

OUR GOD REIGNS – p. 10
“Dreaming of Rams and Goats”
Daniel 8

The Little Horn

We were introduced to him in chapter 7:

- 7:8; 20-26 – “little horn”
- 8:9-14; 22-26 – There are two single horns; the second is “little horn”
- A “horn” in Daniel represents a king.

Are these “little horns” the same or different kings?

- There’s not only similarities, there are some apparent differences, too –
- Chapter 7 it is in relation to the 4th beast; chapter 8 the third beast
- Sometimes what is said about the little horn seems to point to something or someone beyond the little horn itself.
- For example, what brings the little horn to an end in chapter 7 is the establishing of the kingdom of the Son of Man! (26, 27)

I believe we should understand the little horn as –

- First – The historical figure Antiochus IV (or Antiochus Epiphanes as he called himself)
- Then – He is a historical figure that points to and portrays another who will follow in his footsteps, only worse!

Interpreting Angels

The interpretation of these visions are difficult and Daniel gets the aid of an angel to help interpret the visions.

- Daniel is disturbed by what he has seen and he asks one standing there (presumably an angel) “What does it mean?”
- So, Daniel gets the aid of an angel to understand what he has seen.
- That is true of chapter 8 vision as well.

Chapter 8 is simply divided:

- vs. 1-14 – The Vision
- vs. 15-27 – The Interpretation of the Vision

Read Daniel 8:1-14

Pray

The Vision – vs. 1-14

Some reference points –

- He gets this vision in the 3rd year of Belshazzar’s reign (before chapter 5).
- This is his second vision.
- In the vision he was in the citadel at Susa.

He sees a ram –

- The ram has two horns with one higher than the other –
- The ram is charging in three directions – westward, northward and southward.
- The ram is so powerful that no one could stand in its way!

Until the goat comes –

- The goat is a massively powerful he-goat that comes from the west –
- It is moving fast – So fast that it doesn’t even touch the ground.
- He had a “conspicuous” horn between his eyes.
- The goat smashes the ram and destroys it – the goat grows stronger and stronger until 4 horns replace the 1.

Taking center stage is the 1 “little” horn –

- The horn grows strong and expands its empire – south (Egypt) east (as far as India) and toward the “glorious land” which is clearly Israel.
- This horn challenges the heavens and stars –
 - It even experiences some success!
 - It became great like the Prince of host (11)
 - It takes the “regular burnt offering” away and overthrows the sanctuary. (12)
 - It will commit the “transgression and throw down truth to the ground.
 - It will do as it pleases and prosper for a time.

The Interpretation – vs. 15-27

Daniel (literally) searches for the understanding of this vision –

- And God gives him the answer he is looking for by sending the angel Gabriel.

-Read vs. 15-19

Back to the ram with 2 horns–

- All that is said about the ram and its horns – “these are the kings of Media and Persia.”
- The empires of man come and go and rise and fall – but God reigns!

As we look at the interpretation of the rest of the vision, the key word is “precision”!

- Now, notice the precision in which the following is laid out!

The interpretation of the goat and horn –

-v. 21 – *“And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.”*

- At the time Daniel gets this, Greece is far from a world power – it’s not even a country.

-Philip of Macedon formed a confederation of cities that became Greece.

-His son, Alexander, established and expanded Greece into a world empire.

-There’s not much doubt and no disagreement that he is the first great horn of verse 21.

-But he dies in his early 30’s in Babylon of malaria – So soon he doesn’t appoint a successor.

-v. 22 – *“...the horn was broken (snapped off) in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power.”*

-The Greek Empire was divided up into four sections – none of which would have the same power and world influence.

But one rises from the four and becomes notorious –

- What he does is so bad that he is remembered as the “Abomination of Desolation.”

-He depicts and foreshadows the great and terrible Antichrist of Revelation 13.

-His name is Antiochus –

-He was a Seleucid King (or Syrian) king who started a campaign to conquer Egypt.

-Antiochus attempted to literally wipe out the Jew’s faith and practice –

But look at the end of verse 25 – *“...and he shall be broken but by no human hand.”*

-He is overthrown in the Maccabean revolt.

-This is what the celebration of Hanukkah (festival of lights) commemorates.

Why the History Lesson?

To strengthen your faith objectively –

- This points to the divine nature and source of the Scriptures.

-Your faith is based in a book that has withstood the test of time, the doubts of the skeptics and the scorn of unbelievers.

To strengthen your faith internally – God reigns! And He will bring deliverance and eternal salvation to His people!

-God consistently refers to the little horn as the *little* horn – so the most atrocious of adversaries is “little” compared to the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man!