

▶▶ Daniel 8 Christ as Priest.

▶▶ Dare

▶▶ Daniel 8 has two titanic struggles.

The first is the struggle between Persia and Greece.

▶▶ The second is the great battle between God and a power that would presume to take his place.

The first conflict takes place on this earth.

▶▶ The second begins on earth and ends up with the antagonistic power shaking it's fist at God in heaven.

In this chapter, prophecy moves from apocalyptic to literal, from symbolism to more of an explanation. It builds on Daniel 9 looking forward, and on Daniel 7 looking backwards.

So let's begin.

▶▶ **Daniel 8:1-12 (KJV)**

¹ In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar (about 548 B.C.) 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.

By the way, this was the same area where the story of Queen Esther took place.

³ Then I lifted up my 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 withstand him; 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 rage against him, and smote the ram, and broke 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 grew exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land*.

¹⁰ And it grew 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 exalted *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 practiced, and prospered.

Daniel sees this vision. But this time he does not have to wait for an interpretation. The angels are right there ready to help him understand. The last part of the vision is:

►► Daniel 8:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be*, concerning the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?"

¹⁴ And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

There is a transition at this point. Beyond this point there is no apocalyptic prophecy. The only symbolism past this is the use of a day for a year symbol.

Now Daniel is not sure what the vision means. He probably has some kind of feeling that it was a repetition of those that had gone before.

He hears a man's voice call out to Gabriel and say, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

Gabriel approaches and in fear Daniel falls down on his face. Gabriel says to Daniel, "Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end."

Daniel 8:18-20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright.

¹⁹ And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end *shall be*."

²⁰ The ram which you saw, having the two horns--*they are* the kings of Media and Persia.

Daniel probably put some things together in his mind now. The king's dream had been about nations rising and falling until God sets up his kingdom. Daniel's vision of the beasts had been about the rise and fall of kingdoms, and one specially troubling power that would shake it's fist at God.

That too ended up with God's kingdom reigning supreme.

So the ram was Medo-Persia.

Daniel 8:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ And the male goat *is* the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes *is* the first king.

²² As for the broken *horn* and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

We saw in the previous visions that Greece followed Medo-Persia. It was not named before, but in this chapter it is. Greece moved with great swiftness and power against the Persian army.

The Persians kings Dairus I and Xerxes ransacked the cities of Greece, and came close to conquering them. The Greeks did not forget.

When Alexander attacked the Persians, and there were several battles, the attacks were done with the fury of a nation that wanted revenge for atrocities against their cities.

We have covered a lot of this before. We could go into a lot of very interesting history here, but that is not the point of the vision. What we see next is what the vision is about.

Daniel 8:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

⁹ And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which grew exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

¹⁰ And it grew 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 exalted 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 practiced, and prospered.

Now we see the punch line of the vision.

There was to be a power that would arise after Greece that would be a nasty, boastful, and arrogant power that would shake it's fist at heaven.

That power in some form would exist until the end of time.

We find that Rome did grow and exercise power over the south (Egypt) over the pleasant land (Judea) and the east (the rest of Alexander's empire). It had periods when it persecuted Jews and Christians, killing many of them.

Rome took Jerusalem and destroyed it in 70 A.D. Because of that the temple services had to be discontinued.

Daniel 8:23-26 (NKJV)

²³ "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

²⁴ His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

²⁵ "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.

If we look closely something starts to stand out to us. This persecution starts with the pagan Roman empire, and ends up with the papal Roman empire. Both powers used persecution. But let's look further

▶▶ In verse 10-12, the little horn power challenges the host of heaven. It casts some start to the ground. He magnifies himself to the prince of the hosts. He takes away the daily sacrifice, and he casts down the sanctuary.

▶▶ Then we over the two holy ones taking, and they are talking about the sanctuary, the daily, transgression and treading on the host. These all suggest things of a religious nature rather than political.

▶▶ The words suggest a change from vertical of nation against nation to a horizontal, a power that is at war with heaven.

Look at directions. Cast down the sanctuary. Cast down the truth. Magnified self to prince of host. Waxed great even unto heaven.

But this power is not content to reach up to heaven and cast down some stars, (which refers to those faithful to God) it goes even further and attempts to crush them into the ground.

▶▶ **Daniel 8:24 (KJV)**

²⁴ And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

▶▶ As we carefully consider the text, we can see how this little horn power is the same as the little horn that the Reformers identified as the Papacy.

There were persecutions carried out by Imperial Rome, but the extent and the length of time that persecution was carried out by the Papacy was far greater.

For example, the crusades against the infidel Moslems in the Middle East grew into a general persecution of Christians that did not bow to the pope in Europe, with the inquisition, and then into Latin America where the inquisition was active until the 19th century.

Under the inquisition, protestants were killed in Holland, France, Spain, and to a lesser extent Britain.

