

1. Last week I exegeted Dan 8:2-4 and when time ran out I was about to start an analysis of Dan 8:5-7.
2. Before continuing that study I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 8:1-4.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 8:1 In the third year of Prince Belshazzar's reign over Babylon, I, Daniel, had another vision. The year was approximately c. 550 B.C.

Dan 8:2 In my vision I, Daniel saw myself being transported both in space and time to a large palace in the city of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I could see myself standing beside the Ulai Canal.

Dan 8:3 I, Daniel, looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the Ulai; the horns of the ram were long but one of the horns was much longer than the other however somehow I knew the longer horn grew up out of the ram's head after the shorter horn.

Dan 8:4 I watched as the ram charged first toward the west then the north and finally to the south. Strangely the animal did not charge to the east. The ram was extremely powerful and dominate; there was nothing that could stand before him, all that got in his way succumbed to his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

3. Now let's see what principles we can glean from Dan 8:5-7:

KJV

Dan 8:5 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.

Dan 8:6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

Dan 8:7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

NIV

Dan 8:5 As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground.

Dan 8:6 He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage.

Dan 8:7 I saw him attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering his two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against him; the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled on him, and none could rescue the ram from his power.

1. Interpreters of Daniel 8 are generally agreed that the he goat or literally, "buck of the goats," (Tspheri Haizim - the male goat of the herd) represents the king of Greece, and more particularly the single important horn between its eyes, as also stated in Dan 8:21, is "the first king," that would no doubt be Alexander the Great.

2. All the facts about this goat and his activities anticipate the dynamic role of Alexander in his march to the east to conquer most of the known world.

3. His immediate goal, after solidifying his position in Greece, was to find and defeat the Persians.

3.1 Like Alexander, the he goat comes "from the west on the face of the whole earth," that is, his conquests beginning in Greece move east and cover the entire Persian Empire.

4. The implication in the vision, where it states that the he goat "touched not the ground," is the impression of tremendous speed, which characterized the conquest of Alexander.

5. The unusual horn, one large horn instead of the normal two, represents the single leadership provided by Alexander the Great.

6. As Daniel considered that which he had seen, the buck attacks the ram. The ram is identified with the one seen earlier in the vision as standing before the river.

7. An unusual feature of the attack by the goat is that it is accomplished "in the fury of his power." This describes the considerable feeling of vindication since the Persians had earlier attacked Greece.

7.1 Early in the fifth century B.C. the Persians crossed the Aegean Sea and attacked the Greek city states. Let me quote from an ancient history set,

"In 490 B.C. resolute Greek soldiers miraculously defeated an invading Persian army at the battle of Marathon. After that famous victory many Greek states united against the "barbarians." Persia attacked again in 480 B.C. but Greek successes at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale in Achaea thwarted the Persians and led to a sense of invincibility. Now it was time for Greek retaliation against the Persians. The goat accordingly "moved with choler against him," that is, "in great anger," and butting the ram, he broke the ram's two horns."

8. Reading again from an ancient history set,

"Alexander led an army into Asia Minor in 334 B.C. to liberate Greek cities ruled by Persia and avenge the Persian invasion of Greece 150 years earlier. By consent or by carnage, he took lands from Egypt to what was then India ..."

9. Dan 8:5-7 describe the disintegration of the Medo Persian Empire; the ram is said to have no power to stand before the buck of the herd. The contest ends with the goat casting the ram to the ground and stamping upon it.

10. All of this, of course, was fulfilled dramatically in history. The forces of Alexander first met and defeated the Persians at the Granicus River in Asia Minor in May 334 B.C., which was the beginning of the complete conquest of the entire Persian Empire.

11. A year and a half later a battle occurred at Issus (November 333 B.C.) near the northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea. The power of Persia was finally broken at Gaugamela near Nineveh in October 331. (For Nineveh see the map of the Assyrian Empire)

12. There is no discrepancy between history, which records a series of battles, and Daniel's representation that the Persian Empire fell with one blow. Daniel is describing the result rather than the details.

13. That the prophecy is accurate, insofar as it goes, most expositors concede. Here again, the correspondence of the prophecy to later history is so accurate that liberal critics attempt to make it history instead of prophecy.

14. The divine view of Greece is less complimentary than that of secular historians. Tarn gives high praise of Alexander:

"He [Alexander] was one of the supreme fertilizing forces in history. He lifted the civilized world out of one groove and set it in another; he started a new epoch; nothing could again be as it had been ... Particularism was replaced by the idea of the 'inhabited world,' the common possession of civilized men ... Greek culture, heretofore practically confined to Greeks, spread throughout the world; and for the use of its inhabitants, in place of the many dialects of Greece, there grew up the form of Greek known as the Koine, the common speech.

