

**Reformation Fellowship Notes • June 21, 2020**  
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**Handout #10**  
**Daniel 8**

**I. Introduction**

- A. In chapter seven, the emphasis was on the four beasts that were vicious and destructive.
  - 1. This chapter expands on the second two beasts but uses different imagery.
    - a) The animals in chapter 7 were wild animals.
    - b) These are domesticated animals.
  - 2. This vision focuses on the interaction between these two beasts,
    - a) And the horn that emerges from the second beast.
  - 3. It describes a significant interaction between Empire and the country of Israel in particular.
    - a) Note that from now on the book is all in Hebrew rather than Aramaic.
- B. Third year of Belshazzar (549 BC)
  - 1. This was the year that Cyrus establish the joint state of Medo-Persia.
  - 2. The time for the return of the exiles back to Jerusalem is just ten years away.
    - a) Cyrus was the one who made this possible.
- C. Plan of attack
  - 1. I will go through section by section.
    - a) There is the vision proper; then an angel interprets it.
    - b) But in this vision, the interpreter actually names names.
    - c) So I will match up the vision with some historical detail as we go.
  - 2. But when we get to the end of the vision proper, it talks about a small horn.
    - a) I will talk more about this particular element after we go through the whole chapter.

**II. Daniel 8:1-4**

*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 he charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against him, and none could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.*

- A. The text states that this vision is subsequent to the vision of the four beasts.
  - 1. This suggests a connection.
  - 2. It continues in the first person.
    - a) The vision in chapter 7 had an introduction in the third person, then switched to first person when relating the vision.
    - b) In chapter 8, it is all first person.
      - (1) Even the introduction is in first person.
- B. Daniel is transported in his vision to Susa.
  - 1. An Elamite city
    - a) It became a capital of the Medo-Persian empire.
      - (1) It's not clear whether it was the capital at the time of this vision.
  - 2. It later became the most prominent capital of the Persian empire.
  - 3. Citadel—It was a fortified city.
  - 4. Daniel may have visited Susa as part of his official duties.
    - a) But the text says he was there in the vision (not bodily).
  - 5. He is by the canal Ulai.
    - a) This appears to be the Semitic version; The Persian name is Choaspes.
    - b) It flowed through Susa.
    - c) This canal will be important a little bit later.
- C. Daniel sees a ram with two horns.
  - 1. Both horns are long.
    - a) One horn is longer than the other.
      - (1) It started out shorter than the other, but it outgrew the first.
        - (a) Daniel must have seen them grow.
      - (2) The ram represents the Medo-Persians.
        - (a) The two horns are the Medes and the Persians.
        - (b) Persia is the shorter horn that grew to be longer.
          - (i) Persia started out the inferior nation but became the dominant nation.
  - 2. The ram starts charging in three directions.
    - a) Every direction but east
      - (1) The Persians did make some conquests to the East, but they were much less significant.
    - b) No animals are able to withstand his charges.
      - (1) No one could repulse the Persians in the early years.

- c) The Persians took Babylon and Syria (west), Egypt (south), and the Scythians (north).
- d) He did as he pleased.
  - (1) He became powerful.

### III. Daniel 8:5-8

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

- A. A male goat appears in the west.
  - 1. He has only one horn between his eyes.
    - a) This is the Macedonian army led by Alexander the Great.
  - 2. It comes from the west.
    - a) It came from Macedonia and Greece.
  - 3. It doesn't even touch the ground.
    - a) This suggests ease of movement.
    - b) Alexander conquered a huge empire in a very short period of time.

Over a period of four years between 334 and 331, Alexander demolished the Persian Empire and established an empire of his own extending from Europe to India. (Goldingay, p. 420)

- 4. The goat arrived to the place where ram was standing.
  - a) By the canal
    - (1) This was the location where Alexander brought about the final defeat of the king of Persia.
- 5. It attacked the ram.
  - a) With raging strength
  - b) Broke both of the ram's horns off
  - c) The ram could not fight back.
    - (1) The Greeks easily defeated the Persians.
  - d) The goat threw the ram to the ground and trampled it.
  - e) No one could deliver the ram from its power.
    - (1) There was no other power that Persia could turn to and form an alliance.

