

# Daniel Eight: The Twenty-Three Hundred Days by Stanley Kauer

The prophecy of Daniel Eight begins like that of chapter seven. The historical setting is given for the time when the prophet received the vision. In this case, it was in the third year of king Belshazzar. This is significant only as it indicates that the things given in the prophecy are all after this time. It is very important to note and identify the prophetic foundation in the first part of Daniel Eight. Daniel is living during the time of the empire of Babylon. In the symbolic vision he sees the rise of Medo-Persia and its overthrow of Babylon. He sees the rise of the Greek nation and Alexander the Great, and then his downfall. This is background for the prophecy to be given of events **after** the downfall of Alexander. This preliminary prophecy of history all came about exactly as prophesied. We must believe that the historical basis of the next part of the vision is also accurate and important in identifying the meaning of the prophecy. We will now examine the details of the vision and the explanation of its meaning.

"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him..." (Daniel 8:3,4). "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia" (Daniel 8:20).

This described the rise of the Persian Empire and showed that it would conquer Babylon, since no nation would be able to stand before it.

"And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground, and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes" (Daniel 8:5). The next verses tell that the he-goat destroys the ram. The explanation in Daniel 8:20,21 shows this meant Greece would conquer Persia.

"Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power" (Daniel 8:8,22). In history we find that after the death of Alexander the Great, four of his generals divided his empire among themselves. They were Ptolomey, Cassander,

Lysimachus and Selucus. They had the territory of the empire of Alexander but certainly not his power.

And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up (Daniel 8:9,23).

In verses five and eight we find Alexander symbolized by a very large or great horn. We are told that out of one of the four divisions of the empire there would later arise a "little horn", indicating a king of lesser power than Alexander. Any minor king may be symbolized by the term "little horn". There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that every time this phrase is used it refers to the same king. In Daniel 7:8 a ruler is termed a "little horn", but he comes up among ten horns and is a power out of the Roman Empire. We noted this in a previous chapter. The little horn of Daniel Eight comes out of one of the four divisions of the empire of Alexander. That empire was to the east of Greece and did not include Italy. At the time of the rule of the four generals of Alexander, the Roman Empire did not exist as a prominent nation. The areas where it did exist were never part of any of the four divisions of Alexander's empire. This little horn of Daniel Eight cannot in any way be the same as the little horn of Daniel Seven.

### **Very Great and Exceeding Great**

In Daniel 8:8 it is said that the he goat "waxed very great". We have noted that this refers to Alexander the Great. He conquered a great empire stretching all the way from Greece to India. He was a very powerful king in his time.

In Daniel 8:9 it is said of the little horn that he waxed exceeding great". Therefore some have concluded that this little horn has to be a greater power than Alexander the Great. After Alexander's time, the only great power was that of Rome or perhaps the pope. The little horn of Daniel Eight did not come out of Rome but instead came up in the latter time of the division of the kingdom of Alexander. And since none of these divisions included Italy, this little horn cannot refer to the pope who arose in the city of Rome in Italy! How then do we explain the terms "very great" and "exceeding great"?

First we must carefully examine both verses. In verse eight, the "very great" is not limited in any way. Alexander was very great as a ruler, as a general of his armies, and as a conqueror of a vast territory. But the little horn of verse nine is "exceeding great" in his actions toward the south, east, and toward the land of Israel (the pleasant land). For our identification of this power we must search history to see if any ruler came out of any of the four divisions of the Empire of Alexander and exercised power in the directions mentioned in the verse. Any such power or king must fit the additional descriptions given.

## **Antiochus Epiphanes**

In the year 170 B.C. a king reigned in Syria, a part of the division of the empire of Alexander the Great taken by Alexander's general, Selucus. This king of Syria was named Antiochus IV. He was the fourth in that line of kings, but he is of special importance in our study because his life and activities fit the description of the "little horn" of Daniel Eight.

Antiochus IV took the title of "Epiphanes" as a surname. It has the meaning of brilliant or great but in many ways he was the opposite. The prophecy of Daniel Eight declares that this little horn would come out of one of the four divisions of the empire of Alexander. In its activities, this horn or king would be "exceeding great" in certain areas — toward the south, east, and the "pleasant land", Israel. Antiochus went south and invaded Egypt, and might have conquered and ruled that land had not the rising power of Rome forced him to withdraw. Antiochus took his armies against Persia in the east. But his greatest exploit was against the Jews in Palestine or Israel. This is the key point of the prophecy.

The Bible mentions nations in prophecy in their connection with Israel or the Jews. Alexander took over the land of Israel peacefully and it became a part of his empire without any great events or trouble. Thus he "waxed great" toward it. But Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem, killed many of the people including the high priest. He stopped the service of the temple, polluted it, and dedicated it as a temple for a pagan god. The true Bible scriptures were not to be used. Heathen Greek customs were enforced; the Greek gods were to be worshipped. For a time Antiochus was successful in this. Truly, he seemed to "wax exceeding great" in his activities "toward the pleasant land", the land of Israel.

