

**Daniel 8**  
**December 27, 2015**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

List on DEB: **2-Horned Ram** (Persia, Medes); **Uni-Horn Goat** (Alexander the Great); **4 Horns:** Cassander would rule Greece; Lysimachus would control Asia Minor; Seleucus would control Syria; and Ptolemy would rule Egypt; **The Little Horn** (Antiochus Epiphanes IV)

Q: Let's see who follows commercials well. There is a car rental commercial done by National Car Rental [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls78ieMvORA>] where a customer is well-known for being a "control freak," but he prefers to label himself a "control x?" [Control Enthusiast – He walks past the complimentary coffee, picks up a cup, takes a sip and says, "Ahhh! Coffee at exactly 177"; and then he walks to the car lot liking the option of talking to humans – but he doesn't and walks right past them, etc.]

Q: There is nothing wrong with needing to feel a sense of control. At the individual level, that's important for all of us. But let's shift our focus globally and look at the issue of being a "control enthusiast" by government leaders. Why do you think there are rulers in our world who are power-hungry to rule others? Why do you think that so important to them? [Let the class struggle with this]

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/200908/how-power-corrupts-leaders> [Contrast "socialized power" to benefit others vs "personalized power" to benefit self at the expense of others. Power can be intoxicating. Look at Tiger Woods.]

Human nature hasn't changed over the years, has it?!

**Transition:** Daniel is going to have another vision in chapter 8 that will portray a variety of rulers who will be "control enthusiasts." What he saw was obviously futuristic from his vantage point, but much of it is now history from our vantage point with ample historical evidence of the exact fulfillment of this vision. As we go through the latest vision, consider the words of Jesus who told His disciples in Matt 28:18-20, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples..." Have you seriously considered the fact that Jesus, who had "all authority" distributed that "authority" to each of us and gave us the POWER of the Holy Spirit to be able to do His work? Daniel not only saw this vision, but he became exhausted and lay ill for several days because it was sickening to him. Yet, he got up after several days of illness and "went about the king's business." I am proposing that *each of us can make a significant impact in our world today by doing the Lord's business with the power He's distributed to us*. Since Jesus is our King, let's be "control enthusiasts" and start thinking about the WAYS we can go about the Lord's business. Let's begin.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):** [Read Daniel 8]

V.1:

- In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me.

V.2:

- In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam (modern Kuwait); in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal.

V.3:

- 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.

V.4:

- 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.

V.5:

- 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.

V.6:

- He came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at him in great rage.

V.7:

- 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.

V.8:

- 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.

V.9:

- 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.

V.10:

- 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.

V.11:

- 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.

V.12:

- 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.

V.13:

- 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?"

V.14:

- He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be re-consecrated."

V.15:

- While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man.

V.16:

- And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

V.17:

- 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."

V.18:

- 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.

V.19:

- 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."

V.20:

- The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.

V.21:

- The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.

V.22:

- 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.

V.23:

- "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise."

V.24:

- 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.

V.25:

- 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.

V.26:

- "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."

V.27:

- 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.

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Historical Background: V.2 - Daniel was in Elam at the fortress of Susa. This is near modern Kuwait, about 150 miles north of the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Later, this became the capitol of the Persian Empire and it would have been where Queen Esther and Nehemiah lived. We aren't

sure if Daniel is actually there or if he was simply transported there in his vision, which seems to be more likely.

Now that you've read the content of this dream, let me help summarize what Daniel dreamed and the interpretation the angel Gabriel gave Daniel. Daniel dreamed of a mighty ram with two massive horns, but one horn was bigger than the other. This Ram was powerful and it charged around beating every other animal. But then Daniel saw a strange looking goat approaching the Ram. It had one horn growing out from its forehead (almost like a unicorn, but probably more like a rhinoceros). Well, this one-horned goat destroyed the ram and trampled it down in the dirt. But suddenly its horn was snapped off, and growing in its place were four other horns and growing out of one of those four horns was another little horn and then this little horn did some mean things to God's people and God's temple.

**V.13-14 (Re-Read):** Daniel himself was troubled and confused, so verse 16 tells us Gabriel comes to give him a clear interpretation. By the way, of all the angels in the bible, only three are named. Obviously, one of them is Gabriel. This is the same angel who spoke to the Virgin Mary and Joseph. Another is the archangel, Michael. We'll read about him in chapter 10. So who is the third angel identified by name in the Bible? [Lucifer, the fallen angel.]