▶▶ Daniel says that this power would go up against the Prince of the host (11). Prince is a political title, but in this chapter it is used in a priestly way. The sanctuary and the daily services that went on there belonged to the prince.

The word "Prince" is also a messianic term. The Messiah is mentioned in Daniel 9:25, 26 in relation to his people in the Promised Land. In that passage the Messiah is the sacrifice who will die for his people.

In this chapter the word used for prince reflects a heavenly position. This prince is the chief ally on God's side. This can be compared to the heavenly Michael who we will be learning about in the next session.

As the religious phase of Rome, the little horn has attacked the saints and has harmed some of them. He has challenged the Messiah, Jesus Christ in his heavenly setting, but cannot reach him.

But the little horn does attack, or cast down, the sanctuary.

▶▶ Now obviously, no earthly power can reach up to heaven and bring anything back to earth. So this is a symbol for another action.

What would it mean to bring a heavenly sanctuary down to earth? It means that what was correctly represented as being in heaven has now, in human eyes, been brought down here by the activities of the little horn.

The little horn attempts to counterfeit the ministry of Jesus Christ by requiring that people use a human priest on earth to mediate for the people rather than pointing them to Jesus Christ who is ministering in the Heavenly sanctuary.

▶▶ This was one of the main issues in the reformation. Martin Luther correctly claimed that every Christian has immediate access to Christ's ministry in heaven. You can see how this teaching would particularly infuriate the papacy.

▶▶ **1 Timothy 2:5 (KJV)**

⁵ For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

This text leaves no room for the mediation of priests, saints, angels, popes, Mary, or even angels, as we see in the Roman system.

The final act the little horn carried out against the sanctuary was to attempt to control the "daily" or "continual" ministry of Jesus that goes on there.

▶▶ We find in Chronicles 16:39-40 that the daily sacrifice was done in the morning and the evening. These were also known as the morning and evening sacrifices.

▶▶ The smoke of these sacrifices would be rising around the clock, representing Jesus' continual ministry. More than that, the daily sacrifices took the place of the individual sin offerings if a person were traveling or lived too far from the temple to show up himself.

But the daily was more than that. Offering the daily sacrifices was not the only job that the priest had to do. There were many activities that he had. Offering the sin offerings, taking care of the lampstands, arranging the shewbread, offering incense, and other activities were included in the priest's day.

▶▶ Jesus is fulfilling the meaning of these earthly activities in his ministry in heaven as our High Priest.

The little horn power attempted to use and abuse these things in his attempt to bring the work of Christ down to this earth.

▶▶ Now it makes more sense then you see the burning of incense, using votive candles, wearing priestly garments, (wonder why you do not see blue in the garments?)

turning the communion bread into the body of Christ, and confession to the priest with penance.

The struggle here in Daniel 8:10-12 was distinctly religious. It involved persecution. It involved an attack on the person of Christ, making him subservient to a human, Mary. It is an attempt to take attention off of the High Priestly ministry of Jesus in Heaven and refocus it on a human priesthood, an earthly sanctuary, rites conducted by human beings, and an earned salvation.

►► This is contrary to the clear word of God. This is outlined in the book of Hebrews.

The writer of Hebrews declares that Jesus is:

Better than the angels.

He is a victor over all temptation.

He gives aid to humans.

He is a merciful high priest.

He is better than Moses.

He brings us a Sabbath rest.

He is a sympathetic high priest.

He is an obedient high priest.

He is high priest forever.

He enters the behind the veil for us.

He is better than the earthly priesthood.

He is an eternal high priest.

He is the surety of a better covenant.

He is a perfect high priest.

He is seated at the right hand of God.

He ministers in the true tabernacle which God made in heaven.

He mediates a better covenant.

He offers better gifts.

He offers a better covenant.

He is the priest of eternal redemption.

He is a sacrificial high priest.

He is a returning high priest.

He is a sanctifying high priest.

He is a faithful high priest.

He is an unchanging high priest.

No power can destroy him. No force can move him. No change can affect him. There is no ministry that can take the place of Jesus' ministry. There is no priesthood that can eclipse his priesthood. There is no sacrifice that can take the place of his sacrifice. There is no earthly thing that can take the place of the place of heavenly ministry. There is no rest greater than the rest that he gives. There is no love greater than the love that our High Priest has for us.

161 6Jesus Christ is our eternal High Priest.

Daniel is not given the conclusion of this story. It is somewhat described in Chapter 7, and more in chapter 11. But this chapter closes with these words:

▶▶²⁶ "And the vision of the evenings and mornings which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For *it refers* to many days *in the future.*"

The vision is true. The things in this vision have happened, and they are happening now. Which ministry do you choose, earthly or heavenly?

Gospel text:

▶▶ **Romans 8:34 (NKJV)**

³⁴ Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.