

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

11

WHAT SHALL BE IN THE LAST END

*“And he said, Behold, I will make thee know
what shall be in the last end of the indignation:
for at the time appointed the end shall be.”*

Daniel 8:19

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Two years after the vision of the Sea and the four beasts in chapter 7, Daniel was again shown a vision of the nations. It was similar in some ways to the visions of chapters 2 and 7. In many ways, however, it was different. “With this chapter the Hebrew part of the book begins, and continues to be the language of the remainder; the visions relating wholly to the Jews and Jerusalem.” (JFB. Part 2. P. 425) The Languages in which Daniel wrote his book were Hebrew and the language of Babylon. Chapter 8 concerns the conflict between a ram, a he goat, and “the little horn”. “It came when the exiled Jews needed encouragement to believe God would really restore them as He promised (Jer. 25:11-12.” (Wycliffe. P. 791) It is important to know at least a brief outline of the history of the land between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, the area called Mesopotamia if one is to understand the meaning of the vision.

Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar arose to power in about 612 B.C. and continued until about 539 B.C. when it was taken by the kings of Media and Persia, King Cyrus of Persia and Darius of Media. They are pictured in the vision

as a ram with two horns. "The king of Persia wore a jeweled ram's head of gold instead of a diadem." (JFB. P. 426.) This kingdom expanded until they were defeated by the Army of Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

Daniel chapter 8:1-14 describes these historical events with the use of two animals as types of the two nations. The first animal is a ram. This ram has two horns. One of the horns is bigger than the other. This is a picture of the Medio-Persian Empire. Cyrus the Persian was more powerful than Darius, king of the Medes and is pictured as the greater horn. The Medes and the Persians expanded the kingdom in all directions and no one could stand in their way. This kingdom was coming to power at the time Daniel was living and prophesying in Babylon. As history unfolds Alexander the Great, pictured as the he goat, comes on the scene. "Alexander is prominent in the visions of Daniel. There never lived another like him. He was born in 356 B.C. He died in 323B.C. at thirty-three years of age. He was the son of Philip, the king of Macedon. In twelve brief years Alexander conquered the entire civilized world, never losing a battle. . . . There was no army, no kingdom, no king, nor ruler who could stand the onslaught of Alexander." (Criswell. Vol. 4. P. 64) "*And as I was considering, behold,*

an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.” (vs.5) (Alexander the Great) However, “when he was strong, the great horn was broken.” (Vs. 8) “Alexander died in the thirty-third year of his age, of fever and alcohol, at Babylon. In the subsequent twenty years, his winnings were divided into four parts among four of his military successors.” (Wycliffe. P. 792)

“Out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great.” (Vs.9) When the horn that was between the eyes of the he goat, Alexander the Great, is broken, four other horns appear. These are the kings of the four divisions of Alexander’s empire that formed upon his death. Verse 9 speaks of the “little horn”. This horn is different from the “little horn” of chapter 7. Verses 9-14 tell the story of the conflict the Jews would have after their return from exile with the Seleucid king Antiochus IV, called *Epiphanes* (Magnificent). “Many evangelical interpreters see here a type of Antichrist and his conflict with Christ and His people in the end time. This may very well be. The 2,300 days is literally, *evening-mornings*, i.e., evening and morning daily burnt sacrifices, and so refers to only 1,150 days. It seems to

refer to a period in 168 – 165 B.C. when the Temple was desecrated by pagan sacrifices.” (Wycliffe. P. 792)

At this point Daniel is given the interpretation of this vision by the angel, Gabriel. The name Gabriel means, “hero of God”. He gives Daniel an explanation of the vision in verses 20 – 25. He explains the reign of Alexander the Great and points out that the little horn would be. *“In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.”* (Vs. 23-24) Antiochus Epiphanes was a ruler that became a type of the Antichrist that will arise in the last days. He is not that man but an Old Testament pre-figurement of the Tribulation Antichrist. “These verses add specific details to the portrait of Antiochus. The Jews could hardly fail to recognize him when he appeared. This prophecy may well have been the very divine means used to carry the faithful through those hard days.” (Wycliffe. P. 792) Verse 25 tells us that Antiochus would prosper and “magnify himself in his heart.” His antitype will

stand up against Christ but will “be broken without hand.”

Many liberal Bible students see chapter 8 as evidence that the book of Daniel must have been written around 150 B.C. His visions of their near history were so precise that, they feel, it must have actually been a history written as a prophecy. The rest of the book supports the fact that most of Daniel was written by 543 B.C. Chapter 8 was also written by this time. “The prophecy of Daniel is unwasted by time. It is a forever kind of book. Practically all other books are like milk and eggs. They are addled by time. But not the Book of Daniel. For 2,700 years, history has flowed into the mold of Daniel’s prophecy. As a slave, as a captive, he sees these visions of the end of time. (Criswell. Vol 4. P. 62) There is no reason to doubt the truth of Daniel’s authorship. God gave his people courage through the sure testimony of this man of God. Today, believers can trust the veracity of the book of Daniel and the Bible as the word of God.

Notes

JFB. = Jamieson, Fausset, Brown A Commentary
Vol. 2. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand
Rapids, Michigan. 1973.