

## NOTES

“The reason the focus in this chapter is on the small horn’s actions against the Jerusalem temple and cult (9-12) is expressed well by Towner (1984: 123): ‘If God’s own ground can be invaded, and the very ordinances which he himself established as an abiding assurance of a vital relationship between his people and himself can be rudely set aside by a pagan idolater, can the very security of the universe itself be relied upon?’” (Lucas 2002: 223).

That there is more than one king guilty of these traits has already been established by Daniel’s portrayal of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. The second half of the book reveals that there is more than one such evil figure who will arise in the future, and one will come from Greece and the other from the fourth kingdom.

“Verse 14 concludes by stating that after this period of persecution, the temple would be ‘reconsecrated.’ Just over three years after the altar to Zeus was set up, Judas Maccabeus cleansed and rededicated the temple on December 14, 164 B.C. (cf. 1 Macc 4:52). Today the Jews celebrate the Feast of Hanukkah (‘dedication’) to commemorate this momentous event (cf. John 8:22)” (Miller 1994: 230).

“Nevertheless, it is still possible to be true to the text and allow that the little horn of chap. 8, Antiochus IV, may be a type of that one spoken of in chap. 7, the eschatological Antichrist, for the parallels between their characters and careers are striking. Leupold explains: ‘King Antiochus is seen to be a kind of Old Testament antichrist like unto the great Antichrist; the overthrow and the defilement of the sanctuary shall correspond to similar experiences of the church; the suffering of the holy people corresponds to suffering in the last great tribulation. When this is borne in mind, the chapter loses its isolation from present-day events and is seen to be typical in a very definite sense....’ The typical view is strongly supported by the parallels between the life and activities of Antiochus and Antichrist” (Miller 1994: 232).

## DANIEL 8: PERSECUTION BY A LITTLE HORN OF THE THIRD KINGDOM

### THE MESSAGE OF DANIEL 8

Before the establishment of God’s kingdom with the destruction of the fourth beast, a limited time of great persecution of God’s people will occur under a vicious ruler of the third kingdom.

### OUTLINE OF DANIEL 8

- II. The Lord will protect his people and destroy arrogant kings until the establishment of his kingdom (7:1–12:13).
  - A. The Lord reveals that the future course of world history culminates in a blasphemous ruler who is destroyed before the establishment of the divine everlasting kingdom (7:1-28).
  - B. The Lord reveals the history of two future kingdoms which culminates in a wicked ruler who will persecute the saints before he is destroyed (8:1-27).
    - 1. Daniel sees a vision of a ram, a goat, and a horn (8:1-14).
      - a. Daniel describes the time and location of his vision (8:1-2).
      - b. The ram with two horns conquers everything in its path (8:3-4).
      - c. The goat with one horn defeats the ram (8:5-7).
      - d. The goat’s horn is broken, four horns arise, out of which a small horn arises which persecutes the saints (8:8-12).
      - e. The time of the vision is given as 2,300 days (8:13-14).
    - 2. Daniel’s vision is interpreted (8:15-27).
      - a. The angel Gabriel explains that the vision concerns the time of the end (8:15-18).
      - b. The identities of the ram and the goat are given (8:19-22).
      - c. The small horn is identified as a wicked ruler who will attack God’s people before he is destroyed (8:23-25).
      - d. The angel confirms the veracity of the vision (8:26).
      - e. Daniel is troubled by his dream and its interpretation (8:27).

## THE PURPOSE OF DANIEL 8

“God disclosed this historical summary to the prophet to prepare the Jewish people for the coming crisis—Antiochus’s persecution. Biblical revelations of the future are given by the Lord to his people to exhort faithfulness, to encourage during difficult days, and to comfort in suffering” (Miller 1994: 234).

### DANIEL 8 IN CONTEXT

The visions of Daniel 2 and 7 established the history of the world until the coming of God’s kingdom. Chapter 8 gives greater detail of the second and third kingdoms, with particular emphasis on a single king who would try to destroy Israel and their worship.

All commentators agree on the basic interpretation of this chapter as fulfilled in the Medo-Persian and Greek Empires including Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes. Where they disagree on how this relates to chapter 7. Those who deny the possibility of predictive prophecy must identify the ram and the goat as beasts #3 and #4 and equate the little horns of the two chapters, seeing the complete fulfillment of this book by 164 BC. A better view takes the Medo-Persian Empire as a single kingdom (#2 in chapter 7) and recognizes distinctions between the two horns. The result is that chapter 8’s little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes) is a foreshadowing of the little horn of the fourth kingdom. This interpretation is confirmed by the vision in chapter 11. An important observation in this regard is that the kingdoms in chapter 8 are not replaced by the kingdom of God; this is because the kingdom of God replaces kingdom #4, a kingdom not mentioned in this chapter.

Chapters 2 and 7		Chapter 8
Head/Lion	Babylon	--
Chest/Bear	Medo-Persia	Ram
Belly/Leopard	Greece	Goat (horn)
Legs/Beast (horn)	Rome	--

## MAJOR CHARACTERS IN CHAPTER 8

Cyrus (Medo-Persia; vv3-4, 20): He was the longer horn that grew up later as he led Persia in its incorporation of the Median empire. Under him the Persians conquered lands to the west, north, and south.

Alexander the Great (Greece; vv5-8; 21-22): The first king of Greece, he attacked Medo-Persia furiously, conquering them within three years. But before he had even returned home from his conquests (“at the height of his power”), he died and his kingdom was divided and ruled by four of his generals.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (vv9-14, 23-25): He arose from one of the four horns (the Seleucid kingdom) and waged a fierce war against the Jewish people, sacrificing a pig on the altar of the temple in Jerusalem and forbidding practice of the most central matters of the faith, circumcision and Sabbath observance.

The Prince of the host; the Prince of princes (vv11, 25): God.

### DIFFICULT ISSUES

The little horn threw some of the starry host to earth (v10): stars here are best taken as a reference to faithful Jews who were slaughtered by Antiochus Epiphanes.

2,300 evenings and mornings (v14): some count evenings and mornings separately, giving a total of 3 years and 55 days, which is a little too long to correspond with the time from Antiochus Epiphanes’ desecration of the temple. More likely this refers to 2,300 individual days, a period of 6 years and 111 days, which corresponds to the time when Antiochus Epiphanes deposed the high priest Onias (170 BC) until the reconsecration of the temple (Dec 14, 164 BC).

The appointed time of the end (vv17, 19): because this vision concerns only the second and third kingdoms, this phrase should be understood as a reference to the end of the events described and not the end of all time.