

## The Ram & He-Goat

DANIEL 8, however similar in many ways to Daniel 7, develops a theme not found in Daniel 7, the attack against Christ as the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

Daniel 8 exudes sanctuary imagery. The beasts, for example, used as symbols in Daniel 7, are unclean (lion, bear, leopard), while those used in Daniel 8 are clean (ram, goat). Also, in contrast to the beasts of Daniel 7, the animals in Daniel 8 are sanctuary animals. By employing these animals as symbols of kingdoms (particularly in contrast to the beasts used in the previous chapter), the Lord seems to be directing the reader's mind toward the sanctuary, thus giving hints on how we can understand and interpret the vision.

Daniel 8 also emphasizes the element of conflict, but at two levels: the historical (horizontal) and the spiritual (vertical). The goat attacks the ram and is victorious; the little horn attacks the south (the east and Palestine) and is victorious. But, then, the little horn does something that no other kingdom has done: It goes against the Prince of the Host in the heavenly sanctuary. This is the vertical dimension of its campaign: It makes an assault against Heaven itself!

The vision of Daniel 8:1-14 can be broken down into four major events that follow in order:

- Ram
- Goat
- Little horn
- Sanctuary cleansed

Read the vision over in verses 1-14 as many times as needed, until you clearly can see this sequence.

Unlike Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, both of which begin with the Babylonian Empire, Daniel 8 starts with Media-Persia instead. Though no explanation is given, more than likely the omission has to do with the time that Daniel had the vision, 547 B.C.; by then, Babylon was declining in power and importance, while the Medo-Persian Empire was ascending in both. Babylon was excluded, probably because it was already fading away, and the Lord wanted to emphasize the events that followed Babylon and not Babylon itself.

The vision of Daniel 8 begins in the Medo-Persian Empire. In the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, the 70 weeks also begins in the Medo-Persian Empire (see Dan. 9:1, 2). Some believe that one reason Daniel 8 excluded Babylon and started with Media-Persia was to help establish the link between the prophecies of Daniel 8 and Daniel 9. Discuss that argument.

After the Medo-Persian Empire, another power arose. In Daniel 8, it is shown as a goat and represents Greece. It is even named as such (Dan. 8:21). The large horn between the eyes is Alexander the Great. The Medo-Persian Empire "became great" (vs. 4), but Greece, which followed, "became very great", even trampling the ram (vss. 7, 8). Alexander died in 323 B.C. at the age of 32 (vs. 8), leaving the empire without a capable successor. After a few years of internal fights, the empire was divided among his generals. This happened exactly as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 8:8, where we read the prediction of Alexander's demise and the parcelling of his empire: "The large horn was broken," and "in place of it four notable ones came up" to take his place.

## **THE LITTLE HORN—PART 1 (Dan. 8:9, 10, 23-25).**

Daniel 8 depicted four major events: ram, goat, little horn, sanctuary cleansed. The ram was Media-Persia, and the goat was Greece. Next comes the little horn. Who is this power, and what does it do?

The correct identification of the little horn is of crucial importance.

First, it represents an empire that "grew exceedingly great" (Dan. 8:9), in contrast to Greece, which "grew very great" (vs. 8), and Media-Persia, which "became great" (vs. 4).

Second, the little horn originates from one of the four cardinal points of the compass, not from one of the divisions of the Greek Empire, suggesting that it is another empire.

Third, the parallelism between Daniel 2, 7, and 8 clearly shows that the horn represents a new power, the fourth power of the previous visions, and this is Rome, which conquered Egypt to the south, Syria to the east, and "the Beautiful land" of Judea. At first, the horn was fundamentally a military and political power, conquering other nations. In this phase, it represented pagan, or imperial, Rome.

Read Daniel 8:9-12 again carefully. At what point does the activity of the little horn shift from the horizontal (military, political) to the vertical (spiritual)? What appears to be the object of this vertical attack?

The little horn attempted something that no other power had done before: It reached up to the heavens, signifying its challenge to God's authority, an act that reflects the same spirit of rebellion that possessed Lucifer at the beginning of the great controversy (Isa. 14:13, 14).