We have noted the extensive historical foundation of this prophecy. Alexander the Great is plainly described, then his death and the taking over of his empire by four of his generals. Then we see the little horn power or king arising from one of the four divisions and doing terrible things against the land of Israel and its people. Many details concerning this wicked king are given, and every detail is fulfilled in the life and actions of Antiochus Epiphanes. Let us notice some of these details.

"And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them" (Daniel 8:10). Taken literally, this would seem to say this wicked king was able to destroy some of the angels of heaven. But in the explanation it is revealed that this is symbolic. In Daniel 8:24 we read: "And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power.- and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and thrive, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people." Thus it is clear that the "host of heaven" of verse ten refers to the people of Israel. Of them God had

said "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).

We now see how this symbolism is continued in Daniel 8:11: "Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down." If the "host of heaven was the Jewish people, then the "prince of the host" would be their leader, and that was the High Priest. During the time when Palestine was a part of the Syrian empire, the High Priest was both the spiritual and secular ruler at Jerusalem. At the time of Antiochus, the high priest was Onias, a very godly man. He resisted the desecrations of Antiochus, and as a result was killed.

The harsh rule of Antiochus against the Jews began in 171 B.C. and lasted for six years and one hundred and ten days, or a total of twenty-three hundred literal days. During this time many things happened in the progression of time. The oppression grew worse and worse until in 168 B.C. the regular morning and evening sacrifices at the temple were stopped. A hog was boiled and the broth was poured over all the objects used in the temple worship (table of showbread, candlestick, altar of incense, the veil and the most holy place). Then another hog was offered as a sacrifice on the great altar of burnt offering, and the temple was dedicated to Jupiter. Thus the temple was brought to a very low and polluted condition and "...the daily sacrifice was taken away and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (Daniel 8:11).

It was also during the rule of Antiochus that he entered into the city of Jerusalem with his army and declared he was entering peaceably; the people had nothing to fear. When many of the people came out into the streets, Antiochus gave a command and the soldiers massacred a large number of the people. The prophecy said "...by peace shall destroy many" (Daniel 8:25). Antiochus could not long maintain his harsh rule. He suffered many defeats, and finally contracted a terrible disease and died. Had he died in battle, it would have been by the **hand** of someone, but it came as the scripture said "...he shall be broken without hand" (Daniel 8:25).

### **The Two Thousand Three Hundred Days**

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed  
(Daniel 8:13, 14).

The word "saint" is in other translations given as "holy one" and evidently

means an angel. In a vision the prophet saw one angel speak to another angel. The sanctuary or temple was to be "trodden under foot" and polluted for a period of twenty-three hundred days. The word "days" is here translated from the Hebrew "evening and morning", the term used in Genesis for each literal day of creation. It is true that in most Bible prophecy a day represents a year, but there are exceptions. Jonah prophesied the destruction of Nineveh after forty days. The context shows this did not mean **years**. Also, Jesus said He would be put to death "and after three days rise again" . We know He did not mean three years. This prophecy of the desecration of the temple could not mean a period of twenty-three hundred years, for the temple was not in existence that long. The phrase "evening and morning" refers to a literal twenty-four hour day. This is actually stated in verse fourteen and emphasized in verse twenty-six "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true..."

### **A Double Fulfillment**

In comparing the prophecy with history we find there was a two-fold fulfillment. The "waxing exceeding great" of the oppression of Antiochus toward the Jews began in B.C. 171 and lasted six *years* and one hundred and ten days or a total of twenty-three hundred literal days. But the prophecy includes the question, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice..." This was a sacrifice each morning and evening. Twenty-three hundred sacrifices would be made in eleven hundred and fifty days. From the time Antiochus stopped the daily sacrifices at the temple until they were again restored was eleven hundred and fifty literal days. This was from 168 to 165 B.C. The temple was cleansed, restored and rededicated the 25th of the Jewish month Chislew, which corresponds to our month of December. The Jews still celebrate this event with Hannukah which they observe for eight days the latter part of December. Its importance is seen by the reference to it in John 10:22 where it is called "the feast of the dedication".

The double fulfillment of the prophecy is truly remarkable. The "sanctuary and the host" were "trodden under foot" for twenty-three hundred literal twenty-four hour days. And also twenty-three hundred daily sacrifices were "taken away" . Then the temple was cleansed and restored by Judas Maccabeus and the Jewish people.

### **How Important Was It?**

Are these events in connection with the temple at Jerusalem of any importance in the plan of salvation? Why are they recorded in the prophecies of Daniel and why were they so accurately fulfilled? Let us consider the matter.

The sacrificial system in connection with a tabernacle, and then with the

permanent temple, was given by God to Israel through the great prophet Moses. The book of Hebrews shows that the sacrifice of animals and their shedding of blood upon the alter was a type of the sacrifice of Christ. They foreshadowed the work of Christ. And they were to **continue** until they were fulfilled at the death of Christ on the cross. The type must meet the anti-type. This took place as Christ died on the cross. At that very time the great veil of the temple, dividing the Holy place from the Most Holy, was torn in two by an unseen hand. No longer would the people of God have to go through a human priest to come to the heavenly Father. When Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to heaven, He was seated at the right hand of God, with God on His throne. Where God the Father is, is always the very most Holy Place. God's people are now their own priests and go to God the Father through the great High Priest, Jesus.

