

Dan 8:12-14—God’s Unstoppable Kingdom-A Common Hindrance

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God had already brought down the Assyrians by the Babylonians because they had taken Israel as slaves in 722BC. God then confirmed through Daniel that he would bring down the Babylonians and the Medo-Persians for their enslavement of Judah. Today we will continue to see how God promised to remove all obstacles to advance his unstoppable kingdom. The next empire in the way was Greece. And so far, you have seen how God would remove Alexander the Great, emperor of Greece, and his kingdom would be split into 4 parts – or horns. Of the 4 parts, one would become greater than the other 3. That part would be ruled by a wicked man named Antiochus Epiphanes. He would become more powerful and conquer nations around, including Egypt. His arrogance in his success would make him set his heart on Jerusalem and the people of God. What a bad choice! God had promised his people for many generations that Messiah would come to die for the sins of the world one more obstacle 阻碍 would not stop his kingdom. So Antiochus Epiphanes, whose adopted name meant “stubborn revelation of God,” was next in line for destruction.

But there would be another obstacle to God’s unstoppable kingdom—an obstacle that would delay the destruction of Antiochus. **This other obstacle was sin within the ranks of God’s own covenant people.** God had to deal with that obstacle first before he removed Antiochus. And that is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are: **God permitted Persecution of his people from the Greek Goat,** and **God limited the Length of the Persecution of his people by the Goat.**

Our goals are: **That you will learn that you can hinder阻碍 the kingdom by living careless lives in your homes, church, or society,** and that you will endeavor, as children redeemed by Jesus Christ, to live for his glory.

God Permitted Persecution of his people from the Greek Goat

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** 凡事顺利

1. **Why would God have permitted the Greeks to persecute his people?** The answer is clear: The Jews would transgress违背 God’s law. So as a Father, he would chasten them.

2. **What kinds of sins would the Jews commit?** The priests would become careless about offering the regular sacrifices. They would spurn摒弃 God’s sacrifices. This was already happening 400 years before Jesus Christ came.

Malachi 1:6 "A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' 7 "You offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible可以藐视的' 8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts... **13** You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness真麻烦' And you sneer at it嗤之以鼻" Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD. 14 "But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished残疾—For I am a great King," Says the LORD of hosts...

But God loved his worship and gave strict guidance who should lead it and how it should be done. And God had warned that sin is a reproach责备 to any people.

Malachi 2:6 The law of truth was in his mouth, And injustice was not found on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and equity, And turned many away from iniquity.

What stunning warning this is for those who spurn the Lord’s sacrifice, and ignore his due worship! Don’t expect your children to remain in the church unless you teach them truth and discipline them. Don’t expect them to love the Sabbath unless they are trained to love the Sabbath. Don’t expect your church to grow unless you are playing your part and inviting others in. Don’t expect your marriage to be blessed unless you put the time into making it strong. Don’t expect prosperity if you are robbing God of your tithes. Don’t expect Canada to be a noble country unless you are working to keep it so. When you don’t live as a Christian it is like you are saying: “I don’t care about the sacrifice of Jesus.” As God looked ahead he saw that his people would be careless about his sacrifices (choosing to put their energies into their own houses), and he would have to use Antiochus to wake up his people. Antiochus would be God’s rod to restore his roaming children. What is God seeing as he looks ahead in your future?

3. **Did this happen? How were the Jews persecuted by Antiochus for perverting曲解 God’s sacrifices?**

a. **Antiochus appointed an army which stopped the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem.** This was the morning and

evening sacrifices that showed a constant communion with the Lord. History: Antiochus sent a garrison 驻军 to deal with the Jews. But some Jews also joined with Antiochus and told him how to really get under the skin of the Jews. They told him how to pervert worship and to kill pigs on the Lord's holy altar 圣坛. To the Jews that as an unfathomable 莫测 thing.

b. Antiochus “cast truth down to the ground” by savagely destroying the leaders and teachers of God's people. He attempted to remove any semblance 相似 of religion from Jerusalem. Once he took a copy of the Law, cut it in pieces, and burned it on the ground. You can get some details from the Apocrypha. 1 Maccabees 1:57 *And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death.* 58 *Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities.* 59 *Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God.* 60 *At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised.* History: Jason, a Jew, wanted to take the priesthood from his brother Onias so he opened the gates to Antiochus. Antiochus then slaughtered 屠宰 many, including all of Onias' followers. Later, Menelaus, the Greek in charge, expelled Jason again by similar treachery 背叛.

c. Antiochus renamed the temple, proclaiming it the temple of Jupiter Olympius. He removed Jehovah's name.

5. While Antiochus would persecute the people of God, he would prosper. One would have expected that a wicked man would have been judged early by God, but that was not the case. God's timing and the way he works are often different from what you might expect. Yet, Antiochus would only be able to do what he would do because God would permit him. Herod was also allowed to prosper, even to kill James, before he was stopped by God. God's ways are right. God destroys the wicked when he is ready.

