Daniel chap. 8

The ram, the goat and the horn

1 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, even unto me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. 2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai. 3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. 12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. 13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? 14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. 15 And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. 17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end

shall be the vision. 18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright. 19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. 20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. 22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. 23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. 26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. 27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.

The astonishing visions of Daniel continue on in this chapter with a scene from Shushan the palace which was one of the provinces of Persia. Whether Daniel was there physically or just in vision is not revealed. He sees a ram by the river Ulai with two horns that becomes great and no other beasts can stand before it. Then a male goat with a great horn between his eyes comes and touches not the ground as he moves. He attacks the ram and breaks his two horns and becomes very great. At the height of his power the great horn is broken and four come up in its place toward the four winds of heaven. A little horn is next shown that becomes greater still, exalting himself to the army and prince of heaven. It casts down some of this army of heaven and removes the daily sacrifice and sets up an abomination or transgression of desolation. A fixed time period of 2300 days is given for the daily and the transgression of desolation and lastly for the holy place or sanctuary to be made right or cleansed.

There is so much happening in this chapter that we need to take our time and go thru it piece by piece. The ram is identified as the kings of Media and Persia and the goat is identified as the king of Grecia. It would be very easy to label these beasts as the actual historical kingdoms but we need to remember what we learned about the head of gold and the lion. The king of Babylon had two unique identities – a spiritual king or Satan who worked behind the scenes and an earthly king or Nebuchadnezzar put on display for all to see. The earthly king has long since died and turned to dust but the spiritual king exists to this very day. Also Daniel is told that the vision would be for the time of the end. Those ancient kingdoms do not exist anymore so this completely rules out Antiochus Epiphanes as the little horn for he lived and died before Christ. I have heard other interpretations of the little horn as the pope or papacy but this would only be valid for the pope who lives in the end-times not a papacy that ruled thru the dark ages.

The next curious saying is found in verse 8 where the great horn is broken and four 'notable ones' come forth. The Hebrew word for 'notable ones' is chazuwth and is translated as vision in other occurrences in the bible. When we add this to the phrase toward the four winds of heaven we begin to see this as a reference to the previous chapter where the four original beasts came from. The little horn is the same and he proceeds from the fourth beast so the ram and male goat are not repetitions but actually precede the four beasts of chapter 7. The historical minded bible student could never see this for there is always a fixed order of historical kingdoms but there is no fixed order for demonic angels who will appear on the world's stage in the last days. The kings of Persia and Grecia will precede the king of Babylon.

The focus in the second half of the chapter is the little horn and as we learned previously his reign will be for three and a half years. This brings us to the 2300 days which is the longest time prophecy in the bible except for the millennium. No starting date is given only an ending which is the cleansing of the sanctuary. References to the sanctuary and temple are some of the most confusing in scripture because there were so many different applications. Moses built the sanctuary in the wilderness and the more permanent temple was built by Solomon and later rebuilt by Zerubabbel. There is a temple in heaven that is described in Hebrews and Revelation where Jesus ministers as our great high priest. God's people are referred to individually as a spiritual temple and collectively as a holy city or royal priesthood. Context is the key to knowing what is being described.

The little horn destroys the mighty and holy people and exalts himself to heaven and the Prince of princes which would be Jesus. He removes the daily and sets up an abomination of desolation. The daily sacrifice in the old covenant was a lamb that was offered morning and evening in the temple as a continual or perpetual sacrifice. This prefigured Christ who was the

lamb slain from the foundation of the world. With all the references to heaven and Jesus and the judgment scene in the previous chapter it is a good assumption that the daily and cleansing of the sanctuary are references to the temple in heaven and not some earthly or Jewish temple. The little horn who will most likely be the final pope or some Jewish leader yet to be revealed will somehow remove the daily or Christ's continual intercession for his people. The only way to do this is by deception when Satan comes and impersonates Christ. The little horn will command the world to worship the false Christ and so will be usurping the power and prerogative of God alone.