

Session 5 The Little Horn Who Defiles the Sanctuary (Dan. 8:1-14)

I. OUTLINE OF DANIEL 8

- A. The setting of Daniel's second vision (8:1-2)
- B. Daniel's vision (8:3-14)
 - 1. Persia and Greece set the stage (8:3-8)
 - a. Persia symbolized as a ram with two horns (8:3-4)
 - b. Greece symbolized as a goat with a notable horn: Alexander the Great (8:5-8)
 - 2. The little horn as the Antichrist, foreshadowed by Antiochus (8:9-14)
 - a. The activity of the little horn (8:10-12)
 - b. How long the defilement and persecution continues (8:13-14)
- C. Gabriel appeared to Daniel to explain and expand the vision (8:15-25)
 - 1. The vision pertains to the end times (8:15-19)
 - 2. Gabriel's explanation of the symbols (8:20-22)
 - 3. The Antichrist's personality and power (8:23-25)
- D. The importance of the vision (8:26-27)

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Daniel 8 recounts the second of Daniel's four visions that he received near the end of his life. It focuses on the second and third kingdoms of his first vision (which is recorded in Daniel 7). Like Daniel 7, this vision has many symbols, whereas Daniel's final two visions (Dan. 9; 10-12) are given in a straightforward way without using a lot of symbolism.
 - 1. First, the vision spoke of the Persians conquering westward toward Babylon (8:3-4, 20).
 - 2. Next, the vision described the reign of Alexander the Great (8:5-8, 21-22).
 - 3. Finally, the vision gave details of the wicked reign of the little horn or the Antichrist (8:9-26). This is the main theme of the vision. The Antichrist is foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid king based in Syria who reigned for twelve years (175–164 BC). The complete fulfillment of the details in this vision (8:9-19, 23-26) are found in the reign of the Antichrist.
- B. Gabriel made his first appearance in Scripture to give this vision about the Antichrist to Daniel. Gabriel emphasized that this vision was to be fulfilled in the end times (8:16-19). He did not come merely to affirm the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes. Rather, each time he appears in Scripture, it is to make known significant events and truths that are closely related to the coming of Messiah.

¹⁶*“Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.”*¹⁷...*I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, “Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end”...*¹⁹*And he said, “Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation ...”*²⁶*The vision...refers to many days in the future.” (Dan. 8:16-19, 26)*
- C. Since the details of the first part of this vision came to pass in history with great precision, we can be assured that the parts of the vision with a future fulfillment will also come to pass.

III. THE SETTING OF DANIEL’S SECOND VISION (DAN. 8:1-2)

- A. This vision starts by describing the Persians conquering westward, moving towards Babylon. Persia conquered Babylon twelve years later in 539 BC. Daniel was serving in the Babylonian government, so any prophecy of Babylon’s downfall would have been considered treason.
- ¹In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar [551 BC] a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time. ²I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel [future palace in Persia], which is in the province of Elam [Persia]; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. (Dan. 8:1-2)*
- B. **Third year:** 551 BC. Daniel was about seventy years old. This was two years after his first vision in Daniel 7 in 553 BC and twelve years before Belshazzar’s feast and the fall of Babylon (Dan 5).
- C. **I was in Shushan:** In this vision Daniel “traveled in the Spirit” to another city just as Ezekiel did (Ezek. 8:3; 40:1). This city became the capital of the Persian Empire about eighty years later.
- D. **King Belshazzar:** the king of Babylon. He was undoubtedly keeping a watchful eye on the emerging military might in the neighboring territories related to the future Persian Empire.

