

Life in the Lion's Den
"The 2300 Days of Hell on Earth"
(Daniel Chapter 8)
Lesson #9

Scripture: Hebrews 12:28 *"Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;"*

Introduction:

What if the government decided that the worship of God was wrong and outlawed it. All of a sudden you couldn't meet with the saints anymore to worship God. To sing His praises together and study His word.

What would you think if the church decided to put a statue of Buda here in the auditorium and declare worship of God done with, and only praise and honor to be given to Buda? Wouldn't sit very well would it?

You might say, preacher your much study is driving you crazy...this will never happen. You know the truth is that it did happen.

Transitional Statement:

Church the precious kingdom that many of us so easily take for granted came at a great cost. The blood of many saints stain the very foundation of it. The very son of God gave His own life in its inauguration.

I. Israel on the heels of deliverance.

Daniel 8:1

1 "In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously.

- A. Israel is still in Babylonian captivity
- B. Daniel has another vision.
 - 1. Daniel's last vision left him greatly alarmed, with a pale face....the vision here in chapter eight makes Daniel sick and exhausted for days.
 - 2. You know sometimes the Lord's work is very exhausting.
 - a. Has God's work every...just worn you smooth out?

- C. In a very short period of time Babylon will fall.
- D. In chapter 7 God's people are told what will happen under the fourth beast (Rome).
 - 1. Here in chapter 8 God will tell Israel, more fully, what to expect under the Medo-Persians, and the Grecian Kingdoms.

II. Daniel sees a ram in his vision

Daniel 8:2-4

2 I looked in the vision, and while I was looking I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam; and I looked in the vision and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal. 3 Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last. 4 I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward, and no other beasts could stand before him nor was there anyone to rescue from his power, but he did as he pleased and magnified himself.

- A. This vision is a matter of prophecy....things that will come true in the future.
- B. Here Daniel's vision puts him in the citadel of Susa, located at the northern end of the Persian Gulf in modern day Iran, in a territory which will soon be under the Medo-Persian Kings.
 - 1. The Hebrew language here helps us understand more closely that it was not just in Susa that Daniel found himself, but in the palace of Shushan which was the well noted palace of Persian ruler Xerxes, son of King Darius.
 - 2. This Susa is located at the northern end of the Persian Gulf in modern day Iran, and eastward from the territories of Israel.
- C. By the Ulai Canal (river), Daniel sees a ram (male sheep)
 - 1. The ram has 2 horns
 - 2. One horn was longer than the other, but it came up last.
- D. Latter in the chapter, verse 20 tells us who this ram is *"The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia."*
 - 1. So the text tells us that this ram had two horns, or two strengths of power.
 - a. The Medes had been more prominent in power until Cyrus the Great grew Persia to dominance...hence the larger horn came up last.
- E. The ram was butting westward, northward and southward
 - 1. *"butting"* here in the figurative sense has to do with warring.

- a. And it points to aggression.
 - b. The Medes and the Persians just like other world powers are never satisfied with what they have.
2. No other beasts could stand before him
 3. And no-one could rescue from his power
 4. He did according to his will and magnified himself.
 - a. **NOTE:** If you want a front row seat to God's wrath...magnifying yourself will make you a certain winner!

III. Now Daniel sees a male goat.

Daniel 8:5-8

5 While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. 6 He came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. 7 I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power. 8 Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.

- A. A male goat came from the west (Palestine is the center of mapping directions)
 1. The goat was going so fast that it didn't touch the ground.
 2. The goat had a noticeable horn between his eyes.
- B. The male goat, in a rage or wrath, came up to the ram with 2 horns and struck the ram
 1. Shattering his 2 horns.
 2. He hurled the ram to the ground and trampled him under foot.
 3. No one could rescue the ram from the male goat.
- C. Verse 21 tells us that *"The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king."*
 1. History records that Greece's Alexander the Great moving across the ground with great speed conquering at each turn and he through down the Medes and the Persians.
 2. He spared Jerusalem because a priest took him in the temple and showed him the words of Danielwhere Alexander fancied himself the very work of Almighty God.