The great fulfillment of the type was possible because the temple with its sacrifices was at Jerusalem. But Satan attempted to thwart the plan of God and cause confusion by eliminating the temple and its sacrifices about 167 years before the first advent of Christ. We thus see how important it was that the temple, the sanctuary, be cleansed and restored, and the sacrificial system re-established before the ministry of Christ. That service continued to be the way of atonement for sins until Christ died upon the cross. Then, in the sight and plan of God, it ended.

"And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark 15:37,38). That veil represented Christ and its rending signified His death for us. The rending of the veil took away the separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy. This ended the ceremonies and types, and ushered in a new reality. We no longer need priests to burn incense upon the alter with the smoke going through the veil to represent our prayers. Now Christ is at the right hand of God in heaven as our high priest, and our prayers go directly to God through Him. The sins which could not be atoned for by the blood of sacrificial animals, have been atoned for and blotted out by the sacrifice of the Son of God. Jesus made that great atonement when He died on the cross and ascended to the right hand of God. The apostle Paul could say, "...we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11).

### **Problems in Understanding Daniel Eight**

It was a misunderstanding of this prophecy of Daniel Eight which brought about the William Miller movement, proclaiming that the second advent of Christ would be in October of 1844. How could the prophecy have been so misunderstood?

In Daniel 8:16 we have a voice saying to Gabriel that he should make Daniel understand the vision.

So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid and fell upon my face, but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man. - for at the

time of the end shall be the vision. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation.- for at the time appointed the end shall be (Daniel 8:17,19).

In other parts of the Bible the phrase "time of the end" refers to the time just before the second advent of Christ. So it may be reasoned, that the "end" mentioned in verse nineteen is the end of this age or the time of the second advent. This is the conclusion reached by William Miller. He decided that the "time appointed" for the end referred to the end of the twenty-three hundred days, and that therefore, the twenty-three hundred days would last until the second advent of Christ.

This line of reasoning completely ignores the historical setting of the prophecy. **We must never lose sight of the fact that the "little horn" of verse nine came out one of the four divisions of the empire of Alexander the Great. This is clearly shown in Daniel 8:21, 22. Thus the setting of this prophecy is at the time of the end of the Grecian power, before the Roman empire became great [our emphasis].** The prophecy can not possibly refer to the events at the end of the age, just prior to the second advent of Christ. A comparison of the thoughts in verses seventeen and nineteen shows that the "end" referred to is the conclusion of the desecration of the temple. This is the subject of the entire prophecy – oppression of the people of Israel, desecration of the temple, taking away the daily sacrifice, and then the cleansing of the temple and the restoration of the sacrifices. The chapter includes a complete historical foundation for the prophecy, and it is essential that this history be used in the correct interpretation.

All the details concerning the little horn power given in verses twenty-three to twenty-five were fulfilled in the life and death of Antiochus Epiphanes. He was a "fierce" king, he dabbled in the occult, his power was limited by what the rising power of Rome would permit him to do. He destroyed many of the Jews, the "holy people", and at one time came into Jerusalem under pretext of peace, and then directed a massacre. He stood up against the High Priest (the Prince of princes) and caused the priest to be killed. After returning to his own land, he died of disease "broken without hand". The fact that the priests may be called "princes" is shown in Isaiah 43:28, calling them "princes of the sanctuary",

### **Why the Great False Teaching?**

The meaning of Daniel Eight is clearly and easily understood by comparing the historical references it contains with history. It is strange how some have distorted the meaning. It is said that since the "he goat" of verse eight referring to Alexander the Great, is "very great", and the little horn of verse nine is "exceeding great", therefore the little horn of verse nine must be greater than Alexander. And so it could not possibly be Antiochus because he was a much smaller and weaker power than Alexander. We pointed out that

the "exceeding great" refers to specific actions and directions, especially toward the land of Israel. There Antiochus did far more than did Alexander.

Taking the false position, that the little horn must be greater in all ways than Alexander, it is held that it must refer to Rome. It is then held that the "prince of the host" in verse eleven is Christ. The daily sacrifice taken away refers to the destruction of the temple by the Romans in 70 A.D. To get in the twenty-three hundred days as years, they begin at 457 B.C. and declare the period lasted until 1844 A.D. It is taught that the meaning of "sanctuary" changes to refer to heaven. It is said, Christ went to the "Holy Place" or outer room of the temple in heaven at His ascension. In 1844 He entered the Most Holy room in heaven, "cleansed" the sanctuary there of accumulated sins, and thus completing the atonement.

All of this is of the utmost confusion and violates the true principles of interpreting scripture. It all came about because of failure to recognize and hold fast to the historical foundation of the prophecy as it is clearly given. When the historical connections are made, the meaning becomes clear. We see how God revealed the great attempt of Satan to confuse the work of Christ, and how God's people thwarted the work of Satan, keeping the temple service intact until it met its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.