7.29 years (remember Jewish years are only 360 days). So Daniel's head must be spinning with all these dates and their references. Gabriel later tells Daniel about the 70 weeks which does refer to years and possibly the 2,300 mornings and evenings referring to actual days and the 2,625 probably refers to days. Do they overlap? Are they sequential?

***Lesson Goals - What did we learn?***