

MESSAGE NOTES

Unshakeable: A Faith That Won't Fold - Part 11 "The Ram, The Goat, and The War on God's People" - Daniel 8

Apocalyptic Literature: Apocalyptic Literature is the hardest parts of the Bible to interpret. So, our approach for the study of Daniel 7-12 is to study it from the perspective of what the writer intended to convey, what the original listener or reader heard or understood it to mean, and how the early Christian church looking back interpreted it. Apocalyptic literature shows us that the kingdoms and chaos and evil of this world will be replaced by the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and so God's people can persevere in our faith and live with hope.

PLACE FOR NOTES:

Daniel's vision of the Ram and the Goat – Daniel 8:1-12

- The Ram (Two Horns): Represents the kings of Media and Persia.
- The Goat (One Large Horn): Represents Alexander the Great.

Alexander dies (the picture of the large horn breaking off), and his kingdom was divided among his four generals (the meaning of the verse that says, *in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.*)

PLACE FOR NOTES:

Alexander the Great's vision for Hellenism as a worldview and lifestyle included several core pillars:

1. The Cosmopolitan Ideal ("Citizen of the World")

Alexander envisioned a multicultural society where diverse peoples were unified under a common Greek identity while retaining some local traditions. The Greek culture is superior to all others.

2. Urban Life (The "Polis" or City)

- The Gymnasium: A center for both physical and intellectual training, emphasizing the Greek ideal of a "sound mind in a sound body".
- Theaters and Temples: To promote Greek drama, art, and the Olympian religion as a shared social fabric.
- Agoras (Marketplaces): To foster a booming international economy based on standardized Greek coinage.

3. Intellectualism and Science

Hellenism elevated human reason and logic as the primary ways to learn and understand the world.

- Global Language
- Centers of Learning

4. Humanism in Art and Religion

- Religious Syncretism: People were encouraged to see connections between their local gods and Greek ones (e.g., merging Zeus with the Egyptian Amun), a process known as syncretism. In the Greek mind there was a god force behind everything and so they worshipped gods who controlled every area of life.

PLACE FOR NOTES:

In Israel, religious syncretism – the blending of Jewish and Greek cultures – created a deep rift between those who embraced Hellenism and those who fought to preserve a godly life lived in faith in the one true God, Yahweh.

1. The Sadducees: The "High-Society" Hellenizers
2. The Pharisees: The "Counter-Cultural" Academics
3. The Essenes: The "Total Rejectionists"

PLACE FOR NOTES:

The result of God's people becoming more like the culture of the world around them instead of becoming more like God and living for him is the fulfillment of the Daniel 8 "Little Horn" in Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Seleucid (Greek) king who ruled from 175–164 BC. His actions mirror the prophecy with startling precision:

- Rises from the Four
- The Abomination of Desolation: In 167 BC, Antiochus captured Jerusalem, halted the daily sacrifices, desecrated the Temple by erecting an altar to Zeus and sacrificing a pig on it, outlawed core Jewish practices like circumcision and Sabbath observance, and burned as many copies of the Torah as he could find.

Daniel 8:13-14: The 2,300 Days: This period (interpreted as 1,150 days of morning/evening sacrifices) closely matches the roughly three-year period from the Temple's desecration until its reconsecration by the Maccabees in 164 BC (an event still celebrated as Hanukkah).

PLACE FOR NOTES:

Daniel 8:15-25: The Interpretation of the vision...

Daniel 8:25 tells how Antiochus will gain power through deceitful methods. He sidelines his own brother who is the rightful heir. It also tells us he will not die in battle. He reportedly died of a sudden, agonizing internal disease, fulfilling the prophecy that he would be destroyed by divine intervention rather than by some "human means" or human power.

Daniel 8:26-27:

- **The Timeframe:** Daniel is told to "seal up the vision," because it concerns a time that is "many days in the future". Some see that talking about when Antiochus IV is on earth. Some see that as talking about the End-times.

Main Interpretive Approaches:

- **Preterist:** Views the "little horn" that rises out of one of the four horns as the persecuting ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes rising up from the Seleucid Empire in 175-164 B.C.
- **Futurist:** Interprets the "little horn" as partly fulfilled by Antiochus IV, but the "time of the end" is viewed as foreshadowing the Antichrist and the end of the current age, echoing similar themes in Daniel 7 and Daniel 12.
- **Historist:** Understands the "little horn" as Antiochus IV, and that he is a prototype of many AntiChrist's all throughout history.

PLACE FOR NOTES:

What this means for followers of God:

1. Trusting God's Sovereignty Over History and our World...
2. Living for God in a Culture Drawing Us Away from HIM...

PLACE FOR NOTES:

Taking It Home

We encourage you to take a few minutes today and this week to process this morning's message. These questions are designed for discussion with your family, a friend, mentor, spouse, and small group. They are also useful for self-reflection.

1. What stands out to you in these passages from the Bible? From the message?
2. What is difficult for you to understand or accept in these passages from the Bible? From the message?
3. What is God saying in these passages and through what we heard in the message about Himself? About people? About you?
4. What examples are there to follow, commands to obey, or promises to stand on from these passages in the Bible, and from what we heard in the message?