**V. 20-24:** Gabriel explains the dream to Daniel. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. 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. In the later part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise [that's the little horn]. 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.

### **1. A RAMPAGING RAM: Medo-Persian Empire**

When Daniel received this dream, the Babylonian Empire was still in place, but God showed him there was a new empire on the horizon, one God would use to fulfill the prophecy to all the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed. This ram had one horn that was larger than the other. This symbolizes the Persians who were always the more powerful of the two nations in this coalition.

### **2. A "UNI-HORN" GOAT: The Greek Empire under Alexander the Great**

The goat represents the Greek Empire, and the single horn is Alexander. The Greek Empire grew to world domination under the leadership of Alexander the Great. Alexander was the son of Phillip, King of Macedonia. History books state that when Alexander was a boy, his father enlisted Plato's disciple, Aristotle, to be his personal tutor. Phillip always told Alexander he would be a great leader. From an early age, he was convinced he would rule the world.

Alexander really didn't love his father, as much as he did his mother, Olympias. In fact many scholars write that Alexander grew up angry with this father for his many indiscretions against Olympias.

As early as age 18, Alexander was already leading armies into battle. When he was only 20, his father was murdered (some say by a plot hatched by Alexander's mother) and he became the ruler of the Greeks. His decisive battle against the Persians took place near modern Syria at the battle of Issus, which he won in 333 B.C. at age 23. Within the next ten years he would conquer the entire world from Italy to Egypt to modern Pakistan.

After his victory at Issus in 333, Alexander headed south toward Egypt and he planned to capture Jerusalem. The Jewish writer, Josephus, shares a fascinating incident about Alexander. As Alexander and his army approached Jerusalem, he was planning to destroy the city. Remember the city had just been rebuilt about a hundred years earlier by Ezra and Nehemiah. There was only the basic building of the second Temple constructed by Zerubbabel. Josephus writes that while Alexander was considering destroying the city, the High Priest went out with a scroll and explained to him that he and his army (the goat) were destined by the God of the Hebrews to conquer the Ram (the Persians). The account says Alexander was so impressed that instead of destroying the city, he enriched it and then bypassed it on his way to capture and control Egypt. It must have been exciting to the High Priest to read the Bible and realize prophecy was being fulfilled at that moment.

So Alexander is this uni-horn on the goat. But at the apex of his power, this single horn was suddenly broken off. Alexander the Great died suddenly at age 33.

### 3. THE FOUR HORNS: The four generals who divided Alexander's territory

Alexander made no plans for the continuation of his kingdom. He had children, but he cared little for them and never designated an heir to his empire. So when he died suddenly, there was a conflict between the leading generals and finally they arrived at a tenuous agreement to divide the empire. Cassander would rule Greece; Lysimachus would control Asia Minor; Seleucus would control Syria; and Ptolemy would rule over Egypt.

This is history for us, but remember Daniel predicted all of this almost 300 years before it happened.

### 4. THE LITTLE HORN: Antiochus Epiphanes IV

Those of you who were here last week read about a "little horn" in Daniel 7 and say, "I know the little horn is the Antichrist." Yes and no. This little horn in chapter 8 is different than the little

horn in chapter 7, but as we will see later in this message, he is a forerunner, a type of the antichrist.

Most scholars agree this individual in Chp 8 is Antiochus Epiphanes IV. His capital city was Antioch, which was named for him. (Antioch appears in the New Testament as the place where believers were first called Christians, Acts 11:26)

This man, Antiochus Epiphanes (Epiphanes means “great”) was a wicked and vicious ruler. He hated the Jews and they hated him. He demanded crowds of people honor him by crying out “Epiphanes” whenever he would pass by. Instead, the Jews had nicknamed him Antiochus “Epimanes” a word play on his name. Epimanes means “madman” or “idiot” and so they shouted “Epimanes” when he passed by and that made him even madder.

During the Persian Gulf War, President H.W. Bush used to pronounce Saddam Hussein as “Sadam” which in Arabic can be translated “little man.” It was a taunt. The Jews taunted Antiochus and he got back at them in vicious ways. He committed terrible atrocities against the Jews. Here are just a few examples of his treatment of God’s people:

- He forbade circumcision,
- He outlawed the Sabbath observance and made it a criminal offense for anyone to possess or read the Jewish scriptures. As you can imagine, the Jews rebelled against him, and his punishment was swift and brutal.
- On one occasion, Antiochus forced a Jewish mother watch as her seven sons were fried to death on a large hot metal pan, and then her eyes were blinded so that would be her last sight.
- He was cruel. He was vicious. He was evil. He slaughtered 80,000 Jews on a single occasion.
- But the vilest thing he did from a Jewish standpoint was to set up an image of Zeus in the Jewish Temple (the statue had a striking resemblance to who else? Antiochus). He ordered the Jews to worship that image. And, horror of horrors, he personally sacrificed a hog on the sacred altar and sprinkled the juice and blood of the hog all around the holy place and then it was repeated every month. In doing this, he defiled the temple. It was as verse 13 says, “a rebellion or abomination that causes desolation.” That means the faithful Jews left, or deserted the Temple, so it was desolate. That’s a pretty important term, so hang onto it.

