

**Daniel 8:1-27****Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat**

8 In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. <sup>2</sup> In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. <sup>3</sup> I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. <sup>4</sup> I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.

<sup>5</sup> As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. <sup>6</sup> It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage. <sup>7</sup> I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power. <sup>8</sup> The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

<sup>9</sup> Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. <sup>10</sup> It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. <sup>11</sup> It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down. <sup>12</sup> Because of rebellion, the Lord's people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the Lord's people?"

<sup>14</sup> He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

### **The Interpretation of the Vision**

<sup>15</sup> While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. <sup>16</sup> And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

<sup>17</sup> As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."

<sup>18</sup> While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet.

<sup>19</sup> He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. <sup>20</sup> The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. <sup>21</sup> The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. <sup>22</sup> The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.

<sup>23</sup> "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. <sup>24</sup> He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. <sup>25</sup> He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

<sup>26</sup> "The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."

<sup>27</sup> I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

## John 15:18-16:4

### The World Hates the Disciples

<sup>18</sup> “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. <sup>21</sup> They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. <sup>23</sup> Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. <sup>24</sup> If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup> But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

### The Work of the Holy Spirit

<sup>26</sup> “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

**16** “All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. <sup>2</sup> They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. <sup>3</sup> They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. <sup>4</sup> I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you,

### Sermon: “Forewarned is Forearmed”

Please have your Bibles opened up at **Daniel chapter 8**– we’ll be looking at the whole chapter.

There is an outline if you would like to take some notes!

Let me **pray** first...

## Context/Intro (Daniel 8:1-2)

Last week when we looked at chapter 7 of Daniel – we said that chapters 7 to 12 – were apocalyptic literature

### **[Slide-Apocalyptic]**

And we said that apocalyptic literature was *prophecy that informed Christians like us of a vision of the time when God will come to impose His everlasting Kingdom on the wreckage and rebellion of human history; and the way that this vision is communicated is by using wild, scary, imaginative, bizarre and head-scratching imagery [like the beasts of chapter 7 and like the animals described in this chapter 8].*

Last week the visions we looked at in chapter 7 were to prepare God's people for what they might face near the end of time – whereas here in chapter 8 God's preparing His people – which includes us - for what they might have to face along the way.

We pick up the story in verse 1 – where it's the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Belshazzar – and remember back in chapter 5 – Belshazzar was punished for using God's goblets, stolen from the temple, and a banquet – and God judged and punished him – and he was replaced by Darius – King of Media.

Verse 2 – Daniel is in the main city of Susa – in the Province of Elam – sitting beside the Ulai Canal – when he has his vision.

Now unlike last week when we had the vision of the four beasts and we were left guessing which king or kingdoms these beasts represent. This week – in chapter 8 – we are told exactly who the animals in the vision represent.

## The Vision

### The Ram (Daniel 8:3-4; 20)

The first animal Daniel sees is a **Ram** – verses 3 and 4.

#### **[Slide-Ram]**



The Ram had two long horns. And one of the horns grew later than the other. This ram charged toward the west and the north and the south. It was so powerful – no animal could stand against it or resist its power. It just did as it pleased.

If we skip down to verse 20 – we are told the ram with the two horns represents the nations of **Media and Persia**.

And given the description – Media and Persia – seem indestructible. Remember, the Medes and Persians have swallowed up the Babylonian Empire.

### The Goat (Daniel 8:5-8; 21-22)

But then Daniel sees a 2<sup>nd</sup> animal – a **goat** – in verses 5 to 8

The goat had a prominent horn between its eyes – and came from the west, crossing the whole Earth.

## [Slide-Ram and Goat]



And – v6 – it charged at the two-horned ram

And the goat attacked the ram furiously and shattered its horns. The ram stood no chance and was trampled on. (v7)

We're told this goat became very great (v8) but at the height of its power – its horn was broken off and four prominent horns grew in its place.

If we skip down to verses 21 and 22 – we are told who the shaggy goat is – the **King of Greece** – and the large horn represents the first king.

It's pretty easy to identify this king as – **Alexander the Great** – who was a brilliant military leader. By the age of 30, he had created one of the largest empires in history, stretching from Greece to northwestern India. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered to be one of history's greatest and most successful military commanders.

By age 32 – Alexander was dead. He is the horn broken off.

After the death of Alexander the Great [323BC], his empire was divided among his generals into four major kingdoms which are the four horns that grew up in place of the broken horn. Those four kingdoms were:

### [Slide-Goat-4 horns]



**Seleucus I Nicator** – who ruled the remainder of Asia and founded the Seleucid Empire which included Mesopotamia, the Levant, Persia, and part of India.

