

# Daniel 8

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A Vision Concerning the  
Medo-Persian and Grecian Empires

# Date of this Vision

- “In the **third** year of the reign of King Belshazzar” (8:1), so approximately 551 / 550 B.C.
  - Two years after the vision recorded in chapter 7, which was in the **first** year of Belshazzar (7:1).
- Remember that while this vision concerns the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires, Babylon was still the ruling empire when Daniel received this vision.
  - God’s people are still in Babylonian captivity, and will be for about 14 more years.

# The Main Elements in this Vision

- A two-horned RAM (3–4).
- A one-horned MALE GOAT (5–8).
  - The large (conspicuous, notable) horn on this goat.
  - The FOUR HORNS that arose in the place of the previous horn, when it was broken (8).
  - A LITTLE HORN that grew out of one of the four horns (9–14).

# Who or what does each represent?

Element	Explanation
Ram	Medo-Persia (20)
Male goat	Greece (21)
Large horn	The first king (21), which would be Alexander the Great (died at age 32).
Four horns	Four kingdoms which arise from this nation, but without its power (22). Upon Alexander's death, four kingdoms arose from the one he established, but all inferior to his.
Small horn	We know it's a king from one of these four kingdoms (23-25), but who exactly?

# What did Daniel see and hear?

- He saw a **RAM** with two horns, standing beside the river Ulai. Both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.
  - Recall the bear raised up on one side in 7:5.
- He saw this **RAM** pushing westward, northward, and southward. No animal could withstand him, nor could any deliver from his hand. He did according to his will and became great (Darius I: 2,000,000 sq. mi.).
  - And so there would **appear** to be no match for this **RAM**...

# What did Daniel see and hear?

- Suddenly a **MALE GOAT** came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground (moving swiftly). This **MALE GOAT** had a notable (conspicuous) horn between his eyes.
- Daniel then saw the **MALE GOAT** run at the **RAM** with furious power.
- He was moved with rage against the **RAM**, attacked him, and broke his two horns. The **MALE GOAT** threw him to the ground and trampled him. Neither the ram nor anyone else could do anything to stop it.

# What did Daniel see and hear?

- The **MALE GOAT** grew to be very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable horns came up toward the four winds of heaven (in every direction).
- From one of these four horns came a **little horn** which grew exceedingly great toward the south, the east, and toward the glorious (beautiful, pleasant) land.
- **This horn** grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground and trampled them.

# What did Daniel see and hear?

- This horn exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host. He took His daily sacrifices away, overthrew His sanctuary, and cast truth down to the ground. He did whatever he wished and prospered.
- Daniel heard a holy one speaking, and then another holy one say to him, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?”
- He said, “For 2300 days, then the sanctuary will be cleansed.”

# Who is the Little Horn?

- One of the four Grecian kingdoms which arose after Alexander's death was the Seleucid kingdom of Syria.
- From this kingdom came **Antiochus IV**, who ruled Syria from 175–163 B.C. He assumed the name *Epiphanes* (the illustrious or glorious one), but the Jews called him *Epimanes* (the mad man).
- Antiochus outlawed the Jewish religion—specifically circumcision, the Sabbath, and other feast days. He made possession of the Scriptures illegal, offered swine in the temple and set up an image of Zeus.

# Who is the Little Horn?

- According to 1 Maccabees 1:20–28, during an attack on Jerusalem he killed 80,000 Jews.
- This and other events prompted the Maccabean revolt, led by Judas Maccabeus (the hammer).
- After quite a struggle, they overthrew this tyranny over them and successfully cleansed the temple and restored worship (December 25, 165/164).
  - The “Feast of Dedication” mentioned in John 10:22 was in celebration of this event.
  - What do the Jews call it today?

# Who is the Little Horn?

- Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, certainly thought Daniel was speaking of Antiochus:
  - After describing certain details of Daniel's vision here in chapter 8, he said, "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" (*Antiquities*, X:11:7).
- "While advancing on the Maccabees, he met a horrible death by worms and ulcers (quite similar to God's judgment on Herod Agrippa in Acts 12) (Luck, G. Coleman, *Daniel*, p. 97, with a reference to 2 Macc. 9).

# 2300 Days?

- Of course, it could be symbolic like so many other numbers in this type of literature.
- If speaking literally, this would be just over 6 years.
  - “And the vision of the evening and mornings which was told is **true...**”
  - Antiochus instigated his persecutions against the Jews in 171 B.C., and they ended in 165 B.C. (a period of 6 years).

# “Time of the end” (v. 17)

- It doesn't say, “the end of time.”
  - Verse 19: “the latter time of the indignation, for at the appointed time the end shall be.”
- How does the vision and its interpretation narrow the time frame?
  - Some think the “indignation” or “wrath” refers to Babylon's wrath against Judah.
  - To me, the context seems to point to the one horn's wrath (Antiochus).

# Summary

- God was preparing His people for some very trying times ahead, times when they would suffer great harm. But what God does is assure them that He will break the power of the one who inflicts this harm.
- Those who defy God have their day, but their day has an appointed end.
- 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 those faithful to Him!  
(Alan Yeater)