

What does the Bible say?

As you read this study, I encourage you to study the corresponding scriptures for yourself to develop a personal, confident understanding of biblical truth. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Study like the Bereans, who listened to Paul but did not take his word for it. They studied the scriptures for themselves so they would know for sure.

Acts 17:11 “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” I ask that you do the same with this study. Please pray before you begin.

A Bold Attack on God (Daniel 8)

Today, we will examine Daniel 8 and see how the little horn boldly attacked Jesus and His truth. I hope you studied Chapter 7 so you can better understand the next chapter we are about to study. If not, please go back and study it before moving forward so you can better understand what it's about.

Let's open our Bibles to...Dan. 8:1-4. Daniel had a vision: first, he saw a ram with one horn taller than the other. Today, we are going to apply the tools you've learned for interpreting prophecy. Let's work together on this interpretation, and I will guide you.

What does a beast represent in Bible prophecy? (Daniel 7:17, 23. Kingdom or power.) So, this ram represents a nation. The key question is, “Which nation?” Do you recall the repeat-and-enlarge principle we discussed previously? We saw how Daniel 2 was repeated and enlarged upon in Daniel 7. So, let's use Daniel 7 to help us understand chapter 8. Which beast in Daniel 7 has one side higher than the other? (Answer: the bear. Dan. 7:5.) Which nation did the bear represent? (Answer: Media-Persia.) The Bible shows us that the bear represents the kingdom of Media-Persia, and we can understand that.

Let's read what happens next in Dan. 8:5-7. A he-goat appears and defeats the ram. Here we see the goat moved so fast that it didn't touch the ground (vs. 5). Read Dan. 8:8. The goat had a large horn that broke off and was replaced by four horns.

Which animal in Daniel 7 was known for its great speed and was divided into four parts? (Answer: the leopard, Dan. 7:6.) Which nation did this leopard represent in Daniel 7? (Answer: Greece.) In prophecy, this goat represents Greece and illustrates the empire's division among Alexander the Great's four generals after his death.

We continue reading to uncover the next part of the prophecy. Dan. 8:9 describes a little horn that grew and became great. Dan. 8:10 states that it opposed the heavenly host. Dan. 8:11 mentions it exalts itself against the Prince of the host, removes the sacrifice, and casts

down the place of the sanctuary. Dan. 8:12 indicates it cast the truth to the ground, practiced, and prospered.

Again, in Daniel 7, did we see a little horn prophesied? (Answer: Yes. Dan. 7:8.) What did it represent? (The Medieval Roman Papacy.) Then, the little horn in chapter 8 is the Roman Papacy. What is the next step in the vision? In Dan. 8:13-14. Daniel hears the question, “How long will this take?” The answer is 2,300 days. What is the next event after the little horn in Daniel 7 (Dan. 7:9, 10)? The judgment begins. It's reasonable to interpret the 2300 days as referring to this judgment period.

Now, let's review what we have uncovered so far.

The Ram is Media Persia.

The Goat is Greece. Its four horns represent Alexander's empire divided among his four generals.

The little horn is the Medieval Papacy.

2300 days parallel the setting of the judgment.

We've been using the principle of repetition and enlargement to help interpret this prophecy. Now let's read the rest of chapter 8 to confirm that we are correct. In Dan. 8:15-19. God sends the angel Gabriel to instruct Daniel in understanding his vision. Gabriel clarifies that the dream concerns the end times. Observe Gabriel's interpretation.

Read Dan. 8:20. The ram represents the Medo-Persian Empire, so your understanding was correct. In Dan. 8:21, the goat represents the kingdom of Greece. Correct again! Read the last part of Dan. 8:21. The great horn is the first king, Alexander the Great. See Dan. 8:22. The four horns are the four generals who inherit Alexander's kingdom.

The angel confirms what we've learned. Isn't it neat to learn how to allow the Bible to interpret itself? But there's more to learn. Which nation followed Greece? (Answer: Rome.) In Daniel 8, the little horn depicts the nation that follows Greece. Let's read what the angel says about this power. Read Dan. 8:23-25. Gabriel doesn't give Rome's name, but he does describe it in detail.

In Daniel 7, we also have a little horn. It represents the Medieval Roman Papacy. Here in Daniel 8, it represents Medieval Papal Rome. This is an enlargement on what was presented in Daniel 7. In Daniel 7, the prophecy concerned the time when the little horn would arise and its political roots in Rome. But in chapter 8, the prophecy concerns its philosophical roots in Greece.

