

LESSON 8

A ram and a goat

Objective: To learn that plans of kings of the earth are futile because their kingdoms will perish at appointed times and the kingdom of God will finally be established.

Bible reference: Daniel chapter 8

Memory verses: *Dan 8:19-21*

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 ram which you saw, having the two horns--they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.

Psalms 2:1-2

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,

Introduction

History records the rise and fall of nations in the world. Book of Daniel contains many historical events and important prophecies concerning them. Ch. 8 describes the continuation and culmination of prophetic predictions made in chs.2 & 7.

The vision

Daniel was in the palace of Shushan in the province of Elam in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar when he saw a vision. He found himself standing by the river of Ulai and there appeared a ram with two long horns. One horn was longer than the other. The ram pushed westwards, northwards and southwards. No beast could stand against it and it did as it pleased. As Daniel was watching, a goat came from the west without touching the ground. The goat had a notable horn between the eyes. It came to the ram with great fury and broke its two horns. It cast down the Ram to the ground and stamped it under its feet. The goat became very great and strong. As it became great, its notable horn got broken and in its place four horns grew up. A small horn came out of one of the four horns and grew into a big one even reaching up to the host of heaven. It stopped

daily sacrifices and destroyed the holy sanctuary. Then Daniel heard one saint speaking to another: “How long will this transgression last?” The answer was: “Two thousand three hundred days. After that period, the sanctuary will be restored”.

As Daniel was thinking about the meaning of the vision, Angel Gabriel came to him and explained the meaning to him.

Ram with two horns

The animal points to Medo-Persian empire. The longer horn represents the Persian kings who were stronger than the Medians. It is a historical fact that as the ram was seen pushing in three directions, this empire extended its reign from India to Ethiopia.

Goat

The conquering goat represents the Greek army and the horn between its eyes represents Alexander the Great. The army of Alexander conquered all the then known nations of the world very speedily. Greek army defeated the Persians in two stages, first in B.C. 334 and then in B.C. 331. The two attacks are pictured in the vision. In the first step, both horns of the ram were broken and in the second stage, the ram was trodden on the ground. Just when the goat was becoming stronger, its horn was broken. Alexander was returning after conquering nations up to India, he got drunk and spent one night in a river. He became seriously sick and suddenly died at the age of 33 in B.C. 323. A great warrior who conquered all nations in 12 short years was himself struck down by alcohol! How many great men are conquered by the alcohol monster even today!!

Four horns

Four new horns came up when the single horn of the goat was broken. (You may recall that the leopard in ch.7 had four heads). The new horns show the division of the Greek empire into four after the death of Alexander. The divided nations were Macedon, Asia, Egypt and Syria which remained in power till B.C. 150 and propagated the Greek language and culture. Of these, Egypt and Syria were always in conflict with each other for many years.

Small horn

A small horn sprouted out of one of the four horns. It became very strong “towards south, east and the pleasant land” (Dan. 8:9). Who does this horn represent? Gabriel explained this: “When

the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance and dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty” (Dan. 8:23). His actions are described in Dan. 8:10-12; 8:24-25. The king referred to could be Antiochus Epiphanes, an autocratic ruler who attacked Jerusalem in second century B.C., stopped all sacrifices in the Temple and killed many Jews. He is also a shadow of Antichrist who will rise up after the first phase of the second coming of Jesus Christ (when His saints will be raptured) and rule the world in a cruel and despotic manner.

Two thousand three hundred days

How long will the atrocities of this king last? The answer given in Dan. 8:14 is 2300 days. Historians say that the fearsome rule of Antiochus Epiphanes lasted for 2300 days. But there is also another prophetic implication of this period. Daniel 9 speaks of a coming prince who will “confirm the covenant for one week and cause the sacrifice to cease in the middle of the week” (Dan. 9:27). Prophetically one week represents 7 years of 360 days each, meaning 2520 days. Persecution of the Jews and restriction on their worship will start at the beginning of this period and intensify after 220 days when the period of 2300 days begins. After another 1040 days in the middle of the week, persecution will become very fierce for the next 1260 days. At the end of this great tribulation, our Lord Jesus Christ will appear in glory to destroy Antichrist and establish His kingdom. Let us be ready for that beautiful morning

Questions

1. Describe the vision mentioned in Dan. 8.
2. What is the significance of the ram with two horns?
3. Explain how the prophecy about the ram and its horns was fulfilled historically?
4. Explain from history the meaning and fulfillment of the single horn of the goat.
5. Describe the events symbolized by the four horns which came up after the breaking of the single horn.
6. Who does the small horn which came out of one of the horns of the goat represent? How was the prophecy fulfilled in history? What future event does it foretell?
7. How is the period of 2300 days in the vision connected with the ‘one week’ of Antichrist?