God Limited the Length of the Persecution of his people by the Goat

13 Then I heard a **holy one** speaking; and **another holy one** said to that certain one who was speaking, "**How long will the vision be**, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation 引致毁灭的罪过, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled 践踏 under foot?" 14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

1. Daniel heard a “Holy One” speaking-most likely the Lord Jesus Christ, the uncreated Angel of the Lord. (Angel means “sent one.” Jesus was often called “The Angel of the Lord.”) Then another holy one came and asked Jesus Christ, the 1st Holy One, how long the Greek Goat would persecute the people of God and how long would the people of God have to wait for the cleansing of the temple from the Greek Goat's pollution? Why did he ask this question of the Jesus Christ? The angel asked this for the good of Daniel and God's covenant people.

2. The 2nd holy one who had talked to Jesus Christ then responded to Daniel with a seemingly strange answer. He said that the persecution would last for 2300 days. Did it mean six years, three months, and eighteen days...as in natural days? Absolutely. Visions (as opposed to dreams) are not as complicated. (BTW, this is another reason you can trust God's Word. What God's Word says will surely happen.) For 6 years, three months, and 18 days there were no morning and evening sacrifices. It started from the **15th day of Chislev of 145th** year of the Selucidae calendar, to **13th of Adar, the 151st** year when Judas obtained victory over Nicanor (who collaborated with Antiochus). Look at some more details about what happened. 1Ma 1:14 *“So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom...”* 2Ma 4:12 *“For with alacrity 敏捷 he founded a gymnasium right under the citadel 堡垒 and he induced the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat. 13 There was such an extreme of Hellenization 希腊化 and increase in the adoption of foreign ways because of the surpassing wickedness of Jason, who was ungodly and no high priest, 14 that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar. Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened 急忙 to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the call to the discus, 15 disdaining 蔑视 the honors prized by their fathers and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige 威望 16 For this reason heavy disaster overtook them, and those whose ways of living they admired and wished to imitate completely became their enemies and punished them.”* There is no question about the length of time that the daily offering ceased. It was exactly as God said to Daniel.

3. After administering the rod to his people who has suffered long enough, (Calvin: God moderate the hand of evil.) God would clean up his temple, and clear out Antiochus his pawn. Was God right to destroy Antiochus even though he used him as his pawn – his rod? Yes, no one wants his neighbor to spank 打 his child, let alone his enemy. Further, it was Antiochus' free will that he chose to be so cruel to God's people. So God was fully justified. And you will hear how God destroyed him next time, but come with an empty stomach. Did this really happen? *1 Maccabees 4: "Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary. So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: Who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare (carried) out the defiled污秽的 stones into an unclean place. And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned褻渎; They thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach责备 to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to show what should be done with them. Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former; And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts. They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table. And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple. Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils面纱, and finished all the works which they had begun to make."*

4. The Jews continued to celebrate that day of the cleansing of the temple with an annual feast. From that time they enjoyed a great measure of peace. They could wait for Messiah to appear.

Conclusion:

God permitted the Greek Goat to enter in to the Promised Land and persecute his people for some time for their complacency自满is worship. This happened by a conspiracy图谋between some Jews and the Greeks. But that persecution would only last for a time – **a time determined by God.** God never destroys his own people permanently. He may spank them for a time, but not forever. He promised that to Adam, Abraham, David, and Solomon specifically. With the Greeks expelled, it then set the stage for the final kingdom to come, the one in which the Lord Jesus Christ would come and establish his kingdom that would spread throughout the entire world.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: **God is always on the throne. Men may bring an affront侮辱 to his holy majesty and pure worship perverted, but he still rules.** He controls and uses the nations of the world for his own good pleasure, as his pawns兵卒. **Second, God uses persecutions to humble and admonish his people** so they will confess their sins before him and return to good favor. (Remember Solomon's prayer when the temple was dedicated?) **Third, those who abuse God's people for their own advancement will also meet his judgment.** God didn't let his people rob him and he certainly would not let Antiochus the Greek...or any judge in Canada...or Hugo Chavez (who chased missionaries out of Venezuela), or Kim Jong Un of North Korea (who crushes Christians with bulldozers), or Fidel Castro of Cuba (who throws Christians in prisons and forgets them), or Muslims, or Hindus, or Buddhists rob him. God will destroy every persecutor of his people so they will spread again. No pawn could stop Messiah from coming to die for the sins of the world; no pawn could stop his kingdom from expanding.

Finally: Do you want to continue to be a pawn that will be used by God and then deposited in hell, or do you want to be a child of God who is cared for, loved, and secured forever in heaven? If you want to be God's child, ask him to make you his child. The price for your new citizenship was paid by Jesus Christ!