

# Daniel 8-9a

## Teaching Notes

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### Chapter 8

#### Verse 1: The Timing

*(Daniel 8:1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me—to me, Daniel—after the one that appeared to me the first time.)*

This is about two years after the dream-vision in chapter 7.

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#### Verse 2: Shushan?

*(Daniel 8:2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.)*

Shushan, this city of the kingdom of Elam, later became Susa. Susa became one of the capital cities of the Persian Kingdom.

Soon, in our chronological study through the Old Testament, we will study the book of Esther. About 80 years after this dream-vision, Esther is raised in Susa. And the story of Esther commences where by God's providence she becomes queen of the Persian empire and saves the Jewish race. I am really looking forward to the book of Esther.

And what other person in scripture is linked to Susa? Almost 20-30 years after Esther, more than 100 years after this dream-vision with Daniel, Nehemiah, a man of great power and authority in Susa, was suddenly burdened for the Jews in Jerusalem. And by God's providence, he leads the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

So before Esther or Nehemiah shows up on the scene, Daniel receives this vision from the Lord while in Susa. What's the vision?

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## Verses 3-11: The Vision of World History & End Times

*(Daniel 8:3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.*

*Daniel 8:4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.*

*Daniel 8:5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.*

*Daniel 8:6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power.*

*Daniel 8:7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.*

*Daniel 8:8 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.*

*Daniel 8:9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.*

*Daniel 8:10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.*

*Daniel 8:11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.*

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(Graphic 1)



This is an incredible vision. Before we read the interpretation of the vision, let me share this:

The dream-vision is again examining the kingdoms that were revealed to Nebuchadnezzar decades before and with greater detail to Daniel 2 years prior.

- To review, the empires were: Babylon → Medo-Persia → Greece → Unknown Kingdom

God is revealing His plan of the world kingdoms with greater detail in perfect sequence.

- Nebuchadnezzar is given the revelation.
- Daniel is given more detail of the same revelation in chapter 7.
- And now, Daniel is given more detail exclusively with the Medo-Persian Empire and the Grecian Empire.

**Why do I find that important for you?** Someone studying the book of Daniel might become unnecessarily confused because of the different symbols, images, and visions. So let me repeat this clearly:

(Graphic 2)

**DANIEL'S VISION - GOAT & RAM**  
DANIEL 8

The dream-visions of chapter 2, chapter 7, and chapter 8 are the same revelation.  
(1) The only differences are the symbolic objects/creatures of each, and  
(2) The fact that God highlights more details over time.

KINGDOMS	IMAGE	BEASTS	ANIMALS
Babylonian Empire	Head of gold	Lion	
Persian Empire	Chest of silver	Bear	Ram
Grecian Empire	Abdomen of bronze	Leopard	Goat
Roman Empire	Legs and feet of iron and clay	Great, terrible beast	

"There are four kingdoms from his nation that will stand up, but not with his power." - Daniel 8:22

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- (1). The only differences are the symbolic objects/creatures of each, and
- (2). The fact that God highlights more details of each kingdom over time.

Verse 9: Little Horn

Some of you caught a similar term in chapter 7 and chapter 8. There is a phrase in reference to a person, *little horn*. Who was the little horn in chapter 7? It was the Antichrist. Using similar imagery, there is another little horn who is very much like the antichrist. However, the little horn in chapter 8 is not the antichrist. Who is it? That will be explained in just a moment.

**Verses 15-18: Gabriel Comes**

**(Daniel 8:15** *Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.*

**Daniel 8:16** *And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."*

**Daniel 8:17** *So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."*

**Daniel 8:18** *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.*

**Daniel 8:19** *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.")*

This is the angel Gabriel, whom God uses to reveal the interpretation of this dream-vision to Daniel.

### More About Gabriel:

This angel Gabriel is the same angel Gabriel that came to Zacharias in the temple to prophesy the birth and plan of John the Baptist. This angel Gabriel is the same angel Gabriel that came to the virgin Mary to reveal that Mary will conceive the Son of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### Verse 16: The Voice

Who's voice told the Angel Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel? That is not disclosed. It very well could be the voice of God.

### Verses 17-18: Daniel's Response

Simply put, Daniel FAINTS at this encounter with the Angel Gabriel. Interestingly, there are various angelic encounters and scripture. Other individuals did not faint in those encounters. So fainting at an angelic encounter is new. But again, what is similar with all angelic encounters is the terror that one undergoes in seeing these supernatural beings.

