

Daniel 8:1-27

Daniel 8:18,19 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face on the ground; but he touched me and stood me upright. 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."

The accounts of the visions that Daniel describes includes Daniel's experience of the visions. Daniel 8 begins with Daniel dating the vision and describing his location. Most interpreters believe that Daniel was in Shushan the palace and by the River Ulai in the vision rather than in person. He related the vision to the first of his visions which we have in chapter 7. That vision had occurred 2 years earlier but still seemed to be on Daniel's mind. These experiences were very traumatic and affected him in deeply personal ways. When Gabriel appeared to him he was afraid and fell on his face. As he spoke Daniel was in a deep sleep but then Gabriel stood him up and explained, "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." Daniel's visions continued the revelations that he had seen through the dreams of

Nebuchadnezzar. Those dreams had given Daniel a thirst for more understanding of the intentions and purposes of God. Daniel took his questions to God and the visions were answers from God to Daniel. But they were a heavy burden. When the vision concluded and the interpretation by Gabriel was complete Daniel collapsed and was sick for days before he was able to resume his typical service to the king. He continued to think about the vision and apparently shared it with others but "no one understood it."

Tremper Longman's commentary on Daniel identified six themes that are found throughout the prophecies of the last six chapters of the book.

- 1) The horror of human evil, particularly as it is concentrated in the state.
- 2) The announcement of a specific time of deliverance
- 3) Repentance that leads to deliverance
- 4) The revelation that a cosmic war stands behind human conflict
- 5) Judgment as certain for those who resist God and oppress His people
- 6) The equally certain truth that God's people, downtrodden in the present, will experience new life in the fullest sense.

In chapter 8, theme 1 is seen in the violence and aggressiveness of the ram, the goat, and the little horn that comes from the four horns. Theme 2 is seen in the announcement that after 2,300 days the sanctuary shall be cleansed. The third theme that repentance leads to deliverance is suggested by the holy one's question, "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 underfoot?" The fourth theme of the revelation that there is a cosmic war that stands behind human conflict is seen in the desire of the little horn to destroy the true worship of God as it was being practiced in the temple in Jerusalem. He even declared himself to be "as high as the Prince of the host" and he "cast truth down to the ground." The 5th theme that judgment is certain for those who resist God and oppress His people is seen in the demise of each of the kingdoms identified by the vision as well as by the breaking of the big horn and the end prophesied of the little horn who "shall be broken without human means." The last of the themes that though God's people may be downtrodden in the present they will experience new life in the fullest sense is seen in the short lived powers of evil and the survival of the righteous.