**DANIEL CHAPTER 8**

**The vision of chapter 7 of Daniel, came to him in the first year of Belshazzar, which would have been about 553 BC. The vision covered the same territory and political landscape as that of the great image, and then added more details and a further extension into subsequent history. The vision was symbolized by a lion (Babylon), a bear (Medes & Persians), a leopard (Grecian) and a nondescript beast (Rome). To this last empire there was said to be 10 horns (10 kings) and then another little horn after them. This little horn was said to continue for a time, times and dividing of times. We left off these horns and the time frame for future lessons.**

**The 8th chapter begins with a vision Daniel received in the 3rd year of Belshazzar, or approximately 550 BC. It should be very carefully noted (in V1) that this vision appeared unto Daniel “after that which appeared unto me at the first”. This not only means subsequent to the vision of chapter 7, but in harmony with and covering details closely relating to those of chapter 8.**

**In addition to the connection of the vision of the 8th chapter with that of the 7th, the “location” of the vision of the 8th chapter is also helpful. In V2, Daniel states: “when I saw I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai”. I don’t think that it is stating that Daniel is physically in Shushan, though that is certainly a possibility, given his close connection with the kings. It seems to me that “in the vision”, Daniel sees himself in Shushan. That is, Shushan was the setting of the vision. This Shusan (or Susa) was the location of a winter resort for kings. It was also the location of a palace for later Persian rulers, as the book of Esther and Nehemiah will verify. Later, this location will lend some clarification to a significant point of the vision.**

**In verses 3-8, Daniel’s vision is about a ram with 2 horns and an he goat with a notable horn between his eyes. (Did you ever see a goat with just one horn and it located between its eyes?) Verse 8 tells us that this great horn was broken and four notable horns took its place.**

**Then, if you look at verses 20-22, Daniel tells exactly what this part of his vision means. The ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. One horn was higher than the other, which would indicate the superiority of the Persian element. The he goat, Daniel is told, is the king of Grecia and the great horn is the first king: Alexander the Great. There is no guessing or paging through history to find out what the ram and he goat symbolize; we are told precisely.**

**Why is it, you might ask, that only 2 beasts are mentioned here, while in chapter 7 there were 4, and in the great image there were 4 kingdoms. This vision does not mention anything about Babylon and no other beast is mentioned as a possible symbol of Rome.**

**The vision of chapter 7 covered the 4 universal empires, the same kingdoms as the great image. The later part of the vision of chapter 7, was about 10 horns (that were described as 10 kings) and then another little horn after them, that subdued 3 of them. We have not yet addressed what all of these horns represent. We must first cover some additional area leading up to them. The 8th chapter also presents us with a “little horn”, (V9), which we will find to be the same as the one in chapter 7:8. Chapter 8 will give us much needed extra detail, to help identify what the little horn is.**

**Remember that we noted that chapter 8:2, described the vision Daniel was receiving as originating in a setting at Shushan the palace by the bank of the river Ulai. We also told you that the palace at Shushan, was a resort palace for “Persian” kings. From this you see that the vision is dealing with a time frame and events from the Persian empire and forward, excluding the previous Babylonian kingdom. The vision Daniel is now receiving has advanced beyond the Babylon empire (even though the time Daniel received it is still within the time of the Babylonian empire). In addition, a period of “2300 days”, we will later find, also has its beginning point during the Persian Empire. Let me also refer you briefly, to chapter 9:1, where you will see that Daniel receives another vision in the 1st year of Darius of the Medes, which moves you forward in time about 11 years. Thus, while you find some repetition in the visions, you also find them progressing forward and adding additional details in each subsequent one.**