IV. THE RAM WITH TWO HORNS (DAN. 8:3-4): PERSIA

- A. In this vision a ram with two horns stood beside the Ulai River in Persia (8:3-4). Daniel was seeing the emergence of the Medo-Persian Empire as the new “super power” that would replace Babylon.
- ³I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram [Medo-Persian Empire] which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last. ⁴I saw the ram pushing [conquering] westward, northward, and southward, so that no beast [nation] could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great. (Dan. 8:3-4)*
- B. **A ram:** The ram in the vision represents the Medo-Persian Empire. Gabriel later told Daniel specifically that the ram represented the Medo-Persian Empire (8:20). This corresponds to the bear in Daniel’s first vision (7:5) and the chest and arms of silver in Nebuchadnezzar’s statue (2:32).
- C. **Two horns:** This speaks of two ancient kingdoms (Media and Persia) that formed an alliance.
- D. **One horn was higher than the other:** Both horns were high, but one was higher than the other. This parallels the bear being raised up on one side (7:5). The taller, or higher, horn represents Persia, because it became more powerful than Media after the merging of the two kingdoms.
- E. **The ram pushing:** The ram pushed (made conquests) to the west, north, and south. Historically, the Persian Empire conquered lands in three main directions: *westward* (Babylonia, Syria, Israel, Asia Minor, Thrace, and Macedonia), *northward* (Armenia, regions around the Caspian Sea toward the Caspian Mountains, and Scythia), and *southward* (toward Egypt and Ethiopia).
- F. **He became great:** Medo-Persia became the largest kingdom up to that point in history.

V. GOAT WITH ONE HORN (DAN. 8:5-8): GREECE

A. Daniel saw a male goat attacking the ram—the Greeks defeated the Persian Empire in 331 BC.

⁵...***a male goat [Greece] came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn [Alexander the Great] between his eyes.***
⁶***Then he came to the ram [Persia] that had two horns...and ran at him with furious power.***
(Dan. 8:5-6)

1. ***A male goat:*** Alexander the Great came from Greece, which was west of Israel, Babylon, and Persia. Gabriel told Daniel that the goat represented Greece (8:21). Greece was also portrayed as the bronze belly and thighs in the statue (2:32) and as a leopard with four wings (7:6).
2. ***Without touching the ground:*** This speaks of speedy military victories. This speed was symbolized by the goat's feet not touching the ground and by the leopard with four wings. Alexander conquered the Persians and the Middle East within three years (334–331 BC). He reached as far eastward as India. The speed of his conquest is unprecedented in history.
3. ***Notable horn:*** The notable horn was Alexander the Great, Greece's first king (8:21).
4. ***Between his eyes:*** This represents Alexander's great military intelligence. Some claim that he was the greatest military genius in history.

B. Alexander the Great attacked Persia with great rage and completely defeated her (8:7).

⁷***I saw him [Alexander] confronting the ram [Persia]; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him [Alexander], but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him...*** (Dan. 8:7)

C. Alexander the Great's triumph was very fast and dramatic (8:8).

⁸***The male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken [the death of Alexander], and in place of it four notable ones [Alexander's four generals] came up toward the four winds of heaven.*** (Dan. 8:8)

1. ***Very great:*** Alexander conquered the greatest amount of land up to that time in history.
2. ***The large horn was broken:*** Alexander suddenly died in Babylon at the age of thirty-two in 323 BC. His health broken by a life of excess with alcohol, he succumbed to a severe fever.
3. ***Four notable ones:*** At Alexander's death, his four notable generals divided his kingdom into four separate kingdoms. This parallels the four heads of Daniel 7:6.
4. Four Greek generals broke away from one another to rule portions of Alexander's kingdom:
 - a. ***Seleucus*** ruled Syria, Babylonia, southern Turkey, Persia, and a region to the east. (The Seleucid kingdom was larger than the other three Greek kingdoms combined).
 - b. ***Cassander*** ruled Macedonia and Greece.
 - c. ***Lysimachus*** ruled Thrace (Bulgaria) and much of Asia Minor (western Turkey).
 - d. ***Ptolemy*** ruled Egypt, Cyprus, and Israel.

VI. THE LITTLE HORN: THE ANTICHRIST (DAN. 8:9-14)

A. In the second part of this vision Daniel saw a “little horn” that defiled Israel (8:9-14).

⁹***Out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south [Egypt], toward the east [Babylon], and toward the Glorious Land [Israel]. (Dan. 8:9)***