D. Then the male goat magnified himself ...exceedingly.

1. So when he had become mighty and exalted himself greatly ...at the age of 33 he dies of a drunken fever.
2. Spiritually speaking we can see that magnification comes before the fall.
3. The male goats horn is now broken off.

E. But, four more horns grew up in his place.

1. Now the male goat has four horns.
2. Verse 22 says “...*the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.*”
3. The kingdom that Alexander had fought so hard to gain was now being pillaged from within. 13 men fought to carve out a piece of the Greek empire, but when the smoke cleared only 4 generals remained.
 - a. Horn #1 General Cassander.....took Macedonia and Greece
 - b. Horn #2 General Lysimicus.....took Thrace and Cappadocia
 - c. Horn #3 General Ptolemy..... took Egypt
 - d. Horn #4 General Seleucustook Syria and Babylon
4. The text says that they were “*Toward the 4 winds of heaven*”...i.e. satisfying heaven is not their aim.

IV. In chapter 7 we saw the smallest horn being the biggest pain and it rings true here as well.

Daniel 8:9-12

9 “Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. 10 It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. 11 It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. 12 And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper.”

A. This is Antiochus IV Epiphanies...one of the Seleucids, who became king in 175 BC

1. Interestingly enough Antiochus Epiphanies comes on the scene as the result of transgressions.
2. He robbed temples in Persia, over-ran Egypt

3. And hearing of the revolts in Jerusalem he came and fiercely persecuted the Jews in the “glorious land”. 170 BC
 - a. Causing many to be trampled down, like falling stars.
3. This is the king who desecrates God’s temple by offering a swine upon its altar in 164 BC
 - a. And puts a halt to daily sacrifice and all worship of God Almighty.
 - b. You can read about this in Josephus and 1&2 Maccabees
4. He lifts himself up against God
 - a. Setting up an idol of Jupiter in the God’s Holy Temple.
 - b. Flinging truth to the ground.
5. He cruelly kills anyone who holds to the law of God.
6. And he suddenly dies of disease in 163 BC

B. Listen to the interpretation given to Daniel by Gabriel

*23 "In the latter period of their rule,
 When the transgressors have run their course,
 A king will arise,
 Insolent and skilled in intrigue.
 24 "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power,
 And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree
 And prosper and perform his will;
 He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.
 25 "And through his shrewdness
 He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;
 And he will magnify himself in his heart,
 And he will destroy many while they are at ease.
 He will even oppose the Prince of princes,
 But he will be broken without human agency.*

V. Even heaven wants to know how long will sacrifice to God be halted.

Daniel 8:13-14

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, " How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?" 14 He said to me, "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored."

- A. First it’s important to understand here that sin has brought on this horror.

1. And the horror is the inability to worship God.
- B. And the how long is a question about the halting of regular sacrifice.
1. For 2300 mornings and evenings...this is about 6 and 1/3 years
 2. From the time that Antiochus IV Epiphanies started persecuting the Jews until his death is approx. 6 and 1/3 years.
- C. Gabriel's interpretation in verse 19 says, "*Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end*"
1. The final period of indignation here points to God's pouring out of wrath against this tyrant
 2. The end of time, in context...points to the end of Antiochus IV Epiphanies stopping the sacrifices and worship of the Lord.

VI. Daniel was ordered to keep this vision a secret

Daniel 8:26

26 "...keep the vision secret. For it pertains to many days in the future."

- A. He is to keep this vision sealed up for it pertains to the future.
- B. Here it is important to note that John in Revelations is told to unseal the message because the time is at hand.

V. The Lord's work on many occasions is very exhausting.

27 Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business; but I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it.

Conclusion:

God wanted His people to understand that His will focuses simply on Jesus. A continuing message for us today.

Here I stop and wonder if we take for granted our worship services? Or do we cherish it above all else.

And finally, do we get the fact that sin causes God's holy place to be trampled?

So one might ask are you a part of the spiritual kingdom growth or does your actions lead to the trampling of the timeless truths of God?

God gave this prophecy ahead of time to help us understand the eternal nature of His spiritual kingdom. Folks the kingdom that your a part of will never be put down by human hands. Yes the great United States of America will find its end here on earth....Russia will fall never to rise again...and yes China and all the other kingdoms of this world.

But the kingdom of God is eternal.Where's your citizenship?