**The 2nd chapter covered the 4 universal kingdoms and also the kingdom of God. It also carried us forward to the end of the Roman Empire (western portion) in 476, and to the time when the kingdom of God had filled the earth. Then chapter 7 covered the same universal kingdoms, and added the details of 10 horns plus the little horn after them. This little horn is prophesied to continue for a time, times and half time. At this point in chapter 8, the vision of Daniel has gone beyond the Babylonian Empire in its scope, and provides more symbols for the Persian and Grecian Empires. It reiterates the division of the Grecian Empire among the 4 generals of Alexander the Great. Then it reveals that a little horn will come up from one of the 4 divisions of the Grecian Empire.**

**There is so much said about this little horn and what it does throughout its history. If we identify carefully all that is said about it, it will help us in determining just what it is. In doing this, one simple fact will help us get started in the process. The visions have spoken of beasts, after which they have spoken of horns which are a part of the beast. For example, chapter 8: 5 & 21, describes the beast as a goat, which represents the whole empire of Greece. Then it tells us that the horn between his eyes is the first king. Not the entire kingdom from beginning to its end, but just one part of the kingdom. Another way to describe it is to see the head of the beast as the major ruling entity and a horn some lesser or restricted portion of that entity. In the case of the 10 horns, they are a part of the same empire to which they are attached, but not the total empire. Also keep in mind that a horn, as a part of the beast, cannot be interpreted as something totally disconnected from the beast with an entirely different meaning or application in some other remote time in history. In this case, the little horn of 8:8-9, comes out of one of the previous ones. It may grow and expand to be great, but it has a direct connection to begin with to the empire of which it is a part.**

**Now let us analyze this little horn to see just how it is described.**

**a. V9. “It” came out of one of the 4 divisions of the Grecian empire, and waxed exceeding great toward the south, east and the pleasant land.**

**b. V9. “It” started little but became great.**

**c. V10. “It” waxed great, even to the “host” of heaven.**

**d. V10. “It” cast down some of the host and stars to the ground.**

**e. V11. “He” magnified himself to the prince of the host.**

**f. V11. “By him” the daily sacrifice was taken away.**

**g. V11. “By him” the place of his (prince of the host) sanctuary was cast down.**

**h. V12. An host was given “him” (the little horn).**

**i. V12. Against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression.**

**j. V12. And “it” cast down the truth to the ground.**

**k. V12. And “it” practiced and prospered.**

**After this description of the little horn and what it did, in verses 13-14, a period of time of 2300 days is identified. The question is asked (V13), how long shall be the vision “CONCERNING THE DAILY SACRIFICE, AND THE TRANSGRESSION OF DESOLATION, TO GIVE BOTH THE SANCTUARY AND THE HOST TO BE TRODDEN UNDER FOOT?” The period of time assigned for this twofold activity is two thousand and three hundred days. Then notice the next statement. “Then (at the end of the 2300 days) shall the “sanctuary” be cleansed.**

**“How long shall be the vision”, refers to the vision of this chapter, beginning with the ram and continuing on through the activities of the little horn. Recall now that this little horn was also defined in chapter 7:25, where it was prophesied to continue for a time, times and dividing of times, (1260 prophetic years). Then in chapter 8, the entire vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, involving the ram, goat and the little horn, extends across a period of 2300 days.**

**Before addressing this 2300 day period, look at verses 18-19. The angel Gabriel comes to Daniel to cause him to understand the vision. In V17, he informs Daniel that “at the time of the end shall be the vision”. Not at the “end of time”, but the time of the end. The “time of the end”, “last days”, or, “day of the Lord”, refers here to the last dispensation of time, or the church age. Thus Daniel’s vision of the goat, ram and, specifically, the little horn, extends into the age of the church. How far into it will depend on the beginning, and therefore the ending of the 2300 year period. The only problem is that chapter 8, does not provide us with a precise beginning point. We know, by virtue of the vision beginning in the time of the Persian Empire, that it apparently begins somewhere in this era. But until we can find a clear beginning jpoint, we must hold off applying the 2300 year period of time.**

