

DANIEL - The Ram and the Goat - Part 1

DN-14

I. The Ram (Daniel 8:1-4)

Two years after the vision of the four beasts in Daniel 7, the author had another vision, this one in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar (vs.1). The time of this vision indicated that Babylon either had passed on the scene or was about to. It is possible that this vision coming to Daniel occurred in the final year of the reign of Belshazzar and the Babylonian Empire. The year 539/538 BC.

There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy; but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and that the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted. Read the book of Daniel. Call up, point by point, the history of the kingdoms there represented. Behold statesmen, councils, powerful armies, and see how God wrought to abase the pride of men, and lay human glory in the dust. . . . {TM 112.2}

The light that Daniel received from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw by the banks of the Ulai and the Hiddekel, the great rivers of Shinar, are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon come to pass. {TM 112.3}

In these early verses of the chapter we see to animals depicting two nations.

Vs. 3,4

A Ram - The first power introduced to us in this chapter (vs.3,4) is symbolized by a ram. There is no guessing who this is, for in **verse 20** we are told that it is the kingdom of the _____ and _____. So unlike chapters 2 and 7, this vision starts without the kingdom of Babylon. This ram had two horns which symbolized _____ or _____ (Dan.7:24; 8:5,21-22)

One was higher than the other...higher came up last - The Medes, under _____ and the Persians, under _____, untied together to bring about the downfall of the Babylonian empire. When they succeeded, as seen in chapter 5, Cyrus, the nephew of Darius the Mede, allowed Darius to take the throne and rule the empire, out of respect for his uncle. Darius ruled for only two years and then died at the age of 64. Persia now took the throne through Cyrus. But why is this referred to as the higher coming up last? It is because, out of the two nations, the Medes were the weaker and thus the higher or stronger, which were the Persians, came up last. The kingdom eventually was known as the Persian kingdom.

Pushed westward, northward and southward - When looking at the word 'pushed' here, and the way it is used in this verse, it is easy to see that it is referring to the conquests of the Medo-Persian Empire.

The Medes and Persians conquered Lydia to the west 547 B.C. and Babylon 539 B.C., Egypt and Nubia in the south 525 B.C., and the Scythians in the north in 513 B.C. The entire number of provinces were 127 (Esther 1:1) from India to Ethiopia.

II. The He Goat (Daniel 8:5-8)

Behold an he goat - Daniel is now introduced to the next power whilst watching the ram, thus showing that these are consecutive kingdoms. Once again there is no guessing who this is, for we are told in verse 21 that the he goat is the kingdom of Grecia or Greece, under the rulership of Alexander the Great.

On the face of the whole earth - Thus showing Greece to be a world dominating power.

Touched not the ground - Greece was to cover the face of the whole earth in a short space of time, hence the wording touched not the ground. Under Alexander they did this in 12 short years, conquering everything from Macedonia to India and south to Egypt, marching his army over 8364 km during the 12 years.

Notable horn between his eyes - From verse 21 we see that this notable horn is the first king. History tells us that this was Alexander the Great.

Came to the ram...fury of his power...moved with choler - The Bible describes the goat as coming to the ram in the fury of his power and being moved with choler against him, why? Here is a comment from Adam Clarke's Commentary on Daniel to show the reason;

Speaking of Alexander he says, "*Subdued Persia and Media; sacked and burnt the royal city of Persepolis, the capital of the Persian Empire, and, even in its ruins, it is one of the wonders of the world to the present day. This he did because 'he was moved with choler' against Darius, who had endeavoured to draw off his captains with bribes, and had laboured to induce some of his friends to assassinate him. Alexander, finding this, would listen to no proposals of peace; and was determined never to rest till he had destroyed Darius and his whole empire. In Media, Darius [not the King Darius of Daniel's time] was seized and made prisoner by some of his own treacherous subjects, and afterwards basely murdered.*" -Adam Clarke's Commentary on Daniel, pg. 597

From the rest of verse 7 it is easy to see that Alexander utterly destroyed the Medo-Persian empire, for the Bible says that he, "smote the ram...brake his two horns...no power in the ram...cast him down...stamped upon him...none that could deliver the ram". Alexander's empire covered Greece and Macedonia in the west, and east through to almost the Indus River, then south through Syria, Palestine, and Egypt.

Therefore the he goat waxed very great - Because Alexander's kingdom covered a greater territory than the Medes and Persians, and the fact that he conquered them, Greece is regarded as waxing very great.

When he was strong...horn was broken - When the empire was at its peak in strength, Alexander died in a drunken debauch at about the age of 31. Just before his death, he was asked to whom the kingdom would go. The reply came back... it would go to the strongest.

Next week we will explore the impact these kingdoms, especially Greece have made on our world and how the philosophies of these nations have molded modern societies to the present time.