

Daniel 8:1-11 –God’s Unstoppable Kingdom: The Ram, The Goat

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God did not give these details about the 4 beasts (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) to simply show that the Bible was accurate historically 历史准确性. These nations were merely pawns in the puzzle. **God gave these details to show his guiding hand in history: That Messiah’s coming to establish a world kingdom was unstoppable.** These 4 wicked nations, who were children of Satan, would fight to stop God’s redemption plan, but God’s love for his people and God’s power would be unstoppable. The pawns would be destroyed. And then the Son of the Woman would come to crush Satan’s head, the head of the pawns. Neither hell nor high water could stop it. . . Neither fire nor floods could stop it. **And before Messiah came, God would use the defeat of these pawns as a comfort to his people.** As the Jews saw God fulfilling his prophecies, defeating these nations one by one, their faith in the coming Savior would be strengthened, even though they would suffer. Today you will see the prophetic details about the 2nd and 3rd Empires.

Our headings are: **The Medo-Persian Ram** 公羊 and **The Greek Goat.**

Our goals are: That you **will be strengthened in your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ** seeing how strictly and ably God fulfills his promises, and that you then love him more.

The Medo-Persian Ram

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.

1. Daniel’s dreams and visions did not appear all at once. One dream was built upon another. If Daniel had one big, long dream, it would have been easy to doubt it. But his dreams were given progressively 逐步 over time, and they were built upon another. It was like having multiple witnesses. Multiple witness ascertain 确定了 truthfulness. And don’t forget that Nebuchadnezzar had similar dreams which confirmed Daniel’s visions.

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.

2. In his dream, Daniel was standing by the River Ulai in Shushan. (Ezekiel also had a vision of being in another place. While he was in Babylon he had a vision of being in Jerusalem. Ezekiel 8) Now Susa, here called, Shushan, was a beautiful place. Shushan means “lily.” There were many lilies growing around. Sushan became the capital city of the Persian Empire after the Persians conquered the Medes. Shushan was extremely rich. Cyrus stored his riches there. It was impregnable 坚不可摧 by the standards of those days. In fact, there was a fortress there that was never ever captured.

3. What about the river? The river Ulai was also special. It ran around the city of Shushan. Writers described the water as extremely clean and “light,” meaning that it was drinkable and had less sediment 沉淀. The kings of the Medes and the Persians used to carry that water for drinking wherever they travelled.

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. 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.

4. Let us now consider what Daniel saw in Sushan by the Ulai River.

a. **He saw a ram – a male sheep- with 2 horns.** The Medo-Persian Empire was made up of 2 nations, the Medes and the Persians. Earlier Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream the 2 arms joined by the chest to represent the Medo-Persian Empire. It was not strange that God used the ram to describe the Medo-Persian Empire. **The ram was the royal ensign of the Persians,** according to Marcellinus. Persian kings used to wear a ram’s head for a diadem 王冠, made of gold.

b. **He saw 1 of the 2 horns becoming higher or larger than the other horn. This came true. Cyrus the Persian became more powerful than the Medes, though the Medes were more powerful before.** Historical ruins confirm depictions 描写 of the larger horn in drawings.

c. **Daniel saw the ram moving west, north, and south, but not east.** This is exactly what the Medo-Persian Empire did. Cyrus was from the east.

d. **Daniel saw the ram moving with great force.** This is common with rams. They would throw their entire weight when they launch forward and raise their hind legs. The Medo-Persian ram did exactly this. John Gill: “[The ram captured] to the west, Babylon, Syria, Asia, and part of Greece; to the north, Iberia, Albania, Armenia, Scythia, Colchis, and the inhabitants of the Caspian sea; and to the south, Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and India. . .” God said:

Isaiah 46:11 Calling a **bird of prey 猎物 from the east**, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken *it*; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed *it*; I will also do it.

e. The ram crushed everything in its path. The Medo-Persians did whatever they wanted and no alliance of nations could stand up against them. You would find that a history of the Medo-Persian Empire quite a good read, especially when you see what God prophesied about it. And even as the Medo-Persians progressed, God's people would have been able to say: "My God is controlling them. My God is unstoppable."

The Greek Goat

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. 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 忿怒地 7 And I saw him confronting 走近 the ram; **he was moved with rage** against him 向它发怒, 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 践踏 him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

1. Daniel then saw a male goat coming quickly from the West. This was Greece – more accurately, Macedonia, part of Greece. **The Greek army, under Alexander, had the ensign of a goat on their arms.** The Aegean Sea is next to Greece and means "goat sea." Now the Greek army was known for being fleet-footed 飞毛腿 and walked majestically as goats do. Greek soldiers moved with incredible speed over desert or mountains. It was almost as if their feet did not touch the ground. Then Greece ran right into the ram. Wasn't it Alexander who cried because there were not more nations to conquer 征服?

2. Daniel then saw the Goat confronting the ram (Medo-Persia) in the East, and destroying it, even while the Medo-Persians thought they were safe and standing around watching the lilies by the river and enjoying their comforts. Darius Codomannus was the Medo-Persian leader at that time. The Medo-Persians had no power to withstand the force of the goat – Greece. In one battle 20,000 Persians were killed, but only 34 Greek soldiers died. In Sushan Alexander the Great captured about 50,000 talents of gold, uncounted silver, and a large cache of precious stones.

