

# The Book of Daniel: the Key to Bible prophecy

## Chapter 8



Portrait of Antiochus IV Epiphanes on a coin

### *Introduciton to Daniel Chapter 8*

In this chapter, the language returns to Hebrew from Aramaic used in Daniel 2:4 through 7:28. From this chapter until the end of the book, Daniel deals with prophecy. The prophecies from chapters 8 to 12 involve the Gentile nations in their relation to Israel. For this reason, many commentators divide the book of Daniel into two halves, Daniel chapters 1 to 6, and 7 to 12, the first half deals with the Gentile nations and the last half deal with prophecy regarding Israel, some divide into three sections (1, 2-7, 8-12).

In the Daniel chapter seven, we saw animals that represented the kingdoms of man. From God's perspective, the kingdoms of men are beast like, leading to the return of Christ. Chapter 7 is a summary of events. Chapters 8 through 12 fill the details left out in the seventh chapter.

Here in the eighth chapter, the animal representation of earthly kingdoms continues. Two kingdoms are presented as animals in this chapter, the two-horned ram represents Persia and the one horned goat represents Greece. The focus turns to the succession of kingdoms and points to an end-time event regarding the Jewish Temple and the stopping of sacrifice.

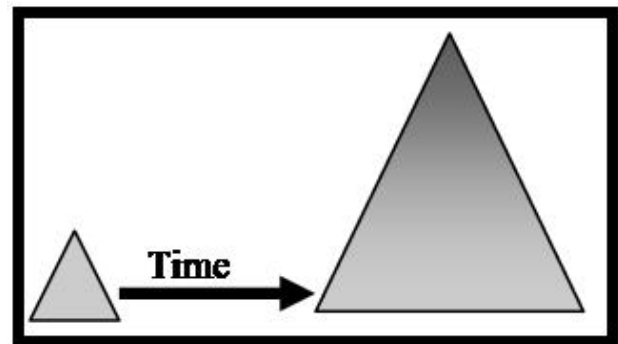
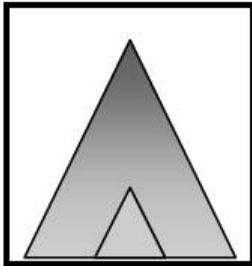
In the ninth chapter, we are given a time line of Messiah, his first and second comings. In 10 and 11, we are given details relating the Gentile oppression of Israel. Chapter 12 deals with the final events in Israel's history as it relates to the end of days.

The revelation of this chapter takes place while in 551-0 B.C.; Daniel is about 69 years old, and an official in the Babylonian government. This chapter focuses on the succeeding rulers of the Greek kingdom, with particular attention to one who opposes the Jewish faith and the Temple. He stops sacrifice, and attempts to destroy the Jewish faith.

We find Daniel presenting a dual prophecy, with a short-term fulfillment and a long-term greater fulfillment.

The short-term fulfillment is in the person of Antiochus Epiphanies, who did exactly that. However, the longer fulfillment will take place in the future under a coming ruler who will do what his predecessor Antiochus did.

If you picture two similar looking mountains separated by the valley of time, the first mountain illustrates the second. In chapter 8, we have a



short-term fulfillment in the person of Antiochus IV Epiphanies who desolated the Jewish Temple. He is the precursor of an end-time's ruler, the Beast (Revelation 13) who like him, will desolate a future third temple Jewish Temple, in the end of days.

### *The Vision at Shushan*

DA 8:1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me-to me, Daniel-after the one that appeared to me the first time.

DA 8:2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.

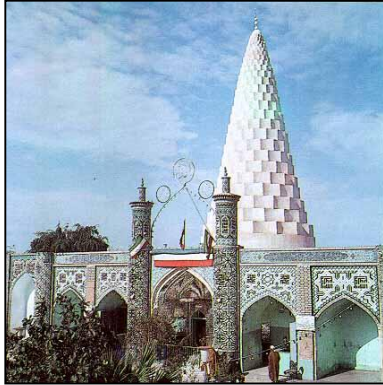
**Third year:** Chapter 8 precedes chapter 5 chronologically. This chapter takes place in 551 to 550 B.C. twelve years before chapter 5. Based on the *Babylonian Chronicle* it is known the reign of Nabonidus began his reign in 556 B.C. and Belshazzar became co-regent three-years later in 553 B.C.