**Then the angel Gabriel (V20-22), informs Daniel exactly the meaning of the ram and goat. The ram with two horns is the kings of the Medes and Persians. The rough goat is the king of Greece and the great horn is the first king, or Alexander the Great. Then (V22), it specifically identifies the end of Alexander, and describes the four kingdoms that will stand up in his place. Gabriel explains (V23) that, in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, that a king of fierce countenance and dark sentences shall stand up. Keep in mind, that Gabriel is here explaining what Daniel saw in the vision as recorded in verses 3-12. He is covering that same territory again, by way of explanation. This means that this “king of fierce countenance”, etc., leads us right back to the little horn. And the little horn came up from the latter end of one of the 4 divisions of the Grecian Empire.**

**Following this, Gabriel proceeds to describe this king of fierce countenance.**

**a. His power shall be mighty;**

**b. He shall destroy and prosper and practice.**

**c. He shall cause craft to prosper in his hand.**

**d. He shall magnify himself in his heart.**

**e. And (he) by peace, shall destroy many.**

**f. he shall stand up against the prince of princes.**

**g. But he shall be broken without hand.**

**Each of these descriptions go along with the previous list drawn from verses 9-12, regarding the little horn. Also compare these with chapter 7:8 & 25, of the little horn there.**

**Just when Gabriel is describing all of these details about this king of fierce countenance, symbolized by a little horn, he tells Daniel (V26), to “shut up the vision for it shall be for many days”. And Daniel is left at that point without a full explanation of all that the vision meant. No wonder verse 27 says, that Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days, and was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.**

**The question this raises is: where does this leave us? To answer that question, we need to consider a few conditions. First of all, Daniel’s vision, by any interpretation, extends way into the future beyond his time. Secondly, the magnitude, complexity, uniqueness, and mysteriousness of the components of the vision were baffling to Daniel. Thirdly, they spoke of a great impact on the saints of God (7:21 & 25; 8:24). Daniel has a vision on his hands with worldwide implications; covering a very long period of time (2300 yrs.); one that is deeply troubling to him for its affect on God’s people, and now he is told to shut up the vision. At this point, look ahead to chapter 12:8-9, and again Daniel is told that the vision was sealed unto the “time of the end”.**

**The major point this makes to us is, that through Daniel’s “eyes” with his description, we also will need more information or revelation in order to understand it. Remember how we have discussed and shown the rule of history in prophecy. This shutting up, or sealing the vision, empowers and demonstrates that point. Without history you have no answer to prophecy, and, in Daniel’s day, the necessary history has not occurred yet. This also means to us, that the history available from Daniel’s era (O.T. times) leaves us without answers as well. Remember the vision of the great image and how it carried us to the end of the ancient Roman Empire in 476 AD. It also left us with the beginnings of things in the world and the kingdom of God, which were evolving at the time, but had not (within the vision of the image) come to fruition. Now Daniel is given a vision of things which will come to pass even beyond the end of the image; things which are baffling, troubling and yet very compelling.**

**With Daniel, all we can do is leave them there. Essentially, Daniel will clear for us a path with his visions down to the end of the 4 universal empires. Indeed, his visions embrace a startling journey beyond those empires, but to Daniel they are a sealed record. We shall find, when we get further in the visions of the Book of Revelation, that John the revelator is not told to seal up his visions, instead he is told to open the seals. Daniel and Revelation together will open the sealed vision of Daniel, by virtue of the further journey of history. The simple but essential point is this: until we have the advantage of appropriate history of the world and the kingdom of God, we will have to wait for the desired explanation of the vision. And even though we, today, have the benefit of that additional history, we are going to end chapter 8 here, until other things unfold in the process of the full development of the vision. In this way, we will be able to incorporate, in a natural sequence, the events that transpire to meet the requirements of chapter 7 and 8. There is real justification for this temporary delay in seeking out the historical answer to these visions, when you consider that the time frames of Dan. 7:25 and 8:14, carry us very far into the Christian era. Once we have covered and understand the history relevant to these visions, their answers and fulfillment of time requirements will be self evident. With that we end our notes on chapter 8.**