14.1 It is in the language of the Koine that our New Testament is written.

15. The historian Porteous comments on Tarn's praise, "Not a glimmer of all this appears in the book of Daniel." God's view is different from man's view. As we have noted earlier the visions of Daniel chapter seven depict gentile powers as wild beasts arising out of the sea to wreak havoc on God's people.

16. Let me give you an expanded translation of Dan 8:5-7 and then we will see what we can learn from Dan 8:8.

Dan 8:5 As I was pondering that which I had just seen, a large male goat suddenly appeared with a prominent horn between his eyes; he had come from the west, I could see him bounding quickly across the whole earth; he moved with purpose and alacrity, so quick was his pace that his feet did not touch the ground.

Dan 8:6 The two-horned ram was still standing beside the canal in the province of Elam outside the city of Suza; the goat without breaking stride charged at the ram in a fit of rage.

Dan 8:7 The large male goat attacked the ram furiously, with his head and horn he butted the ram shattering the ram's two horns. The defenseless ram was powerless to stand against him; the ram tried to fight back but the goat knocked him to the ground and trampled him, and none could rescue the ram from the power of the male goat.

Now let's see what principles we can glean from verse eight.

KJV

Dan 8:8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

NIV

Dan 8:8 The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

1. As Daniel contemplates in his vision the triumph of the goat, an unexpected development takes place.
2. The great horn between the eyes of the he goat is broken just when the goat has reached the pinnacle of its strength. Replacing the large single horn are four most notable horns; they are described as being "toward the four winds of heaven."
3. Expositors, both liberal and conservative, have interpreted this verse as representing the untimely death of Alexander and the division of his empire into four major sections.
4. Alexander, who had conquered more of the world than any previous ruler, was not able to conquer himself.
5. Partly due to strenuous exertion, a serious mutiny, a serious wound, his dissipated life, and a raging fever, Alexander died in a drunken stupor at Babylon. He died a profligate at age thirty-two.
6. His death left a great conquest without an effective single leader, and it took about twenty years for the empire to be successfully divided. A civil war developed among five of his powerful generals.

6.1 Only four would survive to rule the vast empire of Alexander the Great. A man who with some 35,000 warriors was able to defeat a Persian army of some 300,000 and yet he could not defeat the demons of personal profligacy.

7. Practically all commentators recognize the four horns as symbolic of the four kingdoms which ultimately emerged as follows:

7.1 Cassander assumed rule over Macedonia and Greece;

7.2 Lysimachus took control of Thrace, Bithynia, and most of Asia Minor;

7.3 Seleucus took Syria and the lands to the east including Babylonia;

7.4 Ptolemy established rule over Egypt and possibly Palestine and Arabia. A fifth contender for political power, Antigonus, was early defeated.

8. Thus, with remarkable accuracy, Daniel in his prophetic vision predicts that the empire of Alexander would be divided into four divisions (for the divisions see the map of The Grecian Empire).

9. Now for an expanded translation of Dan 8:8 and then we will see what we can learn from Dan 8:9 and 10.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 8:8 The male goat became the leader of a formidable empire, but at the height of his power on a return trip from conquering Pakistan, his large horn, representing Alexander the Great was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up; these four horns represented four Generals who took over from Alexander and after a series of battles, the goat's kingdom was divided among the four generals.

10. Now we are ready to study the mysterious little horn, a type of Antichrist.

KJV

Dan 8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

Dan 8:10 And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

NIV

Dan 8:9 Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land.

Dan 8:10 It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.

1. While there is comparatively little disagreement as to the identity of the ram and the he goat, practically all the controversy over this vision has centered on the meaning of the little horn described in verses 9 and 10.
2. According to Daniel's account, the little horn emerges from one of the four notable horns mentioned in verse eight.
3. The horn, small in the beginning, grows "exceeding great" in three directions: toward the south, toward the east and toward the pleasant land.
4. The implication is that the point of reference is Ancient Syria, that "the south" is equal to Egypt, and "the east," in the direction of ancient Medo Persia or Armenia, and "the pleasant land," or "glorious land" refers to Palestine or Canaan.
5. The Hebrew for "pleasant land" (TSAVAH) actually means "beauty," with the word for "land" supplied from Daniel 11 (compare Dan 11:16, 41, 45; Jer 3:19; and Mal 3:12).

End Lesson Taught 6-2-2002