In this dream, Daniel predicted Antiochus would invade the Holy Land, desecrate the temple and cause the sacrifices to cease for 2,300 sacrifices (morning and evening). Just as today, a morning and evening make one day, so if you divide 2,300 by two, you get 1,150 days. As anyone who has read the Book of the Maccabees (in the Apocrypha) knows, Jewish history records that the offering was taken away for a period of a little over three years. Finally, Judas Maccabees and his sons rose in revolt and led the people of Israel to retake Jerusalem, cleansed the sanctuary and restored the offerings at the end of 1,150 days, exactly as predicted. The re-dedication of the Temple on December 14, 164 B.C. is the reason our Jewish friends celebrate Hanukkah each

December. That is an amazing fulfillment of the scriptures!

**LOOK:**

I suggested at the beginning of class that *all of us can make a significant impact in our world today by doing the Lord's business with the power He's distributed to us*. Given that we live in a world with rulers in other countries who are power-hungry and want to benefit themselves at the expense of others, what are ways that we can be intentional and use the authority Jesus has given us and the POWER He has given to "go about the King's business" just like Daniel?

**Ideas:**

- Prayer
- Share the gospel to give people hope
- Serve others
- Show compassion to those who are hurting

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Da 8). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

## **II. The Vision of the Ram and He Goat (8)**

This vision is actually an amplification of 7:6, explaining how Greece will conquer Medo-Persia. We are back to the Hebrew language in chapter 8 (to the end of the book; since 2:4, it has been in Chaldean). Chapter 8 takes place two years after chapter 7 and describes the kingdoms that will follow Babylon after it falls. God carried Daniel in a vision to the capital of Persia, the palace in Shushan (see Neh. 1:1). Why Shushan? Because Persia would be the next empire.

*The ram* (vv. 3–4) represents Medo-Persia in its conquests (v. 20); the emblem of Persia was a ram. Just about the time the ram was through “pushing,” the he goat appeared from the west (v. 5) and leaped swiftly to where the ram was standing. This ram had two horns, one higher than the other, symbolizing the Medes and the Persians, with the Persians the stronger. The he goat had one great horn—Alexander the Great. Now, the he goat attacked the ram, broke the two horns, and became very great (vv. 7–8). This represents Greece's victory over Medo-Persia. But then we see the great horn broken (Alexander's death) and four horns taking its place (the four generals who divided his kingdom and ruled over it).

But here comes a “little horn” again. We met a “little horn” back in 7:8, and now we have another one. The “little horn” in 7:8 represented the Antichrist, the world ruler of the final world empire before the return of Christ to earth. But this “little horn” in 8:9 comes out from one of the four horns; that is, he is a leader who comes out of one of the four divisions of Alexander's kingdom. So, this “little horn” is not the Antichrist of the “latter days,” although he has a definite connection with him. This “little horn” conquers nations to the south and east (Egypt, Persia), and then invades Palestine (“the pleasant land”). He not only attacks the Jews politically, but also religiously; for he tries to destroy their faith (v. 10) by stopping the sacrifices in the temple (vv. 11–12). Verse 13 tells us that he will set up “the transgression of desolation” in the temple and defile the temple for 2,300 days. Who was this man? History names him: *Antiochus Epiphanes*, a wicked leader who came out of Syria, one of the four divisions of Alexander's empire. He invaded Palestine and set up a statue to Jupiter in the temple. He even went so far as to sacrifice a pig on the Jewish altar and sprinkle its blood around the courts. Imagine how the orthodox Jews felt about this. History tells us that the temple lay desolate until Dec. 25, 165 B.C., when the Jewish patriot, Judas Maccabeus, rededicated the temple and cleansed it. The total number of days between desecration and dedication was 2,300.