### Verse 19: The Timing

Both verses 17 and 19 repeat what the vision is detailing: It is detailing future events, after the death of Daniel.

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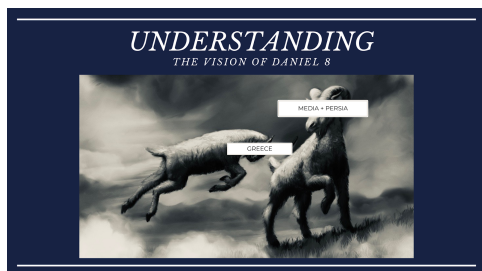
## **Verses 20-23: Ram Versus Goat**

**(Daniel 8:20** *The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia.*

**Daniel 8:21** *And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.*

**Daniel 8:22** *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. )*

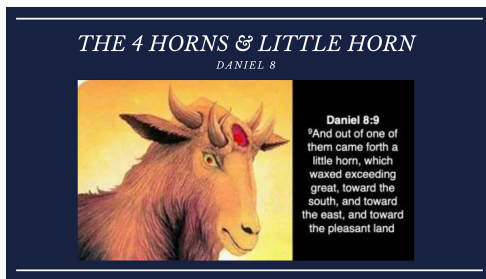
(Graphic 3)



**Introduction:** What must be understood is that the kingdom of Greece was not a world empire at this time. There's this famous quote that Pastor Lyle reminded me of, "Prophecy is the future written as history." The fact that Daniel is shown the next world kingdom, Medo-Persia, and the following world kingdom, Greece, is utterly mind-blowing.

Where Daniel is standing in history, Babylon was soon taken over prophetically/historically by the Medo-Persians in 539 BC. And not until roughly 200 years later did Alexander the Great and the Greek Kingdom conquer Persia.

### Verse 22: Historical Info (Graphic 4)



**Who is the large horn that was “broken”?** The large horn is Alexander the Great. If you know your history, Alexander the Great, a mighty man and world conqueror died relatively young. He was 33 years old.

**Who are the 4 horns?** So, after Alexander's death, due to the fact that he had no heirs, the kingdom under the sovereignty of the generals was divided up into 4 kingdoms (v22).

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### **Verses 23-25: The Works of the Sinister King**

**(Daniel 8:23** *“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.*

**Daniel 8:24** *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.*

**Daniel 8:25** *“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.)*

Did you know that because of the great accuracy of Daniel 8, critics “claim” that Daniel 8 had to be written centuries later because it writes history with accuracy?

Who is the king that arises after time in the Greek Empire? Historically, this is Antiochus Epiphanes. What is recorded in verses 23-25, regarding what Antiochus Epiphanes does is recorded in history. Interestingly, this wicked king was powerful, wealthy, and anti-semitic. He opposed God but in the end was “broken” just like Alexander the Great.

**Is it the Antichrist?** Some say that it sounds very similar to the Antichrist. Could it be him? There are issues with that because of the context. The little horn comes forth from the Greek empire. Remember, the Antichrist does not come from the Greek empire. That was explained in Daniel 7. The antichrist comes from the “unknown kingdom” in chapter 7.

**The Anti-semitism of Antiochus of Epiphanes?** In verses 12-14, details are given of the great anti-semitic attack of Antiochus. The historical book the Maccabees provides some insight on this.

In history, we know how wicked he was towards the Jewish people. In one assault on Jerusalem, 40,000 Jews were killed and 10,000 were taken into captivity.

This man was wicked, satanic, and demonically-inspired. To help you understand, let me quote to you history recorded by the author Archer:

“This suppression came to a head in December 168 B.C., when Antiochus returned in frustration from Alexandria, where he had been turned back by the Roman commander Popilius Laenas, and vented his exasperation on the Jews. He sent his general, Apollonius, with twenty thousand troops under orders to seize Jerusalem on a Sabbath. There he erected an idol of Zeus and desecrated the altar by offering swine on it.  
Constable, Tom. [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#). Galaxie Software, 2003, p. Da 8:9.

**Feast of Dedication:** After Judas Maccabaeus led a revolt and regained the city and the temple, he led the Jews to rededicate the temple in Jerusalem. This led to the establishment of the Feast of Dedication, which was celebrated with Hanukkah, another feast to praise God for His preservation of the Jewish people through a dark time in their national existence (Esther).