1. ***A little horn***: This speaks of a political leader who starts out with a little measure of authority, perhaps as a regional leader. The little horn in 8:9 is the same man as the little horn in 7:8. Daniel 7 emphasizes the Antichrist’s overwhelming power (v. 7) and his role with ten kings. Daniel 8 emphasizes his activities related to Israel (v. 9-14) and reign over nations (v. 23-25).
2. ***Out of one of them***: The Antichrist will come “out of” one of the four generals and kingdoms that arose after Alexander’s death. Antiochus came from the bloodline of Alexander’s general *Seleucus*. The *Seleucid Empire* was one of the four “notable horns” of Alexander's kingdom.
3. The Antichrist may come out of the geographic territory or people groups that are associated with *both* the Seleucid Empire (Greek) and Roman Empire (eastern division). The territories that were a part of both empires (at separate times) include Syria, Iraq (Babylon), and parts of Turkey and Jordan. Currently the people and governments of those territories are Islamic.
4. The Antichrist is foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes, a Seleucid king based in Syria. Antiochus reigned for twelve years (175–164 BC). While the complete fulfillment of the details in this vision (8:9-19, 23-26) is found in the Antichrist, they are partially fulfilled by Antiochus as some of the details do not apply to Antiochus. For example, Antiochus’ first political position was over the Seleucid Empire, the largest empire in that part of the world. In other words, *he never ruled a small kingdom* and thus was never truly a “little horn.” Being a *notable* horn speaks of Antiochus’ “large” power base (*see the map on my website*).
5. ***Grew exceedingly great***: The little horn will have great power and influence toward the south (Egypt), and the east (Iraq and Iran), and toward the Glorious Land of Israel (Dan. 11:41, 45).

B. The little horn will affect the host of heaven (8:10). This is considered by some as the most difficult verse in the book of Daniel. *A host means an army*. The host of heaven seems to speak of an army related to heaven. In what sense will the Antichrist cast down some of an army related to heaven? Is this a demonic host, or is it the armies of Israel? Israel was the “army of the Lord” (Ex. 12:41).

¹⁰***“And it [little 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.” (Dan. 8:10)***

1. ***It grew up***: The little horn will “grow up” to the host of heaven. Some see this as referring to the Antichrist’s actions creating a “*chain reaction in the spirit realm*” that affects the hosts in heaven—fallen angels (demons) being cast to the earth in a war with Michael (Rev. 12:7-9). The language in Daniel 8:10 is similar to Revelation 12:3-9—“cast/threw down” and “stars.”
³***...a great, fiery red dragon [Satan]...⁴His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven [angels] threw them to the earth...⁷War broke out in heaven: Michael...fought with the dragon...⁹The Devil...was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev. 12:7-9)***

2. **Cast some of the host of heaven to the ground and trampled them:** The little horn will cast down some of the host. Some see this as a reference to the activity of the Antichrist associated with fallen angels being cast down (a host of good angels cannot be trampled on the ground).
 3. **Cast some stars to the ground:** Some see this as referring to fallen angels and others as the persecution of believers. The faithful will shine like stars (Dan. 12:3; Mt. 13:43; Rev. 12:1). The number of faithful Israelites is prophesied to be numerous as the stars (Gen. 15:5; 22:17).
³***“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” (Dan. 12:3)***
 4. **It cast down and trampled:** The little horn will cast down and trample “stars” to the ground. Some say this refers to believers being trampled down in persecution. The Antichrist will persecute, or trample, God’s people (8:10, 13, 24). Do these stars include Israel’s army being killed as part of the host being trampled? Antiochus persecuted Israel from 170–164 BC—killing over 100,000 Jewish people in that time period. Earlier, Daniel saw the ram (Persia) being “cast to the ground and trampled” in military defeat by Alexander the Great (8:7).
¹³***“How long will the vision be, concerning the...giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?” (Dan. 8:13)***
- C. The little horn takes away the daily sacrifices and casts down the sanctuary (8:11-12).
¹¹***He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host [Jesus]; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.*** ¹²***Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn [Antichrist] to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. (Dan. 8:11-12)***
1. **He exalted himself:** The Antichrist will exalt himself as high as the Prince of the host, i.e., Jesus, the Prince of princes (8:25). Jesus is the commander, the Prince of the host. Paul made reference to Daniel’s prophecies of the Antichrist exalting himself as high as God (8:11) and above God (11:36) in claiming to be God (2 Thes. 2:4). There is no evidence that Antiochus Epiphanes claimed to be God. Yet he did commit abominable acts in putting an altar to Zeus in the temple precincts and in offering a swine upon it in December 167 BC.
⁴***[The Antichrist]...exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thes. 2:4)***
 2. **Daily sacrifices:** The Antichrist will oppose and take away the daily sacrifices (8:11). This implies that Israel will build a temple in Jerusalem and offer daily sacrifices in it. The Antichrist taking away the sacrifices is a key aspect of Daniel’s end-time prophecies.
 3. **Sanctuary:** Most see the place of His sanctuary being cast down as a reference to the Jerusalem temple being cast down or defiled. Some see it as Satan’s sanctuary being cast down as a result of the war in the heavens that is described in Revelation 12:7-9.
 4. Note the four things are trampled, or cast to the ground, by the little horn (Antichrist): the truth (8:12), the host (8:10, 13), the stars (8:10), and the sanctuary (8:11, 13).