3. Question: Why was the Greek army is such a rage to not only attack and destroy the ram but also to trample him underfoot? According to history, Alexander's crushing force was based on a personal insult he received from the arrogant Persian king. Darius had sent a mocking message to Alexander, called himself king of kings, and compared himself to a god. He called Alexander his servant, and ordered Alexander's own people to take him and whip 鞭 him with children's rods, clothe him in purple, deliver him bound to him, sink his ships with the mariners, and then transport all his soldiers to the furthest part of the Red Sea. Later, as he moved to Persia, according to the historian Josephus, Jaddus, the High Priest in Jerusalem, took Alexander and showed him this prophecy in Daniel's writing that the Greeks would destroy the Persians. This apparently 显然地 gave much pleasure to Alexander as he thought of himself as the means by which this would be accomplished.

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.

4. Upon the defeat of the Medo-Persians (Ram) – in only 2 battles, Daniel saw that Alexander the Great (goat) became very powerful and declared himself to be the son of Jupiter and Lord of the world. (He had captured the known world.) He burned down an important building in Sushan and indulged in drunkenness and debaucheries 放荡. Alexander the Great died by disease or poison about 31 years of age. (I think it was poison because of a disease.)

5. But Daniel saw that when Alexander the Great unduly 过度地 exalted himself the Greek Empire experienced great tragedy. He, the large horn, died young and the kingdom was divided into 4 parts: **Egypt, Greece, Asia, and Syria.**
a. **Ptolemy was king of Egypt** and included Lybia, Palestine, Arabia, and Caelesyria.
b. **Cassander was king of Macedonia and Greece.**
c. **Lysimachus was king of Asia** which included Thrace, Bithynia.
d. **Seleucus was king of Syria.**

Of the 4 parts, 1 became greater. This is historically verifiable 可核查. (Horn was a symbol of power.) From before: **Daniel 7:6** "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

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.** 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.

6. One notable of the 4 leaders of Greece would rise up after Alexander the Great and set his heart toward Jerusalem, that Glorious Land – the land where God dwelt, but this was after he had conquered much of Egypt. His name was Antiochus Epiphanes. He is identified in the Apocrypha as this horrible horn. Familiarize yourself with this name.

7. That little horn who grew large attacked the “host of heaven” and the “stars of heaven” in Jerusalem. Who are the hosts of heaven and the stars of heaven? Christians are the hosts (armies) of heaven. Your names are written in heaven. You are citizens of heaven. **The stars of heaven were the great leaders.** How can you know that the leaders there were “stars?” Obviously these were not literal 字面上 stars. In Matthew 24, you see that the stars will fall from heaven, meaning that the leaders (priest, Levites, princes) of Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans. You can see leaders being called “stars) in Isaiah 13:10, 14:13). Antiochus’ goal was to destroy Judah’s religion and leaders. When anyone objected, he barbarously 野蛮 put them to death. Antiochus also attacked Media, Persia, and Armenia, and required tribute from them. He didn’t go north because he was in the North.

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. 12 **Because of transgression**, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered 繁荣

8. That little horn who grew large, Antiochus, did not want a semblance 外表 of true worship in Judah. He removed Judas Maccabeus, prince of the Jews, and made himself higher than the spiritual Prince of the Host, God. He stopped the morning and evening sacrifices to Jehovah. He destroyed the altar. He removed the holy things from the temple: the table of the showbread, the pouring vessels, the vials 瓶, the censers 香炉 of gold, the veil, the crown, and the golden ornaments 饰品 that were before the temple. He killed pigs on the altar before destroying it. God put his name in Jerusalem and this wicked man decided that he was going to remove God’s name. He stole from God. So this was war! Antiochus looked like he was prospering. Guess who would lose!

9. But why did God let this happen? God’s sovereignty: This was part of God’s plan so he would show his dominance over the world and strengthen the faith of his people Like the thief on the cross, Jesus did not remove him from them from suffering...he simply assured them of future victory.

Conclusion:

The Greeks would come with vengeance 报复 in their hearts against the arrogant Persians and quickly destroy their empire. Then the Greek Empire, because it became arrogant, was split in 4, with the king of the Syrian part excelling as the head. This one, Antiochus, would destroy many nations and set his heart to destroy Jerusalem and the worship there. He would be successful as the world counts success. Eventually, because of arrogance, he himself was destroyed. All the while, God people’s faith would be strengthened as they saw God’s sovereign hand in history. The Jews faced horrors, but they had hope.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: It would have been easy for the covenant children of God to take their eyes off of their sovereign God when they faced the dismal 惨淡 circumstances of their lives. They could easily have forgotten their deliverance from the Babylonians and Medo-Persians. They might have wondered if God would really cause his kingdom to spread all over the world when it looked like it was retreating 退宿. And that is what it might look like to those who are suffering today in persecuted countries...or those of us in Canada who see a contracting church 教会 萎缩, an anti-Christian educational system, self-indulgent 自我放纵 politicians, and an evil supreme court 最高法院 that describes God’s truth as criminal hate speech. But don’t lose hope. You might even become the laughing stock of the world for a time. But you can trust the promises of Jesus Christ. He saved you and he will keep you. All the wicked will be destroyed. He is your Lord. He will never leave his church. None of these armies could stop him from coming to die for your sins, and no army can stop him today from establishing his kingdom in this world! So work for him. And teach this with clarity 清晰 and persistency 持续性 to your children.

Finally, do you see what God does to his enemies? Do not remain an enemy of God. Hear his call to come to him. He offers the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as your own.