**Ptolemy I** – who ruled Egypt, Palestine, Cilicia, Petra, and Cyprus.

**Lysimachus** - who took Thrace and much of Asia Minor.

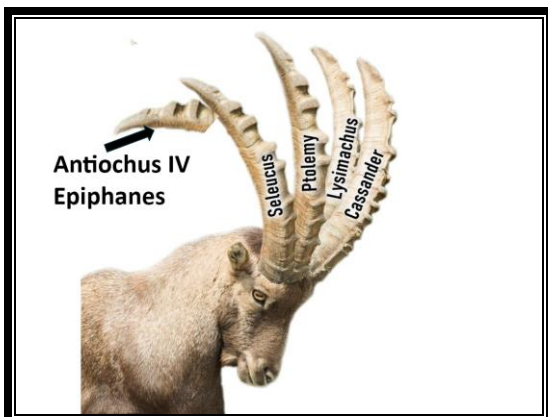
**Cassander** – who controlled Macedonia and Greece.

### Another Horn (Daniel 8:9-14; 23-25)

But we're not quite done with the goat.

Out of one these four horns – another horn grew – verses 9 to 14.

### [Slide-Other Horn]



Verse 9 tells us this horn grew in power to the south and east and came towards the Beautiful Land – which represents Israel – God’s Promised Land.

Verse 10 this horn reached the host of the heavens and threw starry hosts down to the earth and trampled on them. Often in the Old Testaments – starry hosts represent God’s people. [Remember how God told Abraham – he’s descendants would be as numerous as the stars – Genesis 15:5; 22:17; 26:4]

And this horn – v11 – will take away the daily sacrifice from the Lord – and throw down the sanctuary – God’s temple

The horn’s rebellion against the Lord’s people is very successful – v12.

And in the vision – in v13 and 14 – Daniel sees to two holy people – asking “How long will this rebellion and desolation against God’s people and His sanctuary go on for?”

And the answer is (v14) – for 2300 evenings and mornings. This can either be interpreted as 2300 days or 1150 days.

Again, if we skip down to verses 23 to 25 – we get a bit more detail about who this horn might represent.

We find out it’s a fierce looking king and master of intrigue (v23)

That this king is very strong – but not by his own power – in other words he has the power of Satan behind him (v24)

He will cause astounding devastation and destroy God’s holy people (v24)

He will use deceit to prosper and consider himself superior (v25) – and will make a stand against the Prince of princes – in other words against God! But at the end of v25 – he will be destroyed – not by human power – but by God’s sovereign power.



### [Slide-Antiochus IV]

Now one Greek king in history fits the description of this other horn.

His name is Antiochus IV Epiphanes [175BC to 164BC]. He came out of one of those four Greek kingdoms – the Seleucid Kingdom.

The name Epiphanes [a name Antiochus gave to himself] means “God Manifest” or “The Illustrious One”. But many referred to him as Epimanes (“The madman”).

From the history books and the intertestamental book **1 & 2 Maccabees** we know that Antiochus abolished the daily and morning sacrifices in Israel and committed blasphemy by sacrificing a pig on the altar in the Temple in Jerusalem and later placed a statue of Zeus [Greek god] in the temple and made human sacrifices on the altar. He also stopped circumcision and worshipping on the Sabbath. He forced the Jews to sacrifice to pagan gods and to eat pork or be killed.

He wasn't just trying to Hellenize [make people adopt Greek culture, religion, language and identity] the Jews - but to totally eliminate any traces of Jewish culture and religion [[sounds a bit like Hitler, doesn't it?](#)]

The Jewish response was to take up arms and fight. In 167—166 BC, a guy called Judas Maccabeus [Maccabean revolt] led the Jews [with God's sovereign help] in a series of incredible and unlikely victories over the military forces of the Syrian-Greeks. After defeating Antiochus and the Seleucids, the Jews cleaned and restored and reconsecrated the temple in c. 165. The Jews still celebrate this event each year at Hannukah!

As for the interpretation of the 2300 evenings and mornings. If we take it as 2300 days – it's the time Antiochus was wreaking havoc upon Israel. If we take it as 1150

days – it's the time period from when Antiochus desecrated the temple and stopped the daily sacrifices until the temple was reconsecrated.

All this is interesting history...

But we're left with a couple of questions.

First – why is this vision important to Daniel and his people – and that's in verses 15 to 19.

### Why is this Vision Important to Daniel and his people? (Daniel 8:15-19)

#### [Slide-Why?]

Look at v15 – As Daniel tried to understand the vision – someone who looked like a man – which we find out in v16 – is the Angel Gabriel is told to tell Daniel the meaning of the vision.

And in verse 19 – Gabriel gives Daniel the reason for the vision - so Daniel and the Israelites know '*what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end*'

Forewarned is forearmed!

Isn't it better for God's people to know what's going to happen – than to be taken by surprise.

When my grandson Cruz was young – we'd play hide and seek.

I have to say he sucked at hide and seek.

He would hide behind the curtains – and I could see his feet sticking out of the bottom of the curtains.

Which was great – I knew where he was – but I could also prepare my strategy and pretend I couldn't find him – and then have a bit of fun and pounce on him from in front of the curtain – just when he thought I couldn't find him.