5. **Transgression:** This refers to transgression in Israel and the Gentile nations (Isa. 24:1-6).
 6. **An army was given over to the little horn:** A powerful army will be given to the Antichrist to oppose and stop the daily sacrifices.
 7. **Truth will be cast down:** The Antichrist will fiercely oppose God’s truth in the nations. Currently the devil is attacking the biblical view of the sanctity of life, marriage and sex, and salvation and truth itself. The nations will cast off the cords of God’s Word (Ps. 2:2-3).
 8. **Prospered:** The Antichrist will temporarily prosper while doing evil. His power and wealth will increase as his armies conquer more nations. What he does will seem to be blessed by God. His temporary prosperity will cause many to have confidence to join him.
²⁴**“His power shall be mighty...he shall destroy...and shall prosper...” (Dan. 8:24)**
- D. The Antichrist will transgress against and trouble the temple for 2,300 days (8:13-14). Daniel gave four details that give us insight into what the Antichrist will do. He will defile the temple by *removing the daily sacrifices, trampling the sanctuary, trampling the host, and committing “the” transgression*, which is to set up the abomination that results in the desolation of nations.
- ¹³***I heard a holy one [angel] speaking; and another holy one [angel] said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be [will the resistance continue], concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?”***¹⁴***And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days [2,300 days]; then the sanctuary [the temple] shall be cleansed.” (Dan. 8:13-14)***
1. **Angelic conversations:** Daniel heard one angel ask another how long the little horn would engage in his resistance against the sanctuary (temple) and the daily sacrifices. An angel answered that it would last for 2,300 days, at which time the temple would be cleansed.
 2. **The transgression of desolation:** This is the first reference in the Scripture to the abomination of desolation. Daniel says more about it later but here he simply calls it “the” transgression.
 3. **The sanctuary shall be cleansed:** Daniel learned in his fourth vision that the sanctuary will not be cleansed until 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation is set up (12:11). Two things will happen when Jesus returns—the sanctuary will be cleansed (8:14) and the abomination of desolation will be removed (12:11). The temple cannot be cleansed **until** the abomination of desolation is removed. These two events happen in relationship to one another. They will both occur 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation is set up (12:11).
¹¹***“From the time the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days [1,290 days].” (Dan. 12:11)***
 4. Jesus will make His triumphal entry into Jerusalem as the leaders of Israel receive Him as Messiah (Mt. 23:39). He will cleanse the temple, which includes removing the abomination (8:14). He also cleansed the temple at His triumphal entry at His first coming (Mt. 21:8-13).