**A Vision:** This is Daniel's second vision, this one occurred while he was awake as opposed to the first

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one in chapter 7, which occurred while he was asleep two years previous. (Daniel 7:1)

**I saw:** This is a vision as opposed to a dream; Daniel actually saw what he is writing about as opposed to dreaming about it.



**In Shushan:** This city is one of the three fortress cities of the Persian Achaemenian Kingdoms. The city is also the location of the book of Esther and where Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1; Esther 1:2; 2:8 3:15 7:6 8:15 9:11,15).

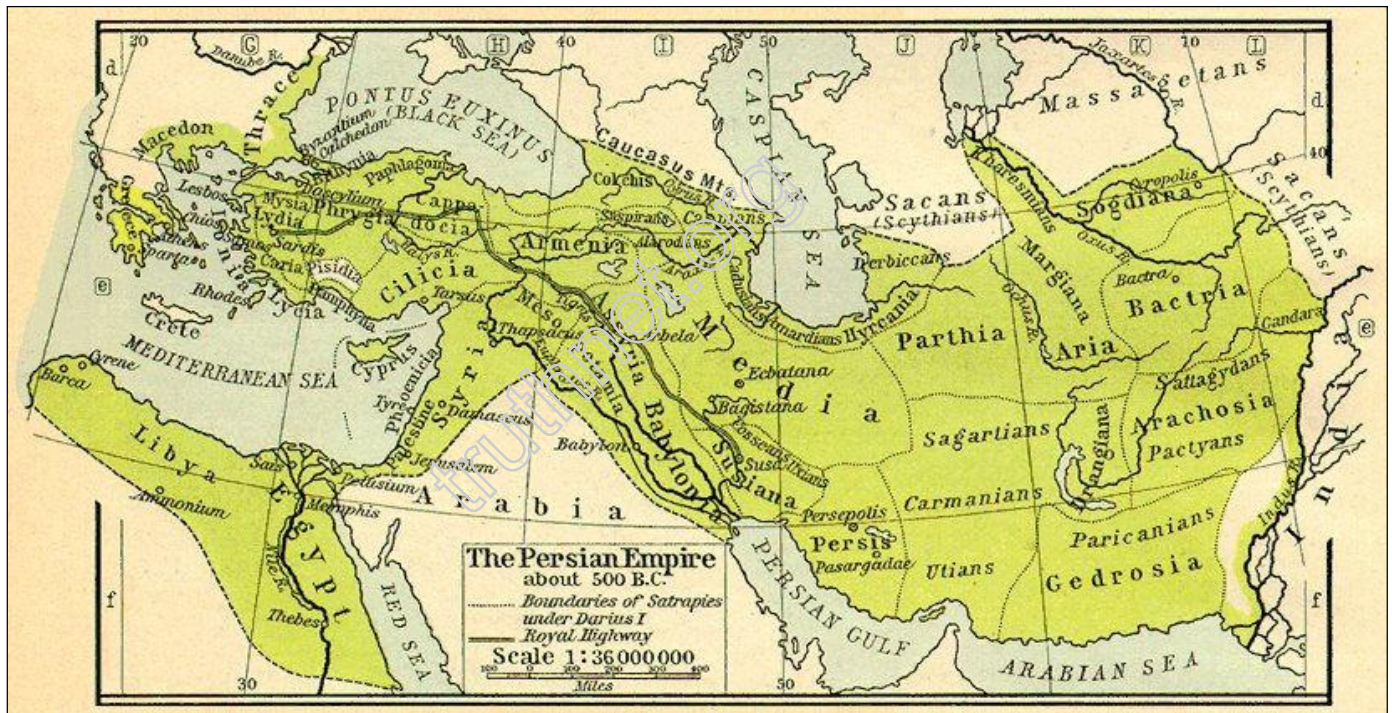
Daniel finds himself in the city, a Persian capital city while he is serving under Belshazzar king of Babylon. The discussion is whether Daniel is taken there in his vision or whether he was physically present in the city during and had the vision while he was there.