From this vision – Daniel and the exiles knew – that there would be a time when they would be back in their homeland again – and there would be a temple again – and there would be sacrifices again – but there would also be a time of persecution and suffering – but it was a limited time of 2300 evenings and mornings.

God was kind in telling them. Forewarned is forearmed.

And from history we know that God's people – with His help – won an incredible victory in that Maccabean Revolt.

Which leaves us with second question

Why is this vision important to us today?

### Why is this Vision Important to us today? (Daniel 8:13-14; John 15:18-16:4)

#### [Slide-Why?]

What happened with the persecution and suffering dished out by Antiochus IV is a familiar pattern of suffering that God's people endure throughout history.

What we have is **a spiritual war** (Evil versus good - Satan versus God). What happened in Antiochus' time is similar to the story of Pharaoh versus God's people in Egypt; and it's similar to the story of Haman versus God's people in the book of Esther; and it's similar to Satan versus Jesus on the Cross! Evil versus good – Satan versus God!

The persecution and suffering that Antiochus IV dished out is also a foreshadowing of the Antichrist prophesied in 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13.

This Antichrist will one day do the same thing that Antiochus did to the temple in Jerusalem. This might not seem that likely to us right now as at the moment the temple in Jerusalem is occupied by an Islamic temple dome – and all that is left of the Jews' Temple in Jerusalem is the wailing wall. But a time will come when the Temple is rebuilt and history will repeat itself.

In 1 John 2:18, the Apostle John says that the Antichrist (capital “A”) will come one day – but in the meantime there will be many antichrists (small “a”).

And these antichrists always cause suffering and persecution to God's people – some examples in history - Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin – and of course Vladimir Putin today.

But remember, this persecution and suffering is for a limited time – 2300 evenings and mornings!

(pause)

In our NT passage [[from John 15:18 to John 16:4 – please turn there now](#)] – Jesus is no false recruiter – He tells His disciples – which includes us – that we will suffer because we follow Him.

Jesus says 15:18 – the world will hate us – because they hated Him

And Jesus also says - because He has chosen us (15:19) – the world hates us too.

And Jesus says – if He - as our Master is persecuted – then we as His servants can't expect to get a free pass from suffering (15:20)

But Jesus is kind to us – He promised to send the Holy Spirit – the Advocate (15:26) – to help us and comfort us in these times of suffering.

Jesus goes on to explain - WHY – he forewarns us about suffering and persecution – In 16:1 – He says “*All this I have told you, so that you will not fall away*”

Forewarned is forearmed!

It’s easy to fall away and give up when we are suffering.

And to give you a real live example of this is our 2030 Vision to put Bibles in 4500 homes in our community.

This vision – without a shadow of doubt in my mind – has brought about attacks from Satan.

I have been attacked personally.

Heather has been attacked personally.

Ministries in our Church have been attacked.

Satan loves to make mischief in churches – and cause arguments, squabbles, and disunity.

Satan does not want us giving people Bibles!

Satan does not want us telling people about Jesus and inviting them to church!

We are in a spiritual war – Jesus has forewarned us – and it would be easy to give up – and throw the towel in.

If we stopped giving out the Bibles – the attacks would stop.

But then we’d be disobeying Jesus’ command to go and make disciples.

And remember when He gave that command – He promised to be with us until the end of the age.

Jesus' power is greater than Satan's!

Jesus will return to judge everyone and to consummate His everlasting Kingdom.

In the meantime, we must be alert

### **[Slide-1 Peter 5:8-9]**

The Apostle Peter reminds us in 1 Peter 5:8-9

*Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

And as we stand firm – remember we get our strength from Him

### **[Slide-Phil 4:13]**

The Apostle Paul reminds us in Phil 4:13 - *I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

We are not fighting this spiritual war in our own strength – but Jesus' strength.

So, let's pray against Satan's attacks and ask God to give us His strength.

And also remember, **the suffering is temporary** – as we learnt from Daniel's vision.

### **Conclusion (Daniel 8:27)**

To finish up then

### **[Slide-Conclusion]**

Look at Verse 27 - Despite the vision of these terrible events and despite ***being exhausted for several days and appalled by the vision***

What did Daniel do?

**[Slide-v27]**

Still in verse 27 – after a few days of licking his wounds and getting over the exhaustion of seeing the vision

***Daniel got up and went about the King's business***

That's what we must be like...

Despite the attacks from Satan, despite the suffering, despite what lies ahead, we too must, lick our wounds and get up and **go about the King's business** - of **telling people about King Jesus – that Jesus is the only way to heaven!**

Let's pray...

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that in your kindness, you forewarn us of what lies ahead and that there will be a time of suffering. Thank you that this suffering is temporary, and that Jesus has victory over Satan; and because of Him we have forgiveness of our sins and the certain hope of Heaven.*

*Father, protect us from Satan's attacks and enable and equip us to go about King Jesus's business – and tell others about Him!*

*In His Name, we pray, Amen.*