

Daniel 8: The Ram And The Goat.

In the ancient manuscripts, the Book of Daniel here resumes using the Hebrew language. The section from [Daniel 2:4](#) to [7:28](#) was written in Aramaic.

I. A mighty ram pushing in different directions.

The **ram** is clearly identified as representing the Medo-Persian Empire, which succeeded the Babylonian Empire. The Ram was the national emblem of Persia.

The ram is noted for the proportion of its **two horns, one higher than the other** - this was an accurate prediction of the partnership between the Medes and the Persians, because the Persians were larger and stronger in the partnership. They also emerged after the Medes (**the higher one came up last**).

Pushing westward, northward, and southward: The Medo-Persian Empire exerted its power to the north, south, and west. It assumed territory but made no major conquests towards the east. "The principle theatre of their wars, says *Calmet*, was against the SCYTHIANS, *northward*; against the GREEKS, *westward*; and against the EGYPTIANS, *southward*." (Clarke)

II. A male goat conquers the ram.

The **male goat** is clearly identified with Greece and its horns with the rulers of the Greek Empire. **Across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground:** The prophetic description of the male goat was proved to be accurate regarding the Greek Empire.

- The Greek Empire rose **from the west** of previous empires

- The Greek Empire rose with great speed (**suddenly ... without touching the ground**)

- The Greek Empire had a notable ruler, Alexander the Great (**a notable horn**)

- The Greek Empire had a famous war with the Medo-Persian Empire (**I saw him confronting the ram**)

- The Greek Empire and the Medo-Persian Empire greatly hated each other (**with furious power ... moved with rage**). Some of the greatest, fiercest battles of ancient history were fought between the Greeks and the Persians

- The Greek Empire conquered the Medo-Persian Empire (**no one that could deliver the ram from his hand**)

- The reign of the notable leader of the Greek Empire was suddenly cut short (**the large horn was broken**)

- After the end of Alexander the Great's reign, the Greek Empire was divided among four rulers (**in place of it four notable ones came up**)

- The four rulers of the Greek Empire after Alexander ruled their own dominions, not the entire empire together (**came up toward the four winds of heaven**)

Alexander did not divide the empire among his four generals himself. His four leading generals divided it among themselves by force after his death.

- Cassander, ruling over Greece and its region

- Lysimachus, ruling over Asia Minor

- Seleucus, ruling over Syria and Israel's land

- Ptolemy, ruling over Egypt

The male goat grew very great: The greatness of Alexander's Empire was not only in its vast dominion, but also in its cultural power. Alexander the Great was determined to spread Greek civilization, culture, and language across every land he conquered.

As God guided history, He used Alexander's passion to spread Greek culture to prepare the world for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of Alexander's influence *koine* (common) Greek became the common language of the civilized world - and the language of the New Testament.

i. (9-12) The strong horn that arises from the four horns of the male goat.

This was fulfilled in one of the four successors to Alexander the Great. Since the dominion of this horn was extended **toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land**, we can identify the historical fulfillment of this **little horn** in Antiochus IV Epiphanes who ruled over Syria and Israel's land.

Israel's land was fought over between the dynasties of Seleucid and Ptolemy, but the Seleucids gained power over the region in the days of Antiochus III (198 B.C.).

Antiochus IV gained the throne by murdering his brother, the former king Seleucus Philopator. The son of Philopator was the rightful heir to the throne, but Antiochus IV had him held hostage in Rome. Antiochus IV legitimized his rule mainly through flattery and bribery.

Antiochus IV assumed the title "*Epiphanes*" meaning, "illustrious" and alluding to deity. The Jews turned it into "*Epimanes*" meaning, "madman."

The Glorious Land: In the Hebrew, the same term is used for the land of Israel

Antiochus Epiphanes is an accurate and dramatic fulfillment of this prophecy in history - so much so that critics insist that the Book of Daniel *must* have been written *after* his time.

- Antiochus Epiphanes exerted his dominion **toward the south, toward the east, and toward the** land of Israel

- Antiochus Epiphanes murdered other rulers and persecuted the people of Israel (**cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them**)

- Antiochus Epiphanes blasphemed God and commanded idolatrous worship directed towards himself (**exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host**)

- Antiochus Epiphanes put a stop to temple sacrifices in Jerusalem (**by him the daily sacrifices were taken away**)

- Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple (**the place of His sanctuary was cast down**)

- Antiochus Epiphanes opposed God and seemed to prosper (**he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered**)

And trampled them: Antiochus was an infamous persecutor of the Jewish people. He wanted them to submit to Greek culture and customs and was more than willing to use murder and violence to compel them.

Antiochus's suppression of the Jews came to a head in December of 168 B.C. when he returned in defeat from Alexandria. He ordered his generals to seize Jerusalem on a Sabbath. There he erected an idol of Zeus and desecrated the altar by an offering of swine and sprinkling the pig's juices in the sanctuary. Sacrifice was ceased because the temple was desecrated.

Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices: This was fulfilled in the terrors of Antiochus Epiphanes. The Jews, especially their leaders invited God's judgment upon them through Antiochus because of their sin.

- ii. ([13-14](#)) The duration of the sanctuary's desecration: 2,300 days.

For two thousand three hundred days: Literally, Daniel heard a holy one say "**two thousand three hundred mornings and evenings.**" Bible students debate if this means 2,300 days or 1,150 days. 2,300 days is almost seven years.

If we take it to mean 1,150 days it can refer to the time the temple was actually desecrated. Since there are two sacrifices daily, the actual time period involved is 1150 days, or slightly over three years. This, in fact, was the time of the Maccabean tribulation, 168-165 B.C.

This amazingly specific prophecy was written some 350 years before the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Great prophetic fulfillment like this demonstrates that God not only *knows* the future, He also *guides* the future.

- iii. ([15-19](#)) Gabriel appears to Daniel.

The vision refers to the time of the end: Gabriel assures Daniel that this vision has to do with end times, with the **latter time of the indignation.**

Though this prophecy is fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes it also has a later fulfillment in the Antichrist, referring to the **time of the end.** Antiochus Epiphanes is sometimes called the "antichrist of the Old Testament."

Daniel reacts to the vision with physical shock and astonishment.

***Isaiah 46:9-10** - Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'*

***Daniel 2:20** - Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His.*