

Daniel 8:1-27

Daniel 8:23,24 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. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and shall thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

There are two parts to Daniel's vision. What he sees and the interpretation of this by the angel Gabriel. Daniel sees the ram with two horns (one horn larger than the other which came up last) pushing northward, westward and southward and no animal could stand before it but he did according to his will and became great. The ram is interpreted as the kingdom of the Medes and Persians and so the two horns with one larger than the other that came up last makes perfect sense since the Persians dominated the empire though they came to power after the Medes.

Next, Daniel saw the goat with one horn that came from the west without touching the ground. This goat attacked the ram with furious power and cast him down to the ground and trampled him. The goat grew very great but when he was strong the

large horn was broken and was replaced by four notable horns that came up toward the four winds of heaven. The out of one of the four horns a little horn grew exceedingly great toward the south, the east and the glorious land. This little horn grew up as the host of heaven, cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground and trampled them. "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... He cast truth to the ground . He did all this and prospered. The question was posed by one holy one to another, "How long..." and the answer given was 2300 days and then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

The goat with the long horn represented Greece. The long horn was Alexander the Great who died leaving his empire to be divided among his four generals. From one of those Antiochus Epiphany rose to power over Syria, Egypt, and the Holy Land. He exalted himself as if he were god and desecrated the temple in Jerusalem ending the daily sacrifices and made war against the faithful. He succeeded in all of this for a time but then became ill and died. "He shall be broken without human means."

When we tell a story we often tell it in order to get to the end, to make the point of the

story. If the vision of Daniel had a point, what was it? Clearly, the vision moves purposefully toward the final episode that is described, the little horn that becomes powerful and that desecrates the temple ending the daily sacrifices for a time until his time is over. In history, it was Antiochus Epiphany who fulfilled Daniel's prophecy. And yet, he seems to be a minor figure from the perspective of World or even Jewish history. So, why would the point of the vision be the little horn rather than the much more powerful ram and goat?

So it is not the little horn so much as what is represented by the little horn. In the vision, the power of evil becomes greater and greater until it reaches its climax in the person of the little horn. For a time, the power of the little horn appears to surpass that of God but this is only temporary. Ultimately, the little horn is defeated and order is restored.

The little horn is typical of the person and work of the devil. Notice that he is characterized by cunning, deceit, and pride. His power is great but it is not his own power and he is defeated but not by human means. This also looks beyond the crisis brought about by Antiochus Epiphany to the end times and to the rise and fall of the Anti-Christ.