As the Catholic 20th Century Encyclopedia declares, “She (the Catholic Church) copied her organization from that of the Roman Empire, has preserved and made fruitful the philosophical intuitions of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.” (Vol. 88, p. 85.) This prophecy shows that the Medieval Roman Church is more grounded in the traditions of pagan Rome and the teachings of Greek philosophers than in the Bible.

Let's look at how Pagan and Medieval Papal Rome both fulfilled this prophecy. See Dan. 8:24: "He shall destroy the holy people." Pagan Rome persecuted the first-century Christians by throwing them to the lions, burning them in fires, etc. Medieval Papal Rome also did the same thing. It persecuted those who would not go along with it when it brought into the church the pagan philosophies of Greece.

Dan. 8:25 states, "He shall cause craft (deceit) to prosper." Historically, pagan Rome used deceit to conquer Christians. Initially, Roman emperors persecuted Christians in an attempt to eliminate them. However, the more they persecuted Christians, the more converts they gained. Eventually, Emperor Constantine devised a strategic plan. He converted to Christianity and assured Christians he would stop persecuting them.

Subsequently, he sought to incorporate his former pagan worship into the church. The church, eager to escape persecution, often accepted these changes. During this period, pagan gods were renamed with Christian labels, idols and prayers to saints were introduced, and many other practices were adopted.

Medieval Papal Rome used a deceptive strategy, with Popes claiming to be God's earthly representatives. They restricted access to the Bible and prioritized church traditions over God's Word. This kept the people in ignorance and led the church into a dark era of corruption as popes incorporated Constantine's compromises into official doctrine.

Read Dan. 8:25: "He shall stand up against the Prince of princes." The Prince of princes is Jesus. Pagan Rome opposed Jesus when Pilate, the Roman governor, sent Him to His death, and Roman soldiers crucified Him. Later, Papal Rome also opposed Jesus by replacing His role in salvation with practices like the confessional, the Eucharist, and teaching traditions over the Word of God. Consider these official church quotes that illustrate this...

"Does the priest merely pray that your sins will be forgiven? No, acting as God's instrument and ordained minister, he truly forgives the sins" [Rev. William J. Cogan, A Catechism for Adults, (Chicago, IL: Adult Catechetical Teaching Aids Foundation, 1975), p. 78].

"This is not a mere ritual repetition or psychological exercise" (Ibid.).

"Does the priest really forgive your sins? ... the priest really forgives your sins. The priest does not merely 'pray away' your sins" (Ibid., p. 80).

"Christ left his priest...to hold on earth his place of mediator between God and men" [St. Alphonsus de Liguori, Dignity and Duties of the Priest or Selva, (Redemptorist Fathers of Brooklyn; copyrighted by James Barron, C.S.S.R., 1927, and carries the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur declaring it to be official church doctrine), page 34].

“The priest holds the place of the Savior himself...he absolves from sin” (Ibid., p. 34).

Of course, only Jesus can forgive our sins (1 Timothy 2:5). All Christians can agree on this, can't we? So, the little horn clearly represents Papal Rome.

Now, the next part of the vision concerns the 2,300 days. Let's look at the interpretation given by the angel Gabriel.

In Dan. 8:26-27. Gabriel tells Daniel that the vision of the evening and mornings is true, but that it will be fulfilled very far in the future, and that he should shut up the book. Daniel faints, but when he awakens, he says he didn't understand the vision. What part did he not understand? He knew about the ram, the goat, and the horns. The angel explained each symbol. The 2,300 days weren't explained.

In the next lesson, we will study Daniel 9 and see how Gabriel returns to explain the 2,300-day prophecy, one of the most important prophecies in the Bible.

God is showing us how the church has grown and changed throughout history, so we can understand why it is the way it is today. Let's reflect on the spiritual significance of today's reading. This prophecy illustrates how far Satan will go to prevent Jesus from reaching us. He used pagan Rome to execute Jesus, aiming to prevent people from experiencing His healing touch or hearing His message of salvation.

Consequently, Jesus was crucified. However, this did not stop Him. Jesus established the Christian church to spread His message of love and truth worldwide. Satan has also persecuted God's people, but Jesus' power surpasses all evil. That's why I want Jesus as my Savior; don't you? While understanding the historical events that shaped Christianity is valuable, the most vital thing is to give our hearts to Jesus, making Him our Lord and Savior.

I encourage you to pray and re-commit your life to Jesus. Let's prepare ourselves, and let's get ready! Let's pray that the Lord will give us a love for His truth, amen!

As you prayerfully consider this topic, I want you to know that we are here to help answer any questions you might have. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at <https://freechristianbooks.us/questions>