- f) The goat acted more arrogantly.
- 6. Then the horn of the goat was broken.
  - a) Right after it had become strong
    - (1) Soon after Alexander reached India, he turned back.
      - (a) On his way back to Persia, he got sick and died.
  - b) It was replaced by four conspicuous horns.
    - (1) They are pointed toward the four winds of the sky.

This has been so historically realized, that out of the wars of the Diadochs for the supremacy, four kingdoms arose toward the four regions of the earth into longer duration—that of Cassander (Macedonia) toward the east, that of Lysimachus (Thracia and Bithynia) toward the north, and finally that of Ptolemy (Egypt) toward the south. (Keil, p. 294)

- (2) I will talk about this more later.

#### IV. Daniel 8:9-14

*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 Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. <sup>12</sup> Because of rebellion, the host [of the saints] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.*

##### A. Emergence of small horn

- 1. It came from one of the four horns.
  - a) It arose out of littleness.
    - (1) It grew great from a small beginning.
  - b) This appears to be an Antiochus Epiphanes-like character.
- 2. The small horn went east, south, and toward the beautiful land.
  - a) Possibly south and east from Israel
  - b) “Glorious land” (Jeremiah 3:19)
- 3. Threw down some from the “host of heaven”
  - a) Who are these?
    - (1) The Israelites coming out of Egypt were referred to as “hosts” (Exodus 12:41).
    - (2) But what is the “host of heaven?”
      - (a) The ANE notion that what happens on earth is a reflection of what happens in the heavens
        - (i) If army X is defeated by army Y, then this reflects the fact that the god of X is already defeated by the god of Y in heaven.

- (b) The book of Daniel is using this notion to create a powerful image.
  - (i) Antiochus is so arrogant that he thinks he is carrying his fight up to the heavens to fight the host there.
  - (ii) Antiochus takes the host, of which God's people are a reflection, and throws them down to earth to trample them.
  - (iii) It is as if by fighting the host of heaven and stopping the sacrifices in the temple, Antiochus is fighting directly in the battle between the gods in heaven.
  - (iv) "Oppression" seems to be the key idea in "trampling."
- 4. *It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host.*
  - a) Who is the "Prince of the host?"
    - (1) It could be God.
    - (2) It could be the Messiah.
      - (a) The word is *sar*, which means "official," but here it probably means "general."
- 5. The small horn discontinued the sacrifices at the Temple.
  - a) It stopped all the regular cultic operations.
    - (1) It set up a shrine to other gods in the temple.
  - b) God allowed the army of believers and the sacrifices to be given over to the small horn.
    - (1) Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the Jews.
- 6. Rebellion
  - a) This word occurs 3 times in the chapter.
    - (1) The other two times it appears to be referring to Antiochus' rebellion against the Creator God.
    - (2) So I am inclined to take this word in that same sense here.
      - (a) My suggested paraphrase: "While the horn was still acting arrogantly, the saints and the daily sacrifices were given over to it."
- 7. The result of all this
  - a) Truth was thrown to the ground.
    - (1) "But 'truth' is a more general word, and it points more generally to the way things are supposed to be." (Goldingay, p. 423)
    - (2) I think this term is a little more focused in this context.
      - (a) God's narrative was completely abused.
      - (b) Antiochus completely trashed the "Gospel" (as I talked about it in the introductory session).
  - b) The small horn enjoyed success.
    - (1) God allowed him the appearance of success in all he did.

**V. Daniel 8:13-14**

*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, and the surrender of the sanctuary and of the host that will be trampled underfoot?”<sup>14</sup> He said to me, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.”*

