

Daniel 8

Read Daniel 8:1-4: I need to correct a mistake last week regarding the duration of Belshazzar's reign. He was King of Babylon. He was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, and the last King of Babylon, before the Medo Persian Empire sacked Babylon. He reigned 17 years from 556 B.C., until 539 B.C. Daniel's dream of the four Gentile Kingdom beasts came in 556 B.C.; in Belshazzar's first year as king. This chapter, Daniel 8, was given to Daniel in 553 B.C., the third year of Belshazzar's reign. The writing on the wall came to Belshazzar on 539 B.C., the final moments of his reign.

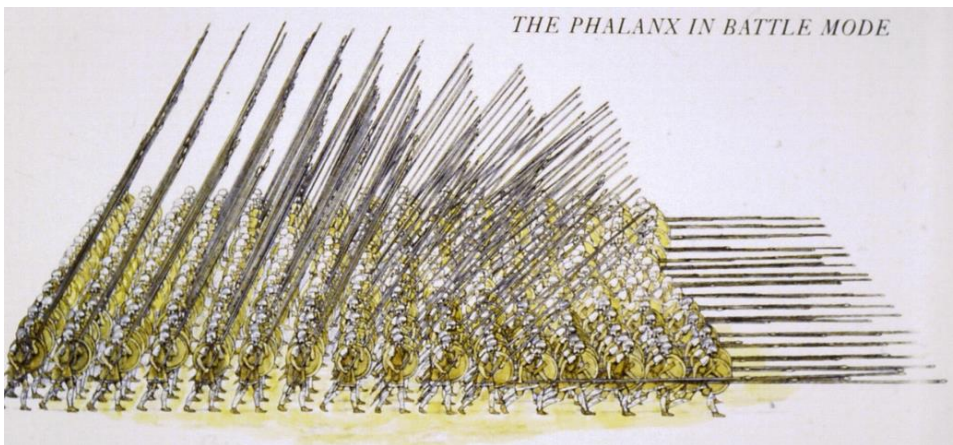
Daniel 8 is the second direct dream to Daniel. It is added detail to Daniel 7's four-beast dream. It took place in the castle at Shushan, in southern Iran (Elam). Elam was a regional power center for the Babylonian Kingdom; but not its capital. The Babylonians had conquered the Elamites; and used its capital as a regional office. The original people of Elam were ironically deported to northern Israel after the Assyrians deported the northern Israeli tribes. This city of Shushan is also where the Persians would make one of their headquarters (winter palace), after sacking Babylon. In addition, it is where God saved Jews all over the world in the book of Esther.

Daniel was standing by the river Ulai, and he had a vision. He saw a ram with a high horn and a lower horn; that was pushing to the west, north, and south. He was seeing the Medo Persian Empire. *saw the ram pushing westward*, &c. — Under Cyrus himself the Persians pushed their conquests *westward*, as far as the Ægean sea, subduing Babylonia, Syria, and Asia Minor; and extended them to part of Greece under his successors, Darius the son of Hystaspes, and Xerxes: *northward* they subdued the Lydians, Iberians, Albanians, Armenians, Cappadocians, and the adjacent countries: *southward* they conquered Arabia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, if not under Cyrus, as Xenophon affirms, yet most certainly under Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus. Under Darius they subdued India; but in the prophecy no mention is made of their conquests in the *East*, because those countries lay very remote from the Jews, and were of little concern or consequence to them. Daniel saw an unstoppable force.



Read Daniel 8:5-8: Next, we go back to beast #3; the Grecian Empire. This was the beast of speed. It was shown to Nebuchadnezzar as a belly and thighs of bronze (speed center of the body). It was also shown as a 4-winged, 4-headed leopard. Here it is shown differently as a unicorn goat that seemed to be flying through the air from the west. Alexander the Great came at the Medo Persians with unprecedented speed and anger. It stomped them to death. This is not a random animal used to represent Greece. Persia ruled till about 333 BC, when Alexander the Great came from the west and with unbelievable speed overran the Persian Empire. Note also that he came from the west. Alexander's great conquests followed that course exactly. He crossed the Hellespont and carried his campaigns all the way to India, the only conqueror in world history ever to do that. "Alexander's conquest of the entire Near and Middle East within three years stands unique in military history and is appropriately portrayed by the lightning speed of this one-horned goat. Despite the immense numerical superiority of the Persian imperial forces and their possession of military equipment, the tactical genius of young Alexander, with his disciplined Macedonian phalanx, proved decisive."

Alexander made the *Phalanx* a well-known military front-line technique. His soldiers on the front lines would lock their shields together, and the first few ranks of soldiers would project their spears out over the first rank of shields. The phalanx therefore presented a shield wall and a mass of spear points to the enemy, making frontal assaults against it very difficult. Secondly, Alexander made use of the pushing match (like rugby).



There is a supernatural aspect to what alexander did. There were three main battles between Greece and Persia. In the third battle, Alexander's 30,000 men killed 600,000 Persian well-trained soldiers and war elephants!

*Two hundred years before the time of Daniel, the Greeks were called the goats' people; the origin of which name is said to be as follows: Caranus, their first king, going with a multitude of Greeks to seek a new habitation in Macedonia, was advised by an vision to take the *goats* for his guides; and afterwards, seeing a herd of goats flying from a violent storm, he followed them to *Edessa*, and there fixed the seat of his empire, and made the goats his ensigns or standards; and called the place *AEge* or *AEgea*, the goats' town.*

Read Daniel 8:9-14: Now we are going to learn a little about several men who were to a degree about the same thing. Now the vision of the Grecian empire switches from Alexander the Great, to a future man of great force and influence. Alexander the Great had some similarities to the coming antichrist. He would take over at blinding speed and be unstoppable.

