

The Book of Daniel

The Vision of the Ram and the Goat

Daniel 8

1. The Timing and Location of the Vision (Dan. 8:1-2)

A. The Timing (v.1)

The third year of Belshazzar's reign was the year 550 b.c. which places this vision after the dream of Dan. 7 and before the events of Dan. 5.

B. The Location (v.2)

Daniel was actually in Babylon during the time of this vision (cf. v.27) but his vision had him in the citadel of Susa (cf. Ezek. 8:3; 40:1ff). At that time, the city of Susa was of no great significance, but it would be a capital city of the Medo-Persian empire.

2. The Vision and its Interpretation (Dan. 8:3-26)

A. The Giving of Divine Assistance (Dan. 8:15-19)

I. The Man Standing Before Daniel (v.15)

II. The Voice of a Man Between the Banks of the Water (v.16)

III. The Message Concerns the Time of the End

B. The Power and Reign of the Ram (vs.3-4, 20)

The only aspect of the Ram that is specifically identified is that it symbolizes the kings of Media and Persia (v.20). With that information it is easy to see how the nature of its two horns, its warpath, and its prolonged preeminence coincide with the rise and fall of the Medo Persian Empire (539-328 b.c.).

C. The Power and Reign of the Goat (vs.5-8, 21-22)

The Goat is identified as Greece (v.21), and while Daniel is not given the name of the first king, we know his name as Alexander the Great. This is evident not only because he was the king who overthrew the Medo Persian empire, but the historical account of his death and the subsequent fallout for the empire are clearly seen in this text (vs.8, 21-22).

D. The Power and Reign of the Little Horn (vs.9-14, 23-26)

While there are some aspects of the activities of the little horn which may well look forward to the activities of the final anti-christ, it is best to see most (if not all) as being fulfilled in the person of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He was the ruler who most specifically and intentionally harassed the Jews, attacked the Scriptures, and set himself against God. Daniel later describes his blasphemous desecration (Dan. 11:31) as well as yet another one to come (Dan. 12:11) which Jesus also indicates is a desolation yet in the future (Matt. 24:15).

3. The Effect of the Vision Upon Daniel (Dan. 8:27)

It is significant to note the toll that this vision had upon Daniel. He was frightened enough to fall on his face before Gabriel (cf. Rev. 22:8-9), and the overall effect of the vision left him sick and exhausted for days.