- A. A conversation begins between two of the attendants (angels?).
  1. Daniel overhears part of their conversation.
  2. One angel asked the other a question.
    - a) How long will it be that the temple, the sacrifices, and the army of saints will be given over to the small horn?
      - (1) Of all that Daniel saw in this vision, this is the most important to the angel.
      - (2) The angel knows that God would only allow this to be a temporary situation.
      - (3) Answer: 2,300 evenings and mornings
        - (a) We will talk more about this in a few minutes.
      - (4) At the end of this time, the temple will be rededicated.
  3. The rebellion that causes desolation (Abomination of Desolation)
    - a) This is apparently a play on words.
      - (1) Antiochus dedicated the temple to Olympian Zeus.
        - (a) The Seleucids referred to Zeus as “*Baal Shamem*.”
      - (2) Rebellion that causes desolation is “*Pesha Shamem*.”
    - b) The rebellion that results in absolute chaos
      - (1) A rebellion against God on the part of Antiochus
- B. Note that the vision becomes less symbolic as the vision progresses.
  1. It begins with animals and horns.
    - a) The only thing that is not symbolic is Susa and the canal.
  2. It ends with armies and sacrifices and the temple.
    - a) The only thing that is symbolic is the small horn, stars, and perhaps the host of heaven.
  3. It is like the fog parting.

**VI. Daniel 8:15-18**

*While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man.<sup>15</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.*

- A. The vision proper came to an end.
1. But Daniel continues to see a vision in which he seeks help understanding the vision he has just seen.
  2. Before Daniel was a man-like creature.
    - a) Is this the son of man in 7:13?
      - (1) He has the authority to command the archangel Gabriel.
      - (2) Who he is is left unclear.
    - b) He heard the voice of a human call out.
      - (1) This is apparently the man-like creature speaking.
    - c) He was commanding the archangel Gabriel to explain the vision.
  3. As Gabriel approached, Daniel fell down on his face.
    - a) (Why did he not fall down on his face before the man-like creature?)
    - b) He says the vision is about the time of the end.
      - (1) We will talk about this later.
    - c) Daniel went into a trance.
    - d) Gabriel woke him up and had him stand up.
      - (1) I don't really understand the choreography, but I suspect it is significant.
  4. The time of the end
    - a) A similar expression occurs in the next section, so we will talk about it in just a minute.

## VII. Daniel 8:19-25

*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 his 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 stern-faced 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 the mighty men and 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.*

- A. Gabriel interprets the dream.
1. *"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.*

- a) This is very difficult.
    - (1) A lot of different opinions
    - (2) My best guess so far
  - b) The time of wrath
    - (1) The judgment extended from the Babylonian conquest to the rededication of the temple.
      - (a) This is strange because it does not appear as though the wrath of God ends at this point.
        - (i) Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans less than a century later.
      - (b) But I don't see a better solution.
  - c) Appointed time of the end
    - (1) In verse 17, we saw "the time of the end."
      - (a) The wording is different.
      - (b) But I think they refer to the same thing.
    - (2) I think it refers to the time when Jesus returns.
      - (a) This is why some don't think this is about Antiochus.
        - (i) They think it is really about the Antichrist.
    - (3) I am inclined to think that this is saying that the vision is talking about Antiochus, but the vision is pointing to the end of history.
      - (a) Antiochus is just a foretaste of the Antichrist to come.
2. We have already talked about his interpretation of the two animals.
  3. We now need to talk about the small horn—Antiochus Epiphanes.
    - a) As those kingdoms are waning and about to die out, a bad king will emerge.
      - (1) Rash and deceitful
    - b) He will be strong and successful.
    - c) He will destroy the mighty men and holy people.
    - d) He will succeed by treachery.
    - e) He will be arrogant.
    - f) He will rise up against the Prince of princes.
    - g) He will not die at the hands of another person.
  4. We will talk more about all of this shortly.

### **VIII. Daniel 8:26-27**

*"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 exhausted and lay ill for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.*



- A. The time frame given in the dream was accurate.
- B. Daniel was told to seal up the vision.
  - 1. Because it is about the distant future
  - 2. Seal it to preserve it.
- C. Exhausted and sick
  - 1. Incapacitated for several days
- D. Astonished, but didn't understand what it all meant

### IX. Antiochus Epiphanes as a historical person

- A. Early life
  - 1. The youngest of several sons
    - a) Unlikely to inherit the throne
  - 2. Hostage in Rome
- B. The coup that brought him to power
  - 1. Seleucus was assassinated in 175 by Heliodorus.
    - a) Eumenes II of Pergamum helped Antiochus get from Rome to Syria.
    - b) Antiochus became regent of another son of Seleucus.
      - (1) Then Antiochus murdered the son of Seleucus.
  - 2. When Antiochus became king, he named himself "King Antiochus God Manifest."
    - a) Some called him Epimanes (the mad one).
- C. Antiochus' persecution of the Jews
  - 1. Ptolemies had long been the overlords of Palestine.
    - a) They had not interfered with Judea religiously or socially.
  - 2. Antiochus moved to reduce the power of the Ptolemies and take control of the area.
  - 3. In 168, Antiochus attacked Egypt.
    - a) Before he could take Egypt, Rome intervened.