The antichrist acts as an alter ego of Satan. Some of the language in this chapter is applicable to Satan, and some is applicable to the antichrist.

Lucifer takes 1/3 of the angels and leads a revolt in heaven.

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. (Revelation 12: 3-4)

During the tribulation, the demons try to overthrow heaven. Michael and the angels throw them out of heaven, to earth. This is when bloodshed on earth goes off of the charts.

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)

This final beast is a 10-nation confederation that is commandeered by the antichrist. He is a hateful and vocal man. He is angry and arrogant. There was another man who is also alluded to in these passages. There is a man who came after Alexander the Great, and before the antichrist. He lived like a *small-time antichrist* from 175 B.C until 164 B.C.

Antiochus Epiphanes (*the little antichrist model*)

Antiochus Epiphanes was a [Greek](#) king of the Seleucid Empire who reigned over Syria from 175 BC until 164 BC. He is famous for almost conquering Egypt and for his brutal persecution of the Jews, which precipitated the Maccabean revolt. Antiochus Epiphanes was a ruthless and often capricious ruler. He is properly Antiochus IV, but he took upon himself the title “Epiphanes,” which means “illustrious one” or “god manifest.” However, his bizarre and blasphemous behavior earned him another nickname among the Jews: “Epimanes,” which means “mad one.”

Antiochus made a decree outlawing Jewish rites and worship, ordering the Jews to worship Zeus rather than Yahweh. He wasn’t just trying to [Hellenize](#) the Jews but to totally eliminate all traces of Jewish culture. Of course, the Jews rebelled against his decrees.

The Jewish response was to take up arms and fight. In 167—166 BC, [Judas Maccabeus](#) led the Jews in a series of victories over the military forces of the Syrian-Greeks. After vanquishing Antiochus and the Seleucids, the Jews cleaned and restored the temple in c. 165.

Antiochus Epiphanes is a tyrannical figure in Jewish history, and he is also a foreshadowing of the coming Antichrist. The prophet Daniel predicts an atrocity in the temple in the end times ([Daniel 9:27](#); [11:31](#); [12:11](#)). Daniel’s prophecy concerns a coming ruler who will cause the offerings to cease in the temple and

set up “an [abomination that causes desolation](#).” While what Antiochus did certainly qualifies as an [abomination](#), Jesus speaks of Daniel’s prophecy as having a still-future fulfillment ([Matthew 24:15–16](#); [Mark 13:14](#); [Luke 21:20–21](#)). The Antichrist will model Antiochus Epiphanes in his great pride, blasphemous actions, and hatred of the Jews.

Read Daniel 8:15-27: The angel Gabriel was told to explain the visions that Daniel was having. The presence of the angel Gabriel was a *sensory overload*. Daniel passed out. Gabriel revived him and stood him up again. He clarified that the two-horned ram was Medo Persia; and that the goat was Greece. He added that Alexander the Great (notable horn) would die...and that 4 men would take his place who were less powerful. Alexanders four Generals would divide his empire into four empires.

One of the four kingdoms from Greece would have an awful man known for hating Jews and being power hungry. Antiochus Epiphanes only fits part of the description. He was just a taste of the antichrist who would come after him. Antiochus was not especially successful; but the antichrist will be unstoppable. Gabriel then transitioned into a description of end-times prophecy.

The Gentile world kingdoms set the stage, and all lead up to the coming antichrist. They also played a key role in the gospel going out to the world. The worst things that men have done still get used by God. The Roman persecution of believers in Jerusalem and Saul of Tarsus forced the gospel to spread all over the world.

The term antichrist is not just a person. It is a state of living, where *anything except Christ* is accepted. I have heard that the Satanic Bible is just about people being encouraged to *do whatever they feel like*. We are certainly living in the era of antichrist. The people of every nation seem to have lost their mind when it comes to spiritual discernment. Turn on the TV and count how many shows embrace evolution and living in sin, verses creation and godliness. Look at our public laws and government representation. We are embracing non-biblical standards. Biblical Christianity is portrayed as bigotry and narrow-mindedness. Listen to most music. It is usually not God honoring.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. (1 John 4:1-3)

The Bible teaches that the world will eventually produce a world ruler, called “the beast” in Revelation, who will wield great power and demand worship of himself. He will have “a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies” ([Revelation 13:5](#)) and is empowered by Satan ([Revelation 13:2](#)). He is called “the man of lawlessness . . . the man doomed to destruction” in [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#). This final Antichrist will be the culmination of the evil workings of Satan throughout the centuries. The Antichrist of the end times will embody all the deception and perversion of truth that the spirit of the antichrist has always promoted. Today, “the secret

power of lawlessness is already at work” ([2 Thessalonians 2:7](#)). The same spirit that will empower the Antichrist of the last days is currently operating in the world to bring confusion and deception to the issue of Jesus Christ’s person and work. “This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world” ([1 John 4:3](#)).

The end of the Gentile age (church age) comes when Jesus returns. Man has had a chance to drive the bus long enough. All kinds of world rulers have taken a shot at it; but unsuccessfully. Sometimes God has to let things get bad enough for us to let go of a false notion.