But this does not exhaust the vision's meaning. In vv. 17–26, the interpreting angel makes it clear that the vision reaches to the time of the end, the closing years of Jewish history. Antiochus Epiphanes is but an illustration, a foretaste, of the Man of Sin, the Antichrist, the “little horn” of 7:8. Verse 23 calls him “a king of fierce countenance.” This man will make an agreement to protect the Jews for seven years (9:27), but in the middle of this period he will break his promise, invade Palestine, and set himself up as world dictator. See vv. 24–25, 2 Thes. 2:1–12, and Rev. 13. He will take away the daily sacrifices in the temple, set up his own image (this is “the abomination of desolation” of Matt. 24:15), and force the world to worship and obey him. Verse 25 tells us he will use craft and lies to accomplish his purposes. He will even stand up against Christ, the Prince of princes. But this will be a losing battle. He shall be broken “without hand”



(see 2:34), defeated at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19). No wonder Daniel was overwhelmed. And so ought we to be as we consider the amazing prophecies of the Word of God.

**Pentecost, J. D. (1985). Daniel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1355–1359). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

A. *The vision of the ram and the goat (chap. 8)*

Chapters 8–12 (and 1:1–2:4a) are written in Hebrew, whereas 2:4b–7:28 are in Aramaic. For the significance of this, see “Languages” in the *Introduction*.

1. THE VISION (8:1–14)

a. *The preparation (8:1–2)*

8:1–2. The vision recorded by **Daniel** in chapter 8 came to him two years after the vision of chapter 7 (cf. Belshazzar’s **third year**, 8:1, with his “first year,” 7:1). In his **vision** Daniel **saw** himself **in the** palace in **Susa**, one of the Persian royal cities, more than 200 miles east of Babylon on **the Ulai Canal** (see map “The World of Jeremiah and Ezekiel” in the *Introduction* to Jer.). A century later the Persian king Xerxes built a magnificent palace there, which was where the events recorded in the Book of Esther took place (cf. Es. 1:2). And Nehemiah was King Artaxerxes’ cupbearer in the Susa palace (Neh. 1:1).

b. *The vision of the ram (8:3–4)*

8:3–4. In his vision Daniel saw **a ram with two long horns** near the **canal**. The significant thing was that **one horn was longer than the other**. The horns did not arise simultaneously; the longer one arose after (**grew up later** than) the shorter one. The disparity between the ram’s two horns recalls the bear raised up on one side (7:5). **The ram** that had been standing by the canal began to charge **toward the west ... north and ... south**. His charge was irresistible; **none could** escape his onslaught. Doing **as he wished**, the ram dominated all the territory against which he moved **and became great**.

c. *The vision of the goat (8:5–14)*

8:5–8. Daniel then saw **a goat with a powerful single horn** arise **suddenly ... from the west**. His speed was so great that his feet did not touch **the ground**. The goat, determined to destroy **the two-horned ram**, went **at him in great rage ... furiously** and broke the ram’s **two horns**.

**The ram was powerless** to defend himself and the goat subjugated the ram. The greatness that had characterized **the ram** now belonged to **the goat**. Previously none could escape from the ram’s power (v. 4); now **none could** escape from the goat (v. 7). As soon as **the goat** was elevated to great **power**, his **large single horn was broken off**, and **its place** was taken by **four prominent horns**.

The description of this goat is somewhat parallel to the third beast in 7:6, the leopard with wings. Both were rapid, and the leopard had four heads whereas the goat had four horns. The goat's horns probably represented kings (just as the horns on the fourth beast represented kings, 7:24).

8:9–12. **Out of one of the four horns came another horn.** It had an insignificant beginning but it exerted **power** southward and eastward **and toward the Beautiful Land**, that is, the land of Israel. He became a great persecutor of the people of Israel (**the host of the heaven**; cf. “host” in v. 13) and he subjugated that nation (**trampled on them**). He **set himself up** as Israel's king, calling himself **the Prince of the host**. He compelled the nation to worship him, as suggested by the fact that he prohibited Israel from following her religious practices (removing **the daily sacrifice**) and desecrated the temple (**brought the sanctuary ... low**). The nation Israel (**the saints**; cf. comments on 7:18) acceded to this individual's wishes because of his rebellious attitude (cf. “rebellion” in 8:13). He **prospered** and so despised the truth contained in God's Word that **truth was** said to be **thrown to the ground**.

This part of the vision anticipated the rise of a ruler in the Greek Empire who subjugated the people and land of Israel, desecrated her temple, interrupted her worship, and demanded for himself the authority and worship that belongs to God.