Remember in John 10 when Jesus said, “I and My Father are One?” or when He said, “No one can snatch My sheep out of My hand?” When did Jesus say those words? He said this at the Feast of Dedication, the feast that was created in consequence of the little horn of Daniel 8:

*(John 10:22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter.*

*John 10:23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch.)*

### Silent Years Explained:

What is happening here in Daniel 8 are what some call the “silent years”: the events that happen in-between Malachi - Matthew, the last book of the OT and the first book of the NT. Some say that there are lost books of divine origin that were written during this time: which some claim why some of the books in the Apocrypha should be included in scripture, for some of the Apocryphal books were written around the time of these prophecies.

**Question: Why are the apocryphal books not inspired by God?** Because each book in the Apocrypha either has a historical inaccuracy or theological error. And remember that Jesus Christ never acknowledged the Apocrypha as His word up until the point in His earthly ministry. While on earth, he verbally stated that Genesis through Malachi are inspired by the Holy Spirit, not the Apocrypha.

When it comes to those “silent years” as some call it, all we need to know is what God revealed to us about those years in Daniel 8. Because Daniel 8 tells us what happened, these are not really “silent years.”

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### **Verse 26: The Future Significance**

*(Daniel 8:26 “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 angel Gabriel reminds Daniel that this is a future event that needs to be recorded. It does not mean that Daniel should stay quiet about it, for the next verse reveals that he told others of the vision.

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## **Verse 27: The Response Towards the Vision**

*(Daniel 8:27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.)*

Why did Daniel respond to this with physical sickness? There are no scriptures that illuminate “why” nor is there necessarily an explanation as to why.

- With something like this, it is wise to not come up with random conclusions or unbiblical conclusions.

I thought of the second part of this verse by picturing a scenario in my head. Imagine Daniel a few weeks later on a Saturday at the local synagogue. Imagine him pulling one of the Jews aside and telling him what the Lord revealed to him a vision. And imagine the Jew saying, “What are you talking about? Medo-Persia is going to take over Babylon? Greece is going to take over Medo-Persia centuries from now? WHAT?” Why do I find that relevant? Because look at next verse:

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## **Chapter 9a**

### **Verse 1: The Downfall of Babylon**

*(Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—)*

Daniel intimately knew the downfall of the Babylonians was coming. It came. And then people understand that Daniel was truly a prophet from God. When he was declaring those prophecies, no one understood it. But when those prophecies came to pass, they understood it.

#### God's Plan for the Ages:

God's plan was established before the world existed. From end to beginning, God's plan was, is, and will be established and unchanging. For God is eternal, with counsel outside of time.

*(Psalm 33:10 The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.*

*Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.)*

The comfort for the Christian is that everything in the future has been previously determined and established. So,

**“Is the future uncertain?”** Depends on who you are asking.

For the Christian, world history from end to beginning is revealed to us in God’s word. For the Christian, the future is certain, not based on hearsay, but eternal decrees, eternal decrees established before this world began.

Especially in the past few weeks, there have been times that I’ve looked at news with Israel, news with the Middle East, and read what commentators are saying about what’s happening, and I’ve been tempted to worry, and at certain moments, have worried.

**If it causes me to worry, I should come back to Psalm 33, “the counsel of the Lord stands forever.” World history is on a course that God is sovereign over and that I can’t change. Yet God has a plan, through His church, which includes you and I, to be the salt and light of the earth until He returns.**

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## **Verse 2: Prophecy Fulfilled**

*(Daniel 9:2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.)*

Jeremiah and Daniel were contemporaries, particularly in Daniel’s youth. Decades after Jeremiah’s death, Daniel is reading the book of Jeremiah. And Daniel sees the prophecy that God’s judgment upon the Jews had a timeframe - a total of 70 years. He realizes that the 70 years is almost completed.

**Imagine the moment of shock and awe Daniel must have felt as he was confronted with such a prophecy?**

What does Daniel do as he sees Bible prophecy almost fulfilled? It tells us that **HE PRAYS.**

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## Verses 3-19: Daniel's Prayer

**(Daniel 9:3)** *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*

**Daniel 9:4** *And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,*

**Daniel 9:5** *we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.*

**Daniel 9:6** *Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.*

**Daniel 9:7** *O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.*

**Daniel 9:8** *"O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.*

**Daniel 9:9** *To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.*

**Daniel 9:10** *We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.*

**Daniel 9:11** *Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. [Do you see Daniel's recall of the history of their disobedience and the righteousness of God?]*

**Daniel 9:12** *And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.*

**Daniel 9:13** *"As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. [This portion of Daniel's prayer stands out to me because if you recall the Jews were complaining to God for their suffering; but the few righteous, like Daniel, knew that God warned them that suffering will come as a consequence for sin.]*

**Daniel 9:14** *Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. [God's word is established.]*

**Daniel 9:15** *And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!*

**Daniel 9:16** *“O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.*

**Daniel 9:17** *Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.*

**Daniel 9:18** *O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.*

**Daniel 9:19** *O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”)*

This is a beautiful prayer, is it not?

