

Doing hard things well

Daniel 8:1-12

- Because of the prophecies, dreams, and visions on human history it makes Daniel a fascinating book to study, but when you add in the changes of the languages from which it was written in, then it adds to the amount of care and detail it took for the message to be interpreted and dispersed out for all the world to read amazing!
- From **1:1** to **2:3** the book was written in Hebrew as it was all about the captivity of Israel and its effect on Daniel and the children of nobility that was taken and immersed into Babylonian culture. Then from **2:4** to **7:28** it's written in Aramaic because the emphasis is on the Gentile kingdoms and its effect on history and prophecy. Now from chapters **8** to the end of the book the language shifts back to Hebrew for the emphasis of these chapters is God's plan for the nation of Israel.

V1-12

- **V1-2** this vision occurred while Babylon was still securely in power, and about two years after the vision Daniel received in chapter seven, that meant it is still twelve years before Cyrus comes and conquers Babylon, ushering in the rule and reign of the Medes-Persians. Daniel receives this vision in Shushan a city that was about two hundred miles southeast of Babylon, later this city would become the capital of the Persian empire through King Xerxes who built a magnificent palace.
- Its also where the book of Esther took place and Nehemiah was King Artaxerxes cupbearer in Neh 1:1. **V3-4** later in **V20** this ram is clearly identified as representing the Medo-Persian Empire, which succeeded the Babylonian Empire. At this point neither the Medes or Persians are much of a threat to Babylon but a few years later they will form an alliance and together begin to conquer all other nations.
- The two horns represent the alliance between the Medes-Persians, with one of the horns larger than the other just like the bear in 7:5 who had one side of his back raised up above the other. This showed that one of them the Persians were larger and stronger in the partnership, and they emerged after the Medes.

- A fourth century historian by the name of “Ammianus Marcellinus” says that the Persian ruler bore the head of a ram as he stood at the head of his army, and the ram became the national emblem of Persia, having rams stamped on their coins as well as on the headdress of Persian Emperors. This all happened after Daniel’s vision.
- As amazing as that is centuries before any of this would take place Isaiah the Prophet called Cyrus by name, even calling him God’s shepherd **Is 44:28, 45:4**. For it was Cyrus who defeated the Babylonians and permit Israel to return to their land. **V4** it speaks of all the territory Cyrus and his armies would take areas like Libya, Egypt, all of Asia Minor where both Ephesus and Corinth were, and is modern day Turkey, and they went as far as India, thus creating the largest empire ever until Greece.
- **V5-8** in Nebuchadnezzar’s image in chapter two Greece was depicted as the thigh of brass, in Daniel’s vision of chapter seven Greece was a swift leopard with four heads, now Daniel sees Greece as an angry goat, who runs so fast that its feet don’t touch the ground. The large protruding horn represents Alexander the great, who led the armies of Greece from victory to victory, and extended his empire even beyond what Cyrus had done with the Persian armies.
- **V7** says the goat was so determined to defeat the two horned ram that it went at him with such fury that it broke its two horns and caused it to be powerless to defend itself, thus defeating it. Despite how strong the horn was on the goat it broke as Alexander died in Babylon at the young age of thirty three, and his vast kingdom was divided among his top generals the four notable ones.
- What is remarkable is how God used Alexander to accomplish his purposes just as He used Cyrus to bring Israel back into their land. Alexander the Great was determined to spread Greek culture, language, and civilization throughout the world and through its culture it prepared the world for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through Alexander Greece put an end to the Oriental culture of mysticism that threatened to take over the western world when Babylon and Persia ruled.
- Because of Greek culture and language it became the primary tool of communication which is where Scripture was translated into and spread across Europe and over to us in the States. As we are about to see what Alexander and the Greeks began the Romans completed in preparation for the coming of Christ.

- **V9-12** what we are reading is called a near and far prophecy, the near is what happens in the near present, and the far is what has yet to happen when its prophesied. The near is out of the four generals one ruled the south one named Antiochus Epiphanes who ruled over Syria and Israel land under the Seleucid dynasty. Israel's land was contested between the dynasties of Seleucid and Ptolemy but the Seleucids gained power over the region in the days of Antiochus iii 198 B.C.
- Antiochus IV gained the throne by murdering his brother and then assumed the title "Epiphanes" meaning Illustrious, alluding to him being deity. The Jews in rebellion twisted the name into "Epimanes" meaning madman. Needless to say he persecuted the Jews as he exerted his dominion to the south, and he blasphemed The Lord and commanded idolatrous worship toward himself which the Jews opposed. So he put a stop to temple sacrifices in Jerusalem.
- Then in an attempt to get the Jews to submit to Greek culture and customs he began to murder anyone caught doing daily sacrifices including the priests this led to an all out rebellion. Finally in 168 B.C. he ordered his generals to seize Jerusalem on a Sabbath, and then set up an idol of Zeus and of himself in the temple, and desecrated the altar by offering swine and sprinkling pig blood on the walls of the sanctuary and forced the priest to drink its blood, burned all the holy writings.
- Thus proving himself to truly be a madman, all this happened because Israel's priesthood had become so corrupt that it was more known to be a place of bribery instead of a ministry of truth. **V13-14** a question is asked about how long before he's dealt with? Two thousand three hundred days which would mean Dec 25th 165 B.C. This is when a Jewish rising up called the Maccabean revolt ended the seize.