Before he reached Alexandria, his path was blocked by a single elderly Roman ambassador named [Gaius Popillius Laenas](#) who delivered a message from the [Roman Senate](#) directing Antiochus to withdraw his armies from Egypt and Cyprus or consider himself in a state of war with the Roman Republic. Antiochus said he would discuss it with his council, whereupon the Roman envoy drew a line in the sand around Antiochus and said: "Before you leave this circle, give me a reply that I can take back to the Roman Senate." This implied Rome would declare war if the King stepped out of the circle without committing to leave Egypt immediately.

Weighing his options, Antiochus decided to withdraw. Only then did Popillius agree to shake hands with him. (Wikipedia article “Antiochus Epiphanes”)

- b) While Antiochus was distracted in Egypt, the pro-Egypt party (the traditionalists) took control in Jerusalem.
- c) When Antiochus left Egypt, he went to Jerusalem.
  - (1) He put down the rebellion.

According to the authors of the [\*Books of the Maccabees\*](#), while Antiochus was busy in Egypt, a rumor spread that he had been killed. In [Judea](#), the [deposed](#) High Priest [Jason](#) gathered a force of 1000 soldiers and made a surprise attack on the city of [Jerusalem](#).<sup>[15]</sup> [Menelaus](#), the High Priest appointed by Antiochus, was forced to flee Jerusalem during a riot. King Antiochus returned from Egypt in 168 BC, enraged by his defeat; he attacked Jerusalem and restored Menelaus, then executed many Jews.<sup>[16]</sup>

When these happenings were reported to the king, he thought that Judea was in revolt. Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery. ([2 Maccabees 5:11–14](#))

- 4. Heavy persecution of the traditionalists followed.
  - a) Cultic practices in the temple were stopped.
    - (1) Lasted about 3 years
  - b) This eventually created a backlash.
    - (1) Jews were able, over several years, to force the Seleucids out of Judea.
      - (a) They were able to rededicate the temple in 164 BC.
- 5. Antiochus died in 164 BC.
  - a) Various accounts of the causes
    - (1) Probably disease
- D. What kind of person was he?
  - 1. According to the historians, he was not pure evil.

No one of course sees in Antiochus’ character the sole reason for the persecution, but nearly all scholars have been sensible of those elements in his make-up which lent the final impulse to the execution of the decrees. There is a certain sense in this emphasis: even in the ancient world Antiochus’ strange traits of character attracted the attention of historians. As the Hellenistic authors reflect him, Antiochus appears as a person in whom the positive and negative were mingled in equal proportion. Jewish historiography has made him “the evil one,” a tyrant of unparalleled brutality; but clearly this distorted picture cannot be used to characterize him, for

justice and impartiality are not to be looked for from foes. Nor is there, on the other hand, an adequate basis for an idealization of Antiochus. (Tcherikover, p. 175-6)

2. But he was an odd and arrogant person.

Like Nero two hundred years after him, he liked to participate personally in theater performances; once during a magnificent festival which he was holding at Antioch, he appeared on the stage before the audience as an actor, and began to dance with the other players. The Greeks had never seen their king in such a role, and many left the banqueting hall in shame. His behavior toward other people was full of contradictions and sudden surprises, for he was silent in the company of his best friends and talkative with strangers; to some he gave precious gifts such as silver and gold, and to others, without clear reason, worthless objects such as dates and dice. Irritable and nervous, full of profound inner contractions, ever striving to do something extraordinary and to astound the world—this was the figure cut by King Antiochus in the eyes of his Greek contemporaries. Hence it is not to be wondered at that humorists mocked him and called him in jest *Epimanes* (“mad”) instead of *Epiphanes* (“the god manifest”). (Tcherikover, p. 177)