Over the years, I have studied this prayer over and over and continue to learn more about the depths of prayer by studying it. In different seasons, the Holy Spirit highlights different things about this prayer. I want to share a new insight I received uniquely in preparing for this message:

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## **Insight into Prayer: Praying God’s Will**

There are 10 things in these verses that Daniel prays.

### **Verse 17:**

- (1). Hear me.
- (2). Cause Your face to shine.

### **Verse 18:**

- (3). Incline Your ear.
- (4). Open your eyes.
- (5). Answer because you are merciful.

### **Verse 19:**

- (6). Listen.
- (7). Act.
- (8). Do not delay.
- (9). Do all this for your glory.
- (10). Do all this because you are a promise-keeping God.

- \*If you notice, Daniel says 3x to listen. Daniel says 2x to do this for the glory of God.

### **The Insight that Caught My Attention:**

God established the eternal decree that the destruction of Jerusalem only lasted for 70 years. If that was eternally established, why did Daniel pray this prayer if that decree was unchanging? Why does Daniel pray as if God might not do it? Did Daniel lack faith in God's promises so he prayed to make sure that God does it? No.

Look, as Christians we should all agree that God's will is unchanging. We agree on this. But there is an unbiblical conclusion that all of us must protect ourselves from:

**The trap where any of us are deceived to think that prayer is not ultimately necessary** because God's eternal decrees are established and unchanging (in simple terms, God's will is going to happen no matter what). Daniel did not think that or believe that. God will be faithful to His word; and may we be faithful to pray. Daniel believed and knew, **that our prayers unite with the eternal decrees of God:**

**God will accomplish His plan with or without our prayers. Yet, He loves to commune and partner with His people to accomplish His will through our prayers.**

**The Lesson of Prayer:** Prayer includes asking God for your needs to be met because He is a good father. And prayer also includes asking God that His prophetic will be accomplished here on earth, on a global scale, national scale, state scale, city scale, family scale, and personal scale.

I enjoyed studying chapters 8 and 9 because you and I can be inspired by Daniel, a man who meditated on prophecy and allowed God to fulfill prophecy through his prayers.

**When I look at Daniel's prayer, I am inspired by him because,**

(1). It's not a prayer only for himself, but also for others.

- (2). It's a prayer of confession, repentance, and obedience.
- (3). It's a prayer centered on the will of God.
- (4). It's a prayer that is centered on the glory of God.

### **Does this prayer sound similar to another prayer?**

**(Matthew 6:9)** *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*

**Matthew 6:10** *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

**Matthew 6:11** *Give us this day our daily bread.*

**Matthew 6:12** *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.*

**Matthew 6:13** *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.)*

God loves to commune with us in prayer. He hears and answers our prayers. And in context, it was in response to the Bible.

**Question: In your daily Bible readings, are you turning what you need into prayer?** If not, that is a wonderful place to start expanding your prayer.

Turning scriptures into prayers for you and for others.

As we see things happening in our world, as we read the prophetic scriptures, let's imitate Daniel by converting the scriptures into prayer.

A prayerful Christian is a powerful Christian. A praying Christian is a powerful Christian.

Here's something else God is teaching me through prayer. Praying with faith.

**(Matthew 21:22)** *And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."*

And to reference the context of Daniel 9, Daniel honestly believed that God would act in response to his prayers. Is that where your faith is tonight? That you believe that God can and will respond and act because you humbly request Him to do so? Is your prayer life defined by great faith?

Recently, I remember lacking faith. There was a person I wanted to share the gospel with, but I did not because I did not believe that God could use me effectively to reach this person that was very different from me.

Another time, I remember praying with faith for an opportunity, and by divine intervention, I shared the gospel with someone who was on their way to fatally harm themselves. Today, that person is still walking with Christ.

I am so thankful that God is patient with us. That He is teaching us how to pray and to pray with faith to see Him answer and respond.

May each of us fall deeper in love with communion with the Father. That we might be like Daniel. Praying, believing that God is hearing and answering all our requests. May the Lord strengthen and increase our faith.

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