8:13–14. For Daniel's benefit an angel (**a holy one**; cf. “holy ones” in 4:17) addressed the revealing angel (**another holy one**) and asked, **How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled?** The answer was, **It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings.** (For the meaning of the “2,300 evenings and mornings” see the comments on 8:23–25.) At the conclusion of that time, **the sanctuary** that had been defiled would be cleansed and restored (**reconsecrated**) to its rightful place in the nation's life.

## 2. THE INTERPRETATION (8:15–27)

### a. *Gabriel's intervention (8:15–18)*

8:15–18. Once again **Daniel**, though able to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (chaps. 2; 4), could not interpret this dream (cf. 7:16). **Gabriel** was sent to interpret **the meaning of the vision** to Daniel. Understandably Daniel **was terrified** (cf. 7:15) by the appearance of the glorious messenger **and fell prostrate** before him. Referring to Daniel as a **son of man** (cf. comments on Ezek. 2:1; not to be confused with Christ, *the Son of Man*), Gabriel explained that **the vision** pertained to **the time of the end** (cf. Dan. 8:19), that is, events future from Daniel's day, events concerning the nation Israel under the Greek Empire.

### b. *Gabriel's interpretation (8:19–26)*

8:19. Gabriel stated that **the vision** pertained to events beyond Daniel's time (**what will happen later, and the appointed time of the end**; cf. v. 17). Significantly this later time, within the times of the Gentiles, was called **the time of wrath**. As stated earlier (chap. 2) the times of the Gentiles is the period from Nebuchadnezzar's reign to the second coming of Christ during which Israel is undergoing divine discipline. Her acts of disobedience brought forth God's disciplinary wrath on the nation.

8:20–21. Gabriel first interpreted the meaning of **the two-horned ram** (cf. vv. 3–7). This beast represented **Media and Persia**, the same empire represented by the bear raised up on one

side (7:5). Though Persia rose later than Media (559 B.C. for Persia compared with centuries earlier for Media) the Persians overshadowed the Medes. So the second horn on the ram was larger than the first horn. Persia extended its empire to the west, north, and south with a vast army of more than 2 million soldiers.

The angel then gave the meaning of **the shaggy goat with the large horn between his eyes**. The goat represented **the king** (or kingdom) **of Greece**, who in 7:6 was depicted by the winged leopard. (See the chart on p. 1356, “A Comparison of Daniel 2; 7; and 8.”) The single horn represented Greece’s **first king**, Alexander (cf. 11:3). Though his father Philip II of Macedonia had united all the Greek city-states except Sparta, Alexander is considered Greece’s first king.

Alexander the Great (the prominent horn, 8:5) came from the west with a small but fast army. He was enraged (v. 6) at the Persians for having defeated the Greeks at the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.) and the Battle of Salamis (481), Greek cities near Athens. He quickly conquered Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia in a few years, beginning in 334 B.C. The Persians were helpless to resist him (v. 7). (See the map on p. 1357, “The Route of Alexander’s Conquests.”) Alexander died of malaria and complications from alcoholism in 323 B.C. at the age of 32 in Babylon. At the height of his power he was cut off (v. 8).

8:22. Since Alexander had no heirs to succeed him, the kingdom was divided several years later among his four generals, represented here by **the four horns** (cf. v. 8; cf. 11:4). But the divided kingdom of Greece never had **the same power** Greece had enjoyed under Alexander. To Ptolemy was given Egypt and parts of Asia Minor. Cassander was given the territory of Macedonia and Greece. Lysimachus was given Thrace and parts of Asia Minor (western Bithynia, Phrygia, Mysia, and Lydia). Seleucus was given the remainder of Alexander’s empire which included Syria, Israel, and Mesopotamia.

8:23–25. Years later from among one of the four horns (kings) there would **arise**, Gabriel said, a severe (**stern-faced**) and cunning **king** (**a master of intrigue**; cf. **deceit**, v. 25). A powerful ruler, he would devastate property and **destroy** people in order to expand his kingdom. **The holy people**, the nation Israel (cf. “saints,” 7:18, 22, 27), would be a special target of his oppression. In subjugating Israel, **many** would lose their lives just when they thought they were safe. His antagonism against Israel would also be **against** her God, **the Prince of princes**. **Yet** this mighty conqueror himself would **be destroyed** by supernatural **power**. His rise was not his own doing (8:24) and his downfall was **not by human** means (he died insane in Persia in 163 B.C.).