E. Why did he persecute the Jews?

1. He wanted to unify the empire by Hellenizing it.
  - a) He encouraged the establishment of Hellenized cities.
  - b) His design was not to build new Greek cities, but to intensify the Hellenism of those that already existed, also to turn the ancient oriental towns which had not yet been Hellenized into Greek *poleis*, by granting them special political privileges. (Tcherikover, p. 179)
    - (1) Jerusalem was going through the process of becoming a Hellenized city.
      - (a) Antioch-at-Jerusalem

It has already been observed that Antioch-at-Jerusalem also was intended as a link in the long chain of strongholds of the new Hellenism in the Seleucid empire. (Tcherikover, p. 179)

- c) He persecuted the Jews because they resisted Hellenization.

From all these passages the fact emerges clearly that Epiphanes’ contemporaries, and the king himself, saw the reason for the persecutions in the Jews’ obstinate refusal to exchange their traditional way of life for Greek ways. The forcible Hellenization of the Jews was the reason for the persecution.” (Tcherikover, p. 180)

- d) Tcherikover goes on to say that this is not the main reason for persecution.

2. Antiochus wanted to unify his empire.

This doctrine holds that Antiochus sought to strengthen his crumbling kingdom by political centralization and cultural unification. The establishment of one religion for all the people of the state was part of his plan of reform. (Tcherikover, p. 181)

3. But Tcherikover argues that the main reason for the persecution was that he came to see the traditionalists as his enemy.
  - a) After the rebellion in Jerusalem in 168 BC

Logic demands the conclusion that, after Jason's failure, the control of the city passed to the opponents of the king—the enemies of the Hellenizers. This means that a very significant thing had occurred in Jerusalem, namely, a people's revolt against Jason and the overthrow of the rule of the Hellenizers in the city: Antioch-at-Jerusalem was liquidated and the people was preparing to return to its traditional form of government. . . . it is clear that Antiochus now regarded Jerusalem as a hostile city and behaved toward it accordingly. (Tcherikover, p. 188)

4. It seems clear to me that all three reasons above contributed significantly to Antiochus' thinking.

#### **X. How do we know when is a prophecy fulfilled?**

- A. Was Alexander the Great the First king of Macedonia?
  1. He was not the first king of Macedonia.
  2. But he was the first king of Macedonia's world empire.
- B. Was the empire divided into four kingdoms upon the death of Alexander?
  1. The history of this process is extremely complicated.
    - a) See Wikipedia article <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diadochi>.
  2. Several numbers could legitimately be used to answer this question.
    - a) But after 20 years, it stabilized with four kingdoms.
- C. It is sometimes hard to know what fulfills a prophecy.
  1. Prophecies are simplistic by nature.
  2. Historical realities are always very complex.
  3. It is often hard to know when a simplistic prediction maps onto historical reality.

#### **XI. Was Antiochus the little horn of Daniel chapter 8?**

- A. Some balk at this association.
  1. The number 2300 does not work out.
    - a) Worship of idols in the temple under Antiochus lasted no more than 3 years and 10 days (about 1090 days).
    - b) Proposed solutions:
      - (1) Morning/evenings (1150 days)
      - (2) Extend the time of beginning
        - (a) Temple rededication 164
        - (b) Jason became high priest

- (3) Extend the time of ending
  - (a) Victory over Nicanor
- (4) Symbolic

- B. It seems to me that Antiochus is a very good fit.
  - 1. I trust that the number 2300 works out.
    - a) I don't know enough to say that it doesn't work.

## **XII. Conclusion**

- A. What does this vision contribute to our knowledge of Empire?
  - 1. Empires will not peacefully relate to each other.
    - a) There will be conflicts to establish dominance.
  - 2. The anti-God character of Empire will be made apparent when an emperor uses his power to destroy the people and things of God.
  - 3. Antiochus Epiphanes was an example of this phenomenon.
    - a) The prediction of Antiochus was a short-term prediction that lent credence to long-term predictions later to come in Daniel.
- B. Daniel was left horrified and bed ridden for several days.
  - 1. God did not give Daniel encouragement or consolation.
  - 2. He was faced into the raw horror of what the future held.