Ezekiel taken from the being with the elders of Judah in Babylon is lifted to Jerusalem to witness the events taking place inside the Temple. (Ezekiel 8)

3 He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy.

**Ezekiel 8:3**

Daniel very could have been the Babylonian ambassador to the Persian kingdom at this time residing in



Shushan or Susa. In fact, the tomb of Daniel is located in the city of Susa.

In the city of Susa, in 1901 A.D. the Code of Hammurabi was found, in addition to many archeological treasures.

**Elam:** The area is northwest of the Persian Gulf, conquered by the Medes and later incorporated into the Persian Empire.

**River Ulai:** The river is an artificial canal built near the city of Shushan, about 275 meters wide (900 feet) connecting the (Kerkha Choaspes) river 20 miles NW of the city to the Abdizful River (Coprates).

Daniel finds himself at this river during this vision witnessing the events in this chapter.

### *The Ram with the Two Horns*

DA 8:3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram, which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the

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higher one came up last.

DA 8:4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

**I lifted my eyes:** In his vision, Daniel lifts up his eyes. Daniel is actually seeing what he is reporting on, the question is whether he was their on Babylonian assignment or transported there in spirit.

**A Ram:** In the vision, according to the interpretation in verse 20, represents the Persian-Median Empire to the North East of Babylon. The history of Media and Persia begins about 1000 B.C., as tribes European tribes known as Aryans (Iran) migrated south from the Caucus Mountain. One group known, as the Medes were able to settle and conquer the Medes. The Medes allied with Babylonians helped sack the city of Nineveh in 612 A.D.

The Persians also migrated from the north and settled north of the Media. Medes and Persian were ethnically very similar. The Persians dynasty, the Achaemenians, was founded about 700 B.C. The kingdom was under Median power at first, until Cyrus the Great rebelled against Median grandfather Astyages. Cyrus was ethnically both Persian and Mede, his mother Mandane was the daughter of Astyages the King of the Medes.

<b>Archaemenian Persian Dynasties</b>	
Achaemenes or Hakhamanish	700 B.C.
Teispes	?-640 B.C.
Ariaramnes or Aryiyaramna (Parsa Kingdom)	640-590 B.C.
Cyrus or Kurash I ( Western Kingdom)	640-600 B.C.
Cambyses or Kanbujiya I / Mandane daughter of Astyages, King of the Medes	600-559 B.C.
Cyrus II (The great)	

When Cyrus rebelled, the Median generals joined in him in 549 B.C. and established the Persian-Median kingdom under Cyrus. Later this same Cyrus in 539 along with the Median generals and princes would conquer the mighty city of Persia.

In fact, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were built for Cyrus cousin, and the granddaughter of Cyaxares, king of the Medes, who married Nebuchadnezzar and longed for the gardens back at Media.

**Two horns:** The arrangement of the horns demonstrates the validity of the book of Daniel in the face of the critics. The two horns represent the unique relationship between these two kingdoms. Cyrus was Persian and Median, by overthrowing his grandfather Astyages in 549 B.C., the king of the Medes, Persia the younger kingdom, became greater.

**One was higher:** The Persian part of the Empire was dominated, as illustrated earlier by the "Bear" raised on one side, chapter 7.

**Higher one came up last:** The higher one came up last because Cyrus the Persian overthrows the kingdom of his grandfather.

**Pushing westward:** The main direction of conquest for the Persian/Median Empire was North, West and South. There was very little expansion to the East, because of the mountains separated the territory.