The attack of the little horn against the sanctuary is described in military terms (compare vs. 12). In the earthly sanctuary, an army ("a host") of Levites protected it against desecration (Num. 18:1-10; 1 Chron. 9:27-33). The enemy would have to fight first the Levitical guard and defeat it before having access to the sanctuary itself and to the ministering priest. This same picture is used in Daniel 8. The little horn attacks the heavenly host and casts "down some of the host" (vs.10); it then goes into the sanctuary where he "exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host" (vs. 11). The little horn is attacking Heaven and a ministry in heaven.

## **THE LITTLE HORN—PART 2 (Dan. 8:10-12).**

So far, this chapter has revealed the following sequence of events:

Media-Persia, Greece, Rome (pagan/papal). Indeed, the little horn represents Rome in its pagan and papal aspects. Passages dealing with the horizontal, political expansion refer to imperial Rome (vs. 9), while the religious, vertical growth designates the second, or papal, phase (vss. 10-12), the part that Daniel spends numerous verses describing in detail.

Identify the Prince of the host, or the Prince of princes, who comes under attack by the little horn. Josh. 5:13, 14; Dan. 8:11, 25.

The title "Prince of the host," or "captain of the host of the Lord," is found in one other place in the Bible (Josh. 5:14), and it designates a heavenly being identified as the Lord Himself (Josh. 6:2), the pre-incarnated Christ. In Daniel, this Prince is also the Son of man, the Messiah, the King, and the Priest (Dan. 7:13; 9:25; 12:1). In Daniel 7 He is described primarily as King, but in Daniel 8:11, He is officiating in the heavenly sanctuary. What

Daniel 8 shows is that the little horn is attacking Christ Himself, not as a human being (as Rome did in its pagan phase) but now as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

What did the little horn remove from the Prince? Dan. 8:12.

The little horn tried to control the "daily" or "continual" (in Hebrew, tamid) ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Most translations render tamid as "continual sacrifice," but the term sacrifice is not in the original. In the sanctuary services, tamid was associated with the different activities performed by the priest during his daily ministry, and only his daily ministry. It is used in connection with the daily/continual sacrifice (Exod. 29:42), the bread of the presence (Exod. 25:30), the offering of incense (Exod. 30:8), and the fire upon the altar (Lev. 6:13). The daily ministry of the priest in the Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary was a type of the daily ministry of the intercession of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. It is this aspect of the priestly work of Christ that the little horn opposes and attacks.

### **FALSE PRIESTLY MINISTRY (Dan. 8:11-13).**

What did the little horn do to the daily ministry, the sanctuary, and the truth? Dan. 8:11, 12.

Though pagan Rome killed Jesus (Dan. 11:22), papal Rome began an assault against Him from another angle, that of interfering with His high-priestly ministry in heaven. How, though, could the little horn, essentially an earthly religio-political power, attack Christ and His ministry in heaven? What did it do?

1. "It overthrew the place of his sanctuary" (NRSV). A literal translation reads: "And the place of his sanctuary was thrown." Place refers to the foundation of the sanctuary, used here metaphorically to designate the essence, the purpose, of the sanctuary. The verb was thrown expresses the idea of casting aside, rejection, abandonment (see 2 Kings 7:15). By misappropriating the priestly work of Christ, the horn rejects the foundation of the heavenly sanctuary as a place of mediation and forgiveness.

2. A host is placed over the daily ministry. Daniel 8:12 could be translated, "A host was given over the continual in transgression/rebellion." The verb was given over often means "to set someone over" (see Dan. 11:21). Hence, the text says that the horn misappropriated the daily ministry of Christ and then "set over," or appointed, its own host to control or minister it. A false religious system was instituted instead of the biblical one, an act of terrible rebellion against God and the truth.

3. It cast the truth to the ground. The truth of the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (which includes the plan of salvation) was discarded by this religio-political power, the same power shown (in Dan. 7:25), as attempting to change the law of God.

What question was raised by a heavenly being in Daniel 8:13?

The question is about the event that will put an end to the series of events listed in the chapter. A literal translation reads: "Until when the vision, the daily, and the rebellion that causes desolation . . . ?" The vision is the one recorded in 8:1-14, which includes Media-Persia and Greece; the daily; the work of the Prince of hosts (vs. 11); and the rebellion or the attack of the little horn (vs. 12). The question addresses the duration of the whole vision.