5. **2,300 days:** There will be a 2,300-day period (six years and four months) of resistance and defilement of the temple (8:14; 12:11).
 6. The important point to understand is that something related to *resisting the temple service* will occur 2,300 days before the abomination of desolation ends and the sanctuary is cleansed. We are not sure what it will be—except that it will have something to do with resisting the daily sacrifices. This will be the first sign that the man who confirmed a covenant (9:27) in the Middle East is hiding his true identity as an evil man. He is not a man of peace, but one who hates Israel and is a very skillful deceiver.
 7. The first sign of the Antichrist's betrayal of Israel will start 2,300 days **before** the sanctuary is cleansed. What will begin as some kind of resistance of the sacrifices will escalate into persecution, lasting until the sanctuary is finally cleansed (at the time that Jesus returns).
 8. Three important things that will happen when Jesus returns to Jerusalem—the cleansing of the temple, removal of the abomination of desolation, and cleansing of the land (Zech. 13:2).
- E. **Understanding the 2,300 days:** After 2,300 days (six years and four months) the sanctuary will be cleansed. This occurs 1,290 days (43 months) after the abomination of desolation is set up (12:11).
- F. There are three views of what these 2,300 days are.
1. **2,300 days view:** The resistance of the temple activities will last 2,300 days (six years and four months). The angel gave the exact number of days because it will be important for God's people to have clarity about these events and the persecution associated with them. Gabriel stated that the vision of the evenings and mornings referred to many days in the future (8:26).
 2. **1,150 days view:** Some see this as referring to 1,150 mornings plus 1,150 evenings, thus totaling 2,300 mornings and evenings—totaling three years, two months, and ten days.
 3. **Symbolic view:** Some see the 2,300 days as a symbolic number. However, since all the other numbers in Daniel are taken literally, there is no reason to take this symbolically.
- G. Applying the 2,300 days to Antiochus Epiphanes:
1. Some promote various theories to make these 2,300 days fit the history of Antiochus. None of them are precise; therefore they are not convincing. The Jews rededicated the temple on December 14, 164 BC under Judas Maccabeus. Counting backwards 2,300 days, we come to September 170 BC. This may correspond to the time in which the high priest Onias III was murdered. Some say he was killed in 170 BC, while most insist it was in 171 BC.
 2. Some say that Antiochus persecuted Israel from 170–164 BC. Others insist that he did this from 171–165 BC. This matters to some because if 171 BC is accurate, then there is no known significant event that occurred at that time. If so, Antiochus cannot have completely fulfilled the prophecy in Daniel 8:14.

- H. Applying the 2,300 days to the Antichrist (*see the power point graphic on my website*)
1. The sanctuary will be cleansed (8:14) exactly 1,290 days (43 months) after the sacrifices are stopped and the abomination of desolation is set up in the middle of the final seven years (12:11). By counting 2,300 days back from the end of the 1,290 days, one can determine the day that the activities in the temple will start to be resisted.
¹¹“From the time the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days [1,290 days].” (Dan. 12:11)
 2. There are 84 months in the seven-year period of Daniel 9:27 or two periods of 1,260 days. There will be 1,260 days **before** the abomination of desolation is set up and another 1,260 days **after** it is set up. However, in Daniel 12:11, an angel indicated an additional 30 days (an additional month) to follow the final 1,260 day period; thus there will be 85 months from the time the covenant is confirmed at the start of Daniel’s 70th week. By subtracting 2,300 days (76 months) from 85 months, we come up with about nine months into the final seven years.
 3. Thus, about **nine months into the final seven year period**, something will occur which resists the sanctuary and its activities about 33 months (two years and nine months) **before** the abomination of desolation is set up. In other words, believers will know something negative will happen about nine months into the prophetic final seven-year period. When this is proclaimed ahead of time, it will alert unbelievers. It will be a prophetic sign of the times.
- I. There are ten passages that mention specific time frames in which the end-time events related to the tribulation occur. The first five passages are in the book of Daniel (Dan. 7:25; 8:14; 9:27; 12:7, 11) and the next five are in the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). Each of the ten passages is understood best by comparing them to one another. Jesus pointed us to the abomination of desolation to understand His view of the end times (Mt. 24:15). The five passages indicating time frames in the book of Daniel are each in context to the abomination of desolation.
- J. Forerunner messengers will proclaim that a man will confirm a covenant for seven years that will bring a counterfeit (temporary) peace to the Middle East. In conjunction with his covenant, Jewish leaders will be allowed to offer animal sacrifices and initiate the building of the Jewish temple.
1. When this all comes to pass, unbelievers will ask believers how they knew that such specific things would happen. They will show the unbelievers the prophetic Scriptures.
 2. After the covenant starts, and when all is going well, prophetic messengers will tell them that in about nine months the man who confirmed the covenant and brought peace to the Middle East will surprise the Jewish people by doing something that resists or defiles the temple in some way. This will give them their first indication that a more serious betrayal is coming.
 3. When the Antichrist, who is masquerading as a man of peace, does something that troubles the temple, it will be very disturbing to those who are alert. This will give Israel about **two years and nine months before the abomination of desolation starts**, at which time they must flee for their lives. When the Antichrist pulls his “mask” off, then they will see that he has no capacity for mercy, even for his most loyal subjects. He is evil incarnate.