The king referred to here is known as Antiochus IV Epiphanes. After murdering his brother, who had inherited the throne in the Seleucid dynasty, he came to power in 175 B.C. In 170 B.C. Ptolemy VI of Egypt sought to recover territory then ruled over by Antiochus. So Antiochus invaded Egypt and defeated Ptolemy VI and proclaimed himself king in Egypt. This was his growth “in power to the south” (v. 9). On his return from this conquest, trouble broke out in Jerusalem so he decided to subdue Jerusalem (“the Beautiful Land,” v. 9; cf. 11:16, 41). The people were subjugated, the temple desecrated, and the temple treasury plundered.

From this conquest Antiochus returned to Egypt in 168 but was forced by Rome to evacuate Egypt. On his return he determined to make the land of Israel a buffer state between himself and Egypt. He attacked and burned Jerusalem, killing multitudes (cf. 8:10). The Jews were forbidden to follow the Mosaic Law in observing the Sabbath, their annual feasts, and traditional sacrifices, and circumcision of children (cf. v. 11). Altars to idols were set up in Jerusalem and on December 16, 167 B.C. the Jews were ordered to offer unclean sacrifices and to eat swine’s flesh or be penalized by death. (Though his friends called him *Epiphanes* [“the Illustrious One”] no

wonder the Jews called him *Epimanes* [“the Madman”].) (For more on the role of Antiochus IV Epiphanes see comments on 11:21–35.)

Antiochus’ desecration of the temple was to last 2,300 evenings and mornings before its cleansing (8:14). Some take the 2,300 evenings and mornings to mean 2,300 days, that is, a little more than six years. In this interpretation, the six years were from Antiochus’ first incursion into Jerusalem (170 B.C.) to the refurbishing and restoring of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in late 164. A second interpretation seems preferable. Rather than each evening and each morning representing a day, the reference may be to evening and morning sacrifices, which were interrupted by Antiochus’ desecration (cf. “the daily sacrifice,” vv. 11–21). With two sacrifices made daily, the 2,300 offerings would cover 1,150 days or three years (of 360 days each) plus 70 days. This is the time from Antiochus’ desecration of the temple (December 16, 167 B.C.) to the refurbishing and restoring of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in late 164 and on into 163 B.C. when all the Jewish sacrifices were fully restored and religious independence gained for Judah. Whichever interpretation it is that one accepts, the figure of 2,300 was a literal one and so the time period was literally fulfilled.

There is no question among expositors that Antiochus is in view in this prophecy. What was prophesied was fulfilled literally through him. However, the prophecy looks beyond Antiochus to a future person (the Antichrist) of whom Antiochus is only a foreshadowing. This coming one is said to “stand against the Prince of princes” (v. 25). This can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the prophecy must go beyond Antiochus and look forward to the coming of one whose ministry will parallel that of Antiochus.

From Antiochus certain facts can be learned about the forthcoming desecrator: (1) He will achieve great power by subduing others (v. 24). (2) He will rise to power by promising false security (v. 25). (3) He will be intelligent and persuasive (v. 23). (4) He will be controlled by another (v. 24), that is, Satan. (5) He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugate Israel to his authority (vv. 24–25). (6) He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 25). (7) His rule will be terminated by divine judgment (v. 25). So it may be concluded that there is a dual reference in this striking prophecy. It reveals Israel’s history under the Seleucids and particularly under Antiochus during the time of Greek domination, but it also looks forward to Israel’s experiences under Antichrist, whom Antiochus foreshadows.

8:26. Daniel was told to **seal up the vision** in the sense of concluding it, not in the sense of keeping it secret, because it needed to be preserved for the **future**. He kept it in his mind and later preserved it in writing when he wrote it down under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration.

*c. Daniel’s response (8:27)*

8:27. **Daniel was** completely overcome (**exhausted and ... ill**) by the interpretation of this **vision**. **For several days** he was unable to carry on his official **business**.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (p. 1283). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**8:1–2** Some critics have argued that Susa (Hb *shushan*), the capital of Elam, did not exist in Belshazzar’s third year, because the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal had destroyed the city around 640 B.C. However, it is known that Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.) restored the Elamite gods from

Uruk to Susa, and Jeremiah indicated in prophecies delivered around 596 B.C. that Elam had again become a relatively strong nation (Jr 49:34–39). In any case, the condition of the city makes little difference because Daniel apparently visited Susa in vision only.

**8:3–14** Here Daniel predicted Alexander the Great's conquests 200 years beforehand, and Antiochus's persecutions 350 years in advance (vv. 20–26).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1283). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.