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DANIEL THE PROPHET – LESSON 4

VISION OF THE RAM AND GOAT

The written language of Daniel now switches from Babylon's local Aramaic back to Hebrew as the remainder of the book is now for God's people to understand.

In the third year of Belshazzar's reign comes this vision. Daniel saw a ram that had two horns (kingdoms). One came up, then a higher horn exceeded the first, and became very great, such as that none could withstand him. (Daniel 8:3-4.) Verse 20 identifies the two horns as the Medes (King Darius) and the Persians (King Cyrus) who were in league together. The Persian empire became very large and powerful from approximately 538 B.C. to 335 B.C.)

Daniel 8:5-7 then describes a male goat that came from the West (Greece). He had one very notable horn between his eyes and moved in fury (rapidly) with power and broke (conquered) the ram. This was Alexander the Great who very rapidly conquered all the known world of that time. He then began to establish a universal Greek language along with the Greek (Hellenistic) culture. This happened around 334-322 B.C.

By 322-23 B.C. young Alexander had died of sickness and the **"great horn was broken"** (v. 8) and **"came up four notable ones."** When Alexander died his four generals divided his vast empire among themselves. Out of these four Greek "horns" came one called **"a little horn which waxed (grew) exceedingly great."** (v. 9). Now the vision will have a two-fold fulfillment from this point onward.

The first is historical as the vision has covered four centuries from Babylon's Belshazzar up to the dividing into four parts of Alexander's Greek empire. Of those four horns, the "little horn" that became great refers to the Seleucid empire of Syria who advanced the Greek culture. In particular it speaks of Antiochus IV, known as Antiochus Epiphanes, who committed the "abomination of desolation" in 168 B.C. as it says in verse 11, **"by him the daily sacrifice was taken away"** from the temple in Jerusalem and God's **"sanctuary was cast down"** by the (v. 13) **"transgression of desolation."**

This happened when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed an unclean pig to his own god in God's holy Temple in Jerusalem. The vile act of desecrating God's sanctuary by this very strong "little horn" was also a prophetic foreshadow of an even greater desecration yet to come from "the man of sin" in the end times.

The second part of the dream interpretation shifts to the future in verse 23 as it says, **"in the latter time...a king (ruler) of fierce countenance, and understanding dark (evil) sentences, (words) shall stand up (arise)... (v. 24) but not by his own power."** (The power would be directly from Satan.) **"He shall destroy wonderfully (supernaturally)...shall magnify himself (above God) ...and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people."**

What becomes of this evil “little horn,” the man of sin (Antichrist)? Verse 25 says that he shall stand up against (make war with) the Prince of (all) Princes (Messiah) but **“he shall be broken (defeated) without hand”** by the sword of the word that issues from the mouth of that Prince, the King of Kings upon His white horse along with His heavenly host.

Note: Some of the “added” interpretation is taken from the Book of Revelation which takes Daniel’s vision and adds greater detail.

It is of some interest to me that the “goat” of verses 5-8 resembles “Baphomet,” the evil “goat head” symbol of the occult that signifies Satan. It is Satan himself that possesses and empowers the Antichrist, the “little horn” who is no match for the “Big Horn” Prince (Jesus), who will establish His (and our) everlasting kingdom.