



## “Making the Prophetic Future Crystal Clear” (Daniel 8)

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v.1 This vision was two years after the one in chapter seven.

v.2 Daniel is transported in his vision to the citadel of Susa. Susa was approx. 200 miles east of Babylon and 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf. It is called the “citadel” of Susa because Darius I made it the administrative capital of the Persian Empire and built a great defensive wall around it. This is the same place the events of the book of Esther take place, and it is where Nehemiah was cupbearer to king Artaxerxes.

v.3 Rams and goats are symbols of power and leadership in the OT (Jer.50:8; Ezek.34:17; 39:18; Zech 10:3). Horns represent strength. The guardian spirit of the Medo-Persian Empire was portrayed as a ram with sharp pointed horns. One horn longer than the other – dominion of Persians over the Medes (same as bear on one side in Daniel 7:5).

v.4 Medes and Persians conquered lands in each of these directions; same as three ribs in the mouth of the bear (Daniel 7:5).

v.5 Greece is west of Media and Persia; Alexander the Great and his army were swifter than any other! Alexander’s strength came from his intelligence, not the size of his army (horn between his eyes). He devised a new military formation called “the phalanx” whereby his smaller army marched over armies of greater size. The phalanx was a mass rectangular military formation composed of heavily armed infantry. The Macedonian phalanx that Alexander commanded uses a “sarissa” spear which was much longer and heavier, thereby giving them an advantage over their enemies.

vv.6-8 Alexander the Great died as a young man (32 yrs old) at the height of his power. In 323 B.C., he entered Babylon for the last time. Worn out by wounds, hardship, and overdrinking, he fell ill. When he could neither move nor speak, they propped him up as each soldier and officer filed past. He acknowledged each man with his eyes or a slight movement of his head. Within two days he dies. His kingdom was divided into four, with four of his generals ruling over each...

1. Cassander – Macedonia and Greece
2. Lysimachus – Thrace and Western Asia Minor
3. Ptolemy – Egypt, North Africa, Palestine, Cilicia, Cyprus
4. Seleucus – East Asia to the Indus Valley; Northern Syria, Mesopotamia

v. 9a Out of the Seleucid Dynasty of Alexander's fourth general (Seleucus), came a ruler the world will never forget. He was the eighth king of this empire, and he began his rule in 175 B.C. He started small because he was not the rightful heir to the throne, his brother was. So he murdered his brother, beginning a reign of oppression and deceit. His name was Antiochus IV Epiphanes ("The Illustrious One" or "God Manifest").

v. 9b Antiochus attacked Egypt (south), then Armenia and Elymais (east), then Palestine (The Beautiful Land; Daniel 11:16, 41).

v.10 The "host of the heavens" most likely refers to Israel (See Gen.15:5; 22:17; Jer.33:22; Rev.12:1). Antiochus killed a multitude of Jews during his reign. He made possession of the Hebrew Scriptures a capital offense, forbade Jews from circumcising their children, forced them to offer unclean sacrifices, and even forced them to eat swine meat!

v.11a Antiochus is the first ruler to put an inscription on a coin in which he claimed to be God. The Jews changed his name to Epimanes, which means "the madman."

vv.11b-12 Antiochus' oppressive policies came to a head December 167 B.C. At this time he sent his general, Apollinius, with twenty thousand troops under orders to seize Jerusalem on the Sabbath. He erected an idol in the temple, offered pig's blood on the altar, an act that became known to the Jews as the abomination of desolation (Matt.24:15).

vv.13-14 In 164 B.C., a Jew named Judas Maccabaeus eventually was victorious leading a revolt against Antiochus. Upon Antiochus hearing of Judas Maccabaeus' victories, he became seriously ill and suddenly died. Then on December 14, 163 B.C., Judas Maccabaeus rededicated the Jerusalem temple to God and recommenced the daily sacrifices. This victory over Antiochus is still celebrated among Jews around the world. It is called the celebration of "Hanukkah." The restoration of Israel's worship took place three years and fifty-five days after Antiochus' administrators had abolished the offerings (note v.14, 2300 evenings and mornings).

v.16 Gabriel is the angel who announced the conception and births of both John the Baptist, and Jesus the Christ (Luke 1:19, 26-38).

v.19 The "time of wrath" is The Tribulation, also known as the "Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jer.30:7).

vv.23-25 There are times in Scripture that a historic event or figure speaks prophetically (Abraham and Isaac, ruler of Tyre, etc.). That is the case here. Antiochus typifies a future ruler the Bible calls the antichrist. See Daniel 7:25; 9:27 --- Matt.24:15-22; II Thess.2:3-4.

v.26 To seal up the vision does not mean keep it secret, but rather record it for those who will live closer to the days of it's fulfillment.

v.27 Daniel is no doubt disturbed, because the time prophesied will be awful, especially for the people of Israel.

## CONCLUSION:

\* The prophetic history outlined here in chapter eight is not something we have not seen before in our study of Daniel. There are different symbols/prophetic figures, but the same interpretation.

\* Let's take just a minute to look back in our study:

### NEB'S IMAGE (Daniel 2)

- \* Head of gold = Babylon
- \* Chest and arms of silver = Medo Persia
- \* Belly and thighs of bronze = Greece
- \* Legs and feet of iron and clay = Rome (historic and future revived)

### DANIEL'S FIRST VISION (Daniel 7)

- \* Lion = Babylon
- \* Bear = Medo Persia
- \* Leopard = Greece
- \* Unidentified Beast = Rome (historic and future revived)
- \* Little horn = antichrist

### DANIEL'S SECOND VISION (Daniel 8)

- \* Ram with two horns = Medo Persia
- \* Goat with horn between his eyes = Greece
- \* Small horn that grew – Antiochus IV Epiphanes (antichrist)

God has given us one message after another, using different symbols and types, but all with the same prophetic message. The repetition tells us how important it is, and that God wants it to be very clear for us. He wants us to know the prophetic future so that we will not be surprised or alarmed when we see it beginning to unfold, and so that we will be encouraged to persevere through the difficult days predicted. See Luke 21:25-36. Finally, read Daniel 2:44-45; 7:25-27; 8:25.

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us...35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.