<b>Persian Rulers to Alexander</b>	<b>Years of Rule</b>
Cyrus the Great	549-529 B.C.
Cambyses II	529-522 B.C.
Pseudo-Smerdis	522-521
Darius the Great	521-486
Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	486-465
Artaxerxes I Longimanus	464-424
Darius II Ochus	
Artaxerxes II Mnemon	
Artaxerxes III Ochus	359-338
Bogoas	338-337
Darius III Codomanus	337-331 B.C.



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## *The Goat from the West*

DA 8:5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

DA 8:6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power.

DA 8:7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

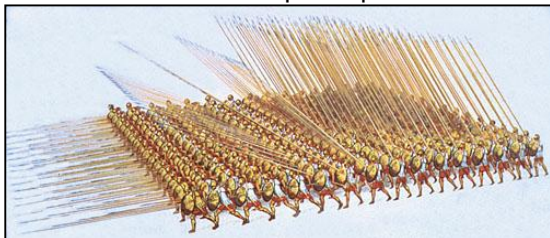
**Suddenly a male goat:** The male goat represents the kingdom of Greece according to verse 21. Greece and Persia had a long history of conflict; Greece was on the boundary of Persian expansion. The notable horn is Alexander the great, who at the age of 23 inherited the Kingdom from his father Philip of Macedon. Philip had planned to unite the Greek city-states, and conquer and Hellenize the whole world, before his death.

**West:** Greece is the west of Persia.

**Without touching:** The conquest of Persia, by the Greek kingdom was swift. Alexander the Great and the Greeks were furious with Persia for all the damage inflicted on Greece, including the burning of the city of Athens.

**Furious power:** The forces of Alexander the Great first defeated the Persians at the Granicus River in Asia Minor in May 334 B.C., which was the beginning of the complete conquest of Persia. In November 333 B.C., Persia was again defeated at Issus, near the Northeastern tip of the Mediterranean Sea. The third and final battle took place in the former capital of

the Assyrian Empire, Nineveh in October 331 B.C. At Nineveh, Persian power was completely crushed; Alexander sacked and burned the capital of Persia in retaliation for Greek suffering.



Greek military formation known as the Phalanx was instrumental in victory

## *The Great Horn Broken*

DA 8:8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

**Grew great:** Alexander the Great the Greek armies continued their conquest to the Indus valley, his men refused to go any further, from there they returned to Babylon. In Babylon, Alexander planned to create his world capital. He married Roxanne, the daughter of the Persian King. Ten thousand of Greek Macedonians married Persian women. This however changed, at the age of nearly 33, Alexander the Great died of fever and drunken debauchery in Babylon.

**Large horn was broken:** After Alexander the Great died, his kingdom was fought over by his Generals for a period of 20 years. Four generals emerged as head of his kingdom, 1. Cassander assumed rule over Macedonia and Greece; two. Lysimachus took control of Thrace, Bithynia and most of Asia Minor; three. Seleucus took Syria and the lands to the east including Babylonia; four. Ptolemy established rule over Egypt and possibly Palestine and Arabia Petraea.

## *The Little Horn*

DA 8:9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.

DA 8:10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

**Out of them:** Two of the kingdoms, The Ptolemy and the Seleucid's were locked in constant struggle over the centuries. Both of these powers fought over Palestine. The details of this conflict are expanded in Daniel 11. This came to a head with the eighth king of Seleucids/Syria Antiochus Epiphanies who reined 176-164 B.C.

Antiochus conquered the Ptolemy's/ Egypt to the south, the east and Palestine/Jerusalem called the Glorious Land.

**Host of heaven:** Antiochus sold the High Priesthood of the Jewish Temple to the highest bidder.

**Some of the stars:** Stars are pictured as people who stand out. The descendents of Abraham were

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called stars Gen. 15:5; 22:17. Daniel 12:3 refers to those who lead many to righteousness as “Stars” who will shine. Antiochus, main goal was to turn people away from the God of Israel, in his program to Hellenize his kingdom. Some of the Jewish priesthood and secular Jews were his allies in this cause. They were in opposition to the Hasidim who named themselves who tried to be righteous and follow the Laws.

### *Desolation of the Sanctuary*

DA 8:11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.

DA 8:12 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.

DA 8:13 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, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?"

DA 8:14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

**He...himself:** Antiochus named himself “Epi Phanes” god manifest. He proclaimed himself as Zeus manifest in the world. The Jews used a play on words and called him “Epimanes”, lunatic. Calling himself god, he exalted himself as the **Prince of the host**.

**Daily sacrifice:** Antiochus had earlier conquered Egypt, but he was checked by the rising Roman and forced into a humiliating retreat back to his kingdom. He planned to make Palestine the buffer between his kingdom and Rome expansion to the south. In order to do this he needed to Hellenize the Jews and turn them away from their faith in the God of Israel.

At first, he sold the Priesthood to Menelaus of the tribe of Benjamin, who was willing to introduce Greek culture to Jerusalem. Then in order to speed the process along, Antiochus started to force the people to worship and sacrifice to Zeus. Temple sacrifices were stopped, and an image of himself, pictured as Zeus was placed in the Jewish Temple. He forced the Jews to worship Zeus and sacrifice to Zeus. He collected scriptures and had them burned, and any who refused were killed.

41 Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, 42 And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. 43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath. 44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land, 45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days: 46 And pollute the sanctuary and holy people: 47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts: 48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: 49 To the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. 50 And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die.

51 In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Juda to sacrifice, city by city. 52 Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land; 53 And drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour.

54 Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; 55 And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. 56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. 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. 61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.

### **I Maccabees 41-58**

**Because of transgression:** Because of sin, Antiochus was allowed to prosper. God permitted him to operate and desecrate the Temple because Israel was disobedient and following the practices of the Greeks.

**A holy one speaking:** Daniel now records a conversation between the angelic beings in his vision. They also like Daniel are witnessing the events taking place in the vision. The question revolved around the desolation of the Temple and the daily sacrifices.

**How long..daily sacrifices:** The angel asked how long will this transgression take place, the stopping of sacrifice and desolation of the Temple. The act became known as the *abomination of desolation*.

**Two thousand three hundred days:** The reply has sparked a lot of controversy and varied opinions. The angel replied the transgression would last a period of 2300 days.

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The word for day used here is בִּקְרָ *Boqer* and means literally "Evenings and mornings". Some see this referring to 2300 evening and morning sacrifices or 1150 days.

The Seventh Day Adventist understood this as a period of 2300 years and based the return of Christ in 1884 on this verse.

The picture of transgression of the Jewish Temple is event to occur at the end of days, in the Third Temple built on the same location. Twenty three hundred days is equal to 6 years 136 days, with a biblical year being 360 days.

Walvoord writes about this 2300 day period,

Innumerable explanation have been attempted to make the 2300 days coincide with the history of Antiochus Epiphanies. The terminus *ad quem* of the twenty-three hundred days is taken by most expositors as 164 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanies died during a military campaign in Media. This permitted the purging of the sanctuary and the return of Jewish worship. Figuring from this date backward twenty-three hundred days would fix the beginning time at 171 B.C. In that year, Onias III the legitimate high priest was murdered and a pseudo line of priests assumed power. This would give adequate fulfillment in time for the 2300 days to elapse at the time of the death of Antiochus<sup>1</sup>

<b>Ways the 2300 days are interpreted</b>	
1	2300 days are start at the killing of Onias III till the death of Antiochus 6 years 136 and pre-figure a future desecration of the Temple.
2	2300 actually means 1150 days because the Hebrew word means evening and mornings. Therefore, the period under consideration is 3 years and 68 days based on 360-day Jewish year.
3	2300 actually means years, and looks forward to a future event

### *Vision interpreted in Relation to the time of the End*

DA 8:15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

DA 8:16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

DA 8:17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."

DA 8:18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright.

DA 8:19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.

**Suddenly...appearance of a man:** The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel in the form of a man. This is the first appearance of Gabriel in the Bible.

**Man's voice:** We know from scripture Gabriel has access to the throne of God, and the voice has one of authority who commands Gabriel to "Make this man understand the vision". Therefore, we can conjecture the voice is more likely God commanding Gabriel. We see a similar event in chapter 9 of Daniel. Daniel in the ninth chapter is praying for Jerusalem's restoration and Gabriel is sent from the throne of God to answer Daniel's prayer. (Daniel 9:21)

**Gabriel:** The name, גַּבְרִיאֵל *Gabry'el* means Gabriel = "warrior of God" or "man of God".

**He said:** Gabriel informs Daniel, the vision is in reference to the end. The time of this revelation is about 551 B.C., over 300 years before the appearance of Antiochus act on the Temple mount. The event occurs during his day, but a similar act is going to occur at the end of days. Jesus refers to the "Abomination of Desolation" in Matthew as a yet future event to occur at the end of time.

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

**Matthew 24:14-16**

The abomination of desolation under Antiochus took place 200 years before Jesus reference to the event. Jesus speaking about the end in the 14<sup>th</sup> verse correlates the end with the abomination of desolation.

<sup>1</sup> Walvoord, Daniel the Key to Prophetic Revelation. Moody Press, Chicago, 1971 pg. 188-189

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Gabriel is referring to end time event, illustrated by the nearer term event of Antiochus.

### *The Interpretation of the Ram and the Goat*

DA 8:20 "The ram which you saw, having the two horns-they are the kings of Media and Persia.

DA 8:21 "And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.

DA 8:22 "As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

**The Ram:** The is the Media Persian empire.

**Male Goat:** The male goat is Greece, led by Alexander the great.

**Four kingdoms:** The division of Alexander's kingdom between his four generals following his death.

### *The Latter Time of the Kingdom*

DA 8:23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

DA 8:24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

DA 8:25 "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.

DA 8:26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future."

**The latter time:** The word, אַחֲרִית *'achariyth* means after part, end, a last, hindermost. The reference is to end time of the kingdom. This period is characterized by the following;

		<b>Antiochus Epiphanies</b>	<b>The Antichrist</b>
1.	He will appear in the latter time of their kingdoms	Antiochus appeared at the end of the Seleucid control over Jerusalem.	The Antichrist will lead the armies in the end to destroy Israel. Zechariah 12:3,9-10, Revelation 19
2	He will appear when the Transgressors are come to the full	Most of Israel accepted Antiochus except for those who went in hiding and revolted with the Maccabees	The Antichrist will appear at the end of the age when sin is at its height.
3	A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes	Antiochus was diabolical, betraying his brother and his sons, who saved him from the Romans	The Antichrist will seduce the world through peace.
4	His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power	God allowed him to have power for period.	God allows the Antichrist to come to power. Satan indwells him and works through him
5	Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule	Antiochus was a master at deceit and manipulation	The Antichrist will deceive and fane peace to establish himself.
6	he shall exalt himself in his heart	Antiochus proclaimed himself as god manifest. He demanded worship of himself, pictured as Zeus	The Antichrist will curse the God of heaven and those who dwell there, he will demand worship by those on earth.
7	He shall destroy many in their prosperity	Many of the wealthy in Israel submitted to Antiochus, turning Jerusalem into a Greek city.	The wealthy rather than losing their possessions will submit to the Antichrist
8	He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means	Antiochus set up an image in the Temple and proclaimed himself god, he demanded to be worshiped. He died insane in 164 B.C. having heard of the success of the Maccabees.	The Antichrist will challenge the God of Israel, by placing an image of himself in the Temple and demanding worship.
9	it refers to many days in the future	Antiochus is a picture of this end time king.	The event occurs at the end of day, before the return of Christ.

### *Effect on Daniel*

DA 8:27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

**Daniel:** These were hard on Daniel both emotionally and physically.

**The king's business:** The king is Belshazzar, This lends credence to the idea Daniel